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The cover image is an adaptation of a print of Altgeld Hall by Ballpark Blueprints, shown here. The Ballpark Blueprints image is available for purchase as a print, blanket, or mug at ballparkblueprints.com.

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LAS by the numbers
Results of the latest Illinois Success survey revealed some promising career tracks.

Editor
Derek Fultz
Graphic Designer
Heather Gillett

LAS News is published for alumni and friends of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, by the Office of Communications and Marketing, 2040 Lincoln Hall, 702 S. Wright St., Urbana, IL 61801, (217) 333-1350. The college also publishes a monthly alumni newsletter, LAS News Online. Please direct all inquiries about other publications to the editor at lasnews@illinois.edu or at the above address.

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LAS senior receives Lincoln Academy Student Laureate Award

Issy Marquez, a triple major in English, political science, and Latina/Latino studies, received the Lincoln Academy Student Laureate Award for her public service in college, including lobbying legislators on behalf of the National Humanities Alliance. The award is given to one senior per year at the University of Illinois through the Chancellor’s Honors Program. Marquez said the award is an acknowledgment of the success she’s been able to achieve at the university. □ (Photo submitted.)

$87M grant will help advance bioindustrial manufacturing

An $87 million grant from the U.S. Department of Defense, matched by more than $187 million in non-federal cost-share, will fund collaborative efforts to advance sustainable and reliable bioindustrial manufacturing technologies. The money is being awarded to the BioIndustrial Manufacturing and Design Ecosystem (BioMADE) at the University of Minnesota in St. Paul. The University of Illinois is a governing member of BioMADE and a preferred research site for the organization, said Huimin Zhao, Steven L. Miller Chair in Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering. □ (Image from University of Illinois Project.)

Faculty honors

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

- **Carnegie Fellowship:**
  Gillen D’Arcy Wood, English.

- **American Academy of Arts and Sciences:**
  Nancy Makri and Kenneth Schweizer, both of chemistry.

- **American Philosophical Society:**
  Gene Robinson, entomology.

- **Distinguished Senior Research Scientist of the Year by the Agricultural Research Service:**
  Lisa Ainsworth, plant biology.

- **Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship:**
  Kevin Mumford, history.

- **Outstanding Reviewer for the Journal of Educational and Behavioral Statistics:**
  Susu Zhang, psychology.

- **Teaching Sustainability Fellows:**
  Ripan Malhi, anthropology; Chadly Stern, psychology; and Roderick Wilson, history and East Asian languages and cultures.

- **Co-editors for the Luso-Brazilian Review:**
  Jerry Dávila and Marc Hertzman, both of history.

- **American Academy of Microbiology:**
  Cari Vanderpool, microbiology.

- **American Anthropological Association Star:**
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See a complete list of faculty honors at go.las.illinois.edu/honors21mag.

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Study: Negative impact of lockdowns spike, then fade

Negative mental health effects of shelter-in-place orders and lockdowns are temporary and gradually decrease over time as people adjust to their “new normal,” according to research by Dolores Albarracín, former U of I psychology professor and business administration, and Bita Fayaz Farkhad, economist and post-doctoral researcher in psychology. The researchers found that social distancing policies correlated with immediate increases in interest in obtaining information about “isolation” and “worry” – but those effects tapered off two to four weeks after their respective peaks. □ (Photo by L. Brian Stauffer)

New model shows how to make smart homes more frugal

Richard Sowers, professor of mathematics and industrial and enterprise systems engineering, developed a smart home model that uses dynamic, real-time energy pricing data to operate household appliances cost-effectively. The model relies upon real-time energy pricing, with Sowers and his colleagues building a system that crunches a combination of hourly market prices, spot prices, and day-ahead prices to predict the cheapest time to schedule residential loads such as running the dishwasher. □ (Photo by Nicholas Georgakis)

Professor: COVID-19 restrictions led to record drop in emissions

The annual Carbon Budget Project report found that among other trends, the global COVID-19 pandemic restrictions caused a record drop in CO2 emissions for 2020, said Illinois atmospheric sciences professor and report co-author Atul Jain. “The 2020 report shows that CO2 emissions—the main contributor to global warming—are set to drop by 2.4 billion tons of CO2, or 7 percent, in 2020, caused by worldwide COVID-19 restrictions. Such a drastic decline has never been seen before,” Jain said. □ (Photo by L. Brian Stauffer)

Piecing together a colorful mystery

During construction in 1896, a glass dome was installed in Altgeld Hall that provided natural light in the library. Then, with little fanfare in the 1940s, the dome was removed. Few photos of the dome have ever been found, except for this one. An architecture team is using several methods to recreate the masterpiece, however, as part of the $192 million Altgeld and Illini Hall Project. □ (Image from University of Illinois Archives.)
The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected vulnerable communities that lack the proper healthcare resources to combat the disease, but a recent study at the University of Illinois is helping policymakers better identify Illinois communities that are in need. The paper, published by a team led by Shaowen Wang, head of the Department of Geography & Geographic Information Science, demonstrates how to identify which geographic areas in the state are in need of additional COVID-19 healthcare resources.

Two LAS professors elected to National Academy of Sciences

Two professors in the College of LAS have been elected to the National Academy of Sciences, one of the highest professional honors a scientist can receive. Chemistry professors Ralph Nuzzo and Wilfred van der Donk are among 120 newly elected U.S. members and 30 international members recognized for their distinguished and continuing achievements in original research.

