



# COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES NEWSLETTER

## From Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences Elisabeth Mermann-Jozwiak



Dear Friends,

I am excited to share this issue of the newsletter with you and hope that you are impressed, as I am, with some of the wonderful work that faculty, staff, and students are doing in the College of Arts and Sciences. The stories in this newsletter show how seriously we take our Jesuit, Catholic, and humanist tradition, and how this mission manifests itself in our various programs and initiatives.

Take global engagement, for instance. The Jesuit commitment to global learning is evident in the variety of study abroad experiences Gonzaga University offers, and the College is working on a number of initiatives to ensure that all of our students are exposed to global issues. Here, we tell you about our recent implementation of a second language requirement that asks students to demonstrate intermediate proficiency in a language other than their native tongue. Not only does language learning have demonstrable cognitive benefits, but it also brings about openness to other cultures and new ways of thinking.

As well, you will find features on experiential learning, in particular faculty-student research collaborations that directly benefit students from diverse backgrounds and help form close ties between students and their mentors. Outreach to the community has always been part of Gonzaga's mission, and it is evident in the new Theology Institute for High School students, funded by the Lilly Foundation. The photo essay of the College Expo last October further highlights the diverse activities of the College and in our new Centers for Public Humanities and Undergraduate Research and Creative Inquiry.

These accomplishments would not be possible without the very hard work of our faculty and staff. I am proud to be part of a group of such dedicated individuals who care deeply for student success, share the values expressed in Gonzaga's mission, and always pursue the goals of justice and truth.

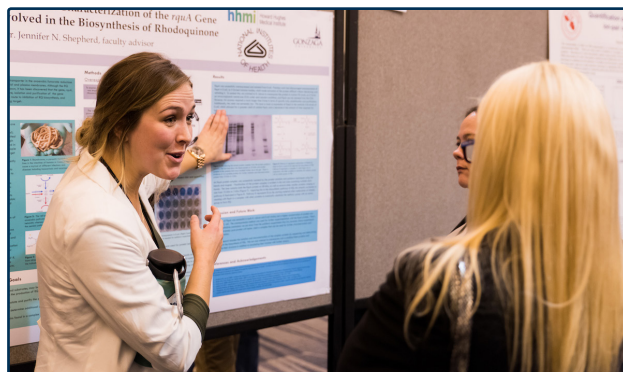
I am greatly appreciative of the work that went into producing this newsletter as well. My thanks go to Tony Payne, the College's marketing coordinator, and to Megan Robinson, our intern, who is a senior in the English program.

We hope that you follow us on Facebook and Twitter, and that you will share your stories with us. As always, we want to hear from you!

Elisabeth Mermann-Jozwiak, Ph.D.

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Allison Zander '17 explains her research poster at November's Murdock College Science Research Conference, where she won the Murdock Poster Prize for Biochemistry

# NEW LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT REFLECTS COLLEGE MISSION

In line with the College of Arts & Sciences' mission to prepare graduates for an increasingly globalized world, all students majoring in the College must now demonstrate proficiency in a second language.

"Language study is foundational," says Dr. Matt Bahr, Associate Dean of the College, who worked on the committee to develop the requirement, which went into effect Fall 2016. "A robust language requirement positions the College to equip greater numbers of graduates to live and work abroad and to make meaningful contributions to the increasingly diverse communities in this country."

Gonzaga's departments of Modern Languages and Classic Civilizations offer an array of languages, including Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Greek, Italian, Latin, Japanese and Spanish, and have expanded their course offerings to accommodate an influx in enrollment.

"Something like eighty percent of students admitted to Gonzaga studied Spanish in high school," says Diane Birginal, Spanish instructor and Modern Language Testing Coordinator. Under the new requirement, students in the College who choose to continue the study of a language begun in high school must show competence at the 201-course level, while those pursuing a new language must progress through 102. Alternatively, students entering the College with more advanced language skills may test out of the requirement altogether through the College's proficiency exam. This system ensures that while every student is competent in a particular language, it will not require any student to take more than two semesters of language, nor will it penalize students who wish to begin learning a new language at Gonzaga.

"When incoming freshmen take the interest survey, one question is 'Do you want to take a language your first semester at Gonzaga?'" explains Birginal. "Almost half of incoming freshmen in Arts and Sciences answered yes. There is a strong interest, even if they're not going to major in it."

