

The Quadrangle



LIFE IS A RUSH

Kameno Bell's family, education, and football stardom propel his career in emergency medicine

PAGE 22

IN THIS ISSUE

1 News from LAS

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

5 LAS@Work

Nisha Chittal is at the intersection of politics and media.

6 Animal Encounters

Anthropologist Jane Desmond examines a different kind of ethics.

8 'I found everything at Illinois'

2024 alumni humanitarian award honoree connects campus lessons to life's work.

11 Reimagining the ancient world

Clara Bosak-Schroeder reveals Greek and Roman history in a new voice.

12 Research in LAS

Research images and news from faculty, staff, students, and alumni

16 Progress on the menu

LAS students and faculty members in Cena y Ciencias give children the tools they need to dream.

19 A minute with the Dean

Venetria K. Patton talks about the college commitments and the life and career tracks of alumni.

20 The big why

Evolution, ecology, and behavior professor Alison Bell seeks answers to fundamental questions about individual behavior.

22 Life is a rush

Kameno Bell's family, education, and football stardom propel his career in emergency medicine.

24 The art of wordsmithing

The Skeuomorph Press & BookLab is an experiential studio to study the history and art of books.

26 LAS in History

The ideas within—and outside—the college have defined its history and purpose.

28 LAS by the numbers

Statistics illuminate the roles of faculty members in the College of LAS.

LAS on display

More than 850 high schoolers packed Lincoln Hall in April for IlliniFest, a campuswide event for admitted students to learn more about majors, scholarships, study abroad, and other programs. More than 81% of LAS attendees accepted their offers to come to Illinois.

(Photo by Melissa Kuhl)



NEW ADDRESS? Update your mail or email address at go.las.illinois.edu/contact-F24.

Editor Dave Evensen
Graphic Designers Carly Conway and Heather Gillett

The Quadrangle 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. 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 las.illinois.edu/news/magazine. Or, contact us via the email address above to request the magazine in a different accessible format.

Copyright © 2024 Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois.

Editorial Board

Antony Augoustakis, associate dean for humanities and interdisciplinary programs
Stephen Downie, associate dean for curricula and academic policy
Derek Fultz, senior director of facilities and planning
Wendy Heller, executive associate dean of social and behavioral sciences and area centers
Alejandro Lleras, associate dean of inclusive excellence
Randy McCarthy, interim associate dean for technology and online learning
Isabel Molina-Guzmán, associate dean for student academic affairs (Fall 2024)
Venetria K. Patton, Harry E. Preble Dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Dana Rabin, acting associate dean for student academic affairs (Spring 2024)
Cari Vanderpool, associate dean for research
Shaowen Wang, associate dean for life and physical sciences
Deanna Wisthuff, associate dean for advancement

NEWS FROM LAS



Photo by Carly Conway



Greenfield Lynch Endowed Lecture series highlights Jewish American literature

The annual Greenfield Lynch Endowed Lecture series continued last spring, bringing to campus acclaimed novelist **Ben Lerner**, a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for fiction and also the National Book Award for Poetry. The series is sponsored by **Deborah Lynch** (BA, '70, English) and jointly organized between the Department of English and the Program in Jewish Culture & Society. go.las.illinois.edu/lecture-F24

Faculty members receive endowed named positions

Several LAS faculty members have received endowed named positions. **Christopher Freeburg**, English, was named the inaugural Presidential Humanities and Social Sciences Endowed Chair; **Charles Gammie**, astronomy and physics, was named Ikenberry Endowed Chair; **William S. Hammack**, chemical and biomolecular engineering, was named Grainger Distinguished Chair in Engineering; **Wendy Heller**, psychology, was named Marjorie Roberts Professor in Liberal Arts and Sciences; **James Imlay**, microbiology, has been named Swanlund Endowed Chair; **Andrew Leakey**, plant biology, was named the Michael Aiken Chair; and **Brent Roberts**, psychology, was named Gutzwill Endowed Professor.



Six professors named among world's most influential

Researchers in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences have been named to the 2023 Clarivate Analytics Highly Cited Researchers list, recognizing scientists who have demonstrated exceptional influence worldwide. They include crop science and plant biology professor **Elizabeth Ainsworth**, plant biology professor **Li-Qing Chen**, atmospheric sciences professor **Atul Jain**, crop sciences and plant biology professor **Stephen Long**, and psychology professor **Brent Roberts**. Former psychology professor **Ed Diener**, deceased, is also honored. go.las.illinois.edu/influential-F24

From left: Ed Diener, Li-Qing Chen, Atul Jain, Stephen Long, Brent Roberts, and Elizabeth Ainsworth

What was found in the Illini Hall time capsule?

In a special ceremony, the University YMCA opened a time capsule uncovered during the demolition of Illini Hall. Sealed away for more than 115 years, the box included the University YMCA's annual report for June 1907 and a copy of The Illini newspaper (now the Daily Illini) from June 11, 1907, detailing the senior ball at the Armory, reading, "The Armory was a bower of evergreens, smilax, and snow-balls, the whole being softly illuminated by shaded lights." go.las.illinois.edu/capsule-F24



Photo by Carly Conway



Research center expands lethal force database

The **Cline Center for Advanced Social Research** and an interdisciplinary team of University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign experts have expanded upon their statewide registry on the use of lethal force by police officers in the state of Illinois to include national data. The Systematic Policing Oversight Through Lethal-Force Incident Tracking Environment project, called SPOTLITE, identified more than 23,000 incidents of police uses of lethal force in the U.S. during 2014-2021. go.las.illinois.edu/database-F24

(Photo by Fred Zwicky)

Paul M. Lisnek LAS Hub helps students achieve academic and career goals

The Paul M. Lisnek LAS Hub, created with the support of communication alumnus **Paul M. Lisnek** (BA, '80; MA, '80; PhD, '86, speech communication; BA, '80, political science; JD, '83), is a new space dedicated to assisting students with a variety of queries. Located in Lincoln Hall, the LAS Hub provides a system of peer mentors who offer drop-in advising for resume and cover letter reviews, internship searches, career guidance, experiential learning opportunities, and information about college services. go.las.illinois.edu/Lisnek-F24

Chemist leads \$4.5 million project to create a clean energy future

A University of Illinois team led by chemistry professor **Joaquín Rodríguez-López** is launching a new project that aims to produce clean hydrogen, sequester carbon dioxide, and store renewable energies like wind and solar inexpensively and sustainably by packaging electrochemical reactions in smaller-than-standard serving sizes. Called Driving Redox on Particulate Liquids Earthshot (DROPLETS), the project is backed by a \$4.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Earthshots Initiative. go.las.illinois.edu/DROPLETS-F24

Top row, from left: Lisa Olshansky, Paul Kenis, and Joaquín Rodríguez-López. Seated, from left: Charles Schroeder and Qian Chen (Photo by Beckman Institute)



Three LAS students receive Critical Language Scholarships

Three College of LAS students were awarded U.S. Department of State Critical Language Scholarships to study foreign languages this summer. **Shireen Aydogan**,

Sylvia Techmanski, and **Karel Pene** received full scholarships to spend 8-10 weeks abroad studying one of 14 critical languages. The program is part of an initiative to expand the number of Americans studying and mastering critical foreign languages and cultural skills to enable them to contribute to U.S. economic competitiveness and national security. go.las.illinois.edu/scholarship-F24



From left: Shireen Aydogan, Sylvia Techmanski, and Karel Pene



U of I grows Brazilian collaborations

The University of Illinois System has launched “Brasillinois” to build research connections and increase the exchange of students and faculty with Brazilian institutions. “Over the last 130 years, the U of I System has become a trusted partner in Brazil for many different types of research and outreach activities. Brasillinois is a great way to commemorate that history while pointing toward an even greater future of collaboration,” said **Jerry Dávila**, executive director of the Illinois Global Institute and the Jorge Paulo Lemann Chair in Brazilian History.

go.las.illinois.edu/Brazil-F24



Photo by Carly Conway

The Illini Success initiative, an annual study of recent alumni, reports that 91% of LAS alumni who graduated during the 2022-2023 period secured a first destination within six months of commencement. Of that figure, 50% of new graduates found employment and 40% sought further education such as graduate or professional school. Roughly 1% went into volunteer or service work. The average salary for new LAS alumni is \$71,135.

go.las.illinois.edu/report-F24

Three professors honored by the largest general scientific society

Three professors in the College of LAS have been elected 2023 Fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the world’s largest general scientific society which recognizes scientists, engineers and innovators for their scientifically and socially distinguished achievements. The new fellows are evolution, ecology and behavior professor **Rebecca Fuller**, chemistry professor **Christy Landes**, and communication professor **Marshall Scott Poole**.

go.las.illinois.edu/aaas-F24



From left: Rebecca Fuller, Marshall Scott Poole, and Christy Landes.