LAS Emergency Fund helps students during hard times

The COVID-19 pandemic brought a variety of personal and financial hardships to students, with some struggling to stay in school. The LAS Emergency Fund was established prior to the pandemic to help students facing loss of housing or income, food insecurity, medical expenses, and other urgent situations. In the past year alone, with help from donors, the college has disbursed more than $32,000 to students facing some of their toughest challenges.

Las faculty named University Scholars

Three LAS professors at the Urbana-Champaign campus have been named University Scholars in recognition of their excellence in teaching, scholarship and service. Christopher Freeburg, English, Ned O’Gorman, communication; and Rachel Whitaker, microbiology, will receive $15,000 for each of the next three years for travel, equipment, research assistants, books, or other academic purposes.

Hats off to the grads

After a challenging end to their college careers, U of I students found reason to celebrate in May when campus hosted individualized stage ceremonies for thousands of graduating seniors. Graduates from 2020, whose ceremonies were canceled, were also invited to attend.

Las names new LEAP Scholars

Four professors have been recognized as Lincoln Excellence for Assistant Professors (LEAP) Scholars for their contributions and potential in research and teaching. The awardees are Carolyn Forsmoe, Spanish and Portuguese; John Paul Meyers, African American studies; Lisa Olishansky, chemistry; and Diwakar Shukla, chemical and biomolecular engineering.

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‘Hunker down’ stress genes boosted in women who live in violent neighborhoods

The chronic stress of living in neighborhoods with high rates of violence and poverty alters gene activity in immune cells, according to a new study of low-income single Black mothers in Chicago. The changes reflect the body’s “hunker down” response to long-term threat, a physiological strategy for lying low and considering new action. Researchers included Sandra Rodriguez-Zas, animal sciences; Andrew Greenlee, urban and regional planning; Gene Robinson, entomology; and Ruby Mendenhall, sociologist and African American studies.

Economist: The path to recovery must include child care

Economic recovery from COVID-19 will require not only restoring jobs and income, according to a professor at Illinois, but revitalizing a key industry that affects millions of families: child care. “If we can’t go back to a situation where we no longer have all these (COVID-19) mitigation strategies then you’ll see permanent impact on the business model of child care with basically all these mitigation costs being passed on to parents,” said economics professor Elizabeth Powers.

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Study tracks 16th century elephant tusks

In 1533, the Böm Jesus sank off the coast of Africa. Scientists at the University of Illinois have determined the source of elephant tusks recovered from the ship. “By comparing the shipwrecked ivory mitochondrial DNA with that from elephants with known origins across Africa, we were able to pinpoint specific regions and species of elephants whose tusks were found in the shipwreck,” said Alida de Flamingh, a postdoctoral researcher who led the study with animal sciences professor Alfred Roca and anthropology professor Ripan Malhi.

Associate director honored for advancing diversity in chemical sciences

Ying Diao, professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering, was recently awarded the NASA Early Career Faculty Award for her proposal: Remote Autonomous Plant Sensing for Space Exploration Enabled by Wearable Printed Electronics. “We’re helping the astronauts to be more healthy during space missions, by improving the health of the plants they grow,” Diao said. “So the bigger impact could also be that it helps human colonization on Mars or on other possible habitats.”

New equipment transforms atmospheric research and hands-on learning at U of I

The Department of Atmospheric Sciences has acquired a multi-million dollar “Doppler on Wheels” mobile radar and instrumentation facility that is expected to transform capabilities for research, offer hands-on field training for students, and expand outreach efforts to demonstrate scientific observation of the atmosphere. “At no other university do students have access to cutting-edge meteorological resources of this scope,” said Jeff Trapp, department head.

Professor receives NASA Early Career Faculty Award to help astronauts grow vegetables

Ying Diao, professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering, was recently awarded the NASA Early Career Faculty Award for her proposal: Remote Autonomous Plant Sensing for Space Exploration Enabled by Wearable Printed Electronics. “We’re helping the astronauts to be more healthy during space missions, by improving the health of the plants they grow,” Diao said. “So the bigger impact could also be that it helps human colonization on Mars or on other possible habitats.”

Octopus inspired design advances wound healing and regeneration

Thin tissue grafts and flexible electronics have a host of applications for wound healing, regenerative medicine, and biosensing. A new device inspired by the animal kingdom rapidly and safely transfers delicate tissue or electronic sheets to the patient, according to Hyunjoon Kong, a professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering, and postdoctoral researcher Byoungsoo Kim. Their design mimics how an octopus can pick up objects of all shapes with small pressure changes in their muscle-powered suction cups.

Professors recognized for leadership and research

Four professors in the College of LAS have been named Richard and Margaret Romano Professional Scholars for their leadership and research. Richard Romano (BS, ’54, chemical engineering) and his wife, Margaret, established the program, which provides faculty members with $25,000 per year for their work. This year’s scholars include: Alison Bell, (pictured), evolution, ecology, and behavior; Alexandra Harmon-Threatt, entomology; Bo Li, statistics; and Zhuo Wang, atmospheric sciences.

New study ranks LAS professors high in research influence

According to datasets published in PLOS Biology, 125 LAS professors rank among the top 100,000 most-cited researchers in the world since the mid-1990s. The dataset includes about 8 million researchers worldwide—active, retired, or deceased—who published at least five papers in their career. The late Carl Woese, namesake of the Carl R. Woese Institute for Genomic Biology, is the most-cited in LAS.
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plot in central Illinois. A friend of mine invited me along, and I was grateful for a different perspective on fire. Here fire was not a tool of destruction but of life, carefully managed to raze just the necessary zone and breathe new vigor into crowded grasses. But even in the context of fire as a useful, cleansing entity, its power was nearly unbearable.

