



GOVERNORS STATE UNIVERSITY

college of

Arts & SCIENCES

2017–2018 STUDENT-PRODUCED NEWSMAGAZINE

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I will be crossing the stage as part of the Class of 2018 with my Bachelor's degree in Advertising and Public Relations. I am an intersectional feminist with an undying need to see the world.

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I am a Fine Arts major here at Governors State focusing on photography and printmaking. When I'm not in the studio creating or out shooting photos, I enjoy taking in as much live music as humanly possible.

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COVER IMAGE: "CHINATOWN SHUFFLE" - TYLER SANTOR



welcome

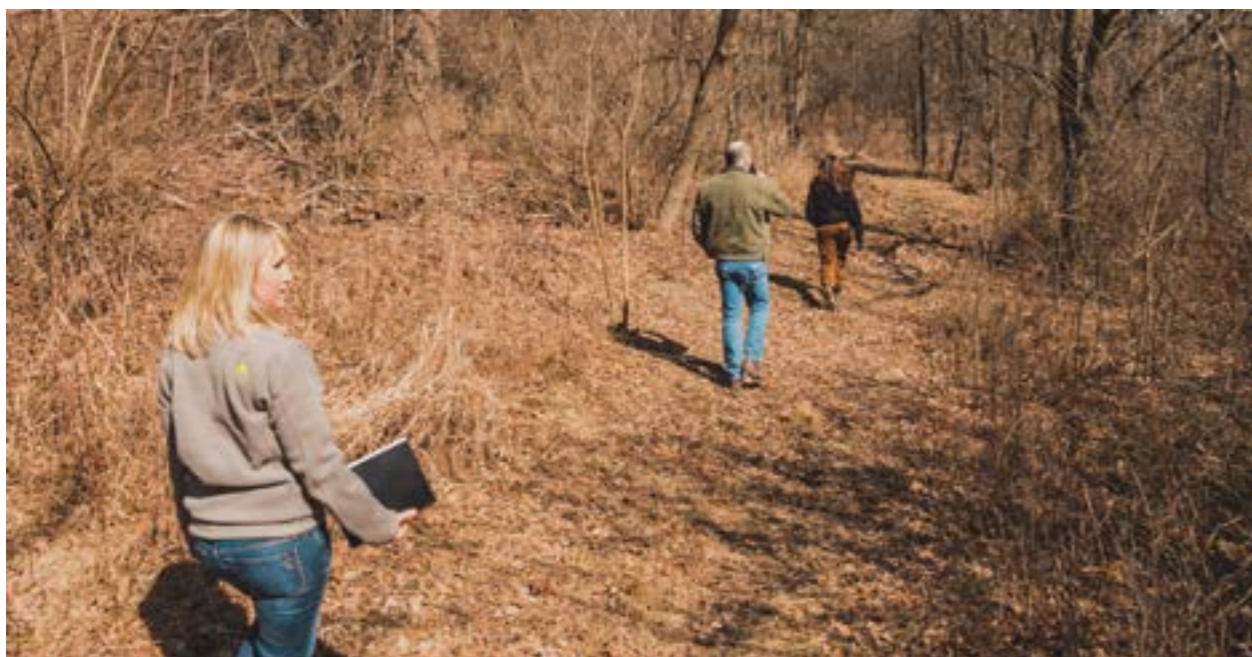
to the second annual College of Arts and Sciences newsmagazine, an endeavor aimed at providing students with one of the many hands-on learning experiences available to them here at Governors State University. Once again, Laura White, a faculty member in our English program, has worked closely with a talented collection of inspired students—Taylor Smith, Danuta Chlebek, Tyler Santor, Paschon Pruitt, and Elizabeth Neris—to produce the final product that you have in your virtual hands. The stories covered in this newsmagazine once again take a look at the opportunities available to students here on our campus and in the broader community through the lens of students themselves. The stories that you find here— a special course on War, Trauma, and the Humanities; GSU’s Biology Field Station; the Cyberdefense Club; and GSU’s new Health and Life Sciences Pathway; among others—will once again demonstrate that GSU is “a model of academic excellence, innovation, diversity, and responsible citizenship.”

