

# LAS

# NEWS

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES | FALL 2020

# The Class of 2020

Lessons learned from  
class, college life, and  
a test like none other

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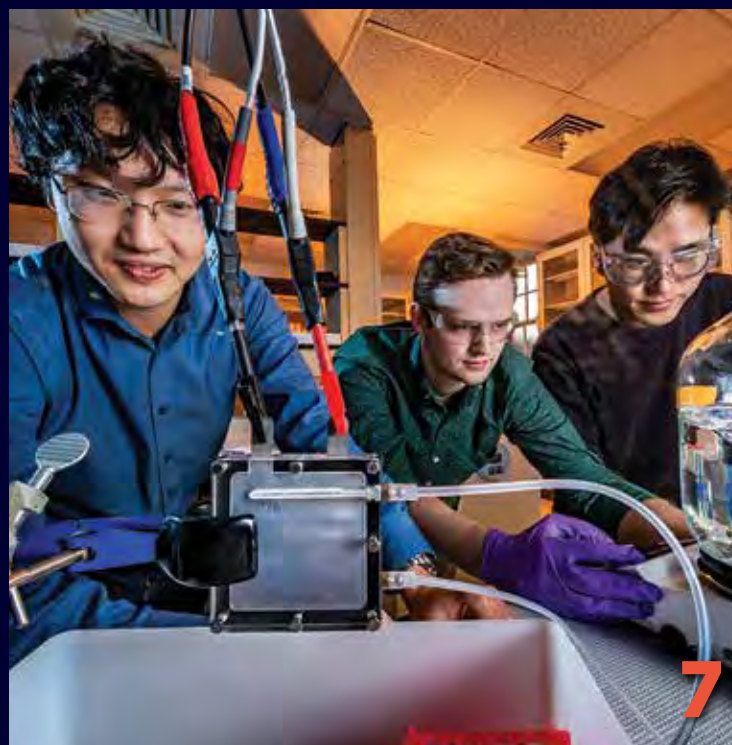
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GREETINGS FROM THE

## College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Dear alumni and friends,

Greetings from the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences. During the first two months of my tenure as interim dean, I have been working closely with faculty and staff across our college to plan for what is likely our most complex semester ever. These are challenging and transformative times, and I am honored to be here. LAS always plays a special role on our campus, but our teaching, research, scholarship, and public engagement feel more important now than ever.

I'm new in the Office of the Dean, but I have spent my 30-year career as a member of the LAS faculty. I arrived on campus as an assistant professor in the Department of Entomology, and currently I am director of the Carl R. Woese Institute for Genomic Biology (from which I am taking a year-long break to focus upon the College of LAS). I founded and direct the Bee Research Facility, and I've also directed the Neuroscience Program. I've been fortunate to work on a campus that has been incredibly supportive and full of opportunities for multidisciplinary collaboration during my career.

As we move forward, we should reflect on what has already been accomplished through the hard work and innovation of our faculty, staff, and students. Last March, the COVID-19 pandemic upended campus in ways we'd never seen. Through collaboration and resourcefulness, we were able to quickly shift our learning online. The Class of 2020, featured prominently here in the magazine, unfortunately had to cap their undergraduate education in a most disruptive and challenging way. We lament their loss, but we salute their resilience and dedication, and we know they have learned life lessons in perseverance and adaptability.

The return of our students this fall is a milestone moment, and campus has worked hard to develop innovative plans to make this possible. Safety will be our top priority, and the measures we take to maintain proper social distancing will require that online learning accompany the traditional classroom and laboratory experiences. There are many aspects of a college education that require face-to-face interaction and shared experiences, however, and we're grateful that many of our students will be back on campus, where we can best teach and support them.

This coming school year will be about more than restarting the residential experience. In some ways we must start over. The killing of George Floyd, and the unrest that followed, has brought to the forefront the systemic racism and discrimination that persists in our society, including our campus. Our college is devoted to being a leader in helping the University of Illinois become a more welcoming, inclusive, diverse, and equitable institution. The future is bright when we move forward together.

With best wishes,

Gene E. Robinson,

Interim Dean

Swanlund Chair in Entomology



On the cover: The LAS Class of 2020. (Photo collage of 2020 graduates by Heather Gillett.)

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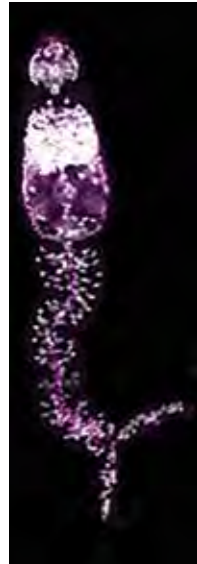
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### A new compound to stop a flatworm

A team of scientists have discovered a compound to stop a pervasive parasitic flatworm that causes schistosomiasis, a disease that has infected more than 200 million people worldwide. Lead researcher **Jonathan Sweedler**, the James R. Eiszner Family Endowed Chair in Chemistry and director of the School of Chemical Sciences, found that a microscopic aquatic animal called a rotifer is key to halting the disease. ■

## Faculty and staff honored

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

- **The L. Carl Brown AIMS Book Prize and 2020 Laura Shannon Prize:** **Eric Calderwood**, comparative literature, for "Colonial al-Andalus: Spain and the Making of Modern Moroccan Culture."
- **Less Commonly Taught Languages Partnership grant:** **Raquel Goebel**, Spanish and Portuguese.
- **Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) award:** **Naveen Narisetty**, statistics.
- **National Humanities Alliance grant:** **Ted Underwood**, English.
- **Outstanding Academic Titles List for 2019:** **John Lynn**, professor emeritus of history, for "Another Kind of War: The Nature and History of Terrorism."
- **Award for Distinguished Contributions to Psychophysiology:** **Monica Fabiani** and **Gabriele Gratton**, psychology.
- **2019 Prize for Best Scholarly Translation:** **David Cooper**, Slavic languages and literatures.
- **Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities Summer Faculty Research Fellowship:** **Carolyn Fornoff**, Spanish and Portuguese.
- **Edward L. Ullman Award:** **Julie Cidell**, geography and geographical information science.
- **Fellow of the International Communication Association:** **Leanne Knobloch**, communication.

See a complete list of faculty honors at [go.las.illinois.edu/honors-fall20magazine](http://go.las.illinois.edu/honors-fall20magazine). ■

### Gift of \$750,000 helps students and faculty in the Department of the Classics

The **Department of Classics** received an estate gift of \$750,000 from Barbara Wallach (MA, '70; PhD, '74, classics) to honor her late husband and Illinois professor, **Luitpold Wallach**, who taught classics and medieval studies until his retirement in 1978. The gift will be used for undergraduate scholarships and graduate fellowships, as well as a named professorship in classics. ■



### Student receives Lincoln Academy Student Laureate Award



**Elena Wilson**, who earned dual degrees in May in molecular and cellular biology and German with a concentration in culture and literature, has been recognized for civic engagement and academic excellence with the Lincoln Academy Student Laureate Award. The award is presented each year to one student from each four-year degree-granting institution of higher learning in Illinois. ■



Latinx murals created in 1974 as protest pieces to prevent the closure of the Latino Cultural Center have been restored and reinstalled on campus. They were removed from campus in 2016 when the building that formerly held the **Department of Latina/Latino Studies** and La Casa Cultural Latina was demolished. ■

### Tracing the history of gender-neutral pronouns

In his recently released book "What's Your Pronoun? Beyond He and She," linguist **Dennis Baron** (he/him/his), a professor emeritus of English, writes about the history of pronoun use and the role pronouns have played in establishing our rights and identities. "The pronoun is becoming like an honorific, like a title. This is how you refer to me," Baron said. "It's got this extra-special significance once again in the context of new gender issues." ■



### Sentences, predictability, and remembering what you never read

From an evolutionary perspective, memory and prediction seem to be closely related. Humans need to remember dangerous situations to help navigate similar situations in the future. Researchers, however, led by psychology professor **Kara Federmeier** and Beckman Institute Postdoctoral Fellow **Ryan Hubbard** in the Cognition and Brain Lab, investigated the other part of this equation: the effect of prediction on memory. When people see something unpredictable, they tend to remember what they predicted would happen instead of what actually happened. ■