I was given the opportunity to haul one of the water backpacks to keep the backburn under wraps. My responsibility was to stand by the edge of the flames and make sure nothing jumped the boundary. The flames were just a few inches high at a time, crawling along a dried-out, mowed-over road, but they were blindingly hot. I was sweating under my fire-retardant leggings and crying from the ash in my eyes. The smoke caused me to sneeze so many times my cloth virus mask became soggy. It was awful, and that was just the beginning of the burn.

I’ve heard of prairie flames reaching 30 feet in height, flying across grasses faster than you can run away. But as forceful as these Midwestern flames can be, what happens out to the west is much more intense. Entire trees ablaze, crowns of needles lit up to infinity, waves of heat intense enough to melt plastic and explode brick. The American crowns of needles lit up to infinity, waves of heat intense enough to melt plastic and explode brick. The American

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At both Philmont and the Illinois prairie, I was grateful that I could leave the fire and go back to the regular world. But I wondered at the random chance of it. It was an accident of geology that had saved my small camp, and it was practical ecology that limited the spread of the prairie fire. I didn’t realize it at the time, but Philmont’s burn zone had scared me. A burn zone is no natural feature; it is devoid of life and growth, an alien space. Maybe prescribed burns are an antidote to that, a way to clear away the ground cover and channel our human need for control into something that won’t blow up in our faces. But our grasp on such things is loose at best. Even prescribed fires are an exercise in limited control; managing fuel and planning for windspeed. Once a critical mass is reached, the fire itself is untouchable.

As the West Coast has gone up in smoke, it has become clear that, despite driving animals to extinction, despite converting the prairie and the tundra to agriculture, despite thinking that we are masters of this planet and everything on it, there are things we will never be able to control. There are things we are only able to try and guide. Do we pay attention to the warning signs? Take climate change as seriously as it needs to be taken? Or do we let it go and see what happens? Light a match and flick it into the grasses. Maybe it won’t catch.

Perhaps that’s our planet now. A lively space built atop a funeral pyre, waiting for any spark to ignite and devour it until nothing remains but the cold, ashly fingers of trees and shards of stone rising in the distance. Happenstance lights the spark, but humanity fuels the fire.

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Books from LAS

Land struggles, presidential photographs, and Gettysburg-inspired poetry were the subjects of books published recently by faculty members.

“For Land and Liberty: Black Struggles in Rural Brazil,” by Merle Bowen, African American studies, is a comparative study of the history and contemporary circumstances concerning Brazil’s quilombos (African-descent rural communities) and their inhabitants, the quilombolas. The book examines the dispossession of quilombola claims to land as a site of contestation over citizenship and its meanings for Afro-descendants, as well as their connections to the broader fight against racism. (University of Texas Press)

“Photographic Presidents: Making History from Daguerreotype to Digital,” by Cara Finnegan, communication, ventures from a newly discovered daguerreotype of John Quincy Adams to Barack Obama’s selfies to tell the stories of how presidents have participated in the medium’s transformative moments. As she shows, technological developments not only changed photography but introduced new visual skills that influence how we judge an image. (University of Illinois Press)

“What Though the Field Be Lost,” by Christopher Kempf, English, uses poetry and the Civil War battlefield at Gettysburg to engage ongoing issues involving race, regional identity, and the ethics of memory. Kempf reveals the overlapping planes of historical past and public present, integrating archival material—language from monuments, soldiers’ letters, eyewitness accounts of the battle—with reflection on present-day social and political unrest. (Louisiana State University Press)

“Unassailable Ideas: How Unwritten Rules and Social Media Shape Discourse in American Higher Education,” co-authored by Illana Redstone, sociology, explores and sheds new light on the intersection of social media with campus climate, offers an extensive set of case studies illustrating the ways in which academic discourse is constrained, and provides a compelling set of recommendations to move us forward and tangible steps for improving the climate for free inquiry at universities. (Oxford University Press)

“A German Barber-Surgeon in the Atlantic Slave Trade,” co-authored by Craig Koslofsky, history, documents the young German barber-surgeon Johann Peter Oettinger’s journey across the Atlantic, his work as a surgeon, his role in the purchase and branding of enslaved Africans, and his experiences in France and the Netherlands. (Duke University Press)

“Deviant and Useful Citizens,” by Mariselle Meléndez, Spanish and Portuguese, explores the conditions of women and perceptions of the female body in the eighteenth century throughout the Viceroyalty of Peru. Meléndez introduces the reader to a female rebel, Micaela Bastidas, whose brutal punishment became a particularly harsh example of state response to women who challenged the system. (Vanderbilt University Press)
Karen P. Layng (BA, ’84, international economics and French commercial studies) leads her own consulting firm and serves as the national president of the Girl Scouts of the United States of America. Layng says the skills she picked up during her undergraduate studies have helped her find success and pursue her passion.

**Occupation:** Strategic C-Suite executive, board member, arbitrator, mediator and president of M.A.I.T. Co. I am also an adjunct professor of ethics, alternative dispute resolution, and due diligence at Northwestern University’s Engineering Masters in Design and Construction program. I am also the national president of the Girl Scouts of the United States of America.

**Describe your career path since college graduation:**
I took on every additional responsibility for leadership that the firm would allow: first as the chair of the summer associate program, next as hiring partner, then chair of the litigation department; member of the board of directors; chair of the compensation committee (as the first woman in that role); and served on a myriad of other committees. All the while, I formed and chaired the Construction Law Practice. Outside of the firm, I was very active in legal and other not-for-profit activities, including becoming the first woman president of the 7th Circuit Bar.