Governors State University continues to offer “an exceptional and accessible education that prepares students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to succeed in a global society.” We are a hidden gem of a university, and we can use your help. If you are interested in giving back, we want to hear from you. You can, for example, donate to our foundation and support our Center for Performing Arts or our Summer STEAM Camp. We are also always looking for volunteers. Finally, if you can assist us in placing our exceptional students in meaningful internships, we will work closely with you. As always, I will strive to be a good steward of the College. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at amarak@govst.edu.

BIOLOGY FIELD RESEARCH IN GSU'S BACKYARD



“Hundreds of plants and animals call the Field Station home, making it a beautiful and serene place to study or take a stroll.”



Students studying science venture into the Biological Field Station to take their own samples for research and analysis.

One of GSU's best kept secrets is in its own backyard, and it starts with a grass path that looks like it leads to nowhere. Actually, this path will lead you into the depths of GSU's Biological Field Station, which is both a source of samples as well as a lab for students and professors.

Walking through the Field Station, you'll see three ponds covered in beautiful lotus during the spring and summer months. One of the ponds, Mendelson Pond, has supplied Dr. John Yunger, Professor of Biology, with 20 years' worth of data for long-term population dynamics of aquatic species. Undergraduate students take boats into the ponds with a dredge to see critters living in the soil and to monitor variations in the water, including water temperature and dissolved oxygen levels. Across from Mendelson Pond is a small house that is used for onsite lectures and research. Research is conducted in the lower level where students carry in over 180 pounds of dirt every fall for analysis. At least 8 different courses have projects throughout the field station allowing students from a variety of disciplines to experience the joys of nature and hands-on research experience.

Another project taking place within the Field Station is prairie restoration. Dr. Mary Carrington, Professor of Biology, is a botanist who has created 64 different plots to distinguish the effects of invasive species. She and her students are also trying to get a count of the different plant species. Plant species can spread by the wind, animals, or even people walking; when these species are dispersed to locations they are not native to, they become invasive. Dr. Carrington is working to figure out exactly how invasive some of the plants are.

Hundreds of plants and animals call the Field Station home, making it a beautiful and serene place to study or take a stroll. Close to the water's edge, visitors can see beaver lodges and spaces where they stash food supplies for winter. These resourceful animals make their way to and from the trees to carry wood and they create runways to make their work more efficient. To catch a glimpse of beaver activity, come out after 6 pm; they are most active in the evening. These beavers, along with hundreds of other animals, are waiting for you at the Biological Field Station.

BY TAYLOR SMITH

PHOTOS BY RAHSAAN TAYLOR



“AT LEAST 8 DIFFERENT COURSES HAVE PROJECTS THROUGHOUT THE FIELD STATION, ALLOWING STUDENTS FROM A VARIETY OF DISCIPLINES TO EXPERIENCE NATURE AND GET HANDS-ON RESEARCH EXPERIENCE.”

A LEAP FROM GSU TO THE WHITE HOUSE

GSU Alum Nicholas Dinger (Criminal Justice 2017) completed a prestigious White House internship in fall 2017.

This is a story about what happens when an ambitious student meets a dedicated professor whose mentorship takes him further than he thought possible. That student is Nicholas Dinger, and that professor is Dr. Bruce Wilson. The result was a prestigious White House internship.

As a Criminal Justice major, Dinger credits a good deal of his success to Dr. Wilson's extraordinary mentorship and his focus on developing character. Dinger recalled the first day of class: "He taught us the four principles in life: Professionalism, Integrity, Ethics, and Standards." Dinger believed in those principles, and they became his major compass.

Not only did Dr. Wilson influence him as a mentor, but he, along with other faculty in the Criminal Justice program, inspired him to "reach for the stars," and assisted him in applying for the internship. Their encouragement proved

fruitful. "When I received my acceptance letter, I was grabbing coffee with a friend. I was literally caught off guard. All the planning, wishing, and hoping that I would be selected was finally over! The day I received my acceptance letter was the best day of my life!"

Dinger's internship has set him on a path of lifelong public service; he will

continue by studying law. He hopes his story inspires other GSU students to strive boldly for success in the same way he was encouraged to. His advice for current students? "Reject being average. Always dream big!"

