

LAS

NEWS

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES | SPRING 2020



VIRTUAL REALITY

**LAS enters a new
dimension of learning**

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On the cover: Anthropology professor Laura Shackelford and computer science graduate student/project manager Cameron Merrill have created a virtual space using gaming technology to allow students to explore, examine, and actually perform a virtual excavation using all the techniques that would be used in the field. (Photo illustration by Fred Zwicky.)



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GREETINGS FROM THE

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Greetings alumni and friends,

As dean of the College of LAS, I have the privilege of working with some of the most talented people on campus. One of the most rewarding aspects of my job, however, has to do with the people who are not yet on campus. Few things are more meaningful than finding ways to bring to campus promising students who otherwise would have lacked the resources to make the leap to college.

We do this through scholarships, and I'm proud to say that we have expanded key programs to offer financial assistance to students in LAS. We have created a new need-based scholarship, named the LAS Morrill Scholarship, to reflect our roots as a land grant university that was founded after the Morrill Act of 1862. This new scholarship complements our campus's Illinois Commitment program, which provides support to families with an annual income of under \$67,000. The LAS Morrill Scholarship will provide \$4,000 per year, renewable for up to four years, to students of Illinois families whose incomes narrowly miss the cutoff for Illinois Commitment.

We are also expanding the Lincoln Scholars Initiative, which offers \$5,000 per year to academically strong admitted Illinois residents with financial need. Launched in 2012 in conjunction with the renovation of Lincoln Hall, and supported by hundreds of donors so far, this is the college's largest scholarship program. Almost 100 LAS students have graduated or are currently enrolled at Illinois with help from the Lincoln Scholars Initiative, and Lincoln Scholar alumni have gone on to a variety of fields, from medicine to chemical engineering and the teaching of English. We have strong incentive to make this program even more robust.

Between the LAS Morrill Scholarship and the Lincoln Scholars Initiative, we will be providing 100 need-based scholarships to Illinois students to study liberal arts and sciences at U of I in Fall 2020. This is an unprecedented number of need-based scholarships offered by the college. You can learn more about the scholarships and make a contribution at go.las.illinois.edu/scholarships20. Opening doors to a brighter future is important, fulfilling, and at the heart of what we stand for.

With best wishes,

Feng Sheng Hu,
Harry E. Preble Dean of the College of LAS

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First came calc, then came marriage To **Betsy** (BS, '12, mathematics) and **Nathan Alderman** (BS, '12, engineering mechanics), Altgeld Hall is not only where they learned mathematics, but where they met, and where Nathan proposed to Betsy. Read their Altgeld love story at go.las.illinois.edu/AltgeldLoveStory. ■

Faculty and staff honored

A partial list of faculty honors this past summer and fall include:

- **University Scholars:** **Brian Allan**, entomology, and **Antony Augoustakis**, classics.
- **iCON Innovator Award:** **Martin Burke**, chemistry.
- **Department of Energy Early Career Research Program:** **David Flaherty**, chemical and biomolecular engineering.
- **Presidential Early Career Award:** **Prashant Jain**, chemistry, and **Daniel Llano**, molecular and integrative physiology.
- **National Center for Supercomputing Applications Fellows:** **Rini Mehta**, comparative and world literature and religion, **Diwakar Shukla**, chemical and biomolecular engineering, and **Kevin Leicht**, sociology.
- **President's Executive Leadership Program Fellows:** **Wendy Heller**, psychology, and **Mariselle Melendez**, Spanish and Portuguese.
- **Campus Distinguished Promotion Awards:** **Lisa Guntzviller**, communication; **Vera (Mi Kyoung) Hur**, mathematics; **Auinash Kalsotra**, biochemistry; **Heidemarie Laurent**, psychology; **Supriya Prasanth**, cellular and developmental biology; and **Francois Proulx**, French and Italian.
- **Outstanding Young Researcher Award, International Chinese Statistical Association:** **Xiaohui Chen**, statistics.

See a complete list of faculty honors at go.las.illinois.edu/honors-spring20magazine. ■



The anemonefish can start out as a male, but can switch to female. Psychology professor **Justin Rhodes** and his colleagues found that the male-to-female sex-change occurs first in the fish's brain and only later involves the gonads. ■

Campus research partnership grows to include social and behavioral sciences



A longstanding partnership between OSF HealthCare and Grainger College of Engineering for joint research to revolutionize clinical simulation, health care systems, and medical education has expanded

to include strength and insight from the Center for Social and Behavioral Science. Jump ARCHES (Applied Research for Community Health through Engineering and Simulation) has received \$112.5 million in endowment support. ■

Alumni establish Pahre Fund to support undergraduate students



At the Department of Political Science's first ever alumni awards ceremony in 2019, an alumni board announced the creation of the Pahre Fund to benefit undergraduate students. It was established in honor of professor Robert Pahre, who designated its use. ■

James Bier (MS, '57, geography), 92, creator and designer of the gardens at U of I's Japan House, has been honored for his continuing efforts to maintain and grow the popular destination. ■



The mythic Mississippi



Helaine Silverman, professor of anthropology, is leading a project called "The Mythic Mississippi: I-Heritage as Public Engagement and Economic and Social Development" to promote new heritage tourism in southern Illinois. The project seeks

to develop themed tourism trails such as coal heritage, African American heritage, French Colonial heritage, and Mormon heritage. ■

Students team with companies and alumni for new campus event

Technological advancements in recent years have brought rapid innovation to many fields, including the ways that risk is calculated.

That's why members of the **Actuarial Science Club at Illinois** conducted the InsureTech and Actuarial Modernization Symposium. The event, sponsored by Deloitte and the Casualty Actuarial Society, featured presentations from five industry professionals and detailed the careers of actuaries. ■



Illinois launches new round of Investment for Growth projects

Four projects in the College of LAS will receive funding through the **Investment for Growth** program to benefit institutional excellence, education, and research. This year's projects include renovating the Plant Sciences Laboratory, establishing online master's degree programs in the School of Earth, Society, & Environment, a professional master's program in chemical engineering and professional development in the Department of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, and enhancing research and education in microbial sciences. ■



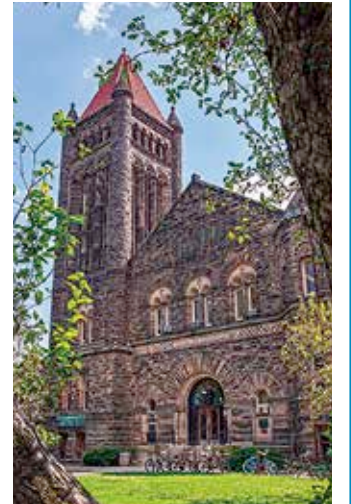
The University of Illinois celebrated the first ever **Illini Fest** in Millennium Park in Chicago in July 2019. The well-attended event included multiple interactive and educational booths from the College of LAS. There are more than 58,000 LAS alumni in Chicago. Experience the sights and sounds at go.las.illinois.edu/illinifest19-video. ■



Kirstin Wilcox, director of the newly created Humanities Professional Resource Center, speaks with students at the first ever Humanities Expo, where students learned about opportunities available to students interested in humanities disciplines. ■

Altgeld and Illini Hall Project enters new design phase

The University of Illinois has taken a significant step toward breaking ground on the **Altgeld and Illini Hall Project**, with architects recently submitting conceptual designs for the plan to modernize and expand spaces devoted to data science and other mathematical sciences. A schematic design will be submitted to the Board of Trustees this month. Once the design is approved, architects will create more detailed construction blueprints. ■