**In hindsight, what about college best prepared you for your life and career?**
Working and going to school, while playing in the university band, being in a sorority, and being an active member of intramural teams, helped me become extremely organized, and my time management skills are now exceptional.

**How did your major prepare you for your career?**
My majors (and my “cognate” in political science) still provide my strategic business acumen and success from the exceptional education I received from the U of I.

**Your proudest achievement?**
Being married to the greatest person I have ever met and my best friend, Patrick Layng, for 31 years this last September and raising three exceptional children (Alex, Shannon, and Kane) together.

Association in its 51-year history and being the room mother for each of my kids’ classrooms, every year, and one of the Troop leaders for my daughter’s Girl Scout Troop for 13 years.

To read Karen’s full interview and read other LAS@Work profiles, go to go.las.illinois.edu/LASatWork.

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**Sweet news for the BRAIN**

**Cocoa flavanols boost brain oxygenation, cognition in healthy adults**

The brains of healthy adults recovered faster from a mild vascular challenge and performed better on complex tests if the participants consumed cocoa flavanols beforehand, researchers report in the journal Scientific Reports.

Previous studies have shown that eating foods rich in flavanols can benefit vascular function, but this is the first to find a positive effect on brain vascular function and cognitive performance in young healthy adults, according to research led by University of Illinois psychology professors Monica Fabiani and Gabriele Gratton and Catarina Rendeiro, a researcher in nutritional sciences at the University of Birmingham.

Flavanols are small molecules found in many fruits and vegetables—and cocoa—that are known to benefit vascular function. The team recruited 18 adult nonsmokers with no known brain, heart, vascular, or respiratory disease to consume cocoa, reasoning that any effects seen in this population would provide robust evidence that dietary flavanols can improve brain function in healthy people.

Through functional near-infrared spectroscopy, a technique that uses light to capture changes in blood flow to the brain, the team measured oxygenation in the frontal cortex, a brain region that plays a key role in planning, regulating behavior, and decision-making. Researchers also challenged participants with complex tasks that required them to manage sometimes contradictory or competing demands.

Most of the participants had a stronger and faster brain oxygenation response after exposure to cocoa flavanols than they did at baseline or after consuming cocoa lacking flavanols, the researchers found. Participants also performed better on the most challenging cognitive tests, correctly solving problems 11 percent faster than they did at baseline or when they consumed cocoa with reduced flavanols. There was no measurable difference in performance on the easier tasks, however.

Four of the 18 study subjects had no meaningful differences in brain oxygenation response after consuming flavanols, nor did their performance on the tests improve. Researchers said this may indicate that those who are already quite fit have little room for improvement. Overall, however, the findings suggest that the improvements in vascular activity after exposure to flavanols are connected to the improvement in cognitive function.

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By Diana Yates, Illinois News Bureau
Effort to curb COVID-19

leads to a deeper understanding of communities and the disease

Workers at the Rantoul Foods pork-processing plant were among the first outbreak clusters when COVID-19 emerged in central Illinois in spring 2020. When researchers from the University of Illinois found no traces of the virus in air and surface samples at the plant, however, it raised questions about how the disease was being spread.

The university began working with clinicians and community researchers to provide pop-up testing clinics in Rantoul. An interdisciplinary team of LAS professors also began investigating the structural, economic, and sociocultural factors that impact transmission and response to the disease among essential agricultural laborers in rural communities.

“We wanted to understand more broadly how interaction in the community works, how people think of the working community, how people think of the virus, and how they think of protecting themselves or what risks they have to take given their need to work in an essential industry,” said Ellen Moodie, professor of anthropology. “There’s generally not a lot of infrastructure for reaching these groups.”

The research may shed light on disparities in COVID-19 infection rates among various demographic groups, said Jessica Brinkworth, professor of anthropology. In addition to organizing the testing clinics, Brinkworth is researching the roles of social stress and life experiences in the working community, how people think of the virus, how the disease was being spread.

“We’re still working to define that and integrate the pieces,” Whitaker said. “Microbiology and ethnography leads to a deeper understanding of communities and the disease.”

“Microbiology and ethnography leads to a deeper understanding of communities and the disease.”

By Sharita Forrest, Illinois News Bureau, and Kimberly Belser

Professor uses new methods of analyzing COVID-19 death toll in South America

People age 40 and under in economically depressed municipalities in the Greater Santiago, Chile, metropolitan area were three times more likely to die as a result of COVID-19 than their counterparts in wealthier areas, U of I researchers report in the journal Science. People ages 41-80 in low socioeconomic-status municipalities also suffered more from the pandemic than their peers in more affluent areas.

The study used new methods to analyze COVID-19 death counts, reporting cases, testing rates, and delays in testing results across location, time, and age group. The results reveal striking disparities between high and low socioeconomic-status municipalities, and also help explain the factors that contribute to differences in COVID-19-related infections and mortality in these regions, said Pamela Martínez, professor of microbiology and statistics who led the research with Gonzalo Mena, a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Oxford.

Greater Santiago is composed of 34 municipalities and is home to nearly 7 million people. The researchers used anonymized mobile phone data available through the Facebook Data for Good initiative to assess residents’ mobility during the pandemic.

“People living in municipalities with low socioeconomic status did not reduce their mobility during lockdowns as much as those in more affluent municipalities,” the researchers wrote. “This supports the hypothesis that people in poorer regions cannot afford to stay at home during lockdowns.”

Access to COVID-19 testing and health care services in lower-income communities also appear to have contributed to the observed differences in health outcomes, the researchers report.

In the early weeks of the pandemic, COVID-19 testing was more available to people in the affluent parts of the metropolitan area than in the poorer locations, the researchers found. People in less affluent regions also appear to have waited longer for their test results.