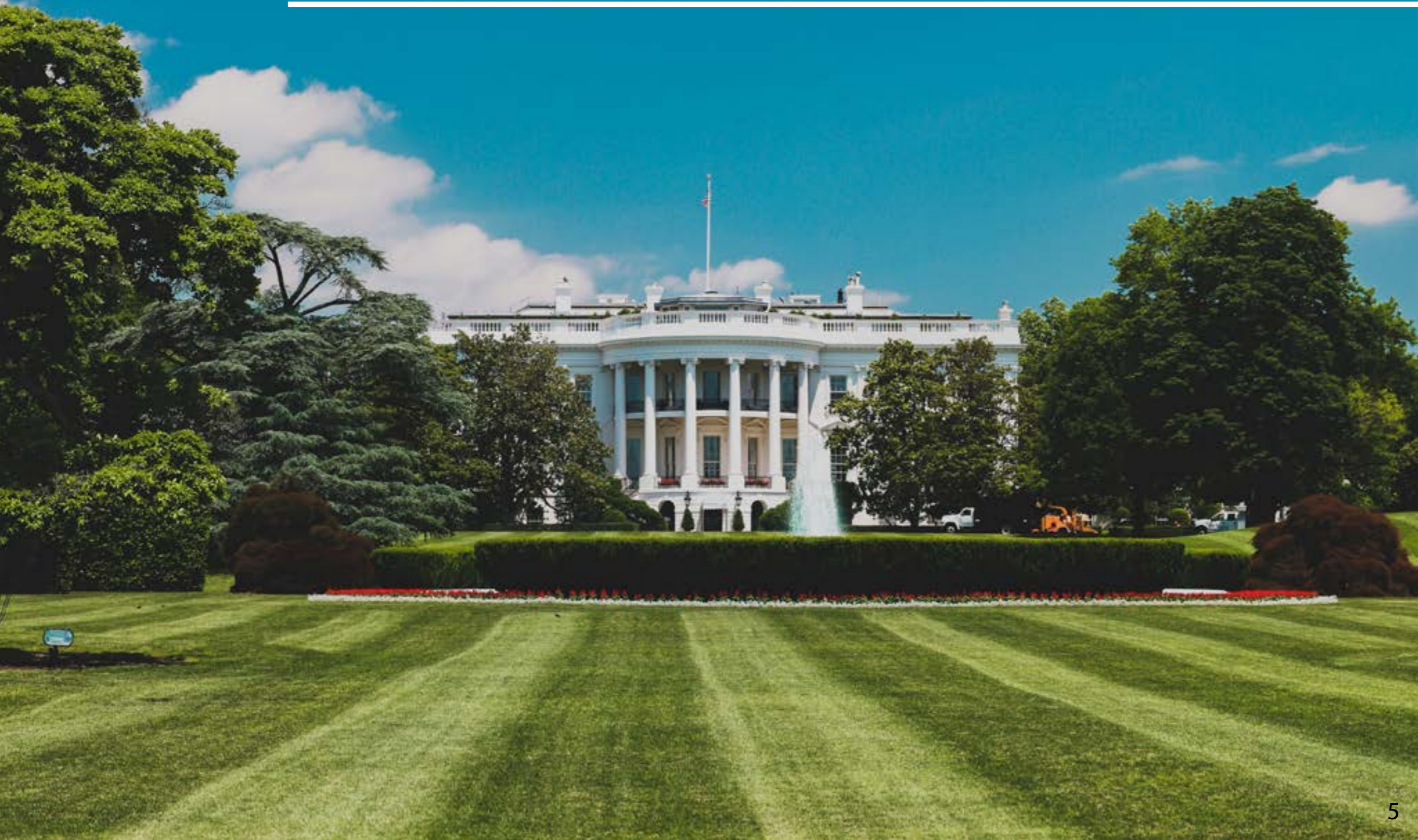
"When I received my acceptance letter, I was grabbing coffee with a friend. I was literally caught off guard. All the planning, wishing and hoping that I would be selected was finally over! The day I received my acceptance letter was the best day of my life!"

"A special thank you to the Criminal Justice Department at Governors State University. Furthermore, Dr. Wilson and Dr. Jones were instrumental in assisting during my process in entering the prestigious White House internship."
—Nicholas Dinger

By PASCHON PRUITT



“REJECT BEING AVERAGE; ALWAYS DREAM BIG!”



CAS FUNDS A NEW VIRTUAL REALITY LAB

Students participating in this interdisciplinary course acquire hands-on experience in a quickly growing field.