For more about these LAS news stories and others please visit las.illinois.edu/news

LAS@Work with Nisha Chittal

At the intersection of politics and media

Nisha Chittal (BA, '09, political science) graduated from Illinois at a time when social media was just finding its footing. She quickly realized social media could be a powerful tool for networking. Using social media, Chittal made connections at the crossroads of politics and journalism and has never looked back. Today she is the chief of staff at Vox.com where she oversees the many facets of a newsroom with an eye on accessible journalism.



Nisha



Image from Adobe Stock

What is the most interesting aspect of your job?

It’s a cliché, but there really is no typical workday. I oversee a lot of management, strategy, and operations of the Vox newsroom, so the projects I work on really vary. I spend most of my days in back-to-back meetings, and projects can range from thinking about our revenue strategy to brainstorming new newsletter ideas to discussing how we’re going to cover a major news story or how we’re going to mark Vox’s 10th anniversary. Sometimes it’s working on budgets and creating processes and workflows to make sure the newsroom is operating smoothly. Other times, I’m interviewing candidates for open roles, or thinking about organizational structure and whether we have the right roles and the right

structure to set us up for success. It’s never the same day to day, and that’s what keeps it interesting. ”

How did your major prepare you for your career?

I loved my political science classes, and I found that I especially liked the ones that focused on the intersection of politics and the media, which helped me realize that I wanted a career in political journalism and that I loved writing. ”

What do you like best about your work?

I believe journalism is incredibly important to having an informed, empowered society, and I love Vox’s mission to make journalism accessible to everyone. In my role, I’m motivated knowing that the work I’m doing will hopefully set Vox up for long-term success and help us serve audiences who are looking for clarity and deeper understanding of the world around them. ”

By Kayleigh Rahn

Editor’s note: This LAS@Work profile is part of a series that features College of LAS alumni and their careers. Visit go.las.illinois.edu/AtWork-F24 to read more.

Animal Encounters

(At left) A bonobo similar to Kanzi, one of the first great apes to show an understanding of human language (AdobeStock). (At right) Jane Desmond (L. Brian Stauffer)

Anthropologist Jane Desmond examines a different kind of ethics.

Animal Studies at Illinois Initiative, which sponsors the annual International Summer Institute in Animal Studies, through the Center for Advanced Study.

Desmond's interaction with Kanzi is just one among her many animal encounters, for she has studied animals from a variety of unique angles. For instance, she has examined pet cemeteries and ways people grieve animals, methods of displaying animals in death through taxidermy, and even animals that paint.

Most recently, she completed a 30-week fellowship in bioethics at Harvard Medical School, tackling ethical issues in both human and animal medicine. Each year, Harvard selects 15 professionals from around the world who are working in arenas with bioethical components.

The 2023-24 team included a pediatric heart surgeon, an ophthalmologist, the head of research at a major Boston hospital, and a liver transplant surgeon. Desmond was the only person in the group studying animals; she said her goal was to examine ways that veterinarians can learn from medical professionals working with humans.

"Medical anthropology, the study of health systems in communities around the world, is a very well-developed field," Desmond said. "But there's practically nothing in this branch of anthropology that engages with medicine for animals. I'm interested in a unique slice that most people are not working on."

Desmond's path to animal studies is equally unique. She began as a modern dancer and choreographer, teaching at Cornell and Duke. After retiring from performing, she earned a PhD in American cultural studies from Yale.

Her dissertation became a book, "Staging Tourism," which examined cultural tourism and also "animal tourism," which includes looking at animals in zoos and marine parks and through eco-tourism. "That's when I got very involved in animal studies, which was just emerging as an interdisciplinary academic field."

When Desmond came to U of I, she began teaching LAS courses on animal studies. Then, roughly 10 years ago, she started doing field work at the U of I College of Veterinary Medicine, where she is also affiliate faculty. "I have spent a lot of time shadowing vet students as they move through classrooms and into anatomy labs and clinics."

On the surface, veterinary clinics appear much like hospitals for humans. But there are fundamental

"But there's practically nothing in this branch of anthropology that engages with medicine for animals. I'm interested in a unique slice that most people are not working on."

differences, such as tougher access to animal health care in some areas. She said the veterinary profession has begun to map "veterinary deserts"—places where access to vets is difficult. And even

"These requests are huge sources of moral stress for vets," she said. It could be one reason that veterinarians have higher rates of suicide compared to the general population—even when compared to MDs.

After grappling with such ethical dilemmas during the Harvard fellowship program, Desmond came away with a hope to forge more links between professionals who treat animals and those working with humans. For instance, she wants to find out if veterinary faculty are interested in "ethical rounds"—processing ethical dilemmas as they do in hospitals.

Desmond has been encountering animals in unexpected ways ever since her mother rescued a robin that fell from a nest and brought the bird into their house for several years. However, her encounter with Kanzi stands out.

According to Desmond, they ran out and purchased a ball, as Kanzi requested. And when they presented the ball to him, Kanzi used his symbols to respond. The center's researcher interpreted Kanzi's reaction, which Desmond has never forgotten: "He said you can take a picture of him now."

By Doug Peterson



Jane Desmond remembers the day she and several colleagues drove to the great ape center in Des Moines to visit Kanzi, a bonobo who is one of the first non-human primates to show an understanding of human language.

The center's researcher asked Kanzi if his visitors could take photos of him. But Kanzi, communicating through printed symbols, said, "No photos." Instead, the ape signaled that he wanted a ball.

When Desmond and the others indicated that they didn't have a ball, Kanzi kept demanding it. And when they said they were going to leave to buy a ball, Kanzi said, "Want ball now."

"It was a shocking moment when he said 'now,'" said Desmond, a pioneer in animal studies and an LAS anthropology professor since 2007. She is also director of the Human-



LAS Alumni Humanitarian Award honoree connects campus lessons to life's work



Before social media, before podcasts, before streaming television — it was 1993, and **Eboo Patel** was a freshman hoping to find his way while living on West Gregory Drive in Allen Hall.

And that made all the difference.

The eclectic, diverse residence hall community became a rich environment where Patel (BA, '96, sociology) could debate the issues of the day or learn from others with different identities and ideologies.

The James Scholar completed four independent studies with professors, served as an RA, and led a volunteer organization on his way to graduating with his bachelor's degree in three years.

"I just loved the fact that so many of the faculty in the Department of Sociology and beyond were open to one-on-one work with a student, even at a large university," Patel said.

"I found everything at Illinois," he added, "and I really want to say that loud and proud. I found a place where I got the big school environment, whether that's from sports, diversity, or big concerts, but I also got a lot of personal attention from faculty and staff who care. All that has played a significant role in the work that I do now."