Command of a second language leads to opportunities both before and after graduation. Approximately half of all Gonzaga students study abroad during their four years, with programs available in locations spanning the globe. Whatever their language of study, the experience of immersion can only enhance their language skills and cultural competency.

Post-graduation, Gonzaga alumni have gone on to live, work and serve internationally, and that number continues to grow. They work with for-profit and not-for-profit enterprises around the world, in professions as diverse as the graduates themselves. As of February 2016, eighteen Gonzaga alumni were actively serving abroad in the Peace Corps, bringing the all-time total to 338.

Whether or not students eventually choose to live internationally, language study is vital. According to Birginal, the true value of learning another language is "being able to see the world through the eyes of the other," an essential component of recognizing the dignity of the human person.

In keeping with the College's commitment to educating men and women for others, language opens pathways of empathy. By coming to understand other cultures, we come to understand ourselves.

## IN BRIEF

### NEH Chair Makes Historic Visit to Gonzaga

Never before had a chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities visited eastern Washington until the College welcomed Chairman William D. Adams on November 14.

In his lecture, sponsored by the College's new Center for Public Humanities, Adams told a

packed crowd in Cataldo Hall how the study of the humanities helped him make sense of his experience as a veteran of the Vietnam War and how the humanities can help other veterans.



### Students Earn Research Awards

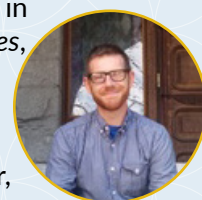
Last November, two Seniors took top honors at the Murdock College Science Research Conference.

Alison Zander won the Murdock Poster Prize in Biochemistry. Alison's research adviser was Professor Dr. Jennifer Shepherd.

Riley Meister won the John VanZytveld Physical Sciences Award for his oral presentation. Riley's research adviser was Dr. Osasere Evbuomwan.

### Lassiter Wins Language Sciences Prize

Assistant Professor Dr. Charles Lassiter's article in *Language Sciences*, "Aristotle and Distributed Language: Capacity, Matter, Structure, and Language," won The Sebeok-Love Award, the journal's honor for the best article from the previous year as chosen by the Editorial Board.



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# DEVELOPMENT AWARDS SUPPORT FACULTY & STUDENT RESEARCH

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Over the past year, eleven faculty from eight departments have received over \$20,000 for individual and collaborative projects through development funds from the Dean's Office of the College of Arts & Sciences.

"Development awards for faculty impact students as professors develop plans for courses that are state-of-the-art, creative, and innovative," says Dean Elisabeth Mermann-Jozwiak. Such is the purpose of these donor-funded awards, which include the Dean's Faculty Development Fund, an award for Faculty in the Arts, and the Faculty and Student Research fund. All long-term and tenure-stream faculty are eligible to apply.

What follows is a small sample of faculty using the funding and how the awards are affecting undergraduates.

## **Dean's Faculty Development Fund**

Associate Professor of History Ann Ostendorf received two Faculty Development Awards over the past year, the first for an archival visit to Clayton Library Center for Genealogical Research in Houston, Texas to study Romani populations in colonial America. Her second award will cover the cost of research materials during an upcoming trip to the Maryland State Archives for further work on her manuscript, *Gypsies and Roma: Perceptions and Realities in American Culture and History*.

Though she does not teach a course on the subject, Ostendorf sees her research fitting perfectly with her teaching philosophy. "I frame all my teaching as to explain systems of power and injustice," she says. "The story of the various Romani peoples who came to or were brought to the Americas has almost never been told."

## **Faculty in the Arts Award**

Truly bridging the arts and the sciences, Dance Program director Suzanne Ostersmith and Biology Professor Dr. Brook Swanson received a joint Faculty in the Arts Award for their collaboration in creating and teaching the First Year Seminar, "The Art and Science of Dance." This past fall, Ostersmith and Swanson taught the course for the first time and raved about the results.

For the cumulative assessment, students worked in teams to express complex scientific problems through dance. "The students committed completely," Ostersmith says, "and [they] created truly compelling work combining the fundamentals of dance with the science they had studied throughout the semester." In course evaluations, students reported better retention and a deeper understanding of the material and its connections to other subjects.

Dean Mermann-Jozwiak echoes how important it is to "break down disciplinary silos," given the complexity of modern problems. "It takes cross-disciplinary teams to creatively solve problems and to effect change," she says.