Virtual Reality is one of the most up-and-coming technologies for professionals and gamers alike. Luckily for GSU students, they have the opportunity to learn this new technology hands on. This kind of learning is a specialty of Professor Ya Lu Lin, multidisciplinary artist, who has brought her passion for art into the school by teaching GSU's first ever course in the brand new Virtual Reality lab. The versatility and introductory nature of this class makes it accessible to students from all majors.

Students from many disciplines can benefit because virtual reality has been implemented in a variety of professions. Surgeons use simulations to practice surgeries, and marketers use this technology to let clients have a first-hand experience with a product or service before it goes on the market.

The virtual reality system, Oculus, is equipped with a headset that is worn over the eyes, headphones, and hand controllers. These tools combined truly immerse the user in the virtual environment. One student, Angela Garbas, created an environment that places the user in a kitchen; the user feels like the size of a mouse. Tables, cabinets, and appliances tower overhead. Another student, Steve Sakhnini, created an interactive environment, allowing the user to enter a house with windows and doors that can be opened and closed. He also inserted a programmed to play *Monsters University* when turned on.

The students taking part in this class come from a variety of majors and possess equally different skill sets vital to the success of the class and allowing for a more creative approach. Steve Sakhnini claimed, "Creating the virtual reality program is easy and open to possibilities and the limits of one's imagination."

By TAYLOR SMITH

“Creating the virtual reality program is easy and open to possibilities and the limits of one’s imagination.”



NEW PATHWAY INTO A FUTURE CAREER

The new Health and Life Sciences Pathway gives incoming GSU freshman an opportunity to get a head start on their health care career tracks.

“I’m glad that there’s a Health Pathways cohort because I get to interact with other classmates who are like-minded about being future health professionals.” — Justine Asas



Since GSU opened its doors to freshmen in 2014, incoming first-year students had the opportunity of choosing between one of three cohorts: Civic Engagement, Sustainability, and Global Studies. Starting in fall 2017, a new pathway was introduced for students interested in the health professions. Dr. David Rhea, Director of the Honors Program, said that the new pathway was created “to give honor students with health sciences interests the classes they needed toward their degree.” It gives the students flexibility to begin college with math and science courses while still being part of a community with peers who share their interests and passions.

Justine Asas, a nursing major who chose GSU because of this new pathway, explains that she was glad to have this cohort option “because I get to interact with other classmates who are like-minded about being future health professionals.”

In addition to creating community, the new pathway also gives students internship opportunities and shadow days. The faculty hope to give their students an insight into the real world environment and begin forming their own network of professional contacts.

Students might also pursue the BS in Nursing or RN certification in partnership with Prairie State. Also, students who graduate the pathway with a 3.5 G.P.A will then have the opportunity of direct admission into GSU’s highly competitive masters and doctoral programs in occupational therapy, communication disorders, and physical therapy. This new cohort, the result of the collaborative work of faculty and administrators across the university, will serve as a model for tailoring cohorts to the needs and interests of future Governors State students.

By DANUTA CHLEBEK

GSU'S SUMMER STEAM CAMP



“Not only are we creating intellectually-minded individuals, but we are reaching out to the entire society.”

HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE IN LIFE SCIENCES, ROBOTICS, AND COMPUTERS.

GSU's STEAM Camp offers middle and high school students a 2-week hands-on experience in life sciences, robotics and computer activities, as well as opportunities to work with local industries.

STEAM Camp prides itself on “lighting that spark” in learners from all backgrounds, particularly girls, who are underrepresented in STEAM fields. GSU alumna and environmental biologist, Snehal Chavda, is a mentor and role model for students; she creates lesson plans and teaches physics. Chavda understands the significance of her influence. “Not only are we creating intellectually-minded individuals; we are reaching out to the entire society.” STEAM wants to ensure that campers work alongside both female and male industry volunteers, faculty members, and counselors.

For the first of the two-week sessions, campers focus on Life Sciences—tramping through the woods, taking pictures, bringing in artifacts, and making presentations. They also visit offsite sponsors: a trip to Bolvay, a company that processes materials for

detergent and soap, allows the campers to watch chemistry in action. During week two, campers focus on robotics and computer activities. Students are given robots, and then watch their robots run an obstacle course. After that, they work on programming video games. While the camp has elements of “school,” it is also fun. Campers leave with memories, as well as something tangible.