Today, Patel is a civic leader who believes religious diversity is an essential and inspiring dimension of American democracy. In 2002, he founded the organization Interfaith Youth Core followed in 2022 by the founding of Interfaith America, which is based on the idea "that religion should be a bridge of cooperation rather than a barrier of division." Since then, Patel has partnered with governments, non-profit organizations, colleges, and other groups to promote dialogue and cooperation among different faiths and communities. In recent years, Patel and the organization have launched initiatives in the areas of public health, technology, media, policy, and racial equity.

For this work, he was named as the honoree for the 2024 LAS Alumni Humanitarian Award, given to alumni whose outstanding leadership or service significantly improve the lives of others.

"Receiving the recognition is very meaningful to me, because of the role that the college and LAS played in my own life," he said. "I visit Illinois once or twice every year. I like to pay my respects to the College of LAS and peek into Lincoln Hall and where the sociology lectures were held."

Back in 1993, Patel had an interest in the patterns of people's lives, so sociology seemed like a great fit for his undergraduate studies.

"I was very interested in the institutions of our society," he explained. "I'm interested in what holds a society together and what tears it apart. I'm interested in issues of identity and diversity. Those are all questions that sociology majors focus on."

At Illinois, Patel learned about Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement and spent time volunteering at the Catholic Worker House. Through volunteer programs at the university, Patel connected with a variety of faith-based groups, including the Salvation Army and the Men's Emergency Shelter.

"I very much learned about the connection between religious identity and social action when I was at the University of Illinois," he explained.

"I became interested in identity, diversity, civic institution, and American society because of my college experience," Patel said. "Those leadership opportunities that I had in college prepared me to lead an organization now. I'm deeply grateful to the University of Illinois for the experience and the learning. I very much tie what I am doing now back to my college experience."

Today, Patel travels to campuses across the country for speaking engagements, hosts guests for his podcast "Interfaith America," writes columns for the The Chronicle of Philanthropy and Deseret Magazine, and leads his staff of 55 individuals.

"I think the connection between faith and social action is really important," Patel said. "To preserve democracy, we have to have respect for different identities and relationships between people of different backgrounds and cooperation on group projects that serve the common good. I was in the early stages of thinking through those issues when I was at the University of Illinois."

Patel compares the power of a religiously diverse democracy to a potluck dinner. At a potluck guests bring their best dish, a dish that is inspired by their identity, he explained.

"It's where everyone can bring their contribution to the table,"

he said. "That contribution is connected to their identity, and we want to create a space for those contributions to include creative combinations. In my mind, identity is viewed as a source of pride and a catalyst for contribution."

2024 College of LAS Alumni Award Honorees

Including Eboo Patel, eight alumni of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences received recognition during the college's 2024 alumni awards at a celebration in April. They are researchers and entrepreneurs who have made incredible impacts in their fields and communities.

LAS Dean's Quadrangle Award



Susan Morisato (BS, '75, mathematics and education; MS, '77, mathematics) and **Tom Remec** (BS, '74, chemistry; MS '83, metallurgical engineering)



Susan Morisato and Tom Remec have found many avenues to give back to the College of LAS and university since graduating. Susan Morisato retired as the president of the Medicare Supplement Business for United Healthcare and AARP, and Tom retired as the president of Beta Instruments and Display Process Consulting. They have served on advisory boards and leadership councils for various departments around campus and provide funding for the Susan C. Morisato Mathematics Scholarship and the Thomas Remec and Susan Morisato Fund for Data Science in the Chemical Sciences.

LAS Alumni Achievement Award



John Anderson (MS, '69; PhD, '71, chemical engineering)

While his research program was active, John Anderson was one of the world's leading experts in understanding how small colloidal particles in liquids interact with membranes in the presence of liquid flow and electric fields. Today he serves as the president of the National Academy of Engineering following his retirement from the Illinois Institute of Technology in 2015 and his service from 2014-2019 on the National Science Board, which sets policy for the U.S. National Science Foundation. Anderson has been a member of the faculties of Cornell University, Carnegie Mellon University, Case Western Reserve University, and ITT.

Continued on next page...

Clara Bosak-Schroeder attended LAS Liftoff to speak with new first-year students about studying classics. (Photo by Carly Conway)

Reimagining the ancient world

Clara Bosak-Schroeder reveals Greek and Roman history in a new voice

Professor of classics Clara Bosak-Schroeder's first book, "Other Natures: Environmental Encounters With Ancient Greek Ethnography," (UC Press 2020), explored how ancient Greek authors cast humans and nonhumans in complex, interdependent relationships. Her latest work blends creative nonfiction and scholarship to examine ancient monuments.

What are you currently writing?

I am writing a digital book called "Seven Wonders" that blends fiction, creative nonfiction, and scholarship to investigate how contemporary artists from marginalized standpoints are reimagining ancient monuments. My case studies include Kara Walker's "A Subtlety" (2014) and Lakshmi Ramgopal and Nancy Davidson's "Hive" (2020). Greek and Roman antiquity, despite being multi-ethnic, has often been seen as the "heritage" of white people; on the contrary, whiteness and other modern racial categories were unknown in the ancient world. White supremacist engagements with Greece and Rome have received a lot of attention from classicists, and rightly so, but I am even more fascinated by people of color who are reclaiming Greece and Rome as their own.

Describe a moment when your career changed direction.

Since completing my first book in 2020 I have devoted most of my writing to creative nonfiction, or projects like "Seven Wonders" that blend creative nonfiction and scholarship. As much as I love traditional research it does not typically allow you to express a personal voice,

a limitation in form that also limits the meaning (and pleasure) scholarly writing can provide. In lieu of an MFA or other degree program I built a community of other writers at Illinois, including Amanda Bales and Dana Kinzy in the English department, who have critiqued and nurtured my creative practice ever since.

What kinds of lessons do you impart on your students?

Students often come to my classes with an interest in the ancient world, and I love to connect that interest to the present day. I firmly believe that the past can help us think through the challenges of the present in new and constructive ways. I teach a variety of media, but literature remains at the core of my teaching practice. In our information-saturated environment it's becoming harder and harder to have slow, immersive reading experiences. I try to communicate the value of that experience to my students and give them opportunities to practice it.

By Dave Evensen

Editor's note: This profile and other LAS Experts profiles can be found at go.las.illinois.edu/Experts-F24.



Clara

2024 Alumni honorees pose with Dean Venetria K. Patton (center) at the event. From left: Daniel Heller, John Anderson, Lisa Monteggia, Venetria K. Patton, Ernest Crim III, Susan Morisato, Tom Remec, and Ruben Mesa. (Group and awardee event photos by Darrell Hoemann)

LAS Alumni Achievement Award continued



Ruben Mesa (BS, '91, physiology and nuclear engineering)

Ruben Mesa is an international expert on myeloproliferative neoplasms, a group of bone marrow disorders that often lead to leukemia. He holds several leadership roles with Atrium Health, serving as president of Atrium Health Levine Cancer Center, executive director of Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Comprehensive Cancer Center, and enterprise senior vice president. He also is the Charles L. Spurr MD Professor of Medicine and vice dean for cancer programs at Wake Forest University School of Medicine. He led the development of the first U.S. guidelines on the diagnosis and treatment of a variety of bone-marrow malignancies. Mesa has been the principal investigator or co-principal investigator of more than 70 clinical trials and is currently leading the investigation of several other drugs.

