

LAS NEWS

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES | SPRING 2021



After 2020

Moving forward
in a new era

PAGE 14



SPRING 2021

2 Around the College

Recent images and news from faculty, staff, students, and alumni.

8 “I have the capability of being grateful in all circumstances”

Student life in a pandemic.

10 COVID-19 Shield program helps campus contain the pandemic

Policy of target, test, and tell allows in-person learning to continue during fall semester.

11 Books from LAS

Politics, freedom, baseball, catastrophic thinking, and other topics were the subjects of books published recently by faculty members in LAS.

12 LAS@Work

Economics to endzones: LAS alumna continues reporting career at ESPN.



On the cover: After 2020. (Collage by Heather Gillett.)

13 New faculty join LAS

With research interests ranging from migration to hip hop, more than 40 new faculty members in almost 25 departments joined the College of LAS this fall.

14 After 2020

Professors share thoughts on moving forward in a new era.

19 LAS Experts

Award-winning poet, author, and English professor Janice Harrington talks about teaching poetry and shares a poem.

20 LAS Alumni Awards

LAS alumni honored for careers, service, and giving back.

22 U of I partners with other universities to form math and statistics institute

23 Of course I sent that email (or maybe not)

Psychologist: Mundane and repeated behavior can create a false memory.

24 A concert for the ages

Photo by Fred Zwicky.

26 The ringing of a new era

100 years ago, music and the resilience of a dream marked the first days of the Altgeld Chimes.

28 LAS by the numbers

The 97-day test.



GREETINGS FROM THE

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Dear alumni and friends,

I hope that this finds you healthy and well. We stand at a pivotal moment in history. In early January we witnessed a threat to the very foundations of our government and democracy. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has put under great strain every facet of our society, from our institutions to our personal interactions with others. But Chancellor Robert Jones described it well last December when, after the University of Illinois conducted its 1 millionth saliva test for COVID-19, he wrote that we are beginning to see a hopeful light at the end of a “long, dark tunnel.” To that I’ll add that while the challenges posed by the pandemic are far from over, the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences is emerging from the crisis with a clearer sense than ever of our strengths and priorities.

In November, the college presented its 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. Produced through an extensive and collaborative effort involving faculty, staff, and students, the plan is intended to serve as a roadmap for the next five years, but our actions over the next few years will have implications lasting much longer than that. We began working on the plan in 2019, only to shift gears when the events of 2020 changed everything. While the pandemic made even daily operations difficult to accomplish, we pushed to complete the plan with the strong belief that it was more important than ever to keep our eyes on the horizon.

The plan is focused upon these four core strategic goals:

- Excel in research and creative activity
- Re-design the student experience for today’s world
- Foster diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Support the people of the college, and strengthen its resource base, visibility, and impact.

I have encouraged all faculty and staff in the college to read the plan, and I invite you to do the same. We are at a crossroads, with the future of our communities hinging on matters of science, politics, race, diversity, environment, health, and technology. With the strategic plan we have a clear idea how to continue producing what today’s world so badly needs: transformational new knowledge and modern minds well-versed in the liberal arts and sciences that know how to use new knowledge for the greater good. You can read the plan at go.las.illinois.edu/StrategicPlan2021-25.

I wish to thank each and every one of you. We have endured and advanced our academic mission during this crisis not only through the efforts of faculty, staff, and students, but through the support of many alumni and friends. They say that you learn who your friends are during times of trial, and I’m pleased to say that our circle of friendship is strong and growing.

With best wishes,

Gene E. Robinson,
Interim Dean
Swanlund Chair in Entomology

Editor Dave Evensen Graphic Designer Heather Gillett

Editorial Board

Matthew Ando, associate dean for life and physical sciences
Clare Crowston, associate dean for humanities and interdisciplinary programs
Paul Elliott, associate director of communications and marketing
Dave Evensen, senior editorial specialist
Derek Fultz, director of facilities
Heather Gillett, senior graphic design specialist
Angela Graham, assistant to the dean
Barbara Hancin-Bhatt, associate dean for student academic affairs

Isabel Molina-Guzmán, associate dean for diversity and inclusion
Brad Petersen, executive director of communications and marketing
Kelly Ritter, associate dean for curricula and academic policy
Gene E. Robinson, interim dean
David Tewksbury, executive associate dean
Leslie Vermillion, senior director of advancement operations
Joan Volkmann, associate dean for advancement

**CONNECT
WITH US**



las.illinois.edu

LAS News is published for alumni and friends of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, at the University of Illinois 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 email newsletter, LAS News Online. Please direct all inquiries about either publication to the editor at laseditor@illinois.edu or at the above address. This publication is available in an accessible electronic format at www.las.illinois.edu/news/magazine. Or, contact us via the email address above to request the magazine in a different accessible format.

Copyright © 2021 Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois.

Read all our news stories at las.illinois.edu/news

Humanities Without Walls Consortium awarded Mellon Grant renewal



The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign has been awarded a \$5 million grant renewal from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for the **Humanities Without Walls** initiative at the Humanities Research Institute. Humanities Without Walls, launched in 2015, fosters collaborative research and explores the contributions of humanities in the workplace. ■



Research group produces masks to fight COVID-19

After hearing an inspiring NPR story, **Ying Diao**, professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering, realized her lab group could make facemasks that would help first responders during the COVID-19 pandemic. Using a Montana Mask design, the group sent the masks to police and hospital workers in Illinois and Texas. ■

Lisa Ainsworth elected to National Academy of Sciences



Lisa Ainsworth, a research plant physiologist with the USDA Agricultural Research Service and affiliate professor of plant biology and crop sciences at the University of Illinois, has been elected to the National Academy of Sciences — largely considered one of the highest honors that a scientist can receive.

This honor recognizes her “distinguished and continuing achievements in original research,” according to the academy. ■

Faculty honors

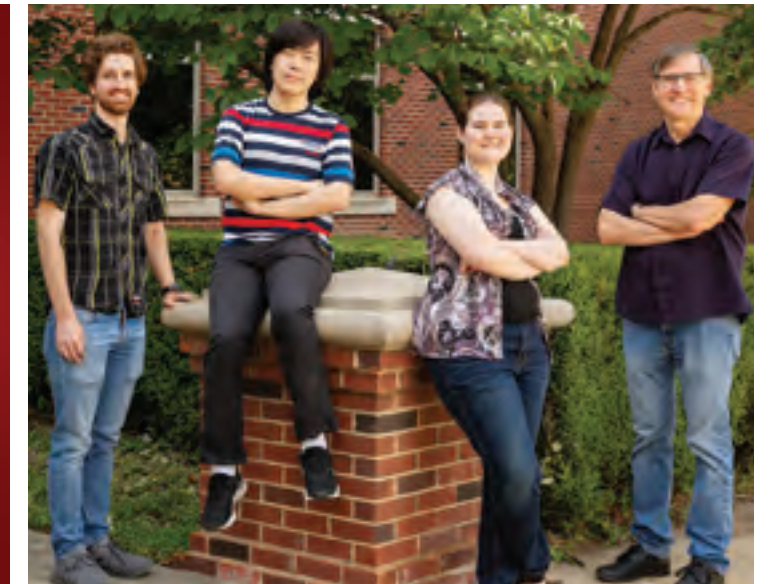
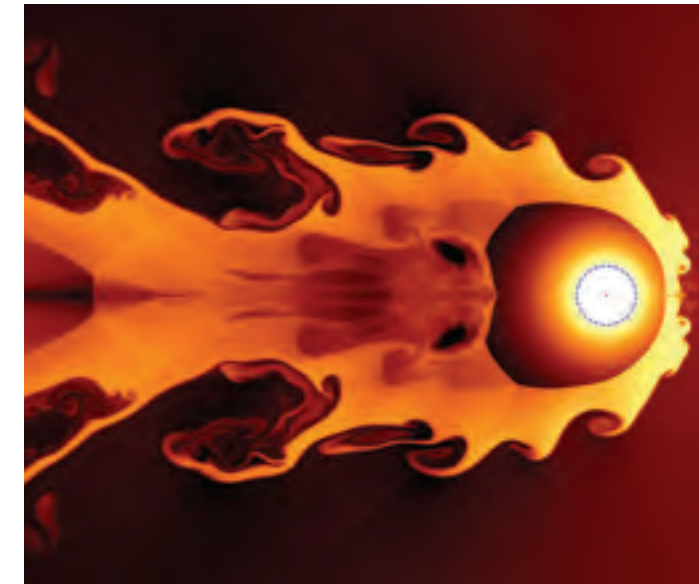
A partial list of faculty honors this past summer and fall include:

- **Campus Award for Excellence in Faculty Leadership:** **Carla Cáceres**, evolution, ecology, and behavior, and director of the School of Integrative Biology.
- **Best Article in the field of Ukrainian history, politics, language, literature and culture from the American Association for Ukrainian Studies:** **Valeria Sobol**, Slavic languages and literatures.
- **Included in “The Best American Poetry 2020” anthology:** **Janice Harrington**, **Christopher Kempf**, and **Corey Van Landingham** (English).
- **NCSA Faculty Fellows:** **David Cooper**, Slavic languages and literatures; **Xin Liu**, astronomy; **Malaika McKee**, African American studies; and **Ruoqing Zhu**, statistics.
- **2020 Viktor K. LaMer Award:** **Xiao Su**, chemical and biomolecular engineering.
- **Lincoln Distinguished Professorial Scholar:** **Thomas Rudolph**, political science.
- **Fellow of the American Physical Society:** **Brian Fields**, astronomy.
- **Vice President-Elect of the Entomological Society of America:** **Marianne Alleyne**, entomology.
- **American Meteorological Society's Edward N. Lorenz Teaching Excellence Award:** **Sonia Lasher-Trapp**, atmospheric sciences.
- **Fellow of the American Meteorological Society:** **Robert (Jeff) Trapp**, atmospheric sciences.
- **Center for Advanced Study:** **Jeffrey S. Moore**, chemistry; **Harriet Murav**, comparative and world literature; and **Donald Ort**, plant biology.

See a complete list of faculty honors at go.las.illinois.edu/honors-spring21magazine. ■

What’s different about last summer’s athlete protests?

There’s nothing new about political protest in sports, but the recent athlete-led game boycotts or strikes following the shooting of Jacob Blake in Kenosha, Wisconsin, set a new standard. “Some observers view these actions as players becoming political, that they are mixing sports and politics. I see something else going on in the manner that African Americans have used their voice,” said history professor **Adrian Burgos Jr.**, who specializes in sports history. “We are witnessing an unprecedented moment in sports.” ■



Study links exploding stars to extinction on Earth - A team of researchers led by astronomy and physics professor **Brian Fields** hypothesizes that a supernova about 65 light-years away may have contributed to the ozone depletion and subsequent mass extinction of the late Devonian Period, 359 million years ago. Pictured is a simulation of a nearby supernova colliding with and compressing the solar wind. Earth’s orbit, the blue dashed circle, and the Sun, red dot, are shown for scale. ■

(Graphic courtesy Jesse Miller.) Pictured: Jesse Miller, left, Zhenghai Liu, seated, Adrienne Ertel, and professor Brian Fields. (Photo by L. Brian Stauffer.)



Building bridges with the Maya community

The Illinois Maya Initiative based in the **Center for Latin American & Caribbean Studies** is a new outreach effort that connect researchers, community social service professionals, and a growing community of Mayan immigrants and refugees in East Central Illinois. The initiative was recently awarded funding by the University of Illinois CO+RE: Community + Research Partnership Program. ■



Scientists work to increase yields of one of the world's oldest crops

In a recent study published in Food and Energy Security, U of I plant biologists from **Realizing Increased Photosynthetic Efficiency (RIPE)** aimed to understand how much variation exists within diverse cowpea lines in light absorption and carbon dioxide assimilation. This information can ultimately be used to design more efficient canopies—with greater carbon dioxide assimilation and water-use efficiency—to increase yields. ■

“Writing is a conversation and race is the American subject”



English professor **David Wright** is gaining notice for his stories dealing with racial issues in the period after the Civil War and during Reconstruction. He wrote “The Sand Banks, 1861,” the real-life story of Richard Etheridge, the only Black man to lead a lifesaving crew along the Outer Banks of North Carolina in the late 19th century, and his crew’s heroic rescue efforts during a hurricane. It was published in the Aug. 31 issue of The New Yorker. ■

Illinois “engineer guy” Bill Hammack awarded Hoover Medal



Bill Hammack, professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering, has been awarded the Hoover Medal. The award was established in 1929 to honor “great, unselfish, nontechnical services by engineers to humanity.” Hammack is the creator and host of the popular YouTube channel “engineerguy” and has recorded more than 200 public radio segments that describe what, why, and how engineers do what they do. ■

Recent LAS alumni awarded Fulbright grants

Six recent alumni from the College of LAS were offered Fulbright grants to pursue international education, research, and teaching experiences across the globe this coming year. The winners include **Alicia Barbas** (BA, '20, global studies, Spanish, and French); **Isabella Fuentes** (BS, '20, political science); **Liam Millett** (BS, '19, economics; BA, '19, global studies); **Deniz Namik** (BS, '20, integrative biology; BA, '20, Spanish); **Rina Ravisundar** (BS, '20, political science); and **Aboorva Sivasankaran** (BS, '19, psychology). ■

From left: Deniz Namik, Rina Ravisundar, and Aboorva Sivasankaran. (Photos by Ether Bezugla, Lara Ostertag, and Brian Kelly, respectively.)

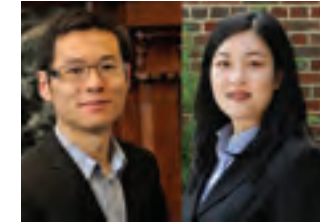


Experts: Quick fixes won't stop sexual harassment in academia



Anthropology professor **Kathryn Clancy** and her colleagues authored a report on sexual harassment of women that said academic institutions are failing to address the most common forms of gender harassment. “Gender-based harassment is insidious because it’s not always distinguishable from criticism or rudeness,” said Clancy. “How do you report that someone told you that you have a ‘mommy brain’? Or that you are hard to listen to with your high-pitched voice?” ■

LAS researchers find balance, customization important during COVID-19 response



Statistics professor **Xiaohui Chen** and **Ziyi Qiu**, visiting professor of economics, used real time data to consider ways that nonpharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) could save lives while preserving the economic health of a country. “Every country should really customize according to their specific situation,” Qiu said. “We can’t just follow other countries. We can see what is happening elsewhere and learn success stories, but, after, we need to customize the NPIs to particularly target the U.S. economy.” ■

Xiaohui Chen, left and Ziyi Qiu

CyberGIS Center produces platform to track and help prevent COVID-19

The CyberGIS Center for Advanced Digital and Spatial Studies at Illinois has teamed with the state of Illinois to help understand and prevent the spread of COVID-19. The WhereCOVID-19 platform presents a variety of information for people to learn more about the spread of coronavirus and how communities are prepared to respond. It is available to the public at go.las.illinois.edu/WhereCOVID. (Image courtesy of Shaowen Wang.) ■



Launching big dreams

This year, the **iVenture Accelerator program** in the Gies College of Business selected five startup ventures launched by College of LAS students. The iVenture Accelerator program provides students with resources to help their startups succeed. Growing numbers of LAS students have been joining the program to help launch their ideas. ■



Benjamin Ray (photo courtesy of iVenture)

Researchers spur the production of new antibiotic or antiparasitic compounds



Researchers have developed a method to spur the production of new antibiotic or antiparasitic compounds hiding in the genomes of actinobacteria, which are the source of drugs such as actinomycin and streptomycin and are known to harbor other untapped potential. The researchers wanted to overcome a decades-old problem that confronts those hoping to study and make use of the countless antibiotic, antifungal, and antiparasitic compounds that bacteria can produce, said **Satish Nair**, professor of biochemistry. ■



A prairie for the bees Two years ago, **Alexandra Harmon-Threatt**, professor of entomology (at right, in green mask), built an outdoor laboratory a few miles off campus by planting more than 80 prairie plant species. Her mission is to attract wild ground-nesting bees. “If we want to bring the bees back, we have to figure out exactly what it is they need and what really hurts them,” she said. ■

Decoy receptor neutralizes coronavirus in cell cultures



A new study suggests that luring the COVID-19 virus with a decoy — an engineered, free-floating receptor protein — binds the virus and blocks infection. “We are testing whether the decoy receptor is safe and stable in mice, and if successful, we then hope to show treatment of disease in animals. Hopefully that data can facilitate a clinical trial,” said biochemistry professor **Erik Procko**. ■



U of I enrollment remains above 50,000 for fall 2020

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign’s fall 2020 enrollment was 52,331, surpassing last year’s record of 51,196. Of that campus total, the College of LAS enrollment stood at 14,525, which includes 11,963 undergraduates and 2,562 graduate students. “We are encouraged to see that an Illinois educational experience remains a priority for students and families, even in these unprecedented times,” Chancellor **Robert Jones** said. ■



Cholesterol metabolite causes immune system to attack T-cells instead of breast cancer

Illinois professor **Erik Nelson** and graduate student **Liqian Ma** in molecular and integrative physiology found that a cholesterol metabolite hijacks myeloid immune cells to disarm the T-cell immune response to breast cancer. “This study provides strong evidence that we can leverage the cholesterol metabolic system to improve immune therapy in our fight against breast cancer,” Nelson said. ■