Ryan Hubbard, left, and Kara Federmeier



### Three siblings, five LAS majors, and one strong family bond

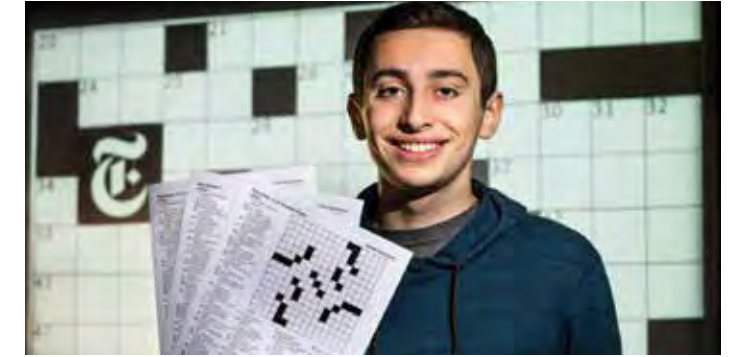
When Robert and Beata Kaminski immigrated to the U.S. from Poland, they knew very little about American colleges. Now their three children—**Szymon, Pawel**, and **Gabriela**—have attended the College of LAS at the same time. Szymon earned his degree in global studies and political science in May 2020; Pawel, the middle child, is studying integrative biology and psychology; and Gabriela, the youngest, is studying history. ■

From left: Siblings Pawel, Gabriela, and Szymon Kaminski are all LAS students.

### Professors receive prominent translation fellowships



A University of Illinois professor emerita and a former professor at Illinois have been awarded Literature Translation Fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts. **Elizabeth Lowe**, (pictured left) a professor of translation studies and **Armine Kotin Mortimer**, a professor emerita of French literature, have been given the fellowships to translate celebrated international works. ■



One student passed time during the COVID-19 outbreak by making some of the toughest crosswords in the country. **Adam Aaronson**, who is pursuing a minor in linguistics, has had his crossword puzzles published in The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal. ■

### Former head of biochemistry named vice chancellor for research and innovation



**Susan Martinis**, former head of the Department of Biochemistry, has been named the vice chancellor for research and innovation at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Martinis had served in an interim role since September 2017. ■

### The curious case of side effects



Earlier this year, psychology professor **Sean Laurent** published “Reconstructing the side-effect effect: A new way of understanding how moral considerations drive intentionality asymmetries” in the Journal of Experimental Psychology: General. Laurent’s research, based on surveys of about 1,500 people, show that people’s answers about the intentionality of side effects may not mean what they appear, because people redefine questions about intentionality differently when an outcome is negative versus positive. ■



### Scientists develop new compounds that suppress breast cancer growth

Scientists have developed new drug compounds that thwart the pro-cancer activity of FOXM1, a transcription factor that regulates the activity of dozens of genes. The researchers focused on FOXM1 because it is found in higher abundance in cancer cells than in healthy human cells, said **Benita Katzenellenbogen**, a professor of molecular and integrative physiology who led the study with chemistry professor **John Katzenellenbogen** and life sciences research specialist **Yvonne Ziegler**. ■

From left: Valeria Sanabria Guillen, Sung Hoon Kim, Kathy Carlson, John Katzenellenbogen, Yvonne Ziegler, and Benita Katzenellenbogen.

### Graduate student discovers a new bug—and names it after Lady Gaga

**Brendan Morris** has always been fascinated by treehoppers, which he describes as the wackiest and most astonishing insects. So when he discovered a new genus and species of treehopper, he named it after Lady Gaga, a musical performer who has her own flamboyant, shape-shifting style. The bug’s name? *Kaikaia gaga*. See a video about the discovery at [go.las.illinois.edu/GagaBug20](http://go.las.illinois.edu/GagaBug20). ■



### Helping to forget the bad memories

In a new study, psychology professors **Florin Dolcos** and **Sanda Dolcos** reported they can manipulate how the brain encodes and retains emotional memories, which may help people forget bad memories. The scientists found that focusing on the neutral details of a disturbing scene can weaken a person’s later memories—and negative impressions—of that scene. ■



### College of LAS students honored with Goldwater Scholarships



Two College of LAS students were honored by the Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship and Excellence in Education Program. **Sriyankari Chitti**, (pictured left) who is majoring in chemistry, and **William Lyon**, who is majoring in chemical and biomolecular engineering, will receive support to pursue careers in science. ■



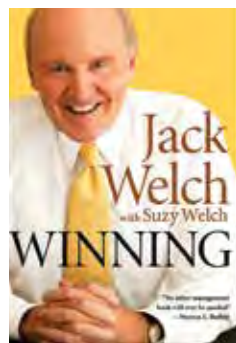
### Transforming data into knowledge

To some, one of the best ways to improve societies is to gather data. It's a cause that **Lori Montana** (BA, '79, political science) can relate to, as she's been recognized for supporting the Cline Center for Advanced Social research in its mission to transform information into knowledge that can help improve life around the world. Her gift will help staff build out software that allows users to more easily access 75 years of global news reports. ■



While papyrus plants haven't been used to make paper for centuries, classics professor **Dan Leon** decided to expand his students' learning experience by having them make paper from papyrus plants found on campus to experience the time and effort required by those in the ancient world to produce books. ■

### Alumnus Jack Welch, former CEO and chairman of General Electric, dies at 84



**Jack Welch** (PhD, '60, chemical engineering) died in March following a stellar career in business. The former General Electric Co. CEO and chairman started working as a chemical engineer at GE immediately after earning his doctorate from Illinois. He was named chairman and CEO in 1981 at the age of 45. He remained at the helm for the next 20 years. ■

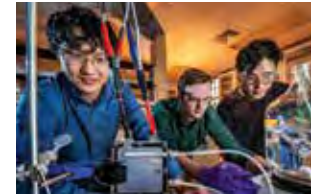
### Two LAS professors named Guggenheim Fellows

Two professors were among 175 writers, scholars, artists, and scientists to be selected as Guggenheim Fellows to support their book projects. **David Sepkoski**, the Thomas M. Siebel



Chair in History of Science at Illinois, used it for his book, "Catastrophic Thinking," and English professor and poet **Janice N. Harrington** will use the fellowship to study expressiveness by African Americans in the Midwest. ■

### Researchers create device to reduce arsenic in water



Researchers led by **Xiao Su**, professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering, have created an advanced device to help dramatically increase efficiency of water purification and reduce arsenic in water. Using specialized polymer electrodes, the device can reduce arsenic in water by over 90 percent while using roughly 10 times less energy than other methods. ■

From left: Xiao Su, Stephen Cotty, and Kwiyoung Kim.

**David Kranz**, professor of biochemistry, has been elected as a fellow of the National Academy of Inventors. The program highlights academic inventors who have demonstrated a spirit of innovation in creating or facilitating outstanding inventions that have made a tangible impact on the quality of life, economic development, and the welfare of society. ■



### Untangling a centuries-old deception

**Mauro Nobili**, a professor of history, has uncovered a manipulated historical account that shows the Tarikh al-fattash, a West African chronicle written in Arabic that is widely believed to have been produced in the 17th century, was in fact written by someone else entirely in the 19th century. Nobili discovered that a scholar named Nuh b. al-Tahir wrote the chronicle, changing pre-existing historical works to legitimize Ahmad Lobbo as the ruler of the 19th century Caliphate of Hamdallahi. ■

Mauro Nobili, left, and Mohamed Diagayete.

### Study tracks why closely related fish avoid each other



A new study led by **Becky Fuller**, professor of evolution, ecology, and behavior, and **Rachel Moran** (PhD, '19, ecology, evolution, and conservation biology) offers an analysis of the genomic changes that occur when closely related orangethroat and rainbow darters hybridize. The analysis offers insight into the gradual accumulation of incompatible traits that likely drives males to avoid females of the other species. ■

### Four LAS faculty rank among the world's most influential researchers



Four LAS faculty have been named to the 2019 Highly Cited Researchers list, a global listing of scientists who produced the past decade's most influential papers, compiled by the Web of Science group, a Clarivate Analytics company. The professors are **Lisa Ainsworth** (plant biology and crop sciences); **Mei-Po Kwan** (geography and geographical information science); **Stephen Long** (plant biology and crop sciences); and **Donald Ort** (plant biology). ■

From left: Lisa Ainsworth, Mei-Po Kwan, Stephen Long, and Donald Ort.