## **Faculty and Student Research Fund**

Reaching across another disciplinary aisle, Associate Professor of Psychology Dr. Vinai Norasakkunkit and Assistant Professor of Philosophy Dr. Charles Lassiter received an award from the Faculty and Student Research Fund for their proposal, "Can Marginalizing Situations Cause Culturally Deviant Behaviors?" In his previous research, Norasakkunkit had found that young people at risk of societal marginalization "tended to have values and motivational styles that deviated from what was culturally normative in their own societies." The new collaborative project with Lassiter examines the causal direction between marginalizing situations and culturally deviant behavior.

This spring, twelve students will work with Norasakkunkit to collect data for the project, and he hopes some will present at the National Conference for Undergraduate Research in April. Several students may also help Lassiter refine the computer simulation method they will use to model their data. The professors are developing a cross-listed and co-taught philosophy and psychology course on the complex relationship between mind and society, which will also incorporate their methods and findings.

As Norasakkunkit says, "There is only so far each of us can go if we stick to what we know only within our own disciplines."



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# COLLEGE EXPO SHOWCASES WHAT'S NEW AT THE HEART & SOUL OF THE UNIVERSITY

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At Fall Family Weekend 2016, the College of Arts & Sciences Expo: New Initiatives, Gonzaga's largest and oldest school launched new Centers and Initiatives, installed endowed professorships, and showcased some of the faculty and students who help make the College the heart and soul of the University.

*Mary Farrell was installed as the Kreielsheimer Professor of Art, and welcomed guests to the Gonzaga print studio for a demonstration of her craft as both printmaker and educator.*



*New Coughlin Chair in Philosophy Michael Tkacz discussed what has driven his development as a philosopher with Austin Caswell '17.*

*The Center for Public Humanities launched with a panel of faculty involved in public humanities, including Tod Marshall, CPH Director Brian Cooney, Kathleen Jeffs, Anna Marie Medina, and Lisa Silvestri.*

*The panel discussed recent projects involving veterans and their stories.*







The Center for Undergraduate Research & Creative Inquiry hosted a student-research poster session, which took over Hughes Hall.

Here, Ondraya Romero '17 and Karli McIntyre '17 discuss their research with Sherry Wood, lab coordinator and instructor in the Department of Biology.



The Digital Humanities Initiative debuted at the College Expo with three great events.

Above, Kiah Drogensen '17 and Megan Lantsberger '17 discuss their work digitizing archival photos of Jesuit mission-work in Alaska during DHL's Student Symposium, Also, a faculty panel discussed their work in integrating computer technology into humanities classrooms, and Foley Library hosted interactive exhibits featuring photos from the Jesuit Archives.



Washington State Poet Laureate Tod Marshall is driven to bring poetry to the people, and he did so at Fall Family Weekend with his Poetry Yawps, a series of scheduled poetic interruptions to Saturday's programming. Above, he addresses the crowd at the lunchtime Pep Rally.

**College of  
Arts & Sciences**  
**EXPO**  
New Initiatives

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# UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH EXPERIENCE PROPELS ARLENE CHANDRA'S SUCCESS

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"I knew I wanted to be a social worker since fifth grade," said Arlene Chandra '14 over the phone this past fall. She was on the bus, heading to class at the University of Michigan, where she graduated in December with a Masters of Social Work.

Even before graduating, Chandra was already living the life of a social worker, on-call twenty-four hours a day to provide support for her clients. On the phone, she rattled off a list of her other obligations. In her final term, she was enrolled full-time and working over forty hours a week between her social-work internship, a job with University of Michigan's Blavin Scholars Program—which provides professional development services to undergraduates who have spent time in foster care— and working in a pair of on-campus libraries.

A first-generation college student, Chandra entered Gonzaga University majoring in psychology. It was Dr. Nicole Willms' Introduction to Sociology course which she says "changed my life." She added sociology as a second major. "I became a sociologist because of Dr. Willms."

In her senior year, for one of the two theses she completed, "Fostering Care for Foster Children - DNA Doesn't Make a Family, Love Does," Chandra researched the service gaps for children who had spent time in foster care. Her second thesis, "The College Hook-Up Culture of Mating, Dating and Waiting: Religion vs. Religiosity," required that she conduct interviews across the student body. For both theses, she says, "I did participant observation, content analysis, interviews, focus groups, and surveys."