U of I to lead new national artificial intelligence institutes



The National Science Foundation and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture will invest more than \$140 million to establish seven artificial intelligence institutes in the U.S. Two will be led by teams at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, including the Molecule Maker Lab Institute led by **Huimin Zhao**, professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering and chemistry. Each of the new institutes will receive about \$20 million over five years. ■



Learning from hopeful monsters

New research led by **Andrew Suarez**, professor of entomology and head of the Department of Evolution, Ecology, and Behavior, calls for ants to be studied for bio-inspired designs. “The worker ants are like hopeful monsters,” Suarez said. “They can play with their body form and produce more variation than other insects. With these models we can see that although they have these exaggerated forms, they are not breaking the laws of physics.” ■

Four LAS faculty members receive Public Voices Fellowships



A national program called the Public Voices Fellowship through the OpEd Project will allow professors from across the country to pair up with journalists and learn more about discussing ideas with a broad audience. Four of the professors are from the College of LAS, including **Karen Flynn**, gender and women’s studies and African American studies; **Alexandra Harmon-Threatt**, entomology; **Isabel Molina-Guzmán**, Latina/Latino studies, communication, and associate dean for diversity and inclusion in the College of LAS; and **Leslie Reagan**, history. ■

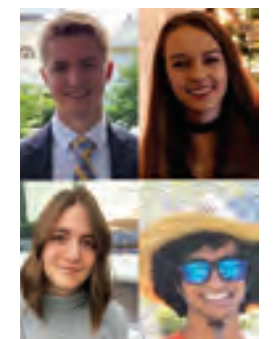
Judging the criminal character



Statistics reveal that the poor in general are punished more frequently and severely for their crimes than the wealthy, but psychology professor **Sean Laurent** has found that when it comes to evaluating the moral character of those who have committed crimes, the wealthy are judged more harshly than the poor. The unethical behavior of the wealthy is seen as less justifiable than the same violations committed by the poor. ■

New scholarship supports professional experiences

About 30 LAS students made use of new **LAS Life + Career Design scholarships** last summer. The scholarships provided up to \$5,000 to help with living, transportation, and/or other expenses related to engaging in unpaid or underpaid work in a professional experience. The opportunity can be an internship, undergraduate research experience, extended volunteer experience, or even a part-time job or any extended experience that can advance professional development. ■



(clockwise from top left) Thomas Ballard, Miranda Johnson, Rishi Chandra, and Katrina Rbeiz. (Photos submitted.)

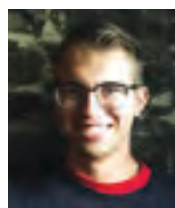
“I have the capability of being grateful in all circumstances”

— Grace Maloney, senior, chemistry and molecular and cellular biology



Students reflect on lessons learned on campus during the pandemic

The fall semester was unlike any other for students at the University of Illinois. Many students returned to campus for a mix of online and in-person courses, some took classes entirely online from home, and others, such as international students, were unable to go home even for breaks. Here, in their own words or as interviewed by others, LAS students share experiences and lessons learned during this challenging time.



Zackary Landers
Freshman, history

“At first, I found asynchronous learning [course material is shared online instead of in-person lectures] to be difficult due to its impersonal nature and ability to

be put off. In time—and by using my planner—I made asynchronous learning the center of my week. This helped with assignments, too. Some professors went the extra mile to adapt their lectures to the online world while having fun. History professor Mark Steinberg’s Lenin lecture was the highlight of the term! Most striking was seeing the vast majority of my classmates consistently doing the right thing. Parties get the press, but the thousands of students who have vigilantly followed COVID-19 regulations down to the science speak volumes about our university.”



Irene Ryu
Senior, communication
(minor in political science)

To cope with the new normal caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, senior international student Irene Ryu has become more conscious about the daily routines that keep her feeling well.

“I started working out at home by watching YouTube workout videos to make up for not being able to go to ARC,” Ryu said. Ryu, who is from South Korea, also states that not being able to travel home for the holidays has been the most frustrating part of dealing with the pandemic. Still, she is finding ways to stay connected.

“To compensate for not being with my family in Korea, I spent Thanksgiving with my fellow international students, Korean Americans, and my kitty at home to be safe!”



Jasmine Wiley
Senior, sociology

Adjusting to online classes has been one of the biggest challenges for many students during the pandemic. Jasmine Wiley said her biggest takeaway from the experience has been prioritizing her mental health.

“I have learned to take baby steps, to not overwhelm myself and to celebrate the little accomplishments,” Wiley said.

Wiley also said that concentrating on school during such a tumultuous time in history has been difficult, but focusing on what she can control has been a source of relief.

“If I can control something,” she said, “even if it’s something small like turning off my phone because it’s loud or turning off the light because it’s bright, it gives me some satisfaction.”



Neha Arun
Sophomore, molecular and cellular biology

“It’s difficult to find ways to stay in touch with the people around you, even living on campus this semester. The combination of constant Zoom classes and meetings along with numerous COVID-19 restrictions have added stress to many peoples’ lives. There was one notable time this semester, however, when my Stamps Scholarship group was able to truly connect in a way that gave us a bit of happiness in a pandemic-proof way. Our advisers planned a small fall get-together where we had a pumpkin carving contest, donuts, and cider, and just talked with each other—all the while being socially distant and with masks. We had a Zoom meeting for our off-campus friends to join in, and it was a fun (though messy) time when we carved our pumpkin masterpieces. I’m glad we had the opportunity to connect in a safe but activity-filled way, and I continue to appreciate the small moments of connection I was able to have with other people this semester.”



Isaiah Lopez
Sophomore, biochemistry

“This summer, we knew that this semester would look much different on campus, especially with many more online and hybrid classes compared to in-person.

When I was redesigning my schedule, I wanted to try to get as many in-person sections as I could because I knew that I learned best, as many do, in person. I was able to get an in-person discussion for my organic chemistry class, but the activity that I looked forward to most was the research lab I started this fall semester thanks to the university’s protocol with testing. It is a biochemistry lab that is studying the protein Azurin, among others, and how it can have electrochemical potential when combined with certain metals. I get to work in the lab on weekends and have been getting hands-on training in the lab while working with a postdoc and grad student. I am really thankful for this and am hoping this experience will help me land another research internship for the summer of 2021!”



Ciera Johnson
Junior, communication

“A highlight of this semester was joining Black Students For Revolution RSO on campus. I had heard about them since my freshman year, and I finally made the choice to learn more about their organization and decided to join! It feels good to come together with people who look like you, share some of the same struggles as you, and have the same aspirations of Black liberation. I look forward to the meetings we have every week, and I’m grateful to be meeting new people even in trying times like these.”



Grace Maloney
Senior, chemistry and molecular and cellular biology (minor in Spanish)

One of the hardest aspects of the fall semester for Grace Maloney was being less active than usual. Then she learned how national parks could be visited in a safe manner, so she and her roommates took a trip to Mammoth Cave National Park, significantly boosting her morale and relieving stress. Another boost came when she was accepted to the Chicago School of Osteopathic Medicine.