“Because public health authorities plan their response based on the number of reported infections in a given area, this led to a poorer health care response in lower income areas than was needed,” Martínez said. “This likely contributed to higher death counts in those areas.”

By Diana Yates, Illinois News Bureau
Love, friendship, and more love

Altgeld Hall’s serious, castle-like appearance and interior were by design. Planners wanted the building to represent solid devotion to education and show that the “spirit of the mighty past was brooding here,” according to architect Newton Wells. We don’t know if they knew that, with its location and musical inclinations, Altgeld Hall would also become a romantic hotspot.

Carolyn Povse (BS, ’78, mathematics) recalled how, in 1993, he finally returned to campus to present a paper on chaos theory at a conference. “This was the only time I ever got back to the school. I also got to see my advisor, M.E. Hamstrom,” Wagner recalled. “When I walked through the main door into Altgeld Hall, I felt completely at home. After all I may have gone through that door a thousand times.”

Want another Altgeld love story? Read “First came calc, then came marriage,” about the marriage of Nathan and Betsy Alderman at go.las.illinois.edu/AltgeldLove

Lessons for a lifetime

Altgeld Hall is an academic crossroads, with students from virtually every college on campus taking class there to lay a foundation for their careers. The lessons have lasted for lifetimes.

Steve Erlebacher (BS, ’58, mathematics) recalls taking a combinatorics course from the late Ken Appel, who, along with Wolfgang Haken (now a professor emeritus at U of I) proved the four-color theorem, which states that no more than four colors are required to color the regions of the map so that no two adjacent regions have the same color. “It was a wonderful class, and having it in Altgeld Hall was special as the post office there used a cancellation stamp that read ‘Four colors suffice’ as an homage to Appel and Haken,” Erlebacher recalled.

John Rooney (BS, ’53, mathematics) recalls working as a computer programmer at Altgeld Hall, where he helped program the Illinois Automatic Computer (ILLIAC), the first computer built and owned by a U.S. educational institution, and the predecessor of the first supercomputer. He went on to program at Argonne National Laboratory and Illinois Institute of Technology before earning a Harvard law degree in 1958.

John Rooney (BS, ’53, mathematics) recalls working as a computer programmer at Altgeld Hall, where he helped program the Illinois Automatic Computer (ILLIAC), the first computer built and owned by a U.S. educational institution, and the predecessor of the first supercomputer. He went on to program at Argonne National Laboratory and Illinois Institute of Technology before earning a Harvard law degree in 1958.

Neal R. Wagner (MA, ’64; PhD, ’70, mathematics)
Mystery and music

When you bring together mathematics, music, and everything else that is Altgeld Hall, sometimes you get a vivid memory that doesn’t fit any category. At times it’s just about, in the words of Joseph Santangelo (BS, ‘54, chemical engineering), a beautiful, snowy night.

“I was walking from the chemical engineering building, where I was doing my research, to Newman Hall,” he recalled, of that walk home some 60 years ago. “I was walking across the Quad with no one around except the lights, and the Altgeld Chimes began to ring. It was such a beautiful scene that I will never forget.”

Ronald Kamp (BS, ‘56; MS, ‘59, mechanical engineering) delivered The Daily Illini. He would get to the basement of Illini Hall, where the print presses were located, at about 4:30 a.m. It was dark at that hour, but on Saturday mornings there would be a light in one of the windows of Altgeld Hall, and the sound of bagpipes could be heard. By the time Kamp got on his bike to deliver the papers at 6 a.m., the light was out.

“Altgeld Hall may be known for its chimes, but in the early morning hours of Saturdays in the late 1950s, the music coming from Altgeld Hall was that created by bagpipes,” Kamp recalled. “Does anyone know who that bagpipe musician was?”

David Carroll (BS, ‘96, music education) played the chimes from 1993 to 1996, and on Halloween he would toll the chimes for a 13th time at midnight. “Alas,” he recalled, “I don’t know if anyone ever noticed.” And yes, there are ghost stories. Scott Croft, a building service worker, recounted unexplained incidents during the 11:30 p.m. to 7 a.m. shift in 2012.

“Two nights in a row I heard high heel shoes in the hallway headed into the auditorium,” he said. “Myself and another building service worker were on the stairs near the west entry and heard someone whistling. We walked around and saw no one.”

We’ll leave you with a memory from Sandra Price (BS, ’57, teaching of mathematics; MA, ’62, mathematics), who was an undergraduate during Altgeld Hall’s last significant renovation, in 1956. That was when the Department of Mathematics moved into the building. She recalled one particular class as the head of the department lectured to them above the sound of heavy construction.

They stayed through the noise and took notes diligently. When class was done they went to leave, but they opened the door and the hallway was gone. Instead they walked out to grass and brilliant sunlight.

By Dave Evensen
New vaccines, old fears, and the race against COVID-19

This past May, Abbigail Bugenske became one of the country’s latest million-dollar winners. But she didn’t get it from a scratch-off: she got it for taking a gamble on hope. Bugenske was the first winner in Ohio’s “Vaxx-a-Million” sweepstakes, a five-week contest designed to get more state residents to take a COVID-19 vaccine shot. From cash lotteries to free beer and amusement park tickets, the unvaccinated have been offered an ever-growing raft of incentives in a national push to reach herd immunity. But the question still remains — will new incentives be enough to overcome resistance that’s as old as vaccines themselves?

When British physician Edward Jenner first pioneered a vaccine for smallpox in 1796, there were those who voiced concerns. In a recent guest essay for The New York Times, historian David Motadel said clerics argued that Jenner’s methods, which used exposure to the much milder cowpox virus to inoculate recipients against smallpox, contaminated the human body with animal matter and were therefore “unchristian.” There were also fears that children who received the treatment could develop distinctly bovine features.