Read more at go.las.illinois.edu/Mesa-F24



Lisa Monteggia (BS, '89, microbiology; MS, '91, biology)

Lisa Monteggia is an internationally recognized leader in the field of neurobiology and psychiatry and serves as the director of the Vanderbilt Brain Institute and professor of pharmacology at Vanderbilt University. Her research focus is understanding psychiatric disorders and their treatments with an emphasis in the field of depression and antidepressant action. She has an extensive track record of service to national and international neuroscience and mental health organizations.

Read more at go.las.illinois.edu/Monteggia-F24

LAS Outstanding Young Alumni Award



Ernest Crim III (BA, '09, history)

Ernest Crim III uses Black historical narratives to empower and educate. A former high school educator, he now uses social media to teach Black history to millions of people around the world. He is an advocate for cultural awareness, social justice, and political and economic equity. He is the founder and CEO of Crim's Cultural Consulting, an international speaker, and the author of two books.

Read more at go.las.illinois.edu/Crim-F24 and scan the code to watch a video.



Daniel Heller (PhD, '10, chemistry)

Daniel Heller is the head of the Cancer Nanomedicine Laboratory at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, where he has rapidly become one of the preeminent young scientists in cancer science. In 2023, Heller and colleagues reported a new nanotherapeutic approach targeting blood vessels to deliver medicines to brain cancers. This work could open the doors to new treatments for brain cancer.

Read more at go.las.illinois.edu/Heller-F24 and scan the code to watch a video.



By Kayleigh Rahn

RESEARCH IN LAS



Exploring how tomatoes talk to each other

Plants have evolved to communicate using chemical signals. They use volatile organic compounds (VOCs) to help prepare their own defenses, to warn each other of threats, and recruit soil microbes that can help plants grow, according to graduate student **Erinn Dady** and entomology professor **Esther Ngumbi**, who published the study in the *Journal of Chemical Ecology*. “When a caterpillar chews on a leaf, the plant sends out a signal that calls out to the caterpillar’s predators. It’s like a billboard that tells them where lunch is,” Dady said.

go.las.illinois.edu/tomatoes-F24

Esther Ngumbi, left, and Erinn Dady studied the effect of arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi, caterpillars, and the variety of tomato plants on plant chemistry. (Photos by Fred Zwicky)

Exploring links between American Indians and classical languages and literatures

Craig Williams, professor of classics, has uncovered the little-known history of Latin texts written by Native American students in 17th and 18th century New England. He has recently published three articles on these writers and the broader connections with ancient Greece and Rome. Currently, Williams is writing a book that will bring together, for the first time, more than 80 Native writers who have engaged with Greco-Roman antiquity in various ways since the 17th century.

go.las.illinois.edu/LatinTexts-F24

(Photo by Della Perrone)



Scientists step closer to growing plants in space

New, highly stretchable sensors can monitor and transmit plant growth information without human intervention, researchers report in the journal *Device*. The polymer sensors are resilient to humidity and temperature and can stretch over 400% while remaining attached to a plant as it grows and send a wireless signal to monitors, said chemical and biomolecular engineering professor **Ying Diao**, who led the NASA-funded study with plant biology professor **Andrew Leakey**. The sensors could someday help astronauts grow vegetables on long missions.

go.las.illinois.edu/spacePlants-F24



(Photo courtesy NASA Marshall Space Flight Center)



Why is the reparations movement gaining momentum?

According to **Sundiata Cha-Jua**, professor of history and of African American studies and co-editor of “Reparations and Reparatory Justice,” some 24 years ago 67% of Black Americans and 4% of white Americans supported reparations. By 2022, 77% of Black Americans and 18% of white Americans did. Cha-Jua said the movement is growing as U.S. politicians and corporations have retreated from a commitment to racial justice.

go.las.illinois.edu/reparations-F24

(Photo by L. Brian Stauffer)



Study: News media trigger conflict for romantic couples with differing political views

Communication professor **Emily Van Duyn** conducted in-depth interviews with people whose partners’ political views differed from their own and found that for these couples, seemingly mundane decisions about media consumption became especially difficult. “They saw the news as inherently political, and their selection of a news outlet or the act of sharing an article or video meant they were intentionally pulling their partner into a recognition of their political differences,” Van Duyn said.

go.las.illinois.edu/political-F24

(Photo by L. Brian Stauffer)

BOOKS FROM LAS



“Bribed with Our Own Money: Federal Abuse of American Indian Funds in the Termination Era,”

by **Dave Beck**, history, recounts how the U.S. government coerced American Indian nations to accept termination of their political relationship with the United States. (University of Nebraska Press)



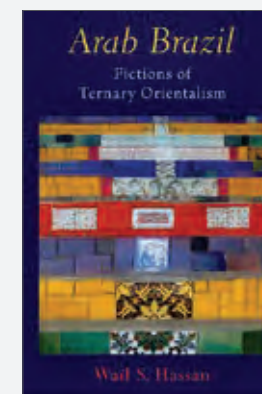
“Inka Bird Idiom,”

by **Claudia Brosseder**, history, shows how the diverse fowl of the Amazon, the eastern Andean foothills, and the highlands shaped Inka politics, launched wars, and initiated peace. (University of Pittsburgh Press)



“A Continuous State of War: Empire Building and Race Making in the Civil War-Era Gulf South,”

by **Maria Angela Diaz**, history, offers an original and valuable analysis of the complicated ways in which race, movement, and geopolitics intersected to shape the history of the Gulf and the United States’ understandings of empire during the Civil War era. (University of Georgia Press)



“Arab Brazil: Fictions of Ternary Orientalism,”

by **Wail S. Hassan**, comparative literature, highlights the representation of Arab and Muslim immigrants in Brazilian literature and popular culture since the early 20th century, revealing anxieties and contradictions in the country’s ideologies of national identity. (Oxford University Press)



Image from Adobe Stock

Study identifies atmospheric and economic drivers of global air pollution

Carbon monoxide emissions from industrial production have serious consequences for human health and are a strong indicator of overall air pollution levels. Many countries aim to reduce their emissions, but they cannot control air flows originating in other regions. A new study from the U of I looks at global flows of air pollution and how they relate to economic activity. The researchers used simulations developed by **Nicole Riemer**, professor in the Department of Climate, Meteorology & Atmospheric Sciences.

go.las.illinois.edu/air-F24

Green zombies: Tropical tree fern repurposes its dead leaves



Plant biologists report that a species of tree fern found only in Panama reanimates its own dead leaf fronds, converting them into root structures that feed the mother plant. The fern, *Cyathea rojasiana*, reconfigures these “zombie leaves,” reversing the flow of water to draw nutrients back into the

plant, as reported by plant biology professor **James Dalling** in the journal *Ecology*. He made the discovery with his team while studying a different plant in Panama.

go.las.illinois.edu/fern-F24

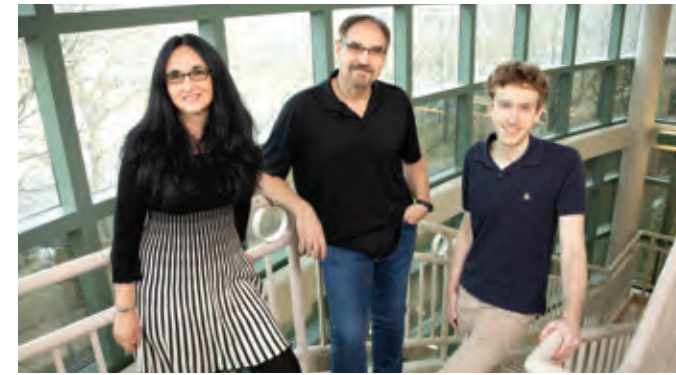
(Graphic by Camila Pizano; color by Michael Vincent)