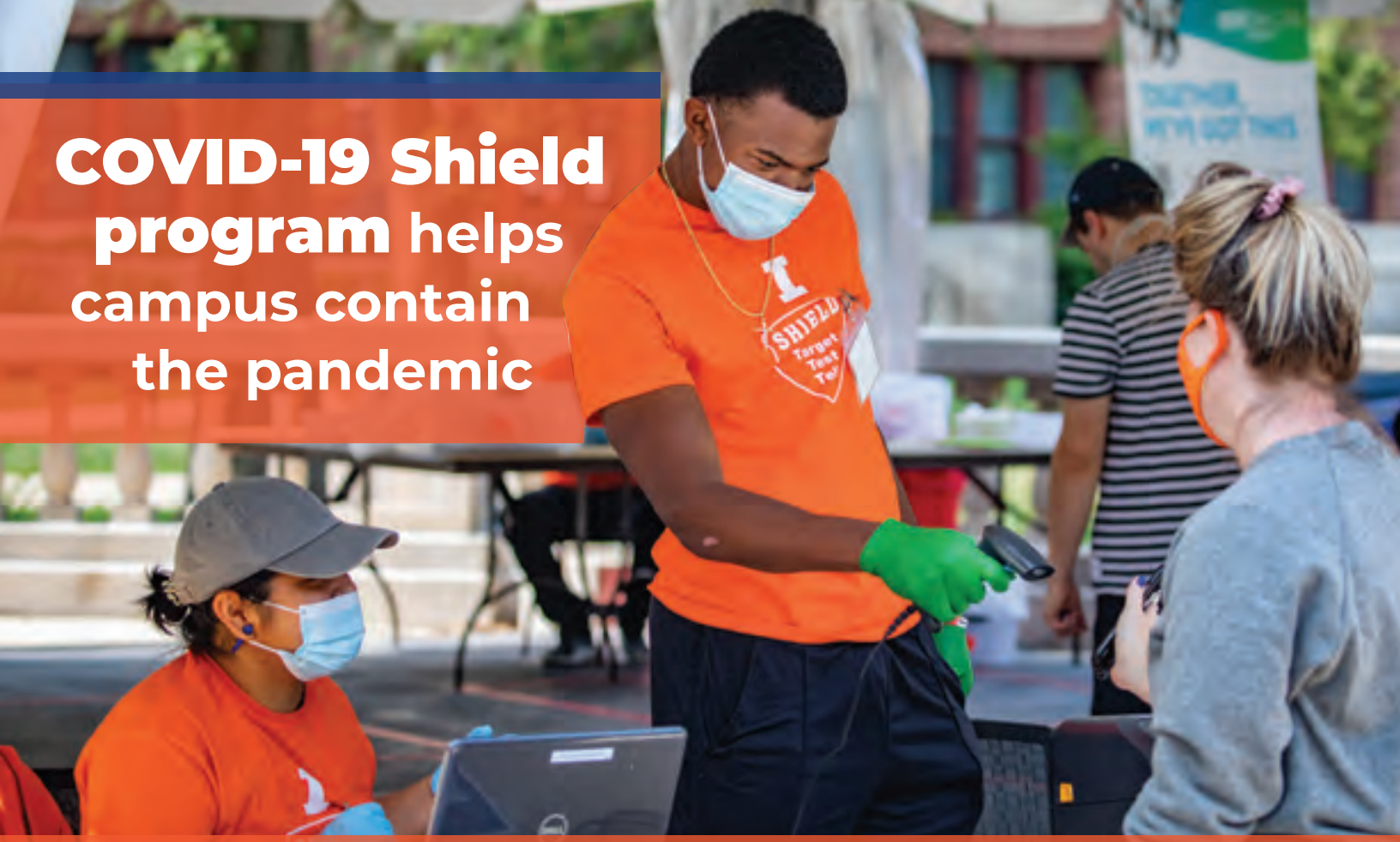
“My hope is to become a family doctor and provide quality care and service to people and patients in locations in the U.S. and around the world where healthcare and doctors are scarce,” she said.

Of her experience in the fall, she added: “I have the capability of being grateful in all circumstances, so regardless of what is going on around me, I can reframe my mindset and change it from everything that I don’t have or have missed out on this semester to everything that I do have and have been blessed with. I have learned that my satisfaction is not dependent on circumstances.” ■

By Kimberly Belser and Kimberly Wilson



COVID-19 Shield program helps campus contain the pandemic



Policy of target, test, and tell allows in-person learning to continue during fall semester

THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS has pioneered a testing program that's helped campus to remain open during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The signature of the university's COVID-19 Shield program is a low-cost, highly accurate saliva test that gives results within hours. Simpler and requiring fewer materials than the nasal swab test, the saliva test requires test subjects to deposit about one milliliter of saliva into a tube.

The polymerase chain reaction (PCR) diagnostic test bypasses the need for ribonucleic acid (RNA) isolation and purification, a time-consuming process necessary for the swab test. The U of I was able to test thousands of people a day.

This test was developed by a group of scientists from the University of Illinois, including three faculty members in the College of LAS: **Christopher Brooke**, microbiology; **Martin Burke**, chemistry; and **Paul Hergenrother**, chemistry. Faculty members Timothy Fan and Leyi Wang also contributed from the College of Veterinary Medicine. Post-doctoral researchers Fadi Alnaji and Diana Rose Ranoa, laboratory technician Kelsie Green, and recent College of Veterinary Medicine alumna Robin Holland also contributed.

"Direct saliva testing can address bottlenecks of time, cost and supplies. Our test also has unique features that enable fast and frequent testing on a large scale, and we are now working together with many partners to make our testing method broadly available as soon as possible," Burke said.

Testing started in the summer of 2020, and students, faculty, and staff on campus were eventually required to get tested one to three times a week starting in August. The saliva test is part of a larger program to use modeling to guide test frequency and scheduling, and inform potentially exposed individuals through digital notifications and manual contact tracing.

The test is available at all three University of Illinois campuses. Several other colleges and universities have partnered with Shield T3, a subsidiary of the U of I System, to conduct saliva tests this spring, including Illinois State University, Northern Illinois University, Eastern Illinois University, Loyola University Chicago, Millikin University, Monmouth College, the Claremont Colleges, and the University of Wisconsin Madison.

See **LAS by the Numbers on page 28** for more information about campus testing. ■

By *Samantha Boyle*

Books from LAS

Politics, freedom, baseball, catastrophic thinking, and other topics were the subjects of books published recently by faculty members in LAS.



"¡Pleibol! In the Barrios and the Big Leagues," by **Adrian Burgos Jr.**, history, reflects on the ambient influence that baseball has had in Latino/a culture and for immigrants from Latin America acclimating to the United States. The book is written in English and Spanish, and includes personal accounts of the significant role that the Latino/a community played in Major League Baseball during the post-segregation era. (Smithsonian Scholarly Press)



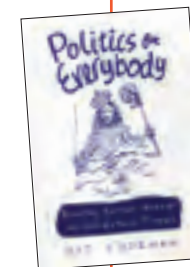
"Counterlife: Slavery after Resistance and Social Death," by **Christopher Freeburg**, English, explores through the works of artist Radcliffe Bailey, abolitionist Frederick Douglass, author Edward Jones, and African-American spirituals and media, an existence of the Black community that extends beyond the effects of slavery and the overarching idea of freedom. (Duke University Press)



"Disruptive Situations: Fractal Orientalism and Queer Strategies in Beirut," by **Ghassan Moussawi**, gender and women's studies, examines how Beirut's LGBTQ community contends with "the situation", or struggles that they encounter in their daily lives, including violence and war. Moussawi also criticizes the concept of fractal orientalism, which is utilized to take into account the relationship that exists between Beirut and the LGBTQ community. (Temple University Press)



"Politics for everybody: Reading Hannah Arendt in Uncertain Times," by **Ned O'Gorman**, communication, reflects on the work of political theorist Hannah Arendt as he encourages readers to engage in politics beyond their personal reservations. He dissects the difference between genuine politics and the distorted forms that can hinder a person's desire to become involved with politics. (University of Chicago Press)



"Bans, Walls, Raids, Sanctuary: Understanding U.S. Immigration for the Twenty-First Century," by **Naomi Paik**, Asian American studies, examines the actions taken by President Donald Trump concerning immigration policies and the barriers to immigration which closely resemble the actions and behavior toward immigration that are ingrained in society. She explores the history of immigration in America to reflect on these barriers, which exist in both the past and the present. (University of California Press)



"Plato: Menexenus," by **David Sansone**, classics (emeritus), analyzes the work of Plato. Sansone provides guidance on grammatical and historical matters, while allowing the student to appreciate Plato's mastery of Greek prose style and critique of democratic ideology. (Cambridge University Press)



"Catastrophic Thinking," by **David Sepkoski**, history, examines the instances of hurricanes, wildfires, the COVID-19 pandemic, that the world is experiencing through the lens of the Darwin to Anthropocene age views on extinction. He also examines what could have led humanity to this point of a global health outbreak and natural disasters. (University of Chicago Press)



"The Lost World of Socialists at Europe's Margins: Imagining Utopia, 1870s-1920s," by **Maria Todorova**, history, examines the "ideological bogeyman" of socialism by recollecting the work of the early socialists. Through the use of a myriad of sources, she contemplates the reasoning for the rise of the early socialist movement, who the followers of the movement tended to be, and the appeal of Marxist socialism to these followers. (Bloomsbury)



ECONOMICS

TO ENDZONES:

LAS ALUMNA
CONTINUES REPORTING
CAREER AT ESPN



As a national correspondent for ESPN, **MICHELE STEELE (BA, '00, economics)** is at home whether she is on the sidelines during a Monday night NFL game or behind the anchor desk on SportsCenter.

Describe a typical workday at your current position.

(Editor's note: This interview was conducted in September 2020.) Today I woke up around 6:30 a.m. I make coffee, listen to the news, sit down at my computer to see what the world is talking about. I saw a video of a veteran NFL center running into an empty Falcons stadium without any fans in the building, but pretending to see and react to the "crowds." The thought of a man who — his entire life — has played in front of screaming fans and adjusting to this new normal struck me as an interesting story. I sent a pitch to the NFL editor at ESPN — now I'm waiting to hear back. Later today, I'll jump on a couple of Zoom calls with Bears players to prep for next Sunday's game. I'll do some expenses later this afternoon, and have a meeting with other NFL reporters to share best practices. That's a day. It's a little crazier if there's a game.