# THE LESSONS OF COVID-19

Faculty, staff, and students in the College of LAS came together to endure one of the hardest semesters in campus history

By Kayleigh Rahn and Dave Evensen

**Editor's note:** This story details responses to the COVID-19 pandemic prior to the start of the Fall 2020 semester.

COVID-19 brought with it an immediate—and ongoing—need for sacrifice, teamwork, and innovation at the University of Illinois, from the closure of campus to rethinking how to continue teaching and learning. Through these trying moments, the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences community found ways to not only finish the spring semester, but to contribute to the common goal of overcoming the pandemic.

Key lessons from classrooms and laboratories suddenly had more weight, as faculty, staff, and students produced resources for health care workers and offered expert perspectives on how to cope during a time of unprecedented change. Others ensured the safety and smooth running of facilities and vital research, and students and faculty members discovered new ways to connect academically while at home.

Here is a snapshot of ways LAS worked together to help light the way through the early stages of COVID-19.

## University of Illinois partners with Carle Health and the state to increase COVID-19 testing



In early March, when the COVID-19 pandemic began shuttering businesses and schools across the United States, **Chris Brooke** wondered how he'd teach his classes online. As the virus spread with astonishing speed, however, and it became frighteningly clear that COVID-19 threatened something far greater than just the spring semester, Brooke, a professor of microbiology, asked a bigger question: How can we help stop it?

At the same time, discussions were underway between Carle Health and the University of Illinois to develop plans to curb the pandemic. Brooke recruited colleagues to help, sparking a campuswide effort to dramatically increase COVID-19 testing in the local community and the entire state of Illinois.

Spurred by reports that local health officials lacked the means to process tests for the coronavirus, units across campus mustered



Akanksh Shetty produces viral transport media in the Carl R. Woese Institute for Genomic Biology. The fluid is used to preserve patient test samples for COVID-19. (Photo by Ann Hyoung Sook.)

machines, materials, and personnel to partner with Carle Health in establishing a COVID-19 testing site.

Not only did the effort allow healthcare workers at Carle to begin testing for COVID-19, thus dramatically reducing the wait period for local tests to within 24 hours in many cases, but the University of Illinois expanded the partnership to the Illinois Department of Public Health and Illinois Emergency Management Agency to ramp up testing operations. Laboratories across campus mobilized to provide COVID-19 testing supplies for thousands of tests across the state.

"It's been a tremendous team effort, involving lots of people and lots of different partnerships. It's one of the best things about U of I. We know how to work together. It's so amazing to see everybody team up and try to get something done that's impactful," said **Marty Burke**, the May and Ving Lee Professor for Chemical Innovation in the Department of Chemistry and associate dean for research at the Carle Illinois College of Medicine. "This is just how we roll."

## Supplies and resources for COVID-19

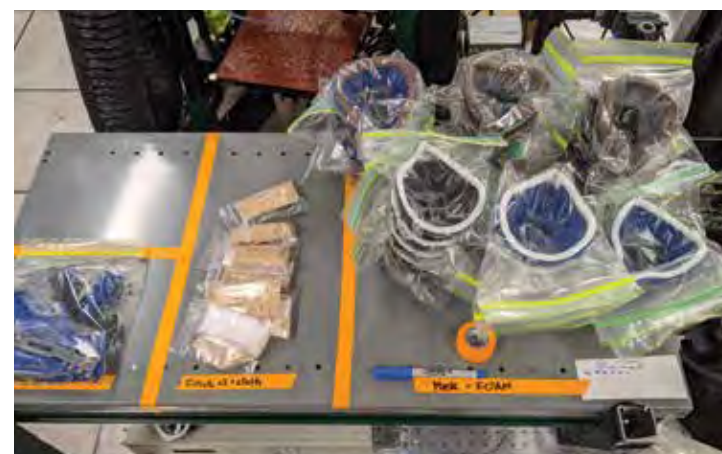
As the COVID-19 pandemic spread, **Ying Diao**, professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering, and her research group,



A vial of viral transport media produced at the University of Illinois earlier this year. The fluid is used to preserve patient test samples for COVID-19. (Image courtesy of the Carl R. Woese Institute for Genomic Biology.)

including several graduate students, began thinking about how they could help fight the outbreak.

Through an inspiring NPR story, Diao learned about the creation of 3D-printed ventilator parts in Italy. She immediately realized that her lab could potentially make facemasks and parts for medical supplies through their collective expertise in 3D printing and fabrication.



Assembled masks, filters, and 'ear savers' ready to be packed and sent out to hospitals and first responders. (Photo courtesy of Diao Research Group.)

The group optimized its laboratory of 3D printers to make 10 Montana Masks per day, with its goal to fabricate, assemble, and donate hundreds of masks to healthcare workers facing dire supply shortages.

The group's first shipment of masks went to the Monticello (Ill.) Police Department, and the Piatt County (Ill.) Sheriff's Department, and Parkland Memorial Hospital in Dallas, Texas. The group established Champaign County Covid Relief, where people can find updates, protocols, and links for resources to make their own printed or sewn masks.

Other donations from within the College of LAS came in the form of inventory from Spurlock Museum. Personal protective equipment—PPE—is used by Spurlock staff to protect themselves and the collections during handling. However, with all staff working from home, and with PPE sitting unused, the museum donated nitrile gloves, N95 masks, hand wipes, sanitizer, and safety glasses to the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District, said collections manager **Christa Deacy-Quinn**.

At the same time, the School of Chemical Sciences provided the Integrated Bioprocessing Research Laboratory (IBRL) with ethanol, glycerol, and hydrogen peroxide from its chemistry storerooms. The chemical supplies were used as IBRL produced more than 300 gallons of hand sanitizer each day.

## The lessons of learning, teaching from home

Prior to Spring Break 2020, students at Illinois were attending class in places like Lincoln Hall and Natural History Building, visiting faculty during office hours, and bumping into each other on the Main Quad.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the mid-term suspension of on-campus activities, however, students traded classrooms for Zoom lectures and online discussion boards while sitting in their apartments or childhood homes. The pandemic forced professors and students to complete the spring semester remotely as they followed guidelines for social distancing.

*(continued on page 10)*

(continued from page 9)

It was a learning experience for everyone; one professor in the Department of Political Science conducted an informal survey and found that about 75 percent of students had never used Zoom before. Despite the gap, students found ways to maintain learning, even while being dismayed that they wouldn't finish out the spring semester on campus.



Students pose at their homes for a Zoom photo. Top row (from left): Issy Marquez, Megan Resurreccion, and Katrina Rbeiz. Bottom row: Elena Cannova and Arnoldo Ayala. (Photo by Samantha Boyle.)

"It is so important for us all to realize the larger picture," said Katrina Rbeiz, junior in psychology and global studies. "While we may not be as comfortable as we were before the outbreak, we owe it to the well-being of others to stay inside and practice social distancing."

For professors, going from teaching in front of an auditorium that seats 600 students to lecturing on a webcam at home required patience, skill, huge time commitments – and, for at least one, a lot of imagination. **Martha Gillette**, professor of cell and developmental biology and director of the Neuroscience Program, co-taught a class on integrative neuroscience and learned a way to maintain her energy while she was just talking to a computer screen.

"I have to imagine that my students are in front of me in order to give an animated and engaging lecture," Gillette said.

### Social and behavioral insight during uncertainty

Researchers from across the College of LAS have provided insight into the human experience and how it related to the drastic societal changes and responsibilities that accompanied COVID-19.

State and local governments across the U.S. asked people to isolate themselves at home and avoid all but the most essential outings. This level of behavioral change has been unprecedented in most people's lifetimes, and for many it represents a direct threat to their economic welfare. Psychology professor **Dolores Albarracín**, who has spent much of her career studying how people respond to public health messages asking them to change their behavior, suggested how medical messaging should be framed to best reach the greater population.

Meanwhile, parents sheltering at home with their kids sometimes struggle to foster their children's continued engagement with learning. Psychology professor **Eva Pomerantz**, (above right), who studies the factors that promote children's motivation and



achievement at school, shared her advice on how to keep children academically engaged while learning from home: set new routines for learning (with your child's input), be flexible, and adjust goals to avoid negative emotions.