Restoring family narratives disrupted by slave trade

Vast knowledge gaps among families stem from the transatlantic slave trade. To better understand these histories, scholars and individuals are turning to genetic genealogy to discover and retrace descendant-family lineages. In a recent paper published in the journal *American Anthropologist*, anthropology professor **LaKisha David** explains how genetic genealogy combines DNA testing with traditional family history research to help people discover ancestral origins and living relatives and extend their family trees beyond the limitations of historical records.

go.las.illinois.edu/origins-F24

(Photo by Fred Zwicky)



The vivid aftermath of distressing events

A new study from psychologists suggests that we remember the moments immediately following a distressing episode more sharply than the moments leading up to it. Clarifying the relationship between trauma and memory can improve how we evaluate eyewitness testimonies, inform therapies to treat PTSD, and help clinicians combat memory decline in brain disorders like Alzheimer’s disease. This study led by PhD student **Paul Bogdan** with psychology professors **Florin Dolcos** and **Sanda Dolcos** and appears in the journal *Cognition and Emotion*.

go.las.illinois.edu/distressing-F24

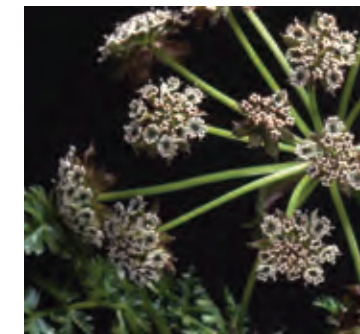
Sanda Dolcos (far left), Florin Dolcos (center), and Paul Bogdan. (Photo by L. Brian Stauffer)

Reconstructing an evolutionary history of flowering plants

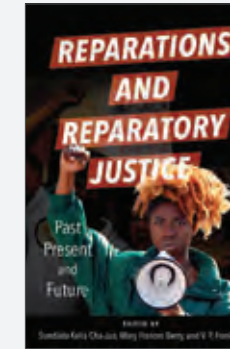
Researchers at the University of Illinois, including **Stephen R. Downie**, professor of plant biology, have helped reconstruct a comprehensive “tree of life” for flowering plants. The study offers new light on the evolutionary history of angiosperms, which account for approximately 90% of all terrestrial plant species. The study, published by *Nature*, involved 279 scientists worldwide who used 1.8 billion letters of genetic code from 60% of all flowering plant genera representing all 416 angiosperm families.

go.las.illinois.edu/flowering-F24

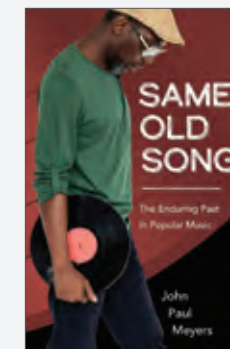
(Photo courtesy of Stephen R. Downie)



BOOKS FROM LAS



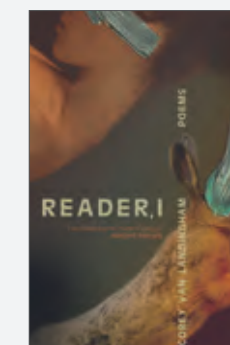
“**Reparations and Reparatory Justice**,” co-edited by **Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua**, history and African American studies, contains works that chronicle the historical movement for reparations both in the United States and around the world for people of African descent. (University of Illinois Press)



“**Same Old Song: The Enduring Past in Popular Music**,” by **John Paul Meyers**, African American studies, examines the widespread sampling of music from decades-old R&B tracks, sold-out anniversary tours by aging musicians, retrospective box sets of vintage recordings, museum exhibits, and performances by current pop stars invoking music and images of the past. (University Press of Mississippi)



“**Enlightenment Anthropology: Defining Humanity in an Era of Colonialism**,” by **Carl Niekerk**, Germanic languages and literatures, probes the origins of modern anthropology in the European Enlightenment, foregrounding how the knowledge transfer between an international array of natural historians and public intellectuals shaped the emerging discipline and its central debates. (Penn State University Press)



“**Reader, I**” by **Corey Van Landingham**, English, contains poems of a speaker who is in her first years of a marriage as she courts and eschews nuptial myths and finds a role for herself in marriage, in history, and in something beyond the self. (Sarabande Books)

PROGRESS ON THE MENU

LAS students and faculty members in Cena y Ciencias give children the tools they need to dream

Ricardo Diaz still remembers the night chemistry professor **Joaquin Rodriguez-Lopez** walked into a room full of kids and told them to throw ketchup on a volunteer wearing a special shirt. Soon the room was enveloped in ketchup, laughter, and gasps as they watched the shirt magically repel everything they threw at it. In an instant, they grasped the practical uses of hydrophobic nanotechnology. But they also learned another important lesson. It's the same lesson they're taught every time Cena y Ciencias is in session, whether they're examining ancient objects or marveling at the vastness of space — that there are people who look like me and talk like me doing fascinating work at the edge of science. And if they can do it, so can I.

Cena y Ciencias, which is Spanish for “supper and science,” began back in 2013, just as a dual-language program was getting off the ground at Urbana School District. It was a bold initiative, designed to enhance integration and build community.

“We realized that we needed dual-language parents and the students to get together so that we could advocate for the STEM equity for the kids in this exciting new program,” said microbiology professor **Rachel Whitaker**. She, along with graduate student **Maria Bautista**, other parents, the dual-language program family liaison **Amanda Gray**, and **Lisa Diaz**, then a STEM specialist at Illinois 4H, helped form the CyC program to do just that.

Their first effort was a homework club held at El Toro restaurant in Urbana, but that morphed into something more when Whitaker and Lisa Diaz, who is now the Illinois 4-H program leader, proposed adding science to the program. “With science, you have a common goal that you're working towards, like building an aerodynamic boat out of tooth picks or making a prediction about a chemistry experiment,” said Whitaker. So that families would not have to orchestrate supper that night, they added free food. And with that, Cena y Ciencias was born.

The program, which provides high-quality science lessons for K-5 students in the Urbana School District dual-language program, is a collaboration between dual-language parent faculty members of the University of Illinois; the UIUC student chapter of the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanic and Native Americans in the Sciences (SACNAS); and the U of I Extension 4-H Youth Development Program. Funded by the National Science Foundation, Cena y Ciencias currently serves about 30 families in Urbana and Champaign, with monthly sessions held at various locations, including the schools, the Champaign Park District's Martens Center and the International Prep Academy in Champaign.



Two things make the program unique. For one, it's taught in Spanish. And for another, families are encouraged to attend. “We're not a drop-off program,” said **Richard Diaz**, Lisa's husband, who was Latin growth manager at 4-H when the program began and continues to serve today as a parent volunteer. “Research is clear that when parents are involved, the kids do better in school.” So, at Cena y Ciencias, parents learn right along with the kids. Each session begins with an exciting demonstration of a scientific principle. Then children and parents split into smaller groups, where they work through experiments, in Spanish, with faculty and students from Illinois.

This unique approach creates a strong sense of community, which is important, according to **Felipe Menanteau**, a senior research scientist at the National Center for Supercomputing Applications and research associate professor of astronomy who's also been involved with the program for years. “If we don't create communities, communities aren't going to thrive. So, this is a small effort to make communities thrive.”



Cena y Ciencias doesn't just build communities; it builds the bridges between them, uniting people who primarily speak English and Spanish, but also other languages, including Q'anjob'al, a Mayan language spoken by immigrants from Guatemala. So how do these diverse groups overcome the language barrier?

“People figure out how to communicate,” said Menanteau. And in the process, they develop relationships. “People get to know each other and build trust, so when there's something going on at school or in the community, they know who they're talking to. They're not strangers anymore.”

Beyond community-building, Menanteau sees Cena y Ciencias as an opportunity to promote social justice. “There are very few Latinos in STEM. So, the idea was twofold. One was to change the face of science by providing Latino students with examples of mentors and say ‘this could be your path.’ And second is the actual education.”