Professor appointed chair of Census committee

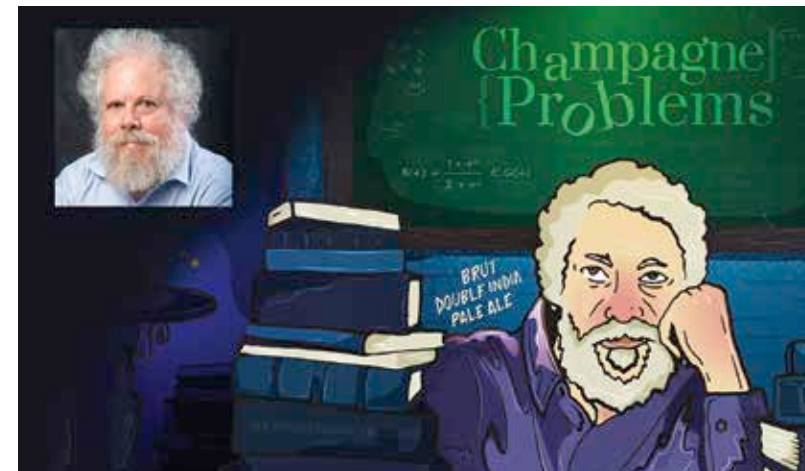


Julie Dowling, professor of Latino/Latina studies, has been appointed chair of the Census Bureau's National Advisory Committee. The committee advises the U.S. Census Bureau on topics such as hard-to-count populations, race and ethnicity, language, aging populations, American Indian and Alaska Native tribal considerations, and new immigrant populations. ■

Students awarded Boren scholarships

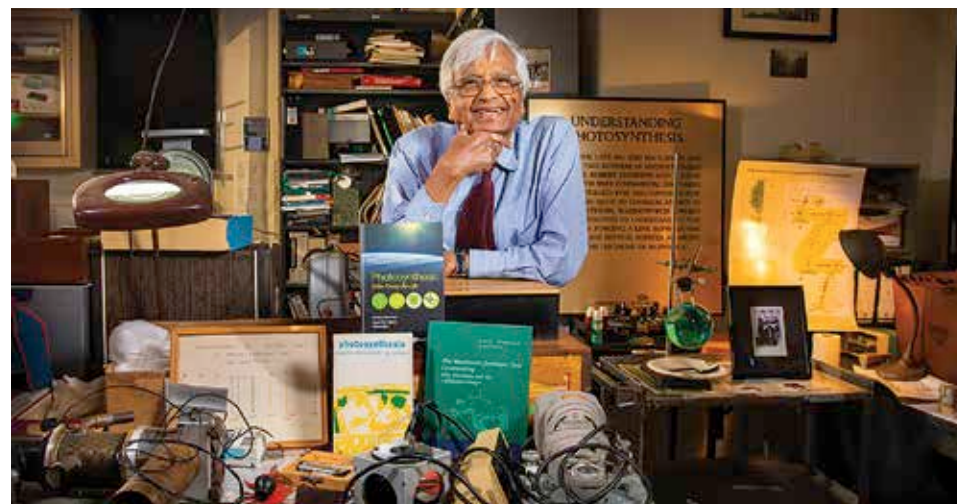


University of Illinois undergraduates **Eddy Almonord** (left) and **Barghav Sivaguru** are among 244 students nationwide awarded David L. Boren Scholarships. Almonord and Sivaguru, who both study political science and communication, are using the scholarships to study at Qasid Institute in Amman, Jordan. ■



The likeness of mathematics professor **Bruce Reznick** has been featured on the label of an IPA beer brewed in Virginia. He was the inspiration for Champion Brewing Company's operations manager, who heard of Reznick's partial solution for the so-called Champagne Problem, a famous mathematical formula (and the name of the beer). *Image courtesy of Champion Brewing Company.* ■

Plant biology professor emeritus **Govindjee**, who has made key contributions to the scientific understanding of photosynthesis, is also an archivist and historian of photosynthesis research, as demonstrated by the extensive collections in his office. ■



Faculty receive Public Voices Fellowship



Twenty faculty members across the University of Illinois System, including seven in the College of LAS, are taking advantage of a new program to help spread their ideas more effectively in the greater public conversation. The **Public Voices Fellowship** allows professors to participate in a series of day-long meetings, receive one-on-one coaching from journalists, and interact with influential thinkers and policymakers. ■

Patterns of the Pacific



What happens in the tropical Pacific Ocean doesn't stay in the tropical Pacific. That's how **Jessica Conroy**, professor in the Department of Geology and Department of Plant Biology, explains the significance of her upcoming fieldwork in the Galápagos Islands and on the islands of Palau. Through a CAREER Award from the National Science Foundation, she will be investigating long-term patterns of the water cycle in the tropical Pacific. ■

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign welcomed a record-breaking freshman class this past fall. In the College of LAS, the freshman fall enrollment stood at 2,411, the highest new number of freshmen in more than a decade. The **Class of 2023** is also the most diverse class in history, with 23.2 percent coming from underrepresented backgrounds, and it's the first to have an average ACT over 29. About 73 percent of the students come from Illinois. ■



Coaching for Careers

Students in any field of study wonder how their degrees will help them after graduation. Finding the right person for advice may be an additional struggle. That's why the **College of Liberal Arts & Sciences** and **The Career Center** have developed a career coaching program aimed at helping academic advisors impart career advice to students. A 10-week pilot program was so successful that they've decided to conduct more program cohorts. ■



"We need to do our share"



From growing up on a farm in northern Iowa without indoor plumbing to graduating debt free with a doctoral degree at age 27, the late **Ken Andersen** knew the financial struggles endured by many college students who pursue higher education. That's why, a few months prior to his death in January 2020, the professor emeritus at the University of Illinois created a new scholarship fund to support current students in the Department of Communication. ■

Rethinking doctoral education



Three departments in the College of LAS—**English, history, and mathematics**—are part of a new nationwide initiative to change the culture surrounding doctoral education and career pathways. Led by the Association of American Universities (AAU), the PhD Education Initiative promotes student-centered doctoral education that will make the full range of career pathways available to PhD graduates more visible, valued, and viable. ■

Astronomy and physics professor **Charles Gammie** is one of the scientists honored with the 2020 Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics. Gammie headed the theory working group for the EHT Project that produced the first image of a black hole. Gammie was also named on the Bloomberg 50 list. ■



Middle school girls pose for a photo with a scientist (who joined them via Skype) at a summer geoscience camp for girls organized by doctoral students in the **School of Earth, Society, and Environment**. (Photo courtesy of *Aida Guhlincozzi* and *Julia Cisneros*.) See more summer camps here go.las.illinois.edu/summercamps20. ■



A new outreach program between **Bruce Fouke**, professor of geology and microbiology, and **Joseph L. Cross**, a research associate and postdoctoral fellow at the Carl R. Woese Institute for Genomic Biology, allows athletes at U of I summer sports camps to visit campus science facilities. ■

Minimum wage effective at increasing the incomes of older workers



A new paper co-written by **Mark Borgschulte**, professor of economics, said the minimum wage is an effective tool to increase the incomes of older workers who are at or near retirement and—contrary to the notion that higher minimum wages force earlier retirements—has no discernible impact on decisions to retire early. ■

History professor earns named position



Kristin Lee Hoganson (second from left in photo), a professor of history at Illinois since 2000, has been named the Stanley S. Stroup Professor of United States History. The position is named after Stanley Stroup (BA, '66, history) who retired as executive vice president and general counsel of Wells Fargo & Company. Hoganson's research focuses on U.S. foreign relations history and the history of the U.S. empire from the 19th century through World War I. She has also written about masculinity and policymaking, trade, and consumption. ■



BIG ACHIEVEMENTS, BIG HEARTS

The latest LAS alumni award winners all have something in common: giving back

When Billy Dec wanted to come to Illinois in 1991, he couldn't afford it, so he drove down from Chicago to visit the financial aid office. A staff member noticed him looking distraught, and over the next few days this person walked him through the process of finding money to go to school.