From partnerships with the Park Forest Fire Department (which supports the field trips) to Junior Achievement programs (which attempt to match students with careers), STEAM camp helps future innovators focus on specific career goals. Director Luke Helm is working to broadening the circle of collaboration to institutions like The Field Museum. And by cross-promoting with University of Chicago, UIC, Prairie State, and the Homewood Science Center, Helm hopes to increase partnerships in funding and participation. This will help to expand a program that actively breaks down barriers by removing the mysteries of the science and tech fields, showing young people how a career in these fields might be the perfect fit for them.

By PASCHON PRUITT

EXPERTS FOR THE DAY

During the Annual GSU Research Day, graduate and undergraduate students from all disciplines showcase original research projects before the GSU community.



Zachary Becvar Presents at research day

“An experience like this will definitely get you out of the comfort zone and look excellent on a resume.”

On a warm April morning, Governors State exploded with the talk of future scholars presenting the work of an entire semester in a culminating research project. One of those scholars was Zachary Becvar, a history major who presented his senior thesis on the Irish Easter Rebellion of 1916.

“Professor Golland and Professor Walsh said my topic was interesting and well researched, so I decided to present,” he mentioned during an interview almost a year later. Becvar recalled the anticipation and nervousness he felt as he watched other students present their own research ideas. “To ease my nerves, I remembered the advice I received from Dr. Golland who said that at this moment, I was the expert on my topic so I should be confident in the information I was presenting. Now that I look back at it, it is fine to be nervous, but an experience like this will definitely get you out of the comfort zone and look great on a resume.”

Yet Becvar’s experience would never have been possible without the help of faculty like Dr. Golland and Dr. Walsh, who advises her students to choose a topic that sparks their interest. Dr. Frances Kostarelos, professor of Sociology and Ethnology, also encourages students to present research they have done in her class on Ethnographic Research Methods. Regardless of their disciplines, many GSU faculty are committed to helping students present their research.

This powerful bond is reflected in positive experiences of students like Zachary Becvar. GSU Research Day is not only a day when students have the ability to teach others, but also a time when the campus community comes together as an academic family.

By DANUTA CHLEBEK

IT students put their skills to the test in regional and national competitions.

“They will experience about 6 months of attacks in a single day.”



“Degrees are not enough in the world of IT.”

In a secluded room, away from professors and all outside help, students must protect a network from attackers. These students have been training for months to test their skills against some of the best IT professionals in the business. The Cyberdefense Club at GSU challenges its 28 students to gain hands-on experience in addition to their traditional education. Competitions usually happen at local colleges and universities, but some team members have travelled to the East coast for competitions.

Governors State University has over 100 students studying IT, making it one of the fastest growing programs. While IT classes utilize labs in order for students to test out their skills, sometimes the learning takes place outside of the classroom. Professor Stephen R. Hyzny, a University Lecturer and computer consultant with 25 years of experience, understands what working in the IT profession requires, which is why he leads his students in the Cyberdefense Club, taking them to competitions for real-world experiences. He explains, “there is a different drive for doing a lab than actually protecting a network.”

In late 2017, the students competed at Argonne National Labs; they needed to protect a device being attacked by the Army National Guard. The students were all placed in one room with their scores projected on the wall—much like the scores to a basketball game—as they fought against the National Guard to protect their device. According to Professor Hyzny, “They experienced about 6 months of attacks in a single day.”

In February 2018, Governors State University students went to Moraine Valley Community College to face off against professional cyber security professionals working as volunteers. After the competition was over, students networked with these professionals and other students to further their expertise. These students understand that what Professor Hyzny states is true: “Degrees are not enough in the world of IT.”

An English major reflects on the student experience of the NEH-grant supported “War, Trauma, and the Humanities” course.

At any given moment, countries around the globe are waging war, with civilians and soldiers living through the long-lasting devastation. However, in America, we often experience war through news, film, and TV. Unless someone knows a veteran or soldier, many don't understand the soldier experience and the long-lasting effects of war. Nevertheless, as war and the military are permanent fixtures in the world, it is important for people to understand the unspoken aspects of war and the soldier experience. Gaining understanding will allow civilians to connect with veterans and soldiers. This is exactly what Dr. Rosemary Johnsen, Full Professor of English, and Dr. Andrae Marak, Dean of the CAS and Graduate Studies, had in mind when they co-wrote a proposal for an NEH grant to create a course that brings veterans and civilians together for a dialogue about war and soldier experiences explored through the arts.