The latter is handled by a long list of faculty and students from LAS and other colleges at Illinois, who teach everything from archaeology to astrophysics. “You name the science and we have probably touched on it in one way or the other,” said Ricardo Diaz.

(At left and at top) Children at a picnic during the Cena y Ciencias program learn about powers of 10 scales from single atoms to microbes. (Photo by Ivan Sosa Marquez)



“Research is clear that when parents are involved, the kids do better in school.”

Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, the program was able to carry on, with sessions held outdoors and kits mailed to students who participated online. The latter allowed former student volunteers who now had jobs to share their expertise. That includes Bautista, the graduate student who helped create CyC and now works as a research scientist, monitoring city waste to track COVID virus concentrations.

“Having an avenue to engage with the local community is huge for Illinois students,” said Whitaker, who helps coordinate those efforts. In many ways, the native Spanish-speaking undergrads, graduate students, and post-docs who participate in Cena y Ciencias are the backbone of the program, recruiting speakers, leading sessions and providing help.

Continued on next page...

That includes chemistry PhD student **Joennis Rosado-Rosa**, whose research focuses on development of tools to combat antibiotic resistance. At *Cena y Ciencias*, she works with families, trains other volunteers and aids speakers by helping them simplify topics and develop activities that are interesting for kids as young as 6.

Rosado-Rosa volunteered because she has a passion for outreach and also knows the importance of learning science early. “When I was in middle school and high school, my school didn’t give a lot of priority to science,” said the Puerto Rico native. “If I would have had that in a younger time, I feel like I would have learned a lot more.”

For microbiology graduate student **Ivan Sosa Marquez**, who is studying symbiosis between nitrogen-fixing bacteria and plants, *Cena y Ciencias* was a chance to help children who often follow their parents into a limited number of jobs break the mold. “I’m actually an example of how context doesn’t define you,” said Sosa Marquez, who comes from Mexico. “I was able to come here and study in this great university, because my parents supported my scientific interests.” Now he tells other children that they can follow their dreams, because “sometimes, that’s all you need.”

Sosa Marquez loves how each session brings scientists into direct contact

with the community. “You’re bringing the absolute expert on that field and having those experts directly engaged with children,” Sosa Marquez said. And many, like **Alejandro Lleras**, psychology professor and associate dean of inclusive excellence at LAS, are happy to do it.

“It’s hugely rewarding,” said Lleras.



“You’re in an environment where you’re inspiring 30 or 40 kids to be engaged in science. And maybe, out of those, some will end up being more motivated to engage in a science career.”

As a parent, Lleras also enjoys seeing his kids develop a sense of agency through their involvement with the program. “If you go to this event and everybody’s speaking Spanish to

“You’re in an environment where you’re inspiring 30 or 40 kids to be engaged in science.”

you, and you’re understanding and communicating, it just validates the effort that you’re putting into trying to learn a new language.”

By the time those students reach high school, they’re at a whole other level, thanks to programs like *Cena y Ciencias*. “I’ve interacted with several students from the dual-language program,” said **Zak Sutton**, a Spanish teacher at Urbana High, where the first dual-language class just graduated, “and their proficiency in both languages, particularly in their corresponding second language, is really impressive.”

For Whitaker, that’s perhaps the most rewarding thing to come out of the entire collaboration. Parents who were once reluctant to enroll their students in a dual-language program are now clamoring to be on the waiting list, and dual-language learning has become so accepted that the community will soon have its own dedicated school. “It’s gotten really, really big,” said Whitaker. “And I hope *Cena y Ciencias* contributed to integrating STEM into families’ everyday lives.”

By John Turner

Children at a *Cena y Ciencias* event observe a microbial growth experiment using yeast to make carbon dioxide. (Photo by Ivan Sosa Marquez)

MINUTE WITH THE DEAN

A MINUTE WITH THE DEAN



Photo by Carly Conway

Venetria K. Patton, is beginning her fourth year as Harry E. Preble Dean of the College of LAS. She talks about the college commitments and the life and career tracks of alumni.

What’s different in the College of LAS this year?

Our college mission is as clear as ever. What’s changing is that we’re deepening our commitment to certain aspects of that mission. For example, with so many people in LAS devoted to outreach and connecting with the community, we have hired a new director of public engagement to help organize and coordinate those efforts. Also, we are hiring a new director of research strategy to assist our new Office of Research—established last year—to help faculty members take advantage of funding opportunities, publish their studies, organize conferences, and other research-related activities. These things represent so much of what we are as a college.

The Illini Success survey indicated that 91% of LAS alumni find a first destination within six months of graduation. What stands out to you about this survey?

We are thrilled about that statistic. It falls in line with previous years, but what I find particularly noteworthy this year is the growing success of students who major

in the humanities. The survey indicates that they are finding first destinations (jobs, graduate school, volunteering, and other pursuits) in growing numbers and earning higher salaries. This shows how well the skills and knowledge that one obtains in English, history, philosophy, and other humanities translate into life and career success. We have established programs to help humanities majors realize their potential, and they appear to be effective.

You are busy as dean, but you are also a professor of English and African American studies. What do you do in that role?

I love being a professor! When I’m not being dean, I teach and study African American literature, focusing particularly on the literature of African American women. This allows me to stay in touch with students and their concerns while sharing a topic that fascinates me. I have studied the Harlem Renaissance extensively, and I’m proud that a book that I edited, “Double-Take: A Revisionist Harlem Renaissance Anthology,” is used by others to teach that topic.

Submit a question for Dean Patton, and she may answer it in the next magazine. Email it to las-news@illinois.edu and put “Ask Dean Patton” in the subject line.

Three-spined sticklebacks interacting as part of study done by Alison Bell, professor of animal biology (Photos by L. Brian Stauffer)

THE BIG WHY



Evolution, ecology, and behavior professor Alison Bell seeks answers to fundamental questions about individual behavior



For evolution, ecology and behavior professor **Alison Bell**, asking big questions seems to be a lifelong habit.

As an undergraduate studying the history and philosophy of science at the University of Chicago, many of those questions were epistemological: How do we know what we know? How is knowledge distorted by our societal norms, prejudices, and blind spots?

She was also, on a more personal level, asking if she wanted to become a scientist.

As a child growing up in a rural area of northern California, she had always

been interested in animals. Her parents thought she might become a vet, but her high school AP Biology textbook suggested a different path.

“Usually the last chapter of a biology textbook is where all the really good stuff is, that has to do with evolution and how behavior evolves,” Bell said. “I remember finishing that class and thinking that stuff at the end was the juiciest stuff. That was what I wanted to study.”

“When I got to college I snuck into an animal behavior class that I didn’t have the prerequisites for. And I promised myself that if I got at least an A- I would talk to the instructor at the end of the class.”

She got the grade, she talked to professor **Lynne Houck**, and the “amazing mentorship” of Houck and other faculty members helped Bell make the leap to studying and practicing science.

Today she leads a research team that seeks answers to a fundamental question: Why do individuals behave differently from one another?

“Think about your own pets. They have a distinctiveness to their behavior. They have an element of uniqueness that they carry with them through situations and over time,” Bell said. “Why is there this variation? From an evolutionary

point of view, we think of natural selection as being a force that sort of removes that individual variation. So what keeps that variation around?”

Bell’s team pursues answers to these big questions by closely studying the relatively small stickleback fish. Three-spined stickleback, which reach a max of about 4 inches in length, are widely distributed in both fresh and marine waters in the Northern Hemisphere. The species has long been of interest to animal behaviorists because of what Bell calls on her website their “rich behavioral repertoire,” including individual variation in behaviors that can also be found in human beings, such as risk taking and aggressiveness.