"I owe everything to that financial aid office," he said.

Now, Dec has received the LAS Alumni Achievement Award, as one of seven people being honored with LAS alumni awards during Homecoming 2019. Like Dec, all of the winners have found ways to share and grow the compassion that was demonstrated to them—and that they exhibited—during their days at Illinois.



Howard Aizenstein
(BS, '86, mathematics; MS, '88; PhD, '93, computer science; MD '95)

LAS ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Amyloid plaque and tangles have long been identified as indicators of Alzheimer's disease, but Howard Aizenstein, a psychiatrist and director of the University of Pittsburgh's

Geriatric Psychiatry Neuroimaging Lab, is unraveling the mystery of how they act in the brain.

Aizenstein and his colleagues were among the first to find a way to measure amyloid plaque in living patients, discovering that 20 percent of adults with no signs of dementia surprisingly had a significant amount of amyloid plaque in the brain.

Aizenstein's team also demonstrated that vascular changes in the brain in older adults can contribute to depression. They discovered a method (now in a confirmatory study) to use functional MRI to predict which patients will respond to antidepressants.



John Coady
(BA, '74, political science)

LAS DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

When John Coady was a junior at Illinois, he ran for—and lost—a student seat on the University of Illinois Board of Trustees. He vowed to never be outworked again in a campaign, and he went on to a distinguished career as circuit judge in the nine-county Fourth Judicial District of Illinois.

Coady also developed a distinguished reputation for service,

mentoring students interviewing for scholarships, starting a girls YMCA soccer program, and chairing the Christian County Prevention Coalition.

The Department of Political Science appointed him to its charter Board of Visitors in 2010, and he served as president of the LAS Alumni Association Board from 2015 to 2017. He and his wife, Kathy, also created a program welcoming high school seniors accepted at Illinois.



Billy Dec
(BA, '95, economics)

LAS ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

When two of his family's elders passed away in 2018, Billy Dec realized his grandmother had only one remaining sister in the Philippines. So he pulled together a film crew, and they traveled to the Philippines to track down family elders and learn their recipes. The result is the PBS documentary, "Food. Roots."

Food and family are at the core of Dec's life, as co-founder of one of the most successful hospitality and entertainment companies in Chicago (and now Nashville)—Rokit Ranch Productions. He appears regularly on TV and radio shows, started his own film company, supports numerous philanthropic causes, won two Midwest Emmys, and was appointed to two task forces by President Obama.

"Some soul searching led me to the fact that I liked to solve problems quickly and make people happy," Dec said.



Hariklia "Lili" Deligianni
(MS, '86; PhD, '88, chemical engineering)

LAS ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

When Hariklia Deligianni was being interviewed for a prestigious research position at IBM, she was told that she could join only if she could solve problems that others said were unsolvable. Naturally, she joined the team.

She and her colleagues introduced electrochemical technology to the development of solder bumps, which ultimately increased the number of microchips that could fit on a silicon wafer, improving performance dramatically and lowering power consumption.

She was also part of a team that used copper wiring to allow current to pass through microchips much faster. This increase in speed has made possible everything from high-speed gaming consoles to smart phones and even neural networks. In recent years, Deligianni has been drawn to new challenges in solar energy and biomedical devices.



Peixin He (PhD, '85, chemistry) and **Xiaoming Chen**

LAS DEAN'S QUADRANGLE AWARD

The year 1980 was a turning point for Peixin He, who came to the University of Illinois as a visiting scholar through the first exchange program between China's Fudan University and Illinois.

He began to do research under chemistry professor Larry Faulkner. Working with Faulkner would change his life and that of his wife, Xiaoming Chen. The research they did in Faulkner's lab helped to launch their careers.

He and Chen went on to build CH Instruments, Inc., a successful electrochemical instrumentation company based in Austin, Texas. They also gave back to Illinois by establishing the Larry R. Faulkner Endowed Chair in Chemistry in 2016. The first person named to the new chair was chemistry professor Catherine Murphy.



Jerrod Henderson
(PhD, '10, chemical engineering)

LAS OUTSTANDING YOUNG ALUMNI AWARD

Jerrod Henderson was a child in North Carolina when a field trip changed his life.

Henderson went to the Black Engineer of the Year Awards and Conference in Baltimore, where he encountered adult engineers who took the students seriously.

"I left the conference saying I wanted to be (a chemical engineer)," he said. Today, Henderson is a chemical engineer, and he also co-founded the St. Elmo Brady STEM Academy—a successful program in two states that mentors African-American, Hispanic, and other underrepresented males in STEM subjects.

Beginning in 2013, Henderson and his co-founder ran the academy at two elementary schools in Champaign before taking the idea to Texas, where Henderson is now an instructional associate professor at the University of Houston.



Alison Kirby (BS, '84, biology)

LAS ALUMNI HUMANITARIAN AWARD

Pediatrician Alison Kirby was practicing medicine in Walla Walla, Washington, when the principal of Lincoln High School, an alternative school, asked her to do free physicals for the school's basketball team.

She was appalled to learn that some of the boys hadn't had physicals since kindergarten. Kirby took action, co-founding a school-based health clinic that helped to turn around both the school and the lives of hundreds of students.

The clinic and school have drawn nationwide attention, being featured in "Paper Tigers," a documentary about Lincoln High School directed by Robert Redford's son, Jamie. The health center became the model for other school-based health centers that expanded to other schools in Walla Walla, including elementary schools, a middle school, and the main high school.

Read full profiles of each winner at go.las.illinois.edu/alumniawards19. ■

By Doug Peterson



Books from LAS



The culture of business, Hitler's first 100 days, the Chickasaw renaissance, and more: Take a look at some of the latest books by LAS faculty.

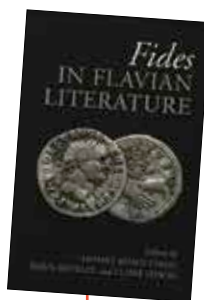
“Ricanness: Enduring Time in Anticolonial Performance,” by **Sandra Ruiz**, Latina/Latino studies and English, argues that Ricanness—a continual performance of bodily endurance against U.S. colonialism through different measures of time—uncovers what’s at stake politically for the often unwanted, anticolonial, racialized, and sexualized enduring body. (Image courtesy of New York University Press.)



“Talking Indian: Identity and Language Revitalization in the Chickasaw Renaissance,” by **Jenny Davis**, anthropology, offers the first book-length ethnography of language revitalization in a U.S. tribe removed from its homelands. (Image courtesy of The University of Arizona Press.)

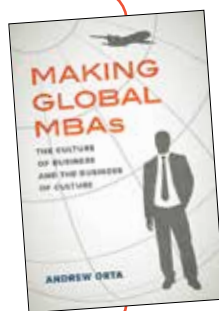


“Going Stealth: Transgender Politics and U.S. Surveillance Practices,” by **Toby Beauchamp**, gender and women’s studies, demonstrates how the enforcement of gender conformity is linked to state surveillance practices that identify threats based on racial, gender, national, and ableist categories of difference. (Image courtesy of Duke University Press.)



“Fides in Flavian Literature,” edited by **Antony Augoustakis**, classics, explores the ideology of “good faith” (fides) during the time of the emperors Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian (69-96 CE), the new imperial dynasty that gained power in the wake of the civil wars of the period. (Image courtesy of University of Toronto Press.)

“Making Global MBAs: The Culture of Business and the Business of Culture” by **Andrew Orta**, anthropology, studies the culture of contemporary business education—in particular, the MBA degree—and how it’s been shaped by the modern global economy. (Image courtesy of University of California Press.)