Winning the National Endowment for the Humanities grant allowed them to co-teach the class “War, Trauma, and the Humanities” (WT&H) during the fall 2017 semester. The class was an 8-week course, unique for more than the prestigious grant that made it possible. Setting WT&H apart from a typical class were five student veterans who served as classroom small-group discussion leaders, and guest speakers who shared their stories and research.

Both Dr. Johnsen and Dr. Marak spoke to the class of their personal connection to war and the military. In the first class session, Dr. Johnsen explained that, although topics of war and the military are frequently discussed, it is usually by people who are



not directly involved. Society does not witness many veterans and soldiers who are extremely forthcoming about their experiences; however, through literature and the humanities, society can learn to better understand both the history of war and soldier experiences.

Texts covering WWI through the Iraq war were explored through the lens of the war's impact on the individual and the art those individual's made to process their experience. As such, poetry, historical fiction novels, personal letters, and the fictional memoir *There's a Man with a Gun Over There* by author, veteran, and guest speaker, R. M. Ryan were examined. The book list offered perspectives that gave students a better understanding of war and military experiences. As students explored the silent histories of soldiers, they learned of the trauma suffered both during and after war, the 'supposed medical treatment' offered to soldiers suffering from what is now known as PTSD, and the general mistreatment of veterans after war—new information to most of the students.



“Everyone could benefit from a class such as this one.”



During a class visit, founder of the “Making History Project” and Oral Historian Patrick Russell led a discussion on trauma, identifying the invisible scarring war leaves behind. Russell began his visit by examining key aspects of war experiences, discussing combat and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. He showed interviews with WWII and Vietnam veterans who still show signs of trauma today, more than sixty years later. After learning to identify the signs of trauma and its long-lasting effects, students displayed greater empathy to the student veterans.

Each of the student veterans helped create a bridge from the books, poems, and films to real-life experiences. English major Gianna Christopher states, “It’s one thing to read about something second-hand; it’s an entirely different ball game when you speak with someone who has been through the stories within the literature.” Making these connections helps us to see that there is more to war than political agendas and what we see on TV; war and military service affect real people and real lives.

During the class session focused on women in the military, student veterans Muriel Williams and Akya Gossit shared the guilt and sadness they felt at leaving their children during deployment, along with the general struggles women face in the military. English major Aidah Abdallah connected with their struggles as women, and appreciated the privilege of asking “personal questions . . . that you can’t get from reading a book.”

The culminating class session was a televised Town Hall featuring Drs. Johnsen and Marak and the student veterans, offering a glimpse into the class experience. Dr. Johnsen explained how useful literature is in creating understanding and empathy in the reader. However, no matter how powerful the text, the reader has the option of keeping a safe distance from the material. But keeping a safe and comfortable distance was not an option for students in the WT&H course—the student veterans made that impossible, so much so that the readings and discussions were life-changing, leaving many with thoughts like Ms. Christopher’s, that “everyone could benefit from a class such as this one.”

By ELIZABETH NERIS



"IT'S ONE THING TO READ ABOUT SOMETHING
SECOND-HAND. IT'S AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT BALL
GAME WHEN YOU SPEAK WITH SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN
THROUGH THE STORIES WITHIN THE LITERATURE."

Muriel V. Williams opens up about her time in the Army and her experiences since returning home.

Muriel V. Williams enlisted in 1998, at the young age of 18, to serve in the Army Reserve. She was trained for refugee situations and served as a liaison between military and civil affairs. However, when she was deployed to Iraq in 2003, she had to utilize those skills to perform a slightly different job. It was her responsibility to survey areas occupied by U.S. forces to understand the importance of certain buildings and spaces that held a great significance to the local people. Her team was directly in contact with local utility companies that supplied electricity and water to those communities. This position allowed her to be on the ground during war time to help rebuild and embrace those directly affected.

Williams describes people in the military as having an ability to lead and to follow, but more importantly having self-awareness and a concern for others. Despite her job

holding such a positive impact on the community, it did not come without the threat of danger. Throughout her time, they were taught to dodge anything that looked unnatural or out of place. Even things as small and innocent as bottles or pens laying on the ground could be weapons. She acquired a strong awareness of her surroundings, and even now, seldomly lets her guard down.