Fears aside, the vaccinations worked, leading countries like Great Britain to pass laws making them compulsory for children. That move, however, led to another fear that-like Great Britain to pass laws making them compulsory — will new incentives be enough to overcome resistance that’s as old as vaccines themselves?

In 2020, a study exploring social media’s influences on anti-vaccine sentiment during the 2018-2019 flu season. “When we began, there were people who oppose vaccines hang out in certain online groups,” said Albarracin. “But the two phenomena of opposing vaccines and certain other activity were observed at the same time, so we didn’t know which came first. Do people who oppose vaccines seek groups that oppose vaccination, or do people who join these groups by accident later learn to oppose vaccines?”

The study, which observed the tweets of more than 3,000 Americans, included surveys that questioned participants about their opinion of vaccines, their vaccination history and whether they discussed vaccinations with others. More than 115,000 tweets were also linked to the counties they came from so that researchers could get a better sense of what vaccine conversations were prevalent in the communities where they originated.

The study found that when fraud, “Big Pharma,” and children were part of Twitter discussions in November-February, there were fewer vaccinations in February-March and April-May. However, this association was absent when participants discussed vaccines with their family, friends, and physicians, indicating that real-world conversation can offset misinformation disseminated online.

“Most COVID vaccination fears are related to misinformation and conspiracy beliefs,” said Albarracin. “But in showing caution, they sowed it, prompting the incidents,” said Brinkworth, “if you’re kind and you’re understanding, could be far less expensive than lotteries and giveaways. “Honestly, my experience with people who question vaccines is that it’s a long, on-going conversation,” said Brinkworth. “If you’re really with anything, you’re clotting at some scale, more in severe infections. So severe COVID-19 is associated with widespread clotting. Systemic clotting can be triggered by many other non-infectious conditions. In terms of whether it’s associated with the vaccine, so far, all of those investigations have suggested that it’s not the vaccine that’s in play or has even necessarily triggered it.”

Some vaccine fears are rooted less in the shots and more in the systems behind them, added Brinkworth. Women often report incomplete medical exams, and undocumented workers fear that a trip to the clinic could lead to deportation. Studies have shown that in emergency departments and intensive care units African-Americans often receive pain medication and other medical aid later than their white counterparts. “Work in this area suggests a lot of these failures probably stem from unintentional or implicit bias, or misunderstandings about human biology and race,” said Brinkworth, “but the interaction with medical institutions regardless is negative and it creates disparities in patient well-being and survival.”

Perhaps the lure of million-dollar jackpots will be enough to convince some to overcome their hesitancy. Ultimately, the real gamble for those yet to get vaccinated is that the virus could continue to mutate, becoming more virulent and developing mechanisms that allow it to escape the vaccine. It’s that type of scenario that has led the World Health Organization to declare vaccine hesitancy one of the ten threats to global health.

The best solution, however, could be far less expensive than lotteries and giveaways. “Honestly, my experience with people who question vaccines is that it’s a long, on-going conversation,” said Brinkworth. “If you’re kind and you’re understanding, then you stand a chance of helping that person better understand the biological reality, assess that against their own fears, and see if that’s the right decision for them.”

And the biological reality, she added, is that the benefits of the vaccine far outweigh the known risk of a virus that’s killed millions around the globe.
Charting a **BRIGHTER FUTURE** during COVID-19

A cademic advisor Dawn McNulty knows how exploring interests and potential career paths can be challenging for students even during normal times. During the pandemic, the challenge can loom even larger. That’s why she considers the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences’ Life + Career Design in a Pandemic program to be so important.

This year, the Life + Career Design in a Pandemic program has offered students an opportunity to explore career options with others who have similar goals. Through meetings and other interactions, the students learn and encourage one another while being mentored by an advisor from within the College of LAS.

Plans are in place for the program to grow in the fall, with new experiences in the works and alumni recruited to help with the effort, according to Barbara Hancin, associate dean for student academic affairs.

"One of the great things about being at U of I is that you have all the resources of this big research institution, but it’s so easy to get lost—and it’s even easier right now in the pandemic to get lost," said McNulty, an advisor in the Department of Sociology who has helped advise students in the program. "And so, by joining one of these groups in LAS and Life + Career Design in a Pandemic, students had a touch point and somebody who could get them those resources."

To join, students filled out an online form that specified their semester goals in terms of coping with challenges posed by the pandemic, exploring interests, or preparing for job search. Then, students were assigned to a Life + Career Design community based on their responses.

According to Kirstin Wilcox, a group coach and director of the Humanities Professional Resource Center, about 25 students participated in groups in the fall semester and 20 students participated in the spring semester.

By Samantha Boyle

The pandemic marked a dramatic slowdown in operations for many organizations, but adaptability and an effective online presence helped the Writers Workshop, which has consulted writers on campus for more than 30 years, continue its services virtually unabated during COVID-19.

Despite the cessation of in-person activities on campus in March 2020, the 2019-2020 academic year was one the busiest for the Writers Workshop, as it tallied up more than 7,600 consultations. For 2020-21, during which its services were entirely online, the Writers Workshop increased consultations by 0.5 percent over 2019-2020.

The Writers Workshop established online consulting services in 2017 to cater toward students, staff, and faculty who may not be physically on campus in the first place. Little did they know in 2017 how important that expansion would be in 2020-21.