“Hitler’s First Hundred Days,” by **Peter Fritzsche**, history, provides an unsettling and illuminating history of how Germany’s fractured republic gave way to the Third Reich, from the formation of the Nazi party to the rise of Hitler. (Image courtesy of Basic Books.)



“Black Bourgeois: Class and Sex in the Flesh,” by **Candice Jenkins**, English and African American studies, reminds us that the conflicted relation of the black subject to privilege is not, solely, a recent phenomenon. (Image courtesy of University of Minnesota Press.)



“Language History, Language Change, and Language Relationship,” by (emeritus professor) **Hans Henrich Hock**, linguistics, and **Brian Joseph**, provides answers to questions such as “Why does language change?” and “What are Americans and English ‘one people divided by a common language?’” in a straightforward way, aimed at the non-specialist. (Image courtesy of De Gruyter Mouton.)



CYBER THREATS, COUNTERTERRORISM, AND SHAKESPEARE

Erin Joe’s career in national security requires a mindset that began forming in college

LAS @Work



Erin Joe (BA, '90, English)

is director of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence’s Cyber Threat Intelligence Integration Center, where she leads efforts to analyze and understand cyber threats to the United States. What she learned from studying Hamlet in college has helped guide her career.

What was your career path from college?

(After earning a law degree at Ohio State University) I was an administrative law judge in Texas for state benefits. (Next) I went to FBI headquarters to write policy. I joined the counterterrorism division, where I led a program management function that was responsible for regional counterterrorism investigations. I became a supervisor and then an acting special agent in charge in Salt Lake City. Then I went to Los Angeles, where I was the assistant special agent in charge for intelligence, surveillance, and aviation. I returned to FBI headquarters, where I became a section chief. I was in the director's office working for James Comey, and our job was to do engagement with the federal, state, and local law enforcement communities.

How did being an English major prepare you?

I use my interpersonal skills to get the best outcome and create trusting relationships. You can't really lead until you can do that, and all of those core leadership skills come from a liberal arts background. Keying in on different languages, keying in on misunderstandings, keying in on the way in which people use nonverbal and verbal communication—you get that because you've been analyzing it for years through your liberal arts background. In English, you do character development, you analyze text, you break down that language, the words. I can't tell you how many times we looked at Hamlet. You key in on the things that reveal insight into people, the characters, character development, and what is happening between characters. You analyze that, and soon it just becomes a part of your DNA.

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

Interview by Samantha Boyle

BRIGHT FUTURES

The College of LAS hired 23 new faculty members this academic year. Read on for profiles of a few of them.



ROBERT CARROLL
Department of Political Science

Robert Carroll began studying political science in college as a “last resort,” he said. Then he thought it was the coolest thing he’d ever seen. He went on to earn a doctoral degree at the University of Rochester, became a visiting fellow at the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame, and earned several teaching awards, fellowships, and grants for his work. At Illinois, Carroll teaches and writes models that include trades, finances, international conflict, and the origin of wars.



AMY HASSINGER
Department of English

Amy Hassinger, a new professor of English, knows that teaching writing and the act of writing complement each other very well. She is the author of three award winning novels—“Nina: Adolescence” (2003), “The Priest’s Madonna” (2006), and “After the Dam” (2016)—and she also has 15 years of teaching experience at the University of Nebraska and two at Illinois as a lecturer. “My own immersion in the creative process and its challenges deeply informs the way I read my students’ work and interact with them,” Hassinger said.



KOHEI KISHIDA
Department of Philosophy

What’s at the leading edge of the computer revolution? To Kohei Kishida, an expert in quantum computing, it’s the ancient methods of philosophy. Kishida earned degrees in philosophy before completing science and math postdocs at Oxford University as well as universities in the Netherlands and Canada. “(Philosophy) is a discipline of methodology, of using your mind to solve a problem when no empirical experiment or mathematical way to solve the problem is available yet,” he said.



ESTHER NGUMBI
Department of Entomology

For Esther Ngumbi, going to college was her solution to feeding her family. She grew up in Kenya, where she saw her parents’ crops destroyed by insects. Ngumbi went on to earn her PhD at Auburn University, becoming the first woman from her home community to earn a doctoral degree. At Illinois, along with teaching, she is trying to find sustainable ways of protecting crops from pests without using fertilizer or pesticides. “Every day I’m excited about work,” she said.

By Therese Pokorney, Heather Schlitz, and Samantha Boyle

For longer profiles and a complete list of new faculty, please visit go.las.illinois.edu/newfaculty-spring20 ■



New Institute launches at Illinois

Illinois Global Institute strengthens international area studies and thematic programs

The University of Illinois has created a new institute within the College of LAS to strengthen research, teaching, and outreach that deepens understanding of cultures and societies around the world.

The Illinois Global Institute (IGI), which launched in August, is home to 10 longstanding international area studies centers and thematic programs.

“The mission of the Illinois Global Institute is to support the range of ways in which students and faculty at the University of Illinois explore globally significant questions and benefit from international collaboration,” said Jerry Dávila, executive director of the IGI.

The centers and programs under IGI include the Center for African Studies; the Center for East Asian & Pacific Studies; the Center for Latin American & Caribbean Studies; the Lemann Center for Brazilian Studies; the Center for South Asian & Middle Eastern Studies; the Russian, East European, & Eurasian Center; the Center for Global Studies; the European Union Center; the Program in Arms Control & Domestic and International Security; and the Women & Gender in Global Perspectives Program.

The centers are home to academic programs and support work across campus, and they raise more than \$2.5 million in grants, gifts, and endowment income that funds faculty research, academic and cultural experiences for students, outreach and public engagement, scholarships, and fellowships. Four are Department of Education National Resource Centers.

Prior to the creation of the IGI, six of the centers and programs were part of the College of LAS; the other four were in Illinois International Programs. In 2018, a task force recommended that the units be brought together.

“Each of these 10 units is world-class in terms of promoting international research, education, and outreach,” said Feng Sheng Hu, the Harry E. Preble Dean of the College of LAS. “Bringing them all together as the Illinois Global Institute will create even more opportunities in our mission to create and educate global citizens.” ■

By Dave Evensen and JoAnne Geigner, Illinois Global Institute

A novel approach to a new career

Alumna Carole Stivers worked as a biochemist in Silicon Valley—and then started anew as a science fiction writer

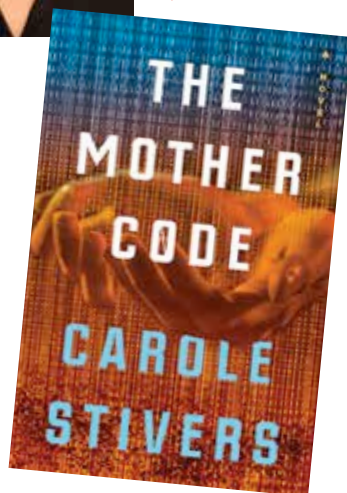
Although she never considered herself a “literary type,” the career of **Carole Stivers** (née Carole Reeve, PhD, '81, biochemistry) has taken a distinctly literary angle: She recently wrote “The Mother Code,” a near-future science fiction novel. Set to hit shelves in May 2020, the novel explores what it means to be a mother when the survival of the human race is at risk.



Publishers Weekly recently listed “The Mother Code” as one of their top 10 science fiction, fantasy, and horror books for Spring 2020.

Stivers spent several years working in biochemistry in the Silicon Valley before retiring from her tech job in late 2017. That’s when she turned her hobby—writing—into a full-time career.

“Since 2003, I’d been intent on writing a novel,” Stivers said. “But along the way I also wrote short stories and took lots of classes and workshops. I started attending writers’ retreats and meeting other writers, and these became my new army of friends. In the end, ‘The Mother Code’ became my training wheels.”