The skills the military provided her are essential to her life. She grew up sheltered and did not venture far from home. Williams even described herself as a bit of a cry baby prior to joining the military.

She confessed, “The military provided the sense of a second upbringing that gave me thicker skin and the ability to meet incredible people from all over.” The War, Trauma, and the Humanities course has provided Williams with an outlet to open up about her experiences for the first time.

By TAYLOR SMITH



STUDENT AND ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENTS

Art

Jessica Peterson (BFA 2016, MA 2018) has been accepted to the MFA program at UI Purdue in ceramics and will be attending in the fall upon completion of her MA, Art this summer.

Biology

Tera Ivy (BS Biology, senior) presented her undergraduate research at the Illinois LSAMP (Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation in STEM) Symposium in Lisle, IL in February. She also attended the Biomedical Science Careers Student Conference in Boston, MA in April 2018.

Communication

Stephanie Zwartz, (BA Communication, Ad/PR concentration 2018) presented her paper “Ashley Madison: Definition and Image Repair Theory” at the President’s Undergraduate Honors Research Conference at the 2018 Central States Communication Association Conference in Milwaukee, WI.

Jessica Lolli, (MA Communication 2017) presented a paper (written with Dr. Jayne R. Goode and Dr. Katherine J. Denker) “Instructor Socio-Communicative Style, Learner

Empowerment and Affective Learning in the Basic Course” at the 2018 Central States Communication Association Conference in Milwaukee, WI. Ms. Lolli was accepted to four PhD Programs in Communication and is currently deliberating on which institution to choose.

Dr. Jeremy Basso (MA Communication and Training 2010) successfully completed his PhD (December 2017) In Interdisciplinary Studies, Humanities and Culture from Union Institute & University and accepted a full-time faculty position with City Colleges of Chicago.

Ernst Lamothe, Jr., (MA Communication) presented his paper “Image Repair Failure of Chris Brown” at the 2018 Central States Communication Association Conference in Milwaukee, WI.

English

Aryana Adkanian (BA English 2017) has been accepted into the MA in Publishing and Writing at Emerson College in Boston.

Jeff O’Malley (MA English 2018) has been accepted, with a Graduate Assistantship, into the English PhD program at Northern Illinois University.



Gender and Sexuality Studies

Ashley Basham (BA Psychology, Gender and Sexuality Studies minor, 2020) and Brieyanna Jones (BA Psychology, Gender and Sexuality Studies minor, 2021) worked with Dr. Novia Pagone to present their paper “The Accessibility of Social Support for Transgender Youth” at the New Directions 2018 Midwest Undergraduate Conference in Gender Studies at Notre Dame University.

Independent Film and Digital Imaging

Rachel Rozycki’s (MFA-IFDI 2014) [“Keep Talking”](#) screened at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian in February 2018 and has had recent screenings at the Vancouver International Film Festival, the Big Sky Festival, and Chicago’s Gene Siskel Film Center. She is a Co-Producer on the film, working with Producer/Director Karen Weinberg. She is now working on two new projects: producing a [documentary](#) about Chicago architect Stanley Tigerman, and she just came on board the documentary [“Lady Parts Justice in the New World Order”](#) as a Co-Producer.

Aaron Daniel Annas (MFA-IFDI 2011) has been promoted to Director of Television and Film Arts at SUNY Buffalo State starting Fall 2018.

Mathematics

Luke Dauparas (MS Mathematics with Actuarial Concentration) passed the Probability test for the Society of Actuaries.

Dreyvon McCray (BS Chemistry, Math minor, 2018) presented his paper *Interpreting a Mass Spectrometry* into Calculus with Dr. Angela Thompson at the Chicago Symposium Series in March 2018.

Non-Profit Social Entrepreneurship

Carol Morrison (EdD 2018, Interdisciplinary Leadership, Non-Profit Social Entrepreneurship) presented her capstone project “Leadership in Quality Head Start Programs” at the National Head Start Association Conference in Anaheim, CA in April 2018.

Help us keep great things going!

To get involved with the College of Arts and Sciences, contact [Luke Helm](#)

[OR DONATE TO THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES](#)



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