Sheltering in place has reoriented connections in work and at home. **John Caughlin**, head of the Department of Communication, who specializes in interpersonal communication and the role of technology in close relationships, suggested that while technology can help in sustaining close relationships during COVID-19, its effectiveness depends on how we use it. Just being on the same social media platform won't maintain a close connection with someone unless specific attention is paid to a partner.

### Turning to history for help

Some professors turned to lessons from history to help put COVID-19 in perspective. **Helaine Silverman**, professor of anthropology, recalled the 17th-century story of Eyam, a small English village that took extraordinary measures to contain a plague outbreak.

One day in 1665, a tailor's assistant in the village received a shipment of cloth from London and hung it out to dry. Unbeknownst to him, the bale of cloth was home to a colony of fleas infected with plague.

Soon, that man and one-third of the population of Eyam were dead. The means by which the village prevented the pestilence from becoming far worse, however, has become a lesson that resonates particularly today.

Eyam has long attracted visitors in a kind of "dark tourism" focused on the villagers' extraordinary sacrifices to contain the outbreak of disease. Silverman was taken by a British colleague to Eyam in 2013, and she was so struck by the community's story that she immediately incorporated it into her Archaeology of Death course.

Although the residents of Eyam didn't understand the plague, they knew that it was highly communicable. Over 14 months the villagers of Eyam self-quarantined. Nobody entered and nobody left Eyam. By so doing, countless lives were saved. But Eyam paid a terrible price.

"The moral lesson of Eyam," Silverman said, "should give us hope that if a society decides to act decisively for the larger public good through selfless decency, cooperation, tolerance for inconvenience, and—in our case—acceptance of scientific facts, then we will get past this infectious episode and hopefully emerge a better people, even a better nation." ■



A 15th century painting by French artist Josse Lieferinxe depicts St. Sebastian, a saint whom people prayed to for protection against the plague, while someone falls ill with disease as he handles a plague victim. (Public domain image, The Walters Art Museum).

# Books from LAS



**Masculinity, uncovering deceptions, the rise of Indian cinema, and more: Here are some of the latest books by LAS faculty.**

The way ancient Greeks thought about the natural environment and their relationship to it is relevant to how we respond to environmental crises today. In her new book, **"Other Natures,"** by **Clara Bosak-Schroeder**, professor of classics, looks at how the ethnographies written by ancient Greeks reveal how they explored ideas about consumption and their use of natural resources. (Image courtesy of University of California Press.)



**"Victims of the Book: Reading and Masculinity in Fin-de-Siècle France,"** by **François Proulx**, professor of French and Italian, uncovers a long-neglected but once widespread subgenre: the fin-de-siècle novel of formation in France. Novels about and geared toward adolescent male readers were imbued with a deep worry over young Frenchmen's masculinity. (Image courtesy of The University of Toronto Press.)



**"Laudato Si' and the Environment"** edited by **Robert McKim**, professor emeritus of religion. The book asks how religion can take a role in addressing environmental crises, and features essays from scholars of different disciplines and cultural and religious perspectives. (Image courtesy of L. Brian Stauffer.)



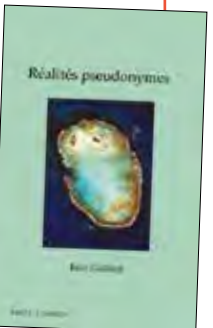
**"Sultan, Caliph, and the Renewer of the Faith: Ahmad Lobbo, the Tarikh al-fattash and the making of an Islamic State in West Africa,"** by **Mauro Nobili**, professor of history, breaks down the historical knowledge of the chronicle Tarikh al-fattash, the problematic and altered aspects that have been historically misinterpreted, and how it is an important piece in the evolution of Arabic historical literature in the region. (Image courtesy of Cambridge University Press.)



Between 1931 and 2000, India's popular cinema steadily overcame Hollywood domination. Bollywood became nothing less than a global cultural juggernaut, but it's merely one part of the country's prolific, multilingual cinema. **"Unruly Cinema,"** by **Rini Bhattacharya Mehta**, professor of comparative literature and religion, examines the complex series of events that allowed the entire Indian film industry to defy attempts to control, reform, and refine it in the 20th century and beyond. (Image courtesy of University of Illinois Press.)



**"Réalités pseudonymes,"** by **Julie Gaillard**, professor of French, explores the question of reality through the lens of the proper name and its referential mechanisms in French literature and arts at the turn of the 21st century. Gaillard analyzes the works of thinkers who question the referential transparency of the proper name to question the fabric of reality and show how it can be transformed. (Image courtesy of Brill Press.)



# Alumnus finds the sweet life

LAS  
@Work

**What's the scoop on John Lowe?** He studied political science at Illinois, entered law school, and began practicing law for a premier corporation. Here's how he became CEO of Jeni's Splendid Ice Creams.



**John Lowe**  
(BA, '95, political science)

**Residence:** Columbus, Ohio

**Family:** A wife, Catherine L. Strauss, partner with Ice Miller, a law firm, and three boys, Jack, Alex, and Luke.

## What's a typical workday?

Jeni's has 40 scoop shops, from D.C. to LA, including five in Illinois, a booming e-commerce business delivering ice cream to doorsteps, and our pints on the grocery store shelves of America's top retailers. My job is to make sure we have the right team around Jeni Britton Bauer (the greatest ice cream maker the world has ever known).

## What has been your career path since graduating from U of I?

I went straight to The Ohio State University's Moritz College of Law. I worked at Kegler Brown in Columbus for eight years. General Electric Company called when it was the World's Most Admired

Company and had the best in-house legal department in the world. My old friends from Columbus, Jeni and her husband, Charly, called me one night in January 2009 and asked me to return to Columbus to be their CEO. It sounded too wholesome and fun to pass up.

## What about college best prepared you for your life and career?

Without question, the writing skills I learned in Lincoln and Gregory halls. Beyond that, the education I received on the arc of human advancement and minor retreats, civil rights and political alienation, all informs how we interpret what is going on in America today and the unique opportunity we have to positively impact it. When Charlottesville happened, our founder said, "We need to make people feel loved today." Today, in the back room of every Jeni's the last thing one sees before walking out to serve our customers is a beautiful framed sign that reads, "Make People Feel Loved Today."

Read more LAS@Work features at [go.las.illinois.edu/LASatWork](https://go.las.illinois.edu/LASatWork). ■

By Kayleigh Rahn

## Let it snow:

### Researchers put cloud seeding to the test

Cloud seeding has become an increasingly popular practice in the western United States, where states grapple with growing demands for water. Measuring how much precipitation cloud seeding produces has been a long-standing challenge, but researchers have developed a way to accomplish it more accurately.

In January 2019, a multi-institution team of researchers, including **Robert Rauber**, a professor of atmospheric sciences and director of the School of Earth, Society, and Environment at Illinois, seeded clouds and tracked the associated snowfall over western Idaho. They fired flares composed of silver iodide from an airplane to inject microscopic particles into already-formed clouds to encourage water droplets to freeze into ice crystals.

"Ice particles grow rapidly and fall within clouds," said Rauber. "The goal was to generate more snow than might normally fall on the mountain slopes."

In all, the cloud seeding event and two more that month produced a total of about 282 Olympic-sized swimming pools worth of water in the form of snow.

"This is an important first step toward better understanding

just how efficient cloud seeding can be at creating those winter wonderlands," said University of Colorado, Boulder atmospheric scientist Katja Friedrich.

It's been tricky historically to know how effective cloud seeding really is, the researchers said. To overcome this obstacle, the group used two special mountaintop radars to peer into the clouds as the snow inside grew and succumbed to gravity. Based on the team's calculations, snow fell from those clouds for about 67 minutes, dusting roughly 900 square miles of land in about a tenth of a millimeter of snow.

Every winter storm is different and interacts with the seeded particles in different ways. However, the group's findings could get scientists closer to being able to make those cost-benefit calculations. Researchers from the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, the University of Wyoming and Idaho Power Company also participated in the study. The findings are published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. ■

By Lois Yoksouljan, Illinois News Bureau



# The Class of 2020

**The Class of 2020 was much like any other of the graduating classes before it—eager, inspired, and prepared to change the world.** This class, however, will long be remembered for how they were forced to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic that closed the university and brought their time on campus to an early end. They adapted to learning from home to finish their degrees, however, and even without a spring commencement they carried with them the spirit of graduation stronger than ever. We asked a few of them for their thoughts as they move forward. >>

By Samantha Boyle, Therese Pokorney, Kimberly Wilson, and Diana Yates. (Photo collage of 2020 graduates by Heather Gillett.)