How has COVID-19 affected your work?

I do many more phone interviews than I did before. I also drive to assignments much more than I used to.

Describe your career path following college graduation.

When I returned from teaching English for two years in France, I moved back to Chicago and got a job as a producer for a business television show owned by WCIU. I accepted a six-week fellowship to work as a journalist in India during that time. I wanted to enhance my resume, so I went to Columbia's journalism school in New York. A Columbia alum hired me at Forbes to anchor their streaming video network. I applied for a job as a reporter for the affiliates news service of Bloomberg Television. When the Tiger Woods scandal hit in 2009, they assigned me the story. It turned into a veritable sports beat. I sent my tape to ESPN in 2011, and here I am.

How did your major prepare you for your career?

I LOVED being an economics major. Economics explains just about every headline you read—some sports included.

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

By Kayleigh Rahn

New faculty

join LAS

With research interests ranging from migration to hip hop, more than 40 new faculty members in almost 25 departments joined the College of LAS this fall. For more profiles and a full list of new faculty, visit go.las.illinois.edu/NewFaculty-Spring21.



Nikolai Alvarado

GEOGRAPHY AND GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SCIENCE

Nikolai Alvarado wanted to launch his career in a place where he could push the boundaries of his discipline. The University of Illinois was the right fit.

Alvarado studies migrant urbanism, including how migration is a key force in shaping urban space. He examines the street politics of migrants living in informal settlements in Latin American cities, and how alternative citizenship arrangements provide access to rights and urban resources. He also is committed to building bridges between U of I and the communities that he researches.

"Following the tradition of my department, I aim to push the boundaries of geography by shedding light on urban and migration processes taking place elsewhere, in regions that have existed at the periphery of our discipline, such as urban Latin America," he said.



Myoung-Sun Song

EAST ASIAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURES

Born in South Korea, Myoung-Sun Song spent part of her childhood in Virginia. That's where she had a life-changing moment: She listened to Coolio's "Gangsta's Paradise."

"I was still learning English at that time, so I could not understand the lyrics," Song said. "But the beat was enough because it was unlike any other song I had heard before. From this moment onwards, I became an avid fan of hip hop."

Today, Song's research centers around the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, class, and identity in Korean media and popular culture. Her book, "Hanguk Hip Hop: Global Rap in South Korea," is the first scholarly book-length study in the English or Korean language on the subject of Korean hip hop.

"I hope to participate and contribute in interdisciplinary projects that expand our perspectives on identity and representation," she said. ■

By Samantha Boyle, Kimberly Wilson, and Dave Evensen



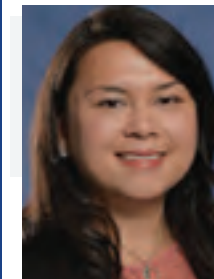
After 2020

Thoughts on moving forward in a new era

By Dave Evensen

How do we move forward from here?

The year 2020 was hard, but it also summoned thoughts on how to start anew. We've asked LAS professors for their thoughts on how—in light of the pandemic, racial tensions, isolation, environmental issues, political divisiveness, and other trials of 2020—we can still move toward a brighter future. *Editor's note: Replies received in December 2020.*



On higher education:
CHAREE THOMPSON
communication

To say that the pandemic has fundamentally changed how I teach and learn would be an understatement. Online learning has certainly presented numerous challenges and barriers—I know I certainly miss the rewards of being physically co-present—but it has also motivated my students and me to foster a virtual learning community committed to connection and resilience. There are several lessons I will carry with me long after we are done quarantining and social distancing. First, the pandemic laid bare the vulnerabilities many students face regularly, including financial precarity, caregiving responsibilities, and access issues. I am grateful students were willing to share with me how they juggled working more hours with their schoolwork to help at home, how they managed no or poor internet connection and limited device capabilities, and how they needed and provided social support to others for mental health. I am committed to making sure students feel seen and heard and to be supporting them in their unique



situations. Second, my pedagogy has increasingly been defined by flexibility—often because it had to shift and adapt during these uncertain times. I am committed to flexibility because it has freed my students to focus on mastery of ideas and given them a sense of autonomy over their learning.

(continued on page 16)



On the environment:
DONALD WUEBBLES
Harry E. Preble Professor, atmospheric sciences

It is extremely important to all life in the United States and beyond to restore many of the protections for our environment that were carelessly removed or altered for commercial reasons during this last administration. It is also important that we rejoin the Paris Agreement to protect our climate, and that the United States provide leadership in getting all countries to work with us in reducing the emissions that affect future changes in climate. This means transitioning our energy and transportation sectors, while continuing to build our economy, to eventually eliminate human-related carbon emissions that drive the changes in climate. A long-term plan for this transition needs to be put into place that all of us can agree to. We need to emphasize the development of pathways and technologies that will allow us to make that transition. We also need to put an emphasis on making our communities, our cities and our industries more resilient to the changes in climate that will still happen even while we slow down future climate changes. The use of solar and other renewable sources of energy need to continue to increase; these also have a positive impact on our economy. Reducing pollution and climate-related emissions while not hurting jobs and while minimizing impacts on the economy needs to be carefully considered.



On equitable food solutions:

ESTHER NGUMBI
entomology

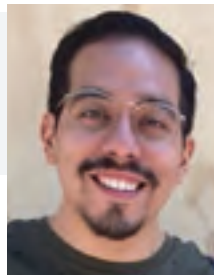
Food insecurity in the United States and around the world continues to rise in part because of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, we witnessed food systems disruptions in rural and urban cities alike. The pandemic exposed the fragility of our existing food systems. Moreover, it also made it clear that hunger and food insecurity disproportionately impact marginalized communities and people of color. Meanwhile, we continued to witness many environmental issues such as drought and flooding, all linked to the changing climate. Impressively, measures and initiatives that were in existence and available to citizens before the pandemic including foodbanks and several federal benefits really made a difference.



Moving on to 2021, there is an urgent need to ramp up the initiatives that worked and to further use knowledge and lessons learned during the pandemic to create policies and solutions to mitigate this worrying trend,

create equitable food systems and to strengthen food production at the household, community, and national level.

Concrete solutions and initiatives to mitigate food insecurity must be rooted in data evidence. Institutions like the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign are better placed to continue to harness research, discovery, engagement, learning and extension to meet our collective food needs.



On technology and education:

RODRIGO DELGADO
Spanish and Portuguese

Technology became both a hero and a villain in an uncertain time. Zoom made it possible to teach remotely and safely from the “comfort” of our homes, but also revealed that not every student has the privilege to attend class from a “comfortable” place. There is a chasm between first-generation, underrepresented students and their counterparts. Speaking from my own personal



experience, I could imagine that taking a class via Zoom as an undergrad would have meant logging in to Zoom from my family home on a cheap laptop (because that is all we could afford). I would also be surrounded by the eight other people living there, none of whom completed college. Going forward, we must keep in mind: Not all students are the same. We must pause to be aware of our first-generation, underrepresented students who cross these borders of privilege in ways that often go unrecognized.



On pandemics of the future:

CHRIS BROOKE
microbiology

The massive impact of COVID-19 has made painfully clear how vulnerable we remain to viral pandemics and has exposed and intensified weaknesses and inequalities that were already present in our society. In many ways, our national response to this pandemic has been a complete disaster. Due to a complete failure of leadership at the top of the federal government, the deployment of the tools and expertise that we have honed over decades to fight viral outbreaks such as this one were hobbled, resulting in massive amounts of avoidable death and suffering. To mitigate the impact of the inevitable pandemics of the future, we must commit to major long-term investments in public health infrastructure and research, as well as a social safety net that can sustain those whose lives are upended by events beyond their control.



On the science of food supplies:

STEPHEN LONG
Ikenberry Endowed University Chair of Crop Sciences and Plant Biology

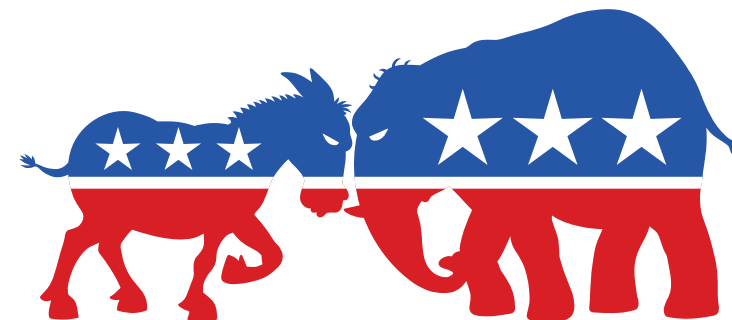
Photosynthesis is directly or indirectly the source of all of our food and much more. No institution in the modern era has made more contributions to understanding the mechanism than the University of Illinois. Now, through the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, U of I leads an international consortium (RIPE) that is converting this understanding via artificial intelligence to predict how the process can be made more efficient and in turn bioengineering these changes into crops to achieve sustainable yield increases. Test-of-concept has demonstrated three independent lines of bioengineering that have resulted in large production increases, in one case a 30 percent increase in soybean yield on our university farm. Now the team is focusing on future-proofing these traits and moving them into the staple crops of sub-Saharan Africa. Globally, this new route to increasing crop yields will benefit the environment by requiring fewer inputs per unit of harvest and avoiding the need to cultivate yet more land to meet growing demand.