The novel turned out to be more than just a spin, however. Stivers was surprised when literary agents took interest. Then came the biggest surprise of all: “The Mother Code” was optioned for film by Steven Spielberg’s Amblin Partners.

“I’m so gratified that someone of Spielberg’s stature believed in my story,” she said. “And even if he never makes the film, the association of my debut novel with his brand has gone a long way toward bringing attention to the book.”

Stivers recalled that as a graduate student at Illinois, she was cash poor, and the state stipend she received for teaching enabled her to obtain an affordable education with no residual debt. This was just one of the things that inspired her and her husband, Alan (MS, '75; PhD, '79; physics), to set up an endowment that supported their first scholarship recipient this fall.

“I was also inspired by something a former classmate had done, in giving back generously to the U of I,” she said. “I would hope that any recipient of our generosity will also ‘pay it forward,’ allowing others to benefit as we have.” ■

By Therese Pokorney

Realizing the potential of humanities

New Humanities Professional Resource Center helps students focus on life and career plans

For students studying everything from Shakespeare to social issues facing minority populations, an underlying question is this: How will the things I’m learning in class help me in the future? A new center, established by the College of LAS, is designed to help humanities students realize their career possibilities.

The **Humanities Professional Resource Center**, launched last fall with help from the Office of the Provost, is the first center on campus intended specifically to help humanities students land jobs and other opportunities after graduation.

“It’s really targeted toward students in these majors, the particular skills they develop, and the ways they can apply those skills in the world,” said **Kirstin Wilcox**, director of the center.

The center offers one-on-one advising sessions to help humanities students turn the skills they learn in their classes into abilities that they can market to employers. Housed in 105 Gregory Hall, the center also contains a lounge where students can study and quiet office space that students can use for phone and video interviews.

“Students are in demand. We just have to direct them on where to go,” **Julie Higgs**, an advisor at the center, said. “People with humanities degrees have a wealth of knowledge to draw from.”

The center started meeting with students at the start of the current academic year. So far, the students run the gamut from senior humanities majors applying for jobs and editing their resumes to freshmen unsure if they’ve even chosen the right major.

For example, Higgs said that she recently helped a student review her resume and talk about how to network with recruiters. The student attended an information night hosted by Visa at the center, and she was offered an interview the next day for an internship at the company.

The center is a project funded through the Office of the Provost’s Investment for Growth program, an initiative that invests in the university’s missions of education, research, and public engagement. ■

By Heather Schlitz



Issy Marquez, center in black shirt, and Ariana Daneshbodi talk in the Humanities Professional Resource Center. (Photo by Melissa Kuhl.)

LESSONS IN VIRTUAL REALITY

**Classrooms
take a
new route
to learning**

By John Turner

Photo courtesy of Tricia Thrasher.

I'm standing on the edge of a high-rise in the middle of a city. I can hear the car horns, feel the traffic below and—just a few feet away—see the spiraling girder that's my destination. Summoning my courage, I leap—and miss, plummeting rapidly towards the ground. Instead of making impact, however, I merely stumble embarrassingly across a patch of green foam as I take off my helmet and wait for my senses to readjust. Thankfully, nothing is hurt, except my pride. But in a few short minutes, I've learned just how powerful the virtual experience can be.



My encounter took place in the Virtual Reality Lab of the Center for Innovation in Teaching & Learning, where **Jim Wentworth**, assistant director, assures me I'm not the first to struggle with the leap. "I'd say it's about 50/50 on people who just can't do it," he explained. "It triggers all of the fight and flight apparatus we have in our brain. Your heart rate increases, you're off balance, you feel as though this is dangerous. It just works and you can't logically override that."

What I experienced was an impressive demonstration of the latest technology powering innovative learning on campus. In August, a call for virtual and augmented reality seed grants from VR@Illinois netted 63 proposals from 37 departments across campus. Interest within the College of LAS has been especially keen, prompting ATLAS, the unit that oversees the college's technological needs, to create a place where those applications can be explored using high-end computers and 20 Oculus headsets.

And they're not just building up, they're reaching out, creating an online catalog of VR apps and working with faculty to explore the possibilities of the new hardware. From interns to administrators, ATLAS has several people working on different components of VR, including some who are exploring its psychological aspects. The unit has an open call out for any professors interested in trying VR in their classroom, said **Julia Hartman**, ATLAS internship coordinator.



Amy Clay, a teaching professor in French, was one of the first to use the new technology in class, taking students out of the textbook and into a brave new world. It was a program called Mondly that sold her on the possibilities of VR in the classroom. The innovative language-learning software drops students into various digital scenarios, from restaurants to train stations, where they practice their French with virtual characters who ask them questions and provide assistive prompts.

"If you're going to buy something in a store, it gives you different things to say, like 'How much is this?' or 'That's too expensive,' so you can direct the conversation," said Clay. You can even venture a little off-road, asking the clerk for a sweater instead of shirt, for example. "It's smart enough to pick up on that sort of thing." It's a great way for students, especially those who may be shy, to practice pronunciation without the fear of getting it wrong in open class.

Her other go-to program is Wander. Using 360 degree images from Google Maps, Wander allows up to eight students to create avatars and explore real-world locations together. "When I tried Wander, I was blown away, because you look around and you feel like you're in a space that you're not in—and it's real," said Clay. With Wander, students can take their classmates on guided tours of their hometown in French or explore cities where LAS offers study abroad programs, providing a small taste of what they might expect.

While both programs are useful, Clay said teachers should always critically examine any new tool they bring into the classroom. Mondly, for example, has useful design features for task-based language learning, but it wasn't built for the classroom, which means it has its limitations. Clay is hoping to change that with help from **Dan Cermak**, a visiting lecturer and former general manager of Deep Silver Volition.

The two met last spring at a symposium provided by Playful by Design, a network of Illinois faculty, staff, and others seeking to enhance learning by exploring the intersection of game design, technology, and playful pedagogies in the classroom. The organization includes many individuals from LAS and is sponsored by the Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities.

At the symposium, Cermak, who is co-teaching a VR class in computer science, offered his students' services to anyone



A student using virtual reality to learn French views his avatar and those in the rest of his group while practicing speaking with them. (Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Innes, I-STEM Education Initiative.)



Students in a French 205 class took part in a study by graduate student Tricia Thrasher to learn how VR technology can reduce anxiety while enhancing learning. (Photo courtesy of Tricia Thrasher.)

who was interested, and Clay took him up on his offer.

"They're building a world where the interactions are meant to be pedagogical, with support systems built in," said Clay, adding that the program is set in 1960s France, so students can't rely on their phones—not that she has a problem with smartphones. In fact, for one of the early test subjects, they provided an unexpected learning opportunity.

Vignesh Sella, an aerospace engineering student, was virtually exploring a city in France when he spotted someone holding a sign that said "add me in Snapchat." He did, and before the period was over, he was practicing his French with a native speaker.

Sella called the VR experiment one of the highlights of his learning experience, adding that it enhanced what he was already learning from Clay. "For instance, when we were talking about the suburbs, the connotation of suburbs in the U.S. is very different to what it is in France. We got to see exactly what she meant because we could see how it looks."



Laura Shackelford, professor of anthropology, knows the challenges of creating course-specific software. In 2019, she debuted a virtual archaeology course, called Anthropology 399, which enables students to go on a virtual dig. Funded by a two-year, \$500,000 grant from the National Science Foundation, the Virtual

Archaeology program is game-changing for two reasons. First, it makes archeology accessible to some who may not have considered it before, including those with disabilities. And second, it eliminates a major hurdle for many students—the need to attend a field school, which can cost upwards of \$5,000. "This puts a socioeconomic barrier at even entering our discipline, particularly for nontraditional students and students from lower income households," said Shackelford.