# The Class of 2020



**PRINCE BOADI** is the first in his family to attend college, and he isn't finished yet. He was accepted to 10 medical schools, including at the University of Chicago, Duke, Vanderbilt, Case Western, and Emory universities. He

chose Duke University School of Medicine, which offered a full cost-of-attendance scholarship.

Boadi majored in **molecular and cellular biology** at Illinois and found the guidance and nurturing he needed to excel. "Being at Illinois enhanced my appreciation of leadership and increased my desire to be a medical doctor and [bring] real change in other people's lives," he said. Part of his college experience included working in the Office of Minority Student Affairs tutoring center, instructing his peers in general chemistry, organic chemistry, physics and introductory biology classes.

"The number of students I have been able to interact with has opened me up to a diverse number of different cultures, personalities and life stories," he said. "I realized I am truly fortunate to have the academic capacity I have. I also know that I have a responsibility to help others."



"While I am sad my time at Illinois is coming to an end, I am very proud of all the work I have done on campus, and the work the university has enabled me to do. I will

always cherish my time on campus, and I am so excited for my future knowing I have the skills to succeed!" - **SKYLAR ROLLE, political science**



**MALANI ROSA** landed a job at an investment firm soon after graduating with a degree in **economics**. The COVID-19 pandemic taught her to take advantage of every moment, because you don't know when it might change or disappear.

"College has shaped me in many ways by figuring out what I like and what I don't like for my future," she said. "The most important thing I learned in college is to always work hard at what you want."



**SISI HE**, who earned her graduate degree in **molecular and integrative physiology**, discovered her interest in biomedical research at the University of Illinois. She plans to move to San Francisco to work for a biotech

company. The most important thing she learned from college? "Have faith."



"Thanks for the bachelor's degree, ready for my master's now! #DoubleIllini" - **CRISTINA A. SANTILLAN, psychology and communication**



**HANNAH PRESTON** earned her bachelor's degree in **English** and is headed to graduate school at Northwestern University for a master's degree. The aspiring university counselor or advisor said that classes are just a small part of what makes college special.

"Not being able to finish out my journey by my friends' sides has been a bummer," she said, "but at the same time it has forced me to recognize how crucial bonds in college can be, even in relationships as simple as the one you have with that guy in your lecture who gives you notes sometimes."



"Hard work and dedication always pays off at Illinois. Remember you're part of a resilient community that always strives wherever we are. Inspire others and always push yourself to be best version of yourself. Stay true to the orange and blue and success will always find you."

- **VICTOR OLOWOMEYE, political science**



As a University of Illinois employee, **KATHRYN BOWMAN** finished a degree in **earth, society, and environmental sustainability** 20 years after she started it. "I was able to continue working full time and take online courses, setting an example for my three kids that hard work

pays off," she said. "I am now excited to start a new career with the Institute for Sustainability, Energy, and Environment and continue my education in the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences graduate field!"



After receiving his bachelor's degree in **communication**, **DOMINIC ROSE** will be back at Illinois this fall to pursue a master's degree. He's also publishing a poetry book called "Are These the Greatest Years?" If he could go back in time, he would tell himself that not everything will fall into place

right away, and that's okay.

"For me, it's important to always be gracious and to use the privilege that I have to validate others' experiences," Rose said. "By doing this, I can also elevate the voices of others who do not share the same privilege. At the end of the day, we're here to build each other up, not tear each other down."



As a future teacher, **SHAYNA VAN OSTRAND, English**, learned during college that she had to make herself a priority during these formative years.

She always knew that she wanted to be a teacher—"I didn't really look in other directions," she said—and she spent her college years pursuing that goal. In addition to her studies, she worked as a junior high basketball coach, published her own children's book, "My Mommy Doesn't Look Like Me," and accepted a teaching position at Central High School in Champaign prior to graduation.

"Self-care and self-love is real!" Van Ostrand said. "After that, everything falls into place."



If **SHAWNA OLIVER** could go back in time to high school, she'd tell herself to worry less, take in every moment, and enjoy every second of being

at the University of Illinois. Oliver recently graduated with a degree in **history**, and she was also part of Air Force ROTC.

She will be commissioned in the United States Air Force as a second lieutenant. The analytical skills that she learned by studying history played a part in her admission to intelligence officer training, she said.

"I enjoyed my entire time at Illinois, and I wouldn't trade it for anything," Oliver said. "It was so much fun, I learned so much, and I've met so many awesome people. Even though my last semester was cut short, it was still a good, unique ending to my time at Illinois."



"My wonderful and memorable four years at Illinois are not complete without the company of my friends: We take difficult CS classes together, we complain about the weather together, and we grow and learn together. After graduation, we might have to go to different

places to pursue our dreams, but the friends I have at Illinois will always hold the same place in my heart." – **MINGCHAO ZHANG, mathematics and computer science**



**SABRINA JOSE** majored in **molecular and cellular biology**, minored in Spanish, and plans to pursue a master's degree in nursing this fall.

"I have changed careers numerous times throughout college," Jose said.

"While taking a variety of classes, I learned what field I truly would enjoy working in. College played a huge role in this deciding factor because it provided me the infrastructures and settings to experience different professions."



Here's what **NOAH SELLAES**, a graduate in **history and political science**, would tell incoming freshmen:

"Take it one step at a time, and find what you love doing and what you're good at. If you can combine those things, then everything else will fall into place."

Sellaes, who will be attending law school at the College of William and Mary, said that the COVID-19 pandemic taught him a sense of community during a difficult time.

"I took a lot of classes in college, covering many topics. But the most important thing I came away with was a clearer sense of who it is I want to be, how I fit into a larger community, and in what ways I want to contribute to that community in the future," he said.



**CARA WIEMEYER** earned her bachelor's degree in **psychology** and will be starting the doctorate of clinical psychology program at Roosevelt University in Chicago this fall. Graduating during the COVID-19 pandemic taught Wiemeyer how to

critically think about the ways the crisis differentially affects certain populations, she said. She added that she'll never be done learning.

"The university has taught me that our knowledge on all subjects is constantly evolving," she said.



**JADA HOLLAND HECK, psychology**, always wanted to work with children but did not know exactly how until her last years as an undergrad.

"As a freshman, I wanted to work as a child psychologist, but the research, volunteer, and job opportunities I sought out

throughout my undergraduate education pointed me in the direction of social work," said Heck, who plans to attend the Brown School of Social Work at Washington University.

One of Heck's most vivid memories from college is how professors and students came together to manage online learning when the coronavirus struck. She also learned about patience.

"You will never have to force your passions to show themselves, they will come out naturally through the work and service that you gravitate toward on your own," Heck said. "Let nature do its thing and trust the process. It can be really scary but so worth it."



"My journey at U of I helped me to find my potential and my passion in the future. I'm glad I made the right choice to come here. I will never forget the memories I had here!"

– **LENGXI ZHANG, communication**

# Designs approved for Altgeld and Illini Hall Project

Construction scheduled to begin in 2021



Rendering of the Math Commons in the new Illini Hall

The **Board of Trustees** has approved schematic designs for the expansive Altgeld and Illini Hall Project, bringing closer to reality the \$192 million plan to modernize and grow spaces devoted to data science and other mathematical sciences.

Some major project details that the board approved in its May meeting include:

- A six-floor, 140,000-square-foot building on the site of Illini Hall. The new building will contain activities affiliated with the Illinois Innovation Network, the C3.ai Digital Transformation Institute, and additional classroom and office space for the departments of Mathematics and Statistics. Designs call for Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum certification, the highest ranking by the U.S. Green Building Council.
- Restoring the historic nature of Altgeld Hall to its original vibrancy and making spaces more accessible. This includes structural repairs to the exterior—and the bell tower—and rebuilding a glass dome over the library in the same style as the original that was taken down in 1942. A new ADA-accessible entryway

will be constructed on the east side of Altgeld Hall.