On politics:

BRIAN GAINES
political science

It once seemed likely that a strong economy would deliver a second mercurial Trump term. A global pandemic demolished that trajectory, knocking Donald Trump from power, narrowly. But a return to “normalcy” in 2021 looks unlikely. With record caseloads and a post-holiday surge, COVID-19 is unvanquished. Competent,



apolitical management of the nascent vaccination program is step one, but Joe Biden must also exhibit creativity beyond what was in evidence in his low-profile, defensive campaign. With Biden operating with the double-edged sword of unified Democratic government, the tone of disgusted disgruntlement that prompted opponents of Trump to posture as “resistance” will persist, in mirror image. Convinced that the election was stolen, a large chunk of the electorate is surly. To deliver on unifying the nation as his predecessor did not, Joe Biden will need immense skill, juggling demands from left, center, and right.



On race and food security:

BOBBY J. SMITH II
African American studies

When Illinois Governor Pritzker issued a statewide stay-at-home order in March 2020 in response to COVID-19, I thought about the countless Black people who would go hungry. I thought about empty grocery shelves and Black children who use school systems for daily nutrition. Even though the order has since been lifted, I still grapple with such realities. Yet, as the world rushes to get back to “normal” amid persistent racial tensions, there remains a painful silence around Black food insecurity. To be sure, many Black folks are simultaneously creating food projects to resist “normal” conditions and hoping that things don’t



go back to “normal.” And that’s the lesson. If “normal” rendered the most vulnerable in general, and Black people in particular, food insecure, then those of us who are committed to social justice across all university levels must actively imagine a new normal that places (food) justice at the center.

(continued on page 18)



On truth and democracy:
JULIE GAILLARD
French and Italian

In March 2020, an eminent French epidemiologist triumphantly announced that he had found a cure for COVID-19: hydroxichloroquine. In spite of unanimous warnings from the scientific community that his protocols were unreliable and his results insignificant, he was hailed like the Messiah. But who could blame people for placing their faith in a scientist?

2020 has been a series of contrafactual, inconsistent communication by government officials, in France just as in the U.S. Scientists warn against an airborne virus? “It is not useful to wear a mask.” People of color and political opponents are brutalized, maimed, or killed on camera? “There is no such thing as police violence.” To make sure it is the case, France is currently debating laws limiting the publication of images of the police and restricting academic liberties when it comes to the study of race.

What happens when those who have been elected to uphold democracy against the rise of fascism no longer handle factual truth as what is established through evidence-based protocols, but as an effect of discourse? Hannah Arendt famously wrote that truth is “the ground on which we stand.” As the ground is being taken from under our feet, the most dangerous of messianic figures seem to have a bright future ahead of them.



On education:
Laurie Johnson
Germanic languages and literatures

The COVID-19 pandemic has made inequities in education even more obvious. My daughter in high school joins her online classes with an excellent internet connection; some of her classmates need to find Wi-Fi hotspots and take class in their cars. Some of

our students are struggling with extra jobs, depression, and food insecurity.

Educators have had countless conversations this past year about how online teaching and meeting addresses (or doesn't address) those inequities: Does disembodiment really affect education negatively? Are students getting the mental health resources they need during this simultaneously over-connected and disconnected time? Is in-person teaching somehow automatically “better,” and why?

The LAS Life + Career Design Lab is one example of a campus unit that has pivoted meaningfully to offer intellectual and practical guidance for students in a world no one saw coming. The students who take advantage of such resources are turning adversarial conditions into growth. They are beginning to see the degree less as an end in itself, and more as another aspect of an overall intellectual and psychological trajectory that they are very actively co-creating. I've never seen students as deeply involved in every choice, every moment of their college experience as I do now.



On confronting racial inequality:
GILBERTO ROSAS
anthropology and Latina/Latino studies

Only a deep reckoning with deep processes of racialized dispossession can liberate us from our confinements.

In August 2019, my hometown of El Paso, Texas, experienced a mass shooting. It targeted a so called “Hispanic invasion,” as the executioner wrote, killing more than twenty and wounding another twenty plus men, women, and children, at a local Walmart on a weekend morning before school began. The shooting occurred in the wake of the horrendous practices of family separation, which began, again, in El Paso, and has links in settler and anti-Black logics.

A virulent pandemic has brought the United States to its knees, killing more than 300,000 people, sickening tens of thousands more, and again, overwhelmingly affecting Native Americans, Black, and Latinx communities, many of whom labor in some essential segment of our way of life. They cannot work behind the safety of glowing screens. Nor can they riot mask-less, armed, and en masse in our nation's capital. ■



LAS Experts

The words that matter

Award-winning poet, author, and English professor **JANICE HARRINGTON** talks about teaching poetry.

1939

The Getaway, 1939, also known as The Fox [The Get-a-way]

Try to ignore the connections between the invasion of Poland, a sorceress crushed beside the curb of a yellow brick road, and a 1939 painting by a Negro folk artist of an escaping fox—fox as sneak-thief, spirit-animal, shape-shifter, ambassador of ghosts, fox as sign, how death steals and steals away.

Dark sky and torn clouds, the snow, the axe-colored creek, Ol' Brer Fox with Massa's best settin' hen pinched tight between pointy teeth, a little some'm-some'm the fox thinks he is righteously owed and has artfully gained with stealth, as history is ultimately a chronology of grand larcenies and petty thefts, the bones of prey animals picked clean by kit and vixen. History is the fox.

But art too is theft. Mark the rapacious brush (pointed like a fox's tail). Mark the rapacious eye (vision's feral skittishness). Mark the rapacious canvas (like the henhouse, after the fox has left). Lift a brush, snatch the unwary eye, alter borders for lebensraum, and *you'll be his- you'll be his- you'll be history!*

A watercolor painted by Adolf Hitler is auctioned for less than Dorothy's ruby slippers. After all, a pair of ruby slippers could be enchanted kits, fox spirits bearing missives from the dead, or exhibit items stolen from a display of several thousand little shoes in a Polish Konzentrationslager. A pair of ruby slippers could be the ears of the fox in Pippin's *The Getaway*. History is a tale of shape-shifting and unlikely connections, or art is the fleeing fox and history dangles from its mouth.

What advice do you give students who want to better express themselves through poetry?

Read as much contemporary poetry as you can, and strive to write 10,000 bad poems. Bad poems lead to better poems. Poetry is a craft that rewards slow, steady, keep-at-it practice. Find poetry mentors, poets who write in a way that you admire, enjoy, or that leaves you stunned. Read and re-read their work.

What kind of impact do you hope that your poetry has on readers?

The impact of my teaching matters more: helping my students hone their voices so that they can say, “Yes, I can,” when asked to describe the moments and perceptions that shape their lives.

Please select one of your poems to share.

“1939” (at right) is an ekphrastic poem, or a poem about a work of art. It ponders “The Wizard of Oz,” the tragedies of World War II, and world folklore about the fox. The poem argues that art is stronger than history.

By Dave Evensen

To read Harrington's full profile and other LAS Expert profiles, go to go.las.illinois.edu/LASexperts. ■

Photo by Rachel Eliza Griffiths.

LAS alumni honored for careers, service, and giving back

2020 LAS ALUMNI AWARDS

CELEBRATING ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT

Ten alumni from the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences have been named recipients of the college's 2020 annual alumni awards. The winners were honored during LAS Impact 2020, a weeklong celebration of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences in October.

Read summaries of the winners here. A video of the award presentation, including comments by the award winners, can be viewed at go.las.illinois.edu/AlumniAwardRecipients2020.



Richard Berkowitz
(BS, '79, biology; MD; '83)

LAS Distinguished Service Award

Richard Berkowitz, a physician anesthesiologist and perioperative physician, co-founded the School of Molecular and Cellular Biology (MCB) Pre-Health and Professional Mentorship Program with the school's assistant director of advising and recruitment Tina Knox in 2010.

The mentorship program connects undergraduate students with alumni already practicing in the field, and includes monthly check-ins between students and their mentors as well as job-shadowing and site visits opportunities for students. In addition to implementing the program, Berkowitz has served as a mentor to students over the past 10 years.