"We did a study (before the pandemic) to compare students’ experiences online and in-person face-to-face sessions when we first started our online tutoring, which was really useful for pre-COVID-19 because we had a good sense of what students felt worked and was valuable in the online sessions," said director Carolyn Wisniewski.

The Writers Workshop employs about 45 consultants, who offer help and advice on anything from resumes and cover letters to essays, class papers, and graduate school applications. Consultants help with everything in the writing process from formulating ideas to final drafts.

Since COVID-19, the Writers Workshop also offers appointments where writers can upload their documents to receive written feedback instead of a live appointment, which helps students with poor internet connections or better suits students in different time zones.

A strong devotion to service is apparent among the consultants, said Samuel (Ikem) Okoli, an undergraduate studying creative writing and psychology. He has worked at the Writers Workshop for three years and loves its "benevolent" culture.

"The workshop, especially when in person, seemed like a sanctuary for ‘help’ and helpful people, even on days that it tended to be busy," Okoli said. "The atmosphere has a refreshing spirit to it."

By Samantha Boyle and Dave Evensen
Images of research

Campus research and scholarship can produce some pretty compelling images. Check out some recent award-winners from the College of LAS.

1. “Fracas at the Nest” by Nick Antonson
   evolution, ecology, and behavior
   Three prothonotary warblers nestlings and a brown-headed cowbird nestling calling for food in a nest box at one of Nick Antonson’s study sites in southern Illinois. Antonson is researching how brood parasitic young survive when they are raised in highly variable rearing conditions. (First place, Graduate College Image of Research contest.)

2. “Differences in Perspective” by Isabella Rose Raynal
   political science
   The image relates to Isabella Rose Raynal’s research on the terminology used to describe unauthorized immigrants and the effects of those terms. One of the goals of her research is to help determine the opposing thought processes of political parties through their use of terminology. To reflect different perceptions of the same population, Raynal uses three different versions of the same image using different filters and edits. The image of a path symbolizes the route to get to the U.S. (Honorable mention, Graduate College Image of Research contest.)

3. “Midewin Naajan Atali’am”
   Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, Arsenal Bunker
   by Adam Farcus
   linguistics
   Adam Farcus describes this image as a visual documentation of a musical performance of theirs and a colleague’s in a decommissioned U.S. Army arsenal bunker. The photo depicts the mixing of phonetic and musical systems. Listen to a recording at go.las.illinois.edu/farcus (Second place, Graduate College Image of Research contest.)

4. “SARS-CoV-2 virus particle” by Hyun Park
   Center for Biophysics and Quantitative Biology
   Hyun Park, part of professor Emad Tajkhorshid’s virus research group, helped assemble a full-atom SARS-CoV-2 virus particle using Visual Molecular Dynamics software. “Just as Argus, Greek mythology’s all-seeing giant, watches vigilantly for enemies, the SARS-CoV-2 virus is a scary entity, endlessly seeking opportunities to attack humans with its many spike proteins that can sense human ACE2 receptors,” Park said. (Winner, special COVID-19 research category, Beckman Institute Research Image Contest.)

5. “Quantum Dynamics Via Path Integrals: Which Path Will the Molecule Choose?” by Reshmi Dani
   chemistry
   The image combines Reshmi Dani’s passions for painting and quantum mechanics. She studies how quantum systems evolve in time. “It is amusing how science mirrors life, where often we are faced with so many paths to choose from—the difference being that we can only choose one path while the atom chooses all,” Dani said. (Honorable mention, Graduate College Image of Research contest.)

6. The tibia of the Emocasca leafhopper by Shreyas Rajagopalan
   integrative biology honors and clinical psychology
   This scanning electron microscope image of the tibia of the Emocasca leafhopper allows for a better understanding of its topography. The small spikes may represent sensory receptors that help the leafhopper detect vibrations. (First place, undergraduate student category, Beckman Institute Research Image Contest.)
The debate over how to name the University of Illinois Urbana - Champaign was long, contentious, and went to the soul of campus.

The University of Illinois is currently updating and evaluating its brand identity standards—the colors, logos, words, and other ways that the university presents itself. It’s a necessary process to stay in step with evolving times, and never was the subject more contentious than in the late 19th and early 20th centuries when campus debated the most prominent identifier of all: the university name itself.

The University of Illinois was founded in 1867 as Illinois Industrial University, in line with other land grant universities formed by the 1862 Morrill Act. Over the next few years, however, dissatisfaction arose over the word “industrial,” as the term suggested a trade-oriented education, or a reformatory or charitable institution in which compulsory manual labor figured prominently, according to late campus historian Winton Solberg.

Students in 1881 voted 250-20 to switch the name to the University of Illinois. A column in the Feb. 2, 1881, Daily Illini, by W.A. Mansfield, who went on to earn a degree in literature and arts (a predecessor to the liberal arts and sciences), said that “industrial” was misleading, with the school regularly receiving applications from people looking for homes for at-risk youth. It cited one such application to the regent’s office that read, in part, “I have two boys, nine and eleven years old, and four girls from two to nine years old. Buried my wife on the 1st of May, last. Health is poor. I have no means of support for them, and I want to get them where they will be cared for together.”

Wrote Mansfield: “I often wonder why the school was not christened as an orphans home in the first place. This is the Industrial University, but it is not an industrial school.”

Thus the university name was changed to the University of Illinois in 1885, but the controversies over the name had only just begun. As more departments and programs emerged, campus began generating more print materials and correspondence than ever before. Urbana was most often listed as the university’s official location, but over time the Champaign Chamber of Commerce and other citizens of Champaign grew more insistent that their city should be included in the official campus address. Their opponents, meanwhile, argued for the address to remain Urbana as most campus buildings were located within Urbana city limits.