- Preserving and restoring roughly two-thirds of the library stacks in Altgeld Hall and adding a reading room with a glass wall view of the book collections. Books that are displaced by the renovation will be placed in storage. Students, faculty, and staff will still be able to request items.
- The addition of seven new classrooms, including a large lecture hall in the new Illini Hall. All undergraduate advising for the departments of Mathematics and Statistics will be located in a new student-centered service area in Altgeld.

Architects are now creating detailed blueprints for the project. The project calls for the construction of a new building on the site of Illini Hall by 2023 and the renovation of Altgeld Hall by 2025.

Support for the project is coming from a mix of state funds, private and corporate donors, and campus funds. Naming opportunities exist for several spaces in the new building and Altgeld Hall. See more at [altgeldillini.illinois.edu](http://altgeldillini.illinois.edu).

By Dave Evensen

# How the George Floyd protests can lead to change



A Q&A with **Kevin Mumford**, professor of history at Illinois, and author of the book, “Newark: A History of Race, Rights, and Riots in America.”

## How do the George Floyd protests compare to other protests in history?

The riots that most people remember or learned about in civics or history class happened at the end of the civil rights movement, particularly in the North in Newark, Detroit, Milwaukee, and smaller riots. The continuity between those protests and today is that the ignition for those riots were police stops. In Newark (in 1967), a Black taxi driver was arrested for a tail light incident, and he was apparently beaten. And it was a police raid in Detroit that started protests (in 1967).

Some of the same strategies that were circulating in the 1960s are doing so today. In the 1960s, the government of the state of New Jersey talked about outside agitators. They said, “Our citizens are basically happy. All of this is the result of these Black nationalist influences.” And there was never any evidence of that. Federal and state investigations didn’t turn up bands of outsiders.

## What’s a constructive way to move forward from here?

We need to get to the next stage, which involves politics. That doesn’t mean, “Vote for a Democrat.” It means if you care, do something. Run for city council. Ultimately what brought

change in the 1960s protests was more elections of Black candidates in the next round of elections. We began to see African-American mayors for the first time in Gary, Newark, Detroit, and eventually in New York and Los Angeles. Historians argue that Richard Nixon was in for a very tight race in 1968, but he was able to use the race card in different ways, and his rhetoric of law and order and silent majority appealed to a lot of swing voters who were misunderstood or who were taken aback by the riots. I fear that the same thing will happen again—that a couple months from now the riots will be remembered as an act of self-destruction and an act of violence.

## How do you think change can be approached on campus?

I truly believe that the students on campus are a generation ahead of the power holders on campus in thinking about race. To the students I would say, “Don’t come back to campus and think that you have something to learn; you have something to teach.” ■

By Therese Pokorney



# The growing success of DATATHON

## Third annual competition exposes students to data science, industry professionals, and a 36-hour question

The numbers are in from the third annual Datathon at Illinois, and the competitive event to expose students to real-world problem solving in analytics is a growing success.

**Divij Ranjan**, president of the Illini Statistics Club, which hosted the third annual Datathon event with Synchrony, a premier consumer financial services company, said that a record 350 students participated in the competition this year.

Participants in the event, which, in addition to Synchrony, was co-sponsored by John Deere, Sandia National Laboratories, Procter & Gamble, Microsoft, and State Farm, were given geographic information system data to solve a marketing challenge aimed at helping small and medium-sized business. They had 36 hours to create a 2-minute video pitch, a presentation of their recommendations, and an analytics model to support their conclusions.

Their presentations were scored by a panel of judges who included U of I faculty and representatives from corporate sponsors.

**Ujjval Patel**, vice president of the Synchrony Emerging Tech Center at Illinois, said a key component of Datathon is that students

received guidance to help them think like data scientists. Synchrony and Illini Statistics Club provided students with software training, analytics libraries, and open source toolkits prior to the competition. Professionals with the corporate sponsors served as mentors for student teams during the challenge, and Microsoft Corporation provided cloud computing space through the Azure Education Hub to provide students with a virtual workspace.

**Anthony Lee**, a junior in statistics, participated for the first time last year and loved it so much that he decided to become a board member to help plan this year’s event. He said that the Datathon presents students with data that isn’t cleaned or sorted in any way—in the same way that he anticipates they will encounter real-world problems in their careers.

“This leads to students having to use a different approach than what they do in class, which always leads to a great learning atmosphere,” he said. ■

By Therese Pokorney



## College of LAS expands need-based scholarship offerings

New LAS Morrill Scholarships and an expanded Lincoln Scholars Initiative will assist students

The College of LAS is creating a new scholarship program, and expanding an already existing program, to significantly increase the number of need-based scholarships for students from Illinois to study liberal arts and sciences.

The new scholarship, called the LAS Morrill Scholarship, will offer \$4,000 per year (renewable for up to four years) to academically strong students whose family incomes sit immediately above the cutoff for Illinois Commitment, the financial aid package which provides free tuition to students whose annual family incomes are at or below \$67,100.

Additionally, the college is doubling the number of scholarships offered through the successful Lincoln Scholar Initiative, which provides \$5,000 per year (renewable for up to four years) to academically strong students from Illinois with financial need. The Lincoln Scholars Initiative began providing scholarships in 2012.

In total, the college named 70 Morrill Scholars and 30 Lincoln Scholars for Fall 2020. Recipients were selected by financial aid officers, who notified admitted students prior to the admission acceptance deadline so they could factor the scholarships into their decision whether to attend Illinois.

**Barbara Hancin-Bhatt**, associate dean for student academic affairs in the College of LAS, said that the LAS Morrill Scholarships have been made available to students of families whose incomes fall between \$67,101 and \$90,000. She added that the LAS Morrill Scholarships are eligible to both incoming first-year students and transfer students; the Lincoln Scholars Initiative scholarships are eligible to incoming first-year students.

Over the years, donors have provided significant support for the Lincoln Scholars Initiative. ■

By Dave Evensen



## NEW CLASS FOR HUMANITIES MAJORS PROVIDES A DEEPER LOOK AT CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Students adjust during COVID-19 pandemic to maintain experiential learning

A new class called Careers for Humanities Majors is helping students explore job opportunities and develop skills for starting a new career.

As part of HUM 275, students work on resumes and cover letters, take field trips to local organizations and businesses, practice networking with professionals, and hear from speakers working in different industries who graduated with humanities degrees.

“It’s clear that students in humanities benefit from guidance and thinking broadly about those skills and learning how the skills connect to the workplace,” said **Kirstin Wilcox**, the course’s instructor and director of the newly created Humanities Professional Resource Center.

This past spring the course pivoted to an online format, in keeping with the University response to COVID-19. Invited speakers shared advice with students in weekly Zoom meetings, and students shared career strategies on an online discussion board, in addition to completing their career planning assignments.

They listened to speakers such as Laurel Straub, an assistant vice president at State Farm, visited employers, and received job application advice from a panel of human resource professionals.

Class activities can help students understand what career paths they’re interested in and prepare them to interact in a professional environment. The class was made up of juniors and seniors from many humanities majors. **Stanley Smith**, who majors in history and linguistics, said the best part of HUM 275 was one-on-one career coaching with Wilcox.

“In taking HUM 275, resources which had been on the peripheral were now going to be in the epicenter for me,” Smith said.

After a pilot class last fall, the course will continue to be offered every semester as a two credit hour class. Wilcox welcomes speakers to talk to her class, and prospective speakers can contact her at [kwilcox@illinois.edu](mailto:kwilcox@illinois.edu). ■

By Heather Schlitz and Dave Evensen



# The politics of sleeping

Studies show how biology and inheritable traits could affect voting



**We'd all like to think we're rational beings** who arrive at our political views strictly through logic. That anyone faced with the same obvious facts would reach the same obvious conclusion. But according to **Aleksander Ksiazkiewicz**, professor of political science, that might not be the case.

"It turns out that political attitudes and behaviors have a heritable component," said Ksiazkiewicz. "It doesn't mean that they're determined by genes, but it does mean that they're influenced by them." How we're influenced and to what degree is at the heart of a relatively new interdisciplinary study of biology and political science that could transform the way modern campaigns are conducted.