Kurt Bloomstrand
(BS, '09, molecular and cellular biology)

LAS Outstanding Young Alumni Award

As an undergraduate student, Kurt Bloomstrand joined Illini EMS, which provides medical assistance at large campus events. This experience would solidify Bloomstrand's passion for medicine, leading him to many accomplishments, including the creation of a system response program in the Urbana-Champaign area.

As medical director of emergency medical services at OSF Heart of Mary Medical Center, Bloomstrand oversees operations in seven counties and operates a physician

response vehicle that functions as an ambulance but with tools and medicine that only physicians can provide.



Kelvin Droegemeier
(MS, '82; PhD, '85; atmospheric sciences)

LAS Alumni Achievement Award

Kelvin Droegemeier was appointed director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy at the White House in 2018 and also serves as acting director of the National Science Foundation.

Droegemeier served as science advisor to President Donald Trump to coordinate science and technology initiatives across the federal government. He was appointed to his current position following a well-respected career in science: Before becoming director, Droegemeier worked for 33 years at the University of Oklahoma, serving as a professor of meteorology and vice president for research.



Joel Geiderman
(BS, '72, physiology)

LAS Humanitarian Award

Joel Geiderman said his liberal arts education has been invaluable to his groundbreaking 41-year career in emergency medicine. Geiderman said that there were no "free passes" or grading curves within the university's "rigorous" curriculum. It was an experience, he said, that helped him throughout his career.

As co-chairman of the Department of Emergency Medicine at the Cedar-Sinai Medical in Los Angeles,

California, Geiderman played an essential role in the development of emergency medicine. Geiderman is also medical director of the Beverly Hills Fire Department, and he has also been extremely active in the area of Holocaust education.



Michael Hecht
(PhD, '76, communication)

LAS Humanitarian Award

As a professor at Penn State University, Michael Hecht is a highly influential scholar of the ways that culture and identity are connected to health decisions. Much of his work has taken place off campus, where he built a model that is proven effective to prevent substance abuse, risky sexual behaviors, opioid overdose deaths, and cancer.

His success includes a proven effective model he developed for keepin' it R.E.A.L., (kiR) a product of Real Prevention LLC, where Hecht is president. The educational programs for this company prevent substance abuse among diverse communities of youth.



Richard Powers
(BS, '78; MA, '80; English)

LAS Alumni Achievement Award with special recognition

Richard Powers switched his major from physics to English during his undergraduate studies at Illinois. It was a good move: Powers has since written several critically acclaimed novels, including "Overstory," which won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 2019.

Powers was formerly a faculty member in the Department of English at Illinois, where he worked closely with several students while simultaneously writing some of his novels. He is the author of 12 novels and has won numerous awards and literary prizes. He was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters for the second time in 2010.



Cheryl Quinn
(PhD, '91, biochemistry)

LAS Alumni Achievement Award

Cheryl Quinn has spent her career working with pharmaceutical drug discovery, development, and consulting. She is currently an Independent Consultant for QnA Pharma Consulting, LLC, where she works to discover and develop new drugs or medicines.

Quinn looks for new ways to treat diseases. Her focus has primarily been with antifungal and antibacterial medicines, but she has also started researching anti-cancer medicines. Quinn said she chose to come to Illinois to work with Robert Switzer, a professor in biochemistry. At Illinois, she learned

the rigor of science and how to approach problems with a methodical, scientific approach.



George Reveliotis
(BA, '96, history)

LAS Dean's Quadrangle Award

George Reveliotis is the founder and managing partner of Reveliotis Law, P.C. The unique experience of adjusting to college life, he said, is what helped propel him to where he is now.

Through his work, Reveliotis ensures fairness within the legal system for property owners paying taxes. A strong supporter of the Department of the Classics, Reveliotis recently pledged \$1.5 million to set up The George N. Reveliotis Family Hellenic Studies Endowment. It will support a lecturer, scholarships, professorships, and graduate fellowships.



Hye Kyung Timken
(PhD, '87, chemistry)

LAS Alumni Achievement Award

Hye Kyung Timken is a Chevron Fellow at Chevron Corporation, where, in her position as team leader, she improves products and processes. Timken and her team worked for 20 years to make the process of making gasoline, one of the most dangerous processes, safer and more efficient.

Timken's favorite class at Illinois was Chemistry 407, Advanced Inorganic Chemistry, which she took as a first-year PhD student. However, in her second year, she decided to switch from inorganic chemistry to physical chemistry.

"Whenever I have difficult decisions, I think about that first difficult decision in Illinois," she said.



Yi Gang
(MS, '84; PhD, '86; economics)

LAS Alumni Achievement Award

Yi Gang is the governor of the People's Bank of China, a role in which he is the highest official governing the monetary policy and banking regulations in the country.

Yi began his professional career as a professor at the Indiana University-Purdue University, and his research interests focused on Chinese monetary policy and the development of China's financial sector. Yi's responsibilities as governor include reshaping China's financial landscape, and he said he plans to maintain a prudent monetary policy, promote financial reform, and maintain financial stability during his tenure. ■

By Kimberly Belser, Samantha Boyle, and Kimberly Wilson



The National Science Foundation (NSF) has awarded \$15.5 million to four universities in Illinois, including the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, to create an institute to bring powerful mathematical ideas to bear on key contemporary scientific and technological challenges.

Researchers at the new Institute for Mathematical and Statistical Innovation (IMSI), which will be hosted by the University of Chicago, will build a platform that accelerates the translation of applied mathematical and statistical techniques into solutions for urgent scientific and societal problems. Many of these problems arise naturally in a range of fields already being studied across the four partner institutions, including climate change, health care, quantum information theory, artificial intelligence, data science, economics, and materials science.

U of I partners with other universities to form math and statistics institute



In addition to the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, IMSI will include a collaborative group of mathematicians and statisticians from the University of Chicago, Northwestern University, and the University of Illinois at Chicago. The \$15.5 million grant will be provided by NSF over five years.

“The IMSI project is a powerful investment by the National Science Foundation in four great universities and in the state of Illinois,” said **Matt Ando**, associate dean for life and physical sciences at the College of LAS, who played a key role in forming the institute. “It puts the state and these universities in a position of national leadership in bringing mathematical and statistical research to bear on pressing societal challenges and in training the next generation of mathematicians and statisticians to collaborate with their colleagues across the academy and in business, industry, and government.”

The current complex environment of science and engineering research involves a deep interaction of multiple disciplines to address scientific problems. These interactions, which are often at very large scales, need sophisticated mathematical and statistical approaches that underpin solutions to the scientific problems. ■

By the College of LAS and the University of Chicago

Of course I sent that email (or maybe not)

Psychologist: Mundane and repeated behavior

can create a false memory



There's a reason people often forget to take a daily medication or respond to that email they've been meaning to send, and it can be chalked up to the gulf between intention and actually completing an action, according to new research co-written by a University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign expert.



Mundane behaviors that are repeated over time and occur in the context of other similar behaviors can lead people to create false memories of completing the task, said **Dolores Albarracín**, a professor of psychology and marketing at Illinois and the director of the Social Action Lab.

“Intentions and making plans typically improve task execution. We need them to function in society, to realize our goals and to get along with others,” she said.

Across five studies, Albarracín and her co-authors investigated the previously unrecognized phenomenon of remembering having enacted a behavioral decision when one only intended to do so.

“Our aim was to develop a lab-analog procedure entailing relatively simple, repetitive and similar behavioral

decisions to create the conditions hypothesized to produce high levels of error,” Albarracín said.

The first two experiments showed misreports and subsequent performance errors. Experiments three and four demonstrated greater confusion when physical involvement and mental criteria for intention and behavior were similar. The fifth experiment indicated that monitoring whether one has acted on a decision is highly effective at reducing errors and more effective than monitoring intention.

“Our results highlight that behaviors will look to be more consistent with intentions when the behavior is routine,” she said. “The finding implies we should be more aware of the potential for error in these similarly trivial behaviors.”

Albarracín's co-authors are Christopher Jones, Kathleen C. McCulloch, and Aashna Sunderrajan, all of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

The paper is published in the *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*. ■

By Phil Ciciora, Illinois News Bureau



A concert for the ages

On Oct. 30, the Marching Illini joined chimesmaster Tina Horton to commemorate the chimes in Altgeld Hall. The joint concert between the band and the chimes, played live online, was conducted exactly 100 years after the chimes were installed on Oct. 30, 1920. They played songs that were played during the ceremony a century ago, including “Adeste Fideles,” the U of I’s original alma mater song. See a recording of the concert at go.illinois.edu/chimes100 and read a history of the chimes on pages 26-27. Photo by Fred Zwicky.



Ohio State University to buy a chime.