Through Virtual Archaeology, students can now gain that experience in a stunning simulation created by **Cameron Merrill**, an Illinois computer science graduate student. Using headsets and game controllers, students enter a vast, torch-lit cave, where they lay out excavation grids, use ground-penetrating radar, and recover items to identify. There's even a virtual lab where students identify pollen extracted from soil samples. Shackelford is currently using what

(continued on next page)

she learned there to help chemistry professors create a replica of the Chem 101 and 102 labs to prep students before they begin class.

“The most important thing for me as a teacher is the effectiveness of the information delivery,” said Shackelford. “We have been collecting qualitative and quantitative data on the efficacy of using VR to teach archaeology, and so far the data is incredibly positive.” To prove the point, she invited students on a real-world excavation after the course, where they were tasked with identifying, mapping, and recovering artifacts. “They were able to accomplish all of these tasks without instruction and with minimal self-correction, which was a good indicator that the skills they learned virtually did translate to the real world.”

Cory Pettijohn, a teaching professor in the School of Earth, Society, & Environment, is also implementing VR in two of his classes. Geol 104: Geology of the National Parks lets students join park rangers in a 360 degree video tour, while Geol 117: The Oceans allows students to dive into virtual marine biomes and experience bioluminescence first hand. “I’d love to be able to take all of my students to the big Island of Hawaii and hike through a lava tube,” said Pettijohn. “Because of time and monetary limitations, it’s just not feasible. Virtual reality technology helps me to provide an added layer of active learning, so students can experience these things and apply what they’re learning.”

In political science, professor **Bob Pahre** is in the process of creating two 360 degree tour modules that will help students better understand the politics of Indiana Dunes. From the dunes to the wetlands, the first module will help students explore the theory of ecological succession, while the second will enable them to move along the shoreline, see the juxtaposition of the park, steel mills, and residential development, and understand the political compromise of 1965 that led to the area’s designation as a national park.

Shakil Bin Kashem, a teaching assistant professor in the Department of Geography and Geographic Information Science, is using a VR@Illinois grant to develop instructional materials for students who may already encounter augmented reality (AR) in the real world. AR, which superimposes data over objects viewed through smart devices, is already being used to visualize items like pipes and cables hidden from view. He hopes to help students understand how AR and GIS can provide a more effective geo-data visualization approach.

Meanwhile, **Tricia Thrasher**, a graduate student and teaching assistant in French, is using a program called VTime and heart rate monitors purchased through her grant to analyze anxiety levels in second-language French learners. Through her research, she hopes to learn how technology can be implemented in the classroom to reduce anxiety while enhancing learning performance.



Students use the Virtual Reality Lab of the Center for Innovation in Teaching & Learning, located in the Armory. Interest in VR technology has been growing in a variety of LAS classrooms.

Students Miguel Avalos and Tricia Thrasher demonstrate how VR technology is used in classrooms. The headsets allow students to explore everything from caves to villages and oceans. (Photo by Melissa Kuhl.)

Like any new technology, that implementation will lead to new questions that have to be resolved by those skilled in the humanities, according to **Bianca Teixeira**, ATLAS technology learning technician. “The paradox in this is that the more that we go in this direction of technology, the more people we need to help us think in terms of the ethical aspects of things.”

Regardless of how it’s implemented, technology is advancing at a rapid pace, said **Kostas Yfantis**, assistant director of Teaching & Learning with Technology at ATLAS. “In less than a year, Anthropology 399 went from sensors on stands to sensors mounted on the ceiling. Now they’re shifting from the Vive Pros to the Oculus Rift S, which doesn’t require sensors. So this evolution happened within a semester.”

What’s next? Wentworth thinks full body suits with haptics aren’t out of the realm of possibility, but in the short term he thinks textbook companies will soon recognize the trend and create VR experiences, just like they made websites to go with every text book. Whatever’s next, one thing is certain—with programmers envisioning bold new worlds and innovative faculty exploring them, the sky’s no longer the limit. “The possibilities,” said Wentworth, “are pretty limitless.” ■

See a video about one of the programs in this story at go.las.illinois.edu/anthroVR20.

LAS young alumni and student awarded Fulbright grants

Grants will support educational, research, and teaching experiences across the world

Nine College of LAS recent alumni and a student were offered student Fulbright grants this coming year. They were among 14 Illinois students and alumni chosen this year, and another seven Illinois students were named Fulbright alternates.

Recipients of the prestigious award travel abroad as part of an effort to build international relationships between the U.S. and the rest of the world and solve global challenges.

“Having 21 of our 59 Fulbright applicants being either offered a grant or named an alternate is a real testament to the strength of our student body,” said David Schug, the director of the National and International Scholarships Program.

The LAS awardees who accepted the Fulbright award this year include:

Sean Chapman was offered an English teaching assistant position in India. He’s a December 2018 graduate with a bachelor’s degree in linguistics.

Kevin Ho was named as a Fulbright English teaching assistant in Vietnam. Ho graduated in May 2019 with a bachelor’s degree in

English and a teacher education minor in secondary school teaching.



Jack Josellis was offered an English teaching assistant Fulbright in Madrid. Josellis graduated in May 2019 with a bachelor’s degree in history, a teacher education minor in secondary school teaching, and a concentration in social studies.



Phoebe Lauer was offered an English teaching assistant Fulbright in the Canary Islands, Spain. Lauer graduated in May 2019 with bachelor’s degrees in psychology and Spanish.



Katherine Micek was offered a Fulbright English teaching assistantship in Malaysia. Micek earned a bachelor’s degree in integrative biology in May 2017.



Natalia Román Alicea has been offered a Fulbright English teaching assistantship in Colombia. She earned a master’s degree in

communication in May 2019.



Kruti Tallam has been awarded a Fulbright grant to India. In December 2018, Tallam earned both a bachelor’s in natural resources and environmental sciences, and statistics.



Erielle Tellis has been named a Fulbright English teaching assistant to Italy. Tellis graduated in May 2019 with a bachelor’s in political science and a minor in Portuguese.



Naomi Wasserman was awarded a Fulbright grant to conduct research in New Zealand. She is pursuing a doctoral degree in geology at Illinois. ■

By Illinois News Bureau

LAS Experts

Putting tornadoes under the microscope

Jeff Trapp researches some of the world's most dangerous weather



For most of us, tornado sirens mean that it's time to head to the basement.

Jeff Trapp, however, head of the Department of Atmospheric Sciences, researches intense weather events, and his findings are helping scientists, policy makers, and forecasters around the world understand how severe weather is changing—and how we can give people precious minutes of warning before it strikes.

What are you currently researching?

My group is using computer simulations of tornadic thunderstorms, as well as data from weather satellites and Doppler radar, to better understand the controls on tornado intensity. We're also analyzing data we helped collect during the Remote sensing of Electrification, Lighting, and Mesoscale/microscale Processes with Adaptive Ground Observations (RELAMPAGO) campaign, held in 2018 in Argentina, to characterize processes known as updrafts, downdrafts, and cold pools in some of Earth's most intense storms. Finally, we're developing projections of severe-weather hazards under human-induced climate change.

What's the impact of your work?

Our research results tend to be used frequently by weather forecasters, especially within the National Weather Service,

to issue more accurate and timely warnings of severe-weather hazards. Our climate-change research methodologies have been adopted by other scientists around the world, and thus have aided in their development of future-hazard projections. This work also serves to inform policy and decision makers on potential impacts of climate change.

How has your field changed since your career began?

I now have easy and immediate access to digital weather data, as well as to open-source weather and climate models, which I can run on my laptop computer. Analysis of the data and model output is now enabled by countless Python libraries, rather than by expensive, cumbersome, and more limited analysis packages.

What's your most significant research achievement?