Ksiazkiewicz was just entering grad school in 2008 when the Carl R. Woese Institute for Genomic Biology at the University of Illinois hosted a conference that marked a key moment in the development of the field. For two days, experts in biology, neuroscience, and other areas explored a "new paradigm linking political science with genomic and neuroscientific research" in an event billed as the "first of its kind."

Two years later, **Jeffery Mondak**, a political science professor at Illinois, published a book linking personality traits with political behavior. Extroverts, he found, were more likely to attend rallies but no more likely to put campaign stickers on their cars. Those

who ranked high in conscientiousness were more likely to show up for jury duty, but—perhaps surprisingly—less likely to vote.

To foster more interdisciplinary explorations like these, the Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities (now Humanities Research Institute) created an undergraduate certificate in bio-humanities, a thematic cluster of courses that give students the opportunity to understand how biology, environment, culture, and politics shape each other. As part of that certificate, **Sam Frost**, a professor in the departments of Political Science and Gender & Women's Studies, teaches a course that helps students understand how dialogue between diverse fields can create a broader understanding of the socio-political and ethical challenges we face today.

Ksiazkiewicz believes there's a lot to be gained by opening these doors between worlds. In a previous study he explored a possible genetic link between religiosity and political attitudes. Now, he's taking his research in a new direction, exploring how our time-of-sleep preference—or chronotype—affects our political leanings.

In a series of surveys conducted mostly in the United States, Ksiazkiewicz used questionnaires to determine the sleep preference of participants and asked them to rank themselves as either liberal or conservative. "The expectation was that people who are morning types would be more politically conservative, which is what I ended up finding," said Ksiazkiewicz. What did surprise him, however, was how little personality factors like openness

and conscientiousness seemed to play a role.

"My hypothesis going in was clearly these personality traits are going to account for any relationship that exists with ideology—and they don't at all," he said.

So, if personality doesn't explain the connection, what does? It's possible that there's an environmental component, said Ksiazkiewicz. For example, cities, which tend to have more liberal voters, tend to have more light pollution and a population that stays up later than those in rural areas. However, he believes the more interesting explanation could involve something called motivated social cognition theory, which is the idea that we all have predispositions that nudge us in a certain way. If people are more conscientious and like order in their life, for example, there's a natural nudge toward a conservative orientation, which favors order—and possibly a more disciplined sleep routine.

"If you're a morning type, you look at society and you say, 'Yeah, this makes sense. People aren't getting up early because, you know, they're lazy or have bad character,'" Ksiazkiewicz said. "So they have this nudge towards the status quo, while people who are evening types may have the opposite sort of tendency to say, 'Why do people keep making me get up earlier than I want to wake up? What is wrong with society?'"

Of course, Ksiazkiewicz concedes things could just as easily go the opposite way. If being a "morning person" is seen as being a desirable trait, people who prefer order may change their sleep

schedule to conform to norms, whereas people who are more liberal may be less likely to buy into that idea.

Regardless of the reason, understanding the connection between sleep preference and politics could be important for everyone from the candidates attempting to change our opinions to the pollsters who track them. If you're a media buyer, for example, knowing when people are most persuadable could provide a valuable edge in an era when millions of dollars are spent and campaigns are won on the thinnest of margins.

Of course, in a time when political opinions are increasingly polarized, it could also offer something that's even harder to find than toilet paper in a pandemic—a little human understanding.

"Understanding those influences matters, at least for me, because it forces me to have some humility in thinking about political attitudes and that the reason a person is disagreeing with me may not be because they're hardheaded or not listening to the facts, but because they experience the world in a different way—and not just because of their life experiences," said Ksiazkiewicz. "They may physically experience the world in a different way. So, we should think about why people have the views they have. I think that's the broad, philosophical contribution." ■

By John Turner

# A presidential past

Starting with William Howard Taft, several commanders-in-chief (and First Ladies) have visited the University of Illinois before, during, or after their terms

**From witnessing airplanes stuck** in the mud to hearing predictions that Champaign and Urbana would soon unite into one city, the University of Illinois has played host to several memorable presidential visits since the early 1900s.

In fact, more than half of the U.S. presidents elected since 1911 have visited Urbana-Champaign before, during, or after their presidency, with several of them including a swing through the University of Illinois campus on their itineraries. The first sitting president to visit the University of Illinois was **William Howard Taft**, who visited during his presidency in February 1911. According to newspaper reports, the 27th U.S. president spent about two hours on campus, including a

stop to survey the construction site of Lincoln Hall. “Hello, Bill,” one of the workers called out from a window, according to the *Urbana Daily Courier*, to which Taft removed

his hat and returned the greeting. The workers replied with applause and by tossing all of their hats into the air.

Taft also visited Illinois Field to review the student regiment and receive a 21-cannon salute.

“To see so many young men and women preparing themselves to meet the problems of life is indeed a rare pleasure,” Taft said in his address. Interestingly, during his tour, Taft also predicted that the two cities of Champaign and Urbana would someday unite.

It wasn’t until almost 90 years later that another sitting president visited campus. In January 1998, President **Bill Clinton** addressed a full Assembly Hall, where he spoke about the importance of education as well as the need to increase medical and scientific funding. His speech echoed much of the sentiments of the State of the Union address he had made in Washington, D.C., just days earlier.



William Howard Taft



Bill Clinton

What made national headlines, however, wasn’t Clinton’s speech but his exit. Clinton was forced to make an emergency switch from Air Force One to a backup plane upon his departure from Willard Airport,

as Air Force One’s wheel became stuck in mud while it was preparing for takeoff.

The backup plane that Clinton eventually departed on, SAM 26000, transported a president for the last time that day, as it was subsequently placed in the National Museum of the United States Air Force. It had served since the **John F. Kennedy** administration.

Speaking of Kennedy, several future presidents have campaigned on campus before their terms in office. Kennedy visited the Urbana-Champaign community in 1960, weeks before he was elected

president. Upon arriving at Willard Airport, Kennedy traveled through Campus Town in a motorcade, greeted by thousands of spectators. An estimated 10,000 spectators packed the Main Quad to hear his speech, which was the first political speech allowed on the campus since the 1870s.

Kennedy also visited campus in 1957. A senator from Massachusetts at the time, Kennedy gave an address entitled ‘Politics: Our Most Neglected Profession’ at the university’s senior convocation in Urbana.



John F. Kennedy

**Jimmy Carter**, the nation’s 39th president, visited campus in 1976, prior to his election, and spoke to 2,000 students at the Auditorium (now called Foellinger Auditorium). He promised a blanket pardon to those who deserted the military during the Vietnam War, according to Illinois Public Media’s Illinois Pioneers program.



Barack Obama

Only one U.S. president visited campus after his term, and that’s **Barack Obama**, who visited campus in September 2018. Obama spoke in Foellinger Auditorium, where he urged students to vote and accepted the Paul H.

Douglas Award for Ethics in Government from the Institute of Government and Public Affairs. Obama also visited the Champaign-Urbana community prior to his presidency, when he was a U.S. senator and an Illinois state senator.

A few First Ladies have also visited campus. **Eleanor Roosevelt**, the wife of Franklin D. Roosevelt, who came to campus in 1942, one year after the Illini Union was opened. She cut the cake at a dedication ceremony. In 1994, Hillary Clinton delivered the university commencement address. Michelle Obama is also said to have visited the Champaign-Urbana community while her husband campaigned.

There have been several presidential visits to Champaign-Urbana when the president never set foot on campus, but they no doubt had an impact on the U of I. In 1976, President **Gerald Ford** spoke at Centennial High School in Champaign. He never came to the U of I campus, though he was greeted by U of I President **John Corbally** at Willard Airport (which is owned and operated by the U of I).

Other presidents to visit the twin cities include **Harry Truman**, who came to town on whistle stop tours in 1948 and 1952, with his latter visit generating a crowd so large at the train depot that spectators were climbing trees to get a glimpse

of him. Shortly after that, **Dwight Eisenhower**, in the midst of his “I Like Ike” campaign, also stopped in Champaign during a whistle stop tour.

**Theodore Roosevelt**, the nation’s 26th president, visited Champaign-Urbana in April 1912, some three years after the end of his presidency. He was running for a third term in office as a member of the Progressive Party, and he addressed a crowd of thousands at West Side Park.