Chandra attributes her success in graduate school to the skills she developed doing undergraduate research and to the faculty who helped her along the way. "I haven't come across any graduate students with more research experience than what I gained at Gonzaga. Nobody has done as much research or received as much support as I did with my cohort."

That experience has real-life consequences. Using the interview, research, and presentation skills she developed at GU, she is already writing and delivering court testimony on her clients' behalfs. She is aware of her work's impact on peoples' lives. "Social workers assist in making the deciding vote," she says. "Is a child going to be taken away from



*Arlene Chandra '14 with children from the Kamal Loachan Society*

their parents or not?"

After her first year of graduate work, Chandra was awarded the University of Michigan's Child Welfare and Global Special Studies Scholarship to travel and work in India. She spent much of her time working with New Delhi's marginalized street children, teaching them math, reading, writing, and English. Most importantly, she was a caring presence for them. "The most touching time of my life was with these kids," she says. "I feel like I really impacted and touched their lives."

The experience inspired her first children's book, *Family is Friendship: Light the Magic Within You*, published in November 2016. The profits from the book will support the work of the Kamal Loachan Society, the organization she worked with in New Delhi. She says, only partially joking, "That's my dream. To make money and give it away."

Her ultimate goal, though, is to open a foster care and adoption agency in her hometown of Vancouver, Washington, which she plans to do after obtaining her social work licensure in the state, a process that could take three years or more.

Until then, she will continue her many works as a woman for others. Whether supporting her clients, writing children's books, or starting her own agency, she promises, "You will see me out there."

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# GRANT ALLOWS FRANCIS YOUTH INSTITUTE TO CONNECT THEOLOGY & NATURE

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In July 2016, Gonzaga University hosted the first ever Francis Youth Institute (FYI), a week-long theology program for area high-school students. Co-directed by Drs. Joseph Mudd and Anastasia Wendlinder of the Department of Religious Studies, the curriculum draws its inspiration from Pope Francis' *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home* and its discussion of faith and sustainability. For one week, students heard daily presentations from Gonzaga faculty, went on excursions, and took time to reflect, grappling with theological questions and "trying to live out answers," says Dr. Mudd.

Faith "can be a serious thing to deal with," he says, "as serious as physics or calculus. Being religious is not just a bunch of nice feelings. It's about a rigorous investigation of your world for the sake of transforming it into something better."

The program is funded by a \$294,415 grant from the Lilly Endowment as part of their High School Youth Theology Institutes initiative, which aims to engage young men and women with important theological questions and contemporary issues. The grant will fund the Institute and substantial scholarships for students for its first four years, after which FYI plans to secure other funding to continue the program.

In its first year, a diverse group of twenty-two high-school students stayed at Gonzaga, while eight GU undergraduate volunteers led small groups, and Philosophy and Religious Studies faculty presented on topics ranging from faith in the digital age to the

ethics of food production. The students also rafted the Spokane River, hiked nearby Dishman Hills, and witnessed sustainability in action at Catholic Charities' Food For All Farm. Evenings were time for liturgy, prayer, and reflection on the morning's lecture and day's events, both individually and in small groups.

FYI exemplifies the College of Arts & Sciences' commitment to educating women and men as leaders and stewards in service of the common good. Megan O'Malley '17, who served as an undergraduate mentor, volunteered because, "The opportunity to explore ecological justice from a lens of faith sounded exciting, and I was excited to be a part of Gonzaga's effort to engage students in a living ministry. I'm attracted to a faith that does justice, and this sounded like just that." Recalling a lecture from the week, she explained how Professor of Religious Studies Dr. Patrick McCormick "urged us to not try and figure out how to get to heaven, but to work to make this a heavenly place to live."

Looking forward, Dr. Mudd and the FYI team have a simple goal for next summer: "Make it better." The team wishes to grow the number of high-school participants and plans to engage undergraduate mentors earlier in planning. They also hope to reach out to local ministry teams in order to provide training for youth ministers in guiding students toward those higher theological questions and making our shared earth a heavenly place to live.



**Find the Francis Youth Institute online at**

**[www.gonzaga.edu/FYIgonzaga](http://www.gonzaga.edu/FYIgonzaga)**

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“The opportunity to explore ecological justice from a lens of faith sounded exciting. I’m attracted to a faith that does justice.”