Our group was a primary contributor to the discovery of a phenomenon known as "mesovortices," which can cause intense damage within extensive lines of thunderstorms. We were also one of the first groups in the world to show how severe-thunderstorm frequency and intensity can be influenced by human-induced climate change. ■

Interview by Dave Evensen

Infants expect leaders to right wrongs

Psychologists shed light on how young children understand power dynamics

Infants 17 months of age expect leaders—but not others—to intervene when one member of their group transgresses against another, a new study reveals.



The findings, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, prove that children in their second year of life have a well-developed understanding of social hierarchies and power dynamics, said psychology professor Renée Baillargeon, (left, at top) who led the research. The study was conducted in Baillargeon's Infant Cognition Lab by former graduate student Maayan Stavans.



The study involved 120 infants. Researchers used bear puppets to enact skits in front of infants with their parents. Some children watched scenarios involving a protagonist that two other bears treated as a leader, and some saw a protagonist that had no authority over the other two bears.

The protagonist presented the other bears with two toys for them to share, but one bear quickly grabbed both toys, leaving none for the other. Next, the protagonist either rectified this

transgression by redistributing one of the toys from the wrongdoer bear to the victim bear, or the protagonist ignored the transgression by approaching each bear without redistributing a toy.

"Infants stared longer when the leader ignored the wrongdoing than when she rectified it," Baillargeon said. "This suggests that infants expected the leader to intervene and right the wrong in her group, and were surprised when she took no such action."

Stavans said that infants appeared to hold no particular expectation for intervention from nonleaders.

The findings provide new evidence that infants can reason about leaders, Baillargeon said. "We knew from previous work that children this age have specific ideas about how followers will behave toward their leaders," she said. "Now we see that they also have complementary expectations about how leaders will behave toward their followers." ■

By Diana Yates, Illinois News Bureau



Connecting the classroom to the **community**

Ann Abbott's Spanish in the Community service course has grown in popularity ever since it was created in 2004



A student, right, helps a resident at the Refugee Center near U of I. Since 2004, students in Ann Abbott's Spanish in the Community course have helped immigrants adjust to life in the United States.

"I used to think immigrants were a problem."

When **Ann Abbott** read this introduction to a student's final essay, she realized the Spanish in the Community curriculum may be one of the most unique and important experiences of which she's been a part.



"Those words, 'I used to'—that's really impactful," said Abbott, director of undergraduate studies and associate professor in the Department of Spanish & Portuguese. In fact, she sees those words as the culmination of years of effort to deepen her students' learning while serving a community need.

Several blocks from the University of Illinois campus is The Refugee Center.

In 2004, the center was facing the beginnings of a large wave of Spanish-speaking immigrants moving into Champaign and Urbana. A friend and volunteer at the center told Abbott that they needed people who could communicate with the newcomers.

"At the same time, I knew I had these really great Spanish students in the Foreign Languages Building. We sit in these rooms with each other, we talk to each other, and they could really use a boost to get even better," Abbott said. With this information, Abbott created a Spanish course based in the idea of community service. The class opened in 2004 with grant support for courses rooted in public engagement.

Word of the new class spread throughout the community as well as between students. More avenues of service were discovered and sections of the class were added as the course was formalized and recently became the first non-English general education course on

campus. Since it began, hundreds of Illinois students have served at the refugee center, area schools, and the New American Welcome Center, a program at the University YMCA to help immigrants integrate into Champaign County, by providing language assistance to immigrants.

Because of her drive to continue to meet this need, Abbott has been named a recipient of the 2019 City of Champaign Community Impact Award at a time when the 15-year-old course may be as popular as ever.

Last semester, nearly 60 students enrolled in three sections. She said the popularity of the class has allowed for a unique mixture of students to enroll. For example, last semester the class makeup included around 50 percent heritage language learners (students who have Spanish as a first language), which is a contrast to a traditional classroom that includes more second language learners.

"I think having this mixture of heritage language learners and second language learners in the course together enriches the conversation, because their perspective is so valuable," she said.

The class, which helps fulfill the university's U.S. minority cultures course requirement, stipulates that students to spend two hours each week in the community in addition to two hours in the classroom. In the final weeks of the course, students participate in an interactive digital simulation—provided through a collaboration with the Siebel Center for Design—that places students in scenarios involving poverty and immigration. It's the combination of these experiences that sets apart the class from other classroom structures.

"It's a balancing act," she said. "For a lot of my students it fills them up with this kind of energy. It's a nice break from other kinds of learning they are doing."

Kathleen Flores, a sophomore studying psychology and Spanish,

took the class as a freshman and, after completing the course, has continued to volunteer at the center where she helps community members translate medical and benefit forms among other tasks.

"Some days it's slow, and some days there are lines and lines," Flores said. "Translating documents, playing with the kids to keep them distracted and comfortable while someone else helps their parents. The experience and the connection I got out of this is so valuable to me that I'm doing much more this semester."

Ultimately, the students are completing valuable and manageable tasks. This process allows the students to build their confidence by shifting the focus from their language skills to helping others.

"Having good Spanish doesn't mean no mistakes; it means, in context, using it to bridge those language and cultural divides," Abbott said.

Students are required to serve 28 hours per semester. Recently, Abbott has begun allowing some of that time to be used attending campus lectures that give students an opportunity to hear academic-minded individuals speak about immigration in different contexts.

"One of the challenges in this course—and one of the wonderful things—is that students get really attached to a kid or supervisor or a client when they are able to help them," Abbott explained. "What's good about that is they can see the big immigration issue through the prism of one person who they have come to know. That changes what they think about immigration."

However, Abbott explained that there must also be a way to learn about widespread, public policies. If the students think only about the individuals that they help at the refugee center or elsewhere, they could lose the bigger picture, she said.

"It is also about the bigger picture, policy issues, political discourse,

the media images that are replayed over and over," Abbott said. "My challenge is always helping them to find the forest and the trees. If you see one and not the other, it warps the picture that you have."

It's also this divide that keeps Abbott determined to help students experience Spanish as a language of the United States.

"You can talk about it, but when you experience (Spanish in the United States) you understand what you've been working for, why you have been studying for all these years, what you can do with your Spanish, and, even in Central Illinois, how valuable it is," she said.

As she accepted the Community Impact Award, Abbott said she was honored to have fellow community members recognize her dedication to both the center and students through transitions in personnel and the makeup of today's immigrant community members.

"If I look at it now, we have a very different kind of wave but still very important wave of immigration from Spanish-speaking countries," Abbott explained. "Many are from Central America, many of them are children, sometimes by themselves. For some of them, Spanish is not their first language."

This has led Abbott to shift classroom discussions toward Central America, unaccompanied minors, violence in Central America and the roots of that violence, and public policy.

"My students come into class loving Spanish, but that doesn't mean they still haven't absorbed the myths and negative, dominant discourse about immigration in America," Abbott explained. "So, I think this is an important opportunity for us to tell them the truth about immigration in the United States, and it's important to see this for themselves." ■

By **Kayleigh Rahn**

The workhorse

Student housing, the Illini Union, international programs, and a universal college tradition can all trace their roots to the relatively obscure Illini Hall

Some buildings get all the glory. At U of I, Lincoln Hall has its presidential connection, Altgeld Hall has its chimes, English Building has its ghost. But what about the workhorses—the gritty brick behemoths whose claim to fame isn't their name or design, but their practicality, and the fact that over the years they've served as everything from faculty offices to bowling alleys and war barracks? What about Illini Hall? *Story continues on next page.* »

By Dave Evensen

FOUNDATIONAL SUPPORT

A crowd of well-wishers observes the June 11, 1907, cornerstone ceremony for the future Illini Hall. (Photo courtesy of University of Illinois Archives.)