Roosevelt had planned to return to Champaign-Urbana in October of that year, but one day before his scheduled visit he was shot in Milwaukee. He famously delivered his speech in Wisconsin despite the wound, even as blood stained his shirt. The wound prevented him from visiting Champaign-Urbana the next day, however.

Of all the presidential visitors to Champaign-Urbana, the one who stayed the longest was **Abraham Lincoln**. This occurred before his presidency, when he was a lawyer on the 8th Judicial Circuit. For about 20 years he practiced law in the region, from defending accused criminals to representing

the interests of the Illinois Central Railroad at the Urbana courthouse. In the late 1850s, he campaigned in Champaign County during his famous senatorial race against **Stephen Douglas**. In 1857, he sat for a portrait in Urbana by **Samuel G. Alschuler**, an immigrant from Bavaria who operated a photo-gallery in Urbana.



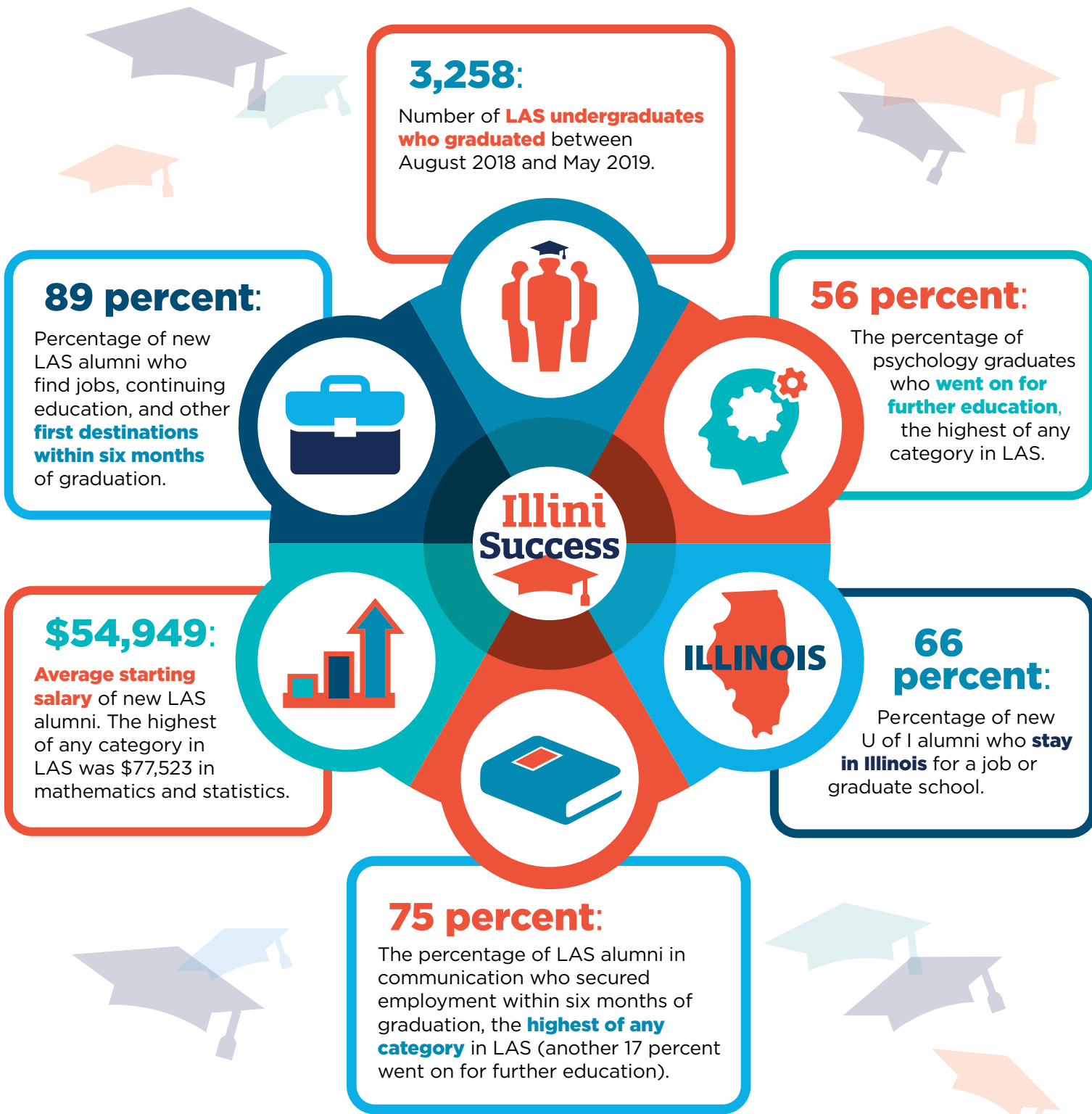
Eleanor Roosevelt

Given that his time in Urbana-Champaign preceded the University of Illinois, there is no known connection between Lincoln and the university other than his signing of the Morrill Act in 1862 that allowed for the creation of land-grant institutions such as the U of I. There’s also that place that President Taft discovered in 1911: Lincoln Hall. ■

By Kimberly Wilson and Dave Evensen

Images of Taft, Clinton, and Roosevelt are courtesy of University of Illinois Archives. Kennedy image copyright of Illini Media/1961 Illio. Obama image by L. Brian Stauffer.)

The University of Illinois recently completed its annual **Illini Success** initiative, which tracks\* the career paths of undergraduates within six months of graduation.



\*These numbers reflect LAS undergraduates who graduated between August 2018 and May 2019. Through direct surveys, employer and college reports, the National Student Clearinghouse, and LinkedIn, the U of I gathered data on about 72 percent of students who graduated in that time period.

# LEARN FROM LAS ALUMNI

The LAS alumni community is 176,000 strong and filled with experts in virtually every field. We sat down with a few of them to pick their brain about finding success in the professional world.



**Jaylin McClinton**  
Community organizer, Obama Foundation  
BA, '16, political science, African-American studies

“Politics, government, and the non-profit world in my experience have been fueled by relationships...Find genuine touchpoints to connect with people you are interested in.”



**Ryan Ross**  
Curator, Richmond Family Welcome Gallery for the University of Illinois Alumni Association  
BA, '08, English; MA, '10, library and information science

“Storytelling is how we make sense of the world. It conveys purpose, sparks empathy, and opens dialogues that connect us with other people.”



**Erika Jones**  
Leadership development facilitator, United Airlines  
BA, '96, humanities

“If we can proactively come to our relationships with flexibility, empathy, and an eye towards good communication, we can cultivate our own success.”

To watch the full videos, go to [las.illinois.edu/alumni/experts](http://las.illinois.edu/alumni/experts).

## ENGAGE AND CELEBRATE ALUMNI

The **LAS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION** is essential to connecting alumni with the College of LAS. Consider applying for the alumni council, or nominate an inspiring individual for an alumni award. [go.las.illinois.edu/alumni-volunteer20](http://go.las.illinois.edu/alumni-volunteer20)

## APPLY TO THE COLLEGE OF LAS

Illinois is now accepting undergraduate applications. Students in LAS benefit from:

- **Opportunity:** More than 70 majors, 60 minors, and numerous certificates.
- **Diversity and inclusion:** LAS is the most diverse college on campus, with a strong commitment to inclusivity.
- **Hands-on learning:** Undergraduate research, out-of-classroom experiences, and global learning opportunities.
- **Support:** Strong honors programs, advising services, and leadership opportunities.

Learn more about the College of LAS and apply at: [go.las.illinois.edu/apply](http://go.las.illinois.edu/apply)



### Connect with us!

Keep up with the latest news from the College of LAS by following us on Twitter. [twitter.com/LASillinois](https://twitter.com/LASillinois)





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# LAS Impact 2020

## Celebrate the impact of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences!

**Monday, Oct. 26:**

**LAS Innovation:** Research and innovation in the college

**Tuesday, Oct. 27:**

**LAS Humanities:** showcasing how humanities make a difference

**Wednesday, Oct. 28:**

**LAS students:** research, outreach, activism, and scholarships

**Thursday, Oct. 29:**

**LAS alumni:** alumni awards, volunteer opportunities, and careers

**Friday, Oct. 30:**

**Uniquely LAS:** celebrating some of the college's most interesting places and programs

Visit [go.las.illinois.edu/LASImpact2020](http://go.las.illinois.edu/LASImpact2020) for more information.