The idea caught the fancy of one Illinois student, **Hale Plahn “Pete” Daugherty**, the so-called “Father of the Chimes,” who used his position as editor of the Daily Illini to promote the idea to the student body. It was a pricey endeavor, but in March 1914 students voted to team up with future classes to purchase chimes for Altgeld Hall (the Lincoln bust was second place).

A student-led fundraising campaign commenced. By creating a memorial fund that accumulated interest, and by setting up funding collection stations around campus—where a good amount of arm-twisting occurred—the students were gradually approaching their fundraising goal. Then, in 1917, the United States declared war on Germany, and everything changed.

Campus shifted gears for war. Buildings were converted from academic purposes to war training. Students, including members of the chimes fundraising committees, left for the front. The war ended in 1918, but on its heels came the influenza pandemic, and by 1919 fundraising for the chimes had become almost an afterthought.

There was one student, however, who had not forgotten the dream for the chimes. In early 1920 **Victor Cullin** took over the Senior Memorial Committee and electrified efforts to raise money for the campaign. He enlisted additional help from the Class of 1921, and in April 1920 the newly

the military school’s contribution. The largest bell commemorates former U of I President **Edmund James**.

On Oct. 30, 1920, during Homecoming celebrations, thousands of students, alumni, faculty, and local community members gathered in front of Altgeld Hall, according to Flood. After speeches, the chimes rang for the first time. McShane representative M. Harry Mettee played “Illinois,” the state song, followed by “Doxology, or Old Hundredth,” “Illinois Loyalty,” “Oskee Wow-Wow,” “Comin’ Thro the Rye,” and “America (My Country, ‘Tis of Thee).”

Dean Clark, whose role was just returning to normal, was deeply moved.

“It was a beautiful and inspiring experience when the bells pealed out from the old tower,” Clark later wrote, according to “An Illini Place: Building the University of Illinois Campus.” “Many a one who had listened had a mist before his eyes and felt a choking in his throat. To the young there was the vision of the future and what it holds, and to the old there was the recollection of the past and of the thousands who have gone before.”

The scene was much different on Oct. 30, 2020, when campus celebrated the 100th anniversary of that first day the chimes played in 1920. There was no crowd of thousands. To maintain safety during the COVID-19 pandemic, the celebration was a virtual one—except for the chimes players and a portion of the Marching Illini, which appeared at

The ringing of a new era

100 YEARS AGO, music and the resilience of a dream marked the first days of the Altgeld Chimes

Perhaps it’s coincidence—and perhaps not—that two of the most symbolic moments in the history of the Altgeld Chimes have come during some of the hardest times in campus history.

Look back to early 1920. A student fundraising drive to purchase chimes for Altgeld Hall had come to a halt. What started out in 1914 as a campaign to create a class memorial for the ages had lost its energy in a devastating 1-2 punch of war and disease. Thousands of Illinois students and young alumni had gone to Europe to fight in World War I; 189 of them were killed. Then, in the closing months of the war, the 1918 influenza pandemic erupted.

Every week for months during the 1918-19 pandemic, which became known as the Spanish flu, the Daily Illini published the names of students who’d died of the virus. Emergency hospitals were set up on campus and overrun with hundreds of patients. Students stopped going to class.

“I don’t feel like the same person, and I haven’t for the last two months. I seem somebody else working in a new world and under new conditions,” wrote Dean of Men



Thomas Arkle Clark on October 22, 1918, according to an article in *Storied*. “We have had a thousand people sick with influenza and nine deaths. There will be others I am afraid too. This is a horrible disease.”

Just a few years earlier, the mood on campus was much more upbeat. This was the golden age of class gifts, and the Senior Memorial Committee of the Class of 1914 wanted to give campus something special. The Class of 1912 had given campus the Eternal Flame; the Class of 1913 had given the Lincoln Hall Gateway.

The Class of 1914 bounced around a lot of gift ideas. According to **Liam Flood** (BS, ’20, chemical engineering), a former Altgeld Hall chimesplayer who is currently researching the history of the chimes, some of the ideas included a bust of Abraham Lincoln (this was several years before the one was placed in Lincoln Hall) and an electronic scoreboard for the football field. Then came word of a successful fund drive at

formed Senior-Junior Memorial Committee organized a week-long fundraising blitz. They canvassed campus, hung a campaign poster on Altgeld Hall, and even solicited funds from students who had dropped out, Flood reported.

Within a week they raised \$5,000, which was enough for not only the originally planned 11-bell chime, but one with 13 bells. A committee of students and campus officials selected Baltimore, Maryland-based McShane Bell Foundry Co. to cast the bells, and they were about to sign the contract when Dean Clark asked if the configuration of 13 could play “Illinois Loyalty.” When told they could not, he nixed the purchase, and the push for the chimes seemed to hit another rut.

Clark struck a deal with the School of Military Aeronautics, however, which had recently disbanded on campus after the conclusion of the war, to donate some money left over from a campus recreation fund. They used that money for two more bells, for a total of 15, which would allow the chimes to properly play “Illinois Loyalty.” One of the added bells included inscription commemorating

Altgeld Hall for its only performance of fall 2020.

For those in 2020 who know the history of the Altgeld Chimes, however, and who know about that joyful day 100 years ago when campus emerged from a dark era with peals of music, the centennial celebration certainly rang a bell.

The future of Altgeld Hall and Illini Hall is coming into focus! Learn more and support the Altgeld and Illini Hall Project at go.illinois.edu/chimes100.

By Dave Evensen

(Main photo) The Altgeld Chimes as they appear today. (Inset top left) Former U of I President Edmund James poses with the Altgeld Chimes before they were installed in 1920. (University of Illinois Archives.) The largest of the bells in the Altgeld Chimes is inscribed with a dedication to Edmund James. (Above) Former U of I President David Kinley addresses a crowd of thousands gathered for the original dedication ceremony for the Altgeld Chimes on Oct. 30, 1920. (Photo courtesy of the University of Illinois Alumni Association and Liam Flood. Originally taken for the *Alumni Quarterly* and *Fortnightly Notes*, the predecessor of *Illinois Alumni News*.)

THE 97-DAY TEST

Between move-in day on Aug. 16 and the start of Thanksgiving break on Nov. 20, when in-person classes ended for the semester, thousands of students resided on campus under a hybrid learning model. Here are some numbers behind the story of how campus stayed open during those critical 97 days of the COVID-19 pandemic.



837,000

Number of saliva tests of students, faculty, and staff under the SHIELD Illinois program between Aug. 16 and Nov. 20



Less than one day

Average time to receive results of the campus saliva test.

99.8- 99.9 percent

Specificity rate (ability to correctly identify those without the virus) of the saliva test developed on campus



Worst day

Aug. 30 (230 cases; 2.86 percent positivity rate)



14 days

Length of the lockdown announced on Sept. 2 to stem a rising tide of COVID-19 cases among students



Best day

Oct. 17 (two cases; 0.05 percent positivity rate among all tests)



74/day

Average number of daily COVID-19 cases before the Sept. 2 lockdown



250

Wellness Support Associates and supervisors hired to enact building access guidelines under the pandemic



29/day

Average number of daily COVID-19 cases after the lockdown until Thanksgiving break



0

Number of COVID-19 cases traced to campus classrooms and laboratories



FOR MORE INFORMATION about U of I's testing program and other measures, visit covid19.illinois.edu.

Follow our LinkedIn page & enter to win a print of Altgeld Hall!



Last fall, the Altgeld Chimes turned 100 years old! To celebrate, we're giving away a newly released print of U of I's most iconic building. To enter to win, simply follow our College of LAS LinkedIn page by March 31.

>> Find more details at go.las.illinois.edu/Altgeld100.

178,000
strong

You're a member of one of the strongest and most brilliant groups in the country: the College of LAS alumni. See how you can get involved and make a difference through volunteering, supporting students, offering and receiving career advice, awards, events, joining the alumni council, and other opportunities.

las.illinois.edu/alumni



Celebrate the amazing impact of people in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences!

Watch videos and read more from a virtual celebration to honor the power of LAS innovation and members of our community.

las.illinois.edu/alumni/events/impact



COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES

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

NEW ADDRESS? Update your mail or email address at go.las.illinois.edu/alumnicontract-spring21.

A young man with dark skin and curly hair is shown from the chest up, smiling broadly and looking upwards and to the right. He is resting his chin on his right hand. The background is a solid, warm orange color.

Start your journey here.

For more than 100 years, the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign has helped students launch their careers. From healthcare and climate change to politics, social justice, and the economy, LAS students are exploring the world's most pressing issues.

Cutting-edge research. World-renowned professors. A supportive community. **That's the Power of I.**

Find 70 inspiring majors and endless opportunities for impact in the College of LAS. Learn more at go.illinois.edu/LAS.