Not a lot has been written about Illini Hall. Situated at the corner of Wright and John streets, the 160-foot-long, three-story act of Elizabethan revival architecture may be the most overlooked 40,000-square-foot building on campus. Maybe that's because it's overshadowed by some of the most picturesque and exciting places at U of I: Altgeld Hall, the Main Quad, Illini Union, Green Street, and other landmarks are all within shouting distance of Illini Hall. Nobody ever says, "Looking for the Alma Mater? It's just east of Illini Hall."

Illini Hall's relative obscurity really isn't fair. Not only is it one of the older buildings on campus—built in 1907, it's older than Lincoln Hall, Noyes Laboratory, the Armory, and University Library, to name a few—but it's also served a variety of important purposes. Today it houses faculty offices for the departments of Mathematics and Statistics, computer labs for campus' Technology Services, and three classrooms. To make space for a new data science center, however, as part of the Altgeld and Illini Hall Project, the 112-year-old building is scheduled to be torn down and replaced by 2023.

The decision to replace Illini Hall was made carefully. Project planners evaluated the building closely, but they determined that it would be too expensive to renovate Illini Hall in a way that enables the necessary expansion of educational and research capacity in mathematical and data sciences. Current plans call for a six-story

building to be built on the site of Illini Hall.

Planners have been in contact with the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office, however, to ensure that the removal of Illini Hall is done in a manner that respects and documents the historical significance of the building. It's already been determined that Illini Hall has been the site of some remarkable and enduring changes at Illinois.

According to **Dennis Craig**, the campus historic preservation officer at U of I's Facilities and Services, Illini Hall was built originally to house the U of I's YMCA, which was the first YMCA at an educational institution in the state. The popular organization had outgrown space in other buildings, including Altgeld Hall, and in 1905 it purchased the land where Illini Hall sits today. Congressman W.B. McKinley (namesake for the McKinley Health Center) served on the building committee, and during the 1905 commencement ceremony he announced a gift of \$15,000 (and later made another gift of \$20,000) toward the \$100,000 required to construct the new building.

The cornerstone for Illini Hall—back then it was known as the YMCA building—was laid on June 11, 1907, in a ceremony attended by W.L. Abbott, president of the University Board of Trustees.

"Designed by the Philadelphia architectural firm of Temple, Burrows and McLane, (the building) was described as 'imposing,'



being 160 feet long and covering only half of the lot area, so that it could be doubled in size in the future," Craig said. "The building has three stories with a basement. The first floor included parlors with fireplaces. The basement had a large café and lunchroom, along with a barber shop, club rooms, and four bowling alleys. The second and third floors had meetings rooms and dormitory rooms."

The YMCA used the building extensively. The building housed almost 90 male students, making it, in effect, the university's first dormitory, according to the YMCA. In 1918, the YMCA began providing organized service to international students, which was a new concept, as there were only about 200 international students at U of I at that time.

During World War I, however, the university, in conjunction with the School of Military Aeronautics, converted the YMCA building into a war barracks. The building underwent numerous modifications for this role, and the YMCA moved out. After the war, the Board of Trustees leased the first floor of the YMCA building to the Illini Union Association, which turned the space into the first student union at Illinois.

The Illinois Union Association thrived for the next couple of decades in its new location—which switched its name from the YMCA building to the Illinois Union Building—and was joined in the space by the University of Illinois Alumni Association and other student organizations until the present Illini Union was constructed in 1941.

Thus ended Illini Hall's stint as the first student union at the U of I, but the university subsequently bestowed the current name upon the building and used it to house a variety of organizations, including the Police Training Institute, a speech research program, and The Daily Illini until the newspaper relocated in 1988.

As the storyline on Illini Hall comes to an end, it's appropriate to reflect upon one more enduring tradition. While Illinois can't claim to be the first university to celebrate homecoming, historians agree that it's among the top five schools to begin what's become a universal annual college tradition. Like many good ideas, the idea came together quickly, during an informal meeting in 1909 between students **C.F. Williams**, a member of the Phi Kappa Psi fraternity, and **W. Elmer Ekblaw**, editor of the Daily Illini.

Where did this brilliant fit of brainstorming take place? Hint: It's just west of the Alma Mater. ■

Update on the Altgeld and Illini Hall Project

Campus officials plan to soon present schematic plans to the Board of Trustees for the renovation of Altgeld Hall and the construction of a new building on the site of Illini Hall. The new building is slated for completion by 2023, and Altgeld Hall is to be renovated by 2025. Visit altgeldillini.illinois.edu for more details.

(Left) Built in 1907, Illini Hall stands on the west side of Wright Street, a block south of Green Street; (top) The interior of Illini Hall has served as everything from ballrooms to bowling alleys and residential quarters; (top left) Jill Drum, the first female sports editor at the Daily Illini in 1944, worked in Illini Hall. The newspaper had offices there until 1988; (center) C.F. Williams, co-founder of the first Illinois Homecoming, sits on the steps of Illini Hall in this 1954 photo; (right) Illini Hall served as the first student union at Illinois, as shown in this 1935 photo. (Images courtesy of the University of Illinois Archives.)

CORPORATE IMPACT

The University of Illinois works hand-in-hand with companies and foundations on many student-oriented activities. Here's a glimpse at some of the numbers behind the partnerships.



Total corporate and foundation support for LAS programs and research (FY 2020 through December 2019):
\$3.4 million

This includes: Corporate and foundation support for research in LAS:
\$2.4 million

Percentage of LAS students with a Handshake job-seeking account:
50 percent

Top major with most active job-hunters (as determined by Handshake data):
Psychology

Number of LAS students attending campus career fairs (Fall 2019):
3,321*

Number of employers attending campus career fairs (Fall 2019)
643*

Number of LAS and LAS-affiliated career-related offices:
10

Number of U of I student interns at the U of I Research Park:
More than 800

Number of companies at the U of I Research Park:
More than 120

Contact **Tracy Parish**, director for corporate and foundation relations at the College of LAS, for more information about how your company can partner with the college. tparish@illinois.edu

Sources: LAS Office of Advancement, LAS Career Development, and U of I Research Park

*These figures represent total attendance from all fairs combined. Some employers and students attended more than one career fair.

LEARN FROM LAS ALUMNI

The LAS alumni community is **174,000 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.”



Joey Levin
HR manager, Stepan Company
BA, '10, psychology

“Building an inclusive culture within a team requires an intentional commitment from the team's leader, and it requires vulnerability and compassion.”



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.

ENGAGE AND CELEBRATE ALUMNI

The **LAS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION** is essential to connecting alumni with the College of LAS. Consider applying for the board of directors, or nominate an inspiring individual for an alumni award. go.las.illinois.edu/alumni-volunteer20

Save the date!

Reunite with friends and classmates for this year's Homecoming celebrations!

Game day:
Saturday, Oct. 17, vs. Purdue



Follow us on our **LinkedIn page!**

Stay up-to-date on the latest happenings throughout the college, or list us as your educational unit on your profile.

linkedin.com/school/lasillinois

I ILLINOIS

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES

2040 Lincoln Hall
702 S. Wright St.
Urbana, IL 61801

NEW ADDRESS? Update your mail or email address at go.las.illinois.edu/alumnicontract-spring20.

With its iconic tower and sandstone construction, Altgeld Hall is one of the most easily recognized buildings on campus.

The University of Illinois has embarked on a project to restore and renovate Altgeld Hall and replace its neighbor across Wright Street, Illini Hall, with a new building.

Funds from the state, campus, and private donors will support the projected \$188 million needed for these projects that grow our college's 100-plus year role as both the intellectual and physical heart of campus.

An investment in these spaces will directly benefit thousands of students and faculty members. The renovation of Altgeld and a new Illini Hall will provide collaborative spaces that are essential for learning and discovery in the 21st century and make both buildings accessible for students from all corners of our campus.

To learn more about Altgeld and Illini Hall visit altgeldillini.illinois.edu.