- Megan O'Malley '17  
FYI Undergraduate Mentor



High-school students and their Gonzaga peer mentors stop to pose during an FYI nature excursion to Dishman Hills

## IN BRIEF

### Mr. Burns Honored



**Mr. Burns:** A Post-Electric Play, which ran in November 2016 at Magnuson Theatre, was one of three regional productions invited to the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival for Region 7.

**Mr. Burns** was directed for GU by Assistant Professor Charlie Pepiton.

The cast and production team will travel to Denver this February to perform the play at the festival, making them eligible for national Kennedy Center honors.

### Henning Awarded Fellowship

Philosophy Professor Dr. Brian Henning has been named Visiting Fellow at the Konrad Lorenz Institute in Austria.

This summer, he will travel to the institute, located near Vienna, to continue work on a book project on environmental metaphysics.

The KLI is an international center for advanced studies in theoretical biology, with a focus on the development and evolution of biological and cultural complexity.

## FACULTY & STUDENT RESEARCHERS TACKLE BIG QUESTIONS WITH SMALL ARACHNIDS

For three undergraduates, Kayla Gunther '18, DeShae Dillard '19, and David Dommermuth '17, summer 2016 was all about spiders. The three worked as research assistants for Dr. Steven K. Schwartz, biology instructor and behavioral ecologist, whose report, "Males Can Benefit from Sexual Cannibalism Facilitated by Self-Sacrifice," was recently published in *Current Biology*. Schwartz's report examined the peculiar postcopulatory behavior of the dark fishing spider, though the undergraduate research assistants faced a broader question: what species of arachnids call Spokane home?

### The Other 97%

"It's always exciting to take an organism like spiders, behind which there is so much stigma, and show people why I am so interested in them," says Dillard, one of Schwartz's research assistants. "Usually after a conversation, people are far more fascinated by spiders than they were coming in."

The team spent evenings collecting specimens in the dark, using headlamps to look for reflections off spiders' eyes. During the day, they took the specimens back to the lab for identification. Each had to be meticulously labeled, including the location, date, collection method, and name of the collector. A single excursion might take six hours, but it could take weeks to identify their finds. "We get a lot of different species that come into our lab," Dillard says. "Identifying requires skill and often so much time that you could spend a couple hours trying to identify a single specimen."

The team documented 22 unique spider species from six field sites around Spokane and one site near Reardan, Washington, despite the fact that amateur identification keys list only three spider species for the entire Inland Northwest.



DeShae Dillard '19, left, inspects a spider specimen on an evening research trip with Dr. Steven Schwartz, right

Photos for this article courtesy of Dr. Steven K. Schwartz

Dommermuth, another research assistant, explains, "Most of what we know about the planet is based on the organisms that are large and obvious—vertebrate animals and green plants." Larger organisms are "easier to discover and identify," he says, but only make up about three percent of the planet's biodiversity. The other 97 percent—including many small, unseen species like arachnids, insects, and other invertebrates—often goes unstudied or understudied. With the team's thorough work, however, that void of research can begin to be filled.



### Big Questions

Dr. Schwartz's recently published report on the dark fishing spider, *Dolomedes tenebrosus*, was based on his doctoral and postdoctoral work in Nebraska and addressed a more specific question: given that the female dark fishing spider always eats her mate post copulation, what, if any, is the benefit for the male spider?

"We found that there's something about eating the male that results in an increase in the number of spiderlings, and a slight but significant increase in spiderling mass. That increase in mass translates to a survival advantage," explains Schwartz. In other words, the male's self-sacrifice provides a benefit for his offspring that other food items (e.g., a cricket) cannot. The question Dr. Schwartz hopes to answer in the future is, "What is it about a *D. tenebrosus* male that results in this benefit? Is it a specific chemical or a limiting nutrient?" A definitive answer would improve scientists' understanding of this curious mating behavior, and such knowledge is far from trivial.

"It seems really basic," Dommermuth says, "but how can we be expected to preserve this planet's biodiversity if we do not even understand it?"

**Learn more about undergraduate research at Gonzaga at**

**[www.gonzaga.edu/CURCI](http://www.gonzaga.edu/CURCI)**

Articles by Megan Robinson '17

Edited by Tony Payne

[gonzaga.edu/CAS](http://gonzaga.edu/CAS)

Gonzaga University, 502 E. Boone Ave., Spokane, WA 99258-0089