According to a research project by the University of Illinois Archives, the issue finally came before the Board of Trustees and President Edmund James in 1906. Notes from that meeting aren’t available, but attendees apparently struck a compromise as official correspondence from the president’s office and trustees reports soon bore the name of both cities.

In 1916, “Urbana-Champaign” had become a common way to distinguish the flagship campus from the university’s medical campus in Chicago.

The use of Urbana-Champaign, however, was not formalized for decades. Many official documents from campus, including from units such as the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, listed only Urbana as the location for the University of Illinois through at least the 1950s. To complicate matters, campus references—official and unofficial—occasionally listed the location as “Champaign-Urbana” instead of “Urbana-Champaign.” For example, the location of the University of Illinois Foundation, formed in 1935, was listed as the “University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, Ill.,” in its constitution. The trust agreement and lease for the Illini Union Building read that the agreement was created “to provide the Illini Union Building for the students of the University on the Champaign-Urbana campus,” according to the archives, and, during the construction of Willard Airport in the 1940s, the Trustees referred to “the University of Illinois Airport at Champaign-Urbana.”

Student references to campus often (not surprisingly) deviated from the official line. Through at least the 1930s, students broadcasting on WILL, the campus radio station, reported their location as the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. The still-linking campus nickname “Shampoo-Banana,” appearing as early as the 1970s and perhaps sooner than that, spun off the practice of listing Champaign before Urbana. And the debate over which city comes first in the name never really died. As one Reddit post from 2016 read, “It’s Champaign-Urbana to locals.” Retorted another, “Urbana and West Urbana.”

University growth solidified adoption of Urbana-Champaign as the official designation, however. As the University of Illinois’ Chicago campus grew in the 1960s, its official name became the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle. This created more need to distinguish the Urbana-Champaign campus from its northern partner, and in most cases the official name for the flagship campus was listed as the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. In the 1990s, when the University of Illinois System grew to include Sangamon State University (which was renamed University of Illinois at Springfield), the acronym UIC, UDC, and UIS grew even more common. Campus acronyms weren’t even a consideration by W.A. Mansfield, who wrote that influential column in 1881 as one of his last acts as a student before graduation (he went on to become a doctor). His column still resonates today, however. Dropping the original name for the University of Illinois was more than just alleviating confusion; despite overwhelming student support for a new name, there were many in the state who believed that true, to the word “industrial,” campus should be narrowly focused on the trades. They threatened to withhold their support from the university if it deviated from that role.

The name “University of Illinois” needed a strong defense, and Mansfield—among others—gave it one.

“The work of the university, open to all who are far enough advanced to undertake it, in agriculture, architecture, mechanics, engineering, chemistry, in literature and in science, shows far more plainly than words can show that there is no class distinction here,” Mansfield wrote. “The language of the grant... says, ‘The leading object of such schools shall be to promote the liberal and practical education of industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions of life.’ This is the best statement of the aim of the University today. Its work is what all classes of our people might wish it to be.”

By Dave Eversen and Kimberly Beber

Top left: view of the Old University Building, c. 1870s. Bottom left: three towers from left to right, including the Law Building, now replaced by the Info Unives, University Hall, and the corner tower of the Library Building, now Alfred Hall, as seen from the Natural History Building, c. 1910. Top right: aerial view of the stadium, Armoury, and Champaign, 1942. (Images courtesy of the University of Illinois Archives.)

Background image: Aerial view of the Urbana-Champaign campus looking north. (Photo by U of I Public Affairs: Seay-Knoblauch.)
LAS by the numbers

LAS Success

Results of the latest Illini Success survey revealed some promising career tracks among August 2019, December 2019, and May 2020 graduates (the latest to be surveyed) within six months of earning their bachelor’s degrees.

180,000 strong

You’re a member of one of the strongest and most brilliant groups in the country: the College of LAS alumni. Learn more about volunteering, supporting students, offering and receiving career advice, awards, events, joining the alumni council, and other opportunities to get involved and make a difference. las.illinois.edu/alumni

180,000 strong

Average annual salary among literatures, cultures, and linguistics graduates. That represents an increase of $16,382 over the previous year, the highest increase of any discipline.

$68,857

90 percent

of new LAS alumni secured first destinations—including jobs (and military service), continuing education, or volunteer/service positions.

Average annual salary among those who took jobs.

$58,057

41 percent

of new LAS alumni took jobs after earning their undergraduate degrees.

Rate of finding first positions (jobs, continuing education, or volunteer/service) by chemical engineering and chemistry alumni, the highest in LAS.

93 percent

48 percent

of new LAS alumni pursued further education after earning their undergraduate degrees.

A bike tour of campus.

The Altgeld Chimes 100th anniversary celebration.

A day-in-the-life of a current student.

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›› go.las.illinois.edu/YouTube

90 percent

of new LAS alumni took jobs after earning their undergraduate degrees.

93 percent

of new LAS alumni secured first destinations—including jobs (and military service), continuing education, or volunteer/service positions.

180,000 strong

Average annual salary among literatures, cultures, and linguistics graduates. That represents an increase of $16,382 over the previous year, the highest increase of any discipline.

$68,857

90 percent

of new LAS alumni secured first destinations—including jobs (and military service), continuing education, or volunteer/service positions.

Average annual salary among those who took jobs.

$58,057

41 percent

of new LAS alumni took jobs after earning their undergraduate degrees.

Rate of finding first positions (jobs, continuing education, or volunteer/service) by chemical engineering and chemistry alumni, the highest in LAS.

93 percent

48 percent

of new LAS alumni pursued further education after earning their undergraduate degrees.
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