“They do everything, and they do it in such interesting ways,” she said. “They are a way of condensing a particular problem into a very tractable system.”

For example, most stickleback males are responsible for caring for offspring—tending and defending the nests where females spawn and watching out for their vulnerable newly hatched young. But there are interesting variations and complexities, which Bell’s lab explore. Some male individuals provide more care than others—why? Bell’s lab has

found that one key parental behavior, fanning the nest, is highly heritable—what mechanism transfers this behavior from parent to offspring? The so-called “white sticklebacks” in Nova Scotia do not provide care for their young—why?

When Bell started her lab, the stickleback genome had just recently been sequenced, and she was excited about opportunities to look beyond a single gene to the entire genome, to measure gene expression rather than just a static DNA sequence. “Technology opens up new avenues in what you can do,” she said. As the Bell lab employed new methods to investigate behavioral variation at the molecular level, they found that the stickleback’s genome reacts to environmental factors, such as opportunities for courtship and risk of predation.

“If you really want to understand behavior, you have to study organisms in their natural environments and embrace the complexity.”

In recognition of this type of pioneering work, Bell was recently awarded a 2024 Guggenheim Fellowship. As a Guggenheim Fellow, she will work toward developing a conceptual framework that integrates neural and gene regulatory networks to offer new insights into individual behavior differences.

It’s not just the behavior of fish, cats, or dogs that Bell and her collaborators hope to better understand. As leader of the recently launched Bill and Julie Kellner Center for Neurogenomics, Behavior and Society at the Carl R. Woese Institute for Genomic Biology, Bell also hopes to shed light on human behavior.

The Kellner Center brings together researchers from the Carl R. Woese Institute for Genomic Biology, the Center for Social & Behavioral Science, and the School of Social Work with the goal of better informing practitioners and policy makers as they address societal challenges. **Julie Kellner** (BA, ’73, political science) said mental illness is a major focus, with the hope that neurogenomic discoveries could one day help develop therapies or medication.

“The gift from the Kellners will allow us to pursue high-risk, high-payoff projects ... and will facilitate building interdisciplinary collaborations that are needed for contemporary studies of genes, brain, and behavior from both scientific and societal perspectives,” Bell said in a March 2024 announcement about the new center.

“Part of the goal is to better communicate what we’re learning and its societal implications,” she added recently. “An overly simplistic deterministic view in which a single gene is responsible for a behavior is not accurate. It’s more complicated than that.”

“If you really want to understand behavior, you have to study organisms in their natural environments and embrace the complexity.”

By Trish Barker with additional reporting by Ananya Sen, Carl R. Woese Institute for Genomic Biology

Life is a rush

Kameno Bell's family, education, and football stardom propel his career in emergency medicine



Kameno Bell knows that fumbling is inevitable — in football, and in life.

Bell (BS, '92, biology; MD, '01), a former fullback for the Fighting Illini, has excelled in the classroom and on the gridiron, playing two seasons of professional football for the Miami Dolphins before launching an ongoing career in emergency medicine.

The pipeline from professional athletics to medical school is as strenuous as it is uncommon. But from a young age, Bell's aspirations were encouraged by his mother, a Jamaican immigrant who obtained two university degrees in adulthood.

"Family was always my primary driver in emphasizing the value of education," Bell said. "My mom and stepdad made sure that education was always the top priority."

As a high schooler in Chicago, Bell became interested in medicine while also being recruited to play football by Northwestern and the University of Illinois. His family had strong ties to the latter; his stepfather was captain of the Illinois track team in 1969 and remained a proud Varsity I alumnus.

In fall 1987, Bell joined Illinois as a biology major and a preferred walk-on for the football team.

"I knew I wanted to play collegiate sports while majoring in pre-med, but doing both was not a common achievement," Bell said. "I had to use my own experience as encouragement to show other students that it was possible."

Inspired by several professional football players who had transitioned to medical school, Bell was supported by the Illinois coaching staff and academic advisors, including **Mike Hatfield**, a now-retired academic counselor for the football and basketball programs.

"Mike was more than supportive; he offered any resources necessary to help me achieve my academic goals," Bell said.

Bell played several games in his first season before redshirting the next to focus on his classes.

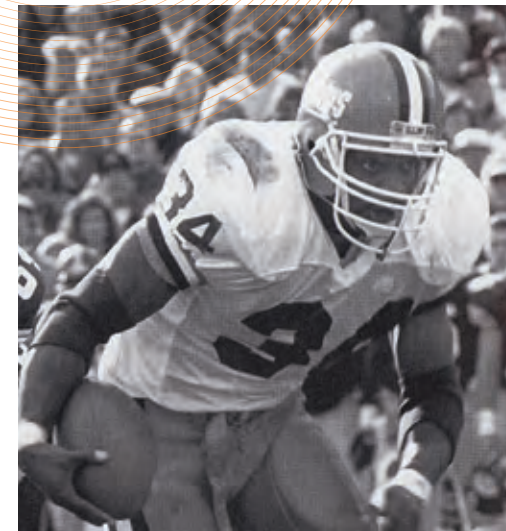
"The daily difficulty was time management and preparing my own meals, which was cheaper than going to the dining hall," Bell said. "But learning that skill of time management was critical for my future."

By his junior year, Bell had earned an athletic scholarship. He remained intent on going to medical school, but as he rushed and received for more than 1,100 yards during his senior season and was named the team's most valuable player, a new opportunity arose: The NFL.

"Professional football was actually my Plan B, but it was an opportunity I couldn't pass up," Bell said. He loaded up on summer classes to complete his degree in time for training camp with the Miami Dolphins. Following two seasons in the NFL, Bell worked for a year as a substitute teacher for Chicago Public Schools while preparing to retake the Medical College Admission Test.

"I enjoyed working in the system I came from and being able to show kids who looked like me what was achievable," he said.

Bell graduated from the University of Illinois Chicago College of Medicine and began a sports medicine fellowship at Indiana University. He was promptly recruited by former Illinois defensive line coach **Denny Marcin** — then a defensive line coach for the New York Giants — to intern with the Giants' head physician. At the end of his fellowship, Bell was offered the head job. He's been team physician for the Giants and an emergency medicine doctor at Hackensack University Medical Center since 2007.

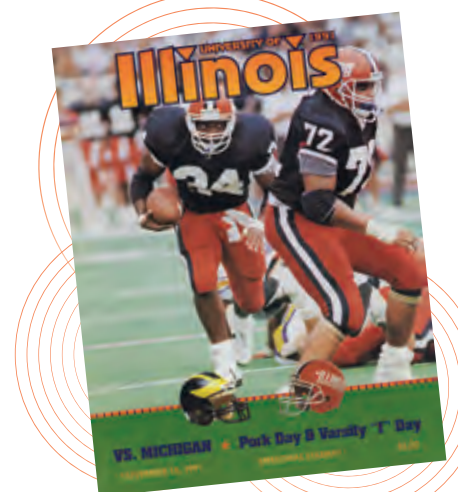


At left: Kameno Bell and his wife, Kenyanna, and daughters, Alyssa, Nia, and Maya Bell, in Memorial Stadium. (Photo by Carly Conway.) Top left: Kameno Bell played fullback for Illinois. Top right: Kameno Bell in his profession as an emergency room physician. Below: A game program featuring Kameno Bell. (Images courtesy of U of I Division of Intercollegiate Athletics)



"For the past 17 years, it has been Illinois connections shaping my trajectory," Bell said.

Bell's schedule can be erratic and uncertain, but he counts the rush of adrenaline, frequent surprises, and variety of cases as his favorite aspects of the job.



"Anything can come through the door," he said. "You have to learn how to adjust."

On the flip side, Bell, like emergency medicine providers across the country, contends with systemic problems like chronic overcrowding resulting from patients' lack of access to primary care, rising healthcare costs, and science misinformation.

"A lot of patients came in (with COVID-19) because they didn't believe in being vaccinated," he said. "There were a lot of victims to disinformation, and I saw it firsthand."

One constant in his career remained: family. Bell attributes his resiliency to a rock-solid support system, including his wife, **Kenyanna**, and their three daughters, **Alyssa**, **Nia**, and **Maya Bell**.

"I've struggled many times in academics, in sports, and in relationships," Bell said. "But my parents were always there to provide support. And I try to impress upon my own kids that while I'm happy they're doing well in school, I'm here to help when they're not doing well."

A quality Bell has noticed in every person he considers successful? The ability to move past failure.

"Disappointment is inevitable, but there is growth through failure," he said. "Those that have done the best, handled failure the best."

In other words: learn to recover the fumble.

By Jeni Bushman



“YOU STAND ON SACRED GROUND. THIS IS A PRINTING OFFICE.”

Watch a video of Skeuomorph Press & BookLab, sponsored by the School of Information Sciences with support from the Department of English to study the art of printing



The contours of LAS

The ideas within—and outside—the college have defined its history and purpose

How are schools of thought defined? The College of Liberal Arts & Sciences has more than 60 academic units, and some, like English and chemistry, have been within LAS since the beginning. But how is it that the Department of Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering, for example, resides in LAS, while physics, the science of matter and energy, is within the Grainger College of Engineering?

Every academic institution has its own distinct identity. It's revealed by the history that exists at the borderlines and contours within itself.

The sciences of formal expression, speculation, and imagination

When the University of Illinois was founded in 1867, it consisted of the departments of agriculture, the military, polytechnics, chemistry and natural sciences, trade and commerce, and general science and literature.

Their descriptions reflected foundational principles. Within general science and literature, for example, were the natural sciences, or, as stated in the 1867 course catalogue, the “sciences of observation and experiment”; the linguistic and philological sciences, or “sciences of formal expression”; philosophical and speculative sciences, or the “sciences of

consciousness and reflection”; and mathematics, or the “science of imagination and calculation.”

Unexpected beginnings

For their own reasons, some lost to time, academic units often originated in unexpected places. The study of astronomy evolved from a means to navigate ships into a scientific endeavor to understand the motion and properties of the universe. **Tony Wong**, head of the Department of Astronomy, said all the faculty members have at least undergraduate degrees in physics.

“We also expect our astronomy majors to learn a lot of physics, perhaps more than they initially expected,” Wong said. Historically, however, astronomy at Illinois was within the Department of Mathematics until it became its own department in 1921.

Physics, meanwhile, has always been grouped with engineering studies at Illinois. Professor and future dean of the College of Engineering **Stillman Robinson**, who introduced the subject to campus in 1870, believed it to be fundamental to the education of every engineer.

The Department of Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering originated within the College of Science (a precursor to LAS) when **Samuel Parr**, a professor of applied chemistry and founder of Parr Instrument Company, created a curriculum for chemical engineering in 1901. The curriculum became a department in 1968, and in 2002 it assumed its modern

name to reflect the role of biology in product engineering.

Evolutions of thought

Units have come and gone. The Department of Ceramics Engineering was founded in the College of Science by geology professor **Charles W. Rolfe**, who launched it in 1905 to study the technology of clay wares. It even had its own building erected in 1916. In 1989, the department was merged into the Department of Materials Science and Engineering.

In the early 1900s the Department of Household Science faced many skeptics, according to a graduate dissertation by **Elisa Miller** (MA, '97; PhD, '04; history). It had supporters in the College of Science, however, where household science students took classes in chemistry, bacteriology, and other fields. “Our practice in cooking is always to illustrate a principle just as an experiment in the chemical laboratory does,” one student argued. Today the Department of Human Development and Family Studies resides in the College of ACES.

The College of Education, formed in 1918, was originally a school within the College of Literature and Arts (a precursor to LAS). In 1916, psychology professor **William Bagley**, one of its first directors, oversaw the construction of a new building, which is now University Laboratory High School.

The Department of Economics was formed by professor **David Kinley**. In 1902, when Kinley formed the School of Commerce, he wanted it to include political science and industrial economics, but a compromise kept political

science within the College of Literature and Arts.

In 2003, the Department of Economics moved back to LAS. “Economics is a central social science discipline that resides in most campuses in the College of Arts and Sciences,” read the proposal, supported by the College of Business.

Art history ... and the history of art

An LAS undergraduate degree in the history of art launched in the 1970s, but it was administered by the College of Fine and Applied Arts, which offers an art history degree. In 2003 the program added a studio art class to its requirements, which brought some academic soul-searching about the purpose of the degree.

In the end the degree description still defines the program clearly as LAS: “History of art is a flexible discipline,” it reads. “Social, economic, religious, philosophical, and other factors are often inextricably involved in the creative matrix of objects of art... Like the other humanities, history of art as an undergraduate area of concentration offers an enrichment of and preparation for life.”

By Dave Evensen

Do you know of any quirky lore about how LAS was formed or have questions about what is (or isn't) part of the college? Contact us at laseditor@illinois.edu

LAS BY THE NUMBERS

FACULTY MEMBERS

Faculty members in the College of LAS are everything from empowering teachers to influential and innovative researchers in their fields. Here are a few statistics that illuminate their roles.



919
FACULTY MEMBERS
in the College of LAS

633
tenure-track
professors

286
specialized
faculty members

1/3
Proportion of
all faculty at the
*University of Illinois
Urbana-Champaign*
who are in the
College of LAS.

134
Faculty members
in mathematics
and statistics

249
Faculty members
in the sciences

211
Faculty members
in social and
behavioral
sciences

325
Faculty members
in humanities

165
Named faculty
appointments

63 Tenure track faculty members in
the Department of Mathematics
(the most of any department in LAS)

33 Guggenheim Fellowship recipients, American
Academy of Arts and Sciences members,
and National Academy of Science members

Source: Division of Management Information, 2023-24 campus profile (Photos by Fred Zwicky)

LAS

DAY OF GIVING

OCT. 23, 2024



Alumni and friends of the
College of LAS know—our
college is at the heart of
the Illinois experience.

LAS influences virtually every Illinois undergraduate, empowering them to explore big questions and develop essential communication, collaboration, and critical thinking skills. Our faculty are global leaders in their fields, blazing trails in

scholarship and research. This fall, we'll celebrate this incredible impact through our second annual Day of Giving. You can help propel the College of LAS to even greater heights by making a gift that will support our students and faculty now and into the future. Look for more information and ways to engage with the LAS community in upcoming e-newsletters, on our social media accounts, and at go.las.illinois.edu/dayofgiving.



University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES
2040 Lincoln Hall | 702 S. Wright St. | Urbana, IL 61801

Add Indicia
approximately
here

YOU HAVE QUESTIONS—
seek your answers WITH LAS

In what ways do religion and politics influence each other?
What can genetics tell us about why individuals behave differently?
How does the ancient world connect to the present day?

Choosing a college to attend can be intimidating, but it doesn't have to be. At the core of this decision is a question that lives deep inside of you. In the pages of this magazine, you'll find stories of people who sought answers to their burning questions through the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences.

Know someone looking for a university that will help them seek the answers to their deepest questions? Encourage them to apply to LAS at Illinois, where they can investigate what is important to them and use those answers to change the world.

Whatever you're curious about, whatever you're interested in, there is a place for everyone in LAS.

FIND OUT MORE AT [LAS.ILLINOIS.EDU](https://las.illinois.edu)



Photo by
Carly Conway