

The **Quadrangle**



THE GREAT RECONNECT

After isolation and lockdowns, the College of LAS reaches abroad with a deepened sense of purpose





Before spring commencement comes final exams, and before final exams comes the rubbing of Lincoln's nose in Lincoln Hall for good luck. See more about the success of recent LAS graduates and young alumni elsewhere in this magazine.

On the cover

A view of London from the air. See how the College of LAS is growing its international programs in the wake of COVID-19 on Page 16.

Editor Dave Evensen

Graphic Designers Carly Conway and Heather Gillett

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NEWS FROM LAS



Can historical racism in medicine help explain current racial differences in medical care?

History professor **Rana Hogarth** is the advisor for a series of podcasts being created by the Science History Institute in Philadelphia to explore issues of racism in science and medicine. "Race has been made 'legible' on the body through the efforts of physicians and scientists, and that continues to cause problems for us now," said Hogarth, who is also author of "Medicalizing Blackness." "Assumptions of innate racial difference continue to surface, often subtly, in medical practice and scientific research today." go.illinois.edu/Hogarth-F22



A smooth landing at the University of Illinois

A growing and successful introductory course in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, **LAS 100**, is designed to help first-year international students adjust to studying at the University of Illinois. When it started, the 8-week course was voluntary and drew about 40 to 60 international students per semester. However, when the COVID-19 pandemic struck and made it difficult for international students to come to campus, LAS 100 became required as a way to better connect international students. go.illinois.edu/LAS100-F22



Increasing the sustainability of phosphorus

Anna-Maria Marshall, a professor of sociology, is a co-principal investigator with the National Science Foundation (NSF) Science and Technology Center: Science and Technologies for Phosphorous Sustainability (STEPS), which recently received a \$25 million grant from the NSF for their research on phosphorus sustainability. With this grant, STEPS will accelerate fundamental scientific discoveries and the development of novel and sustainable technologies and practices to control, recover, reuse, and manage phosphorus. Marshall studies how people can be encouraged to adopt innovative technologies. go.illinois.edu/Phosphorus-F22

LAS graduates remain successful at launching careers

An annual study reveals that new alumni from the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences remain successful in finding first destinations within six months of graduation. More than 93 percent of LAS alumni who graduated during the 2020-21 academic year have secured jobs, continuing education, volunteer/service positions, military service, or other positions, according to the Illini Success Initiative. Average starting salaries for those finding jobs has increased to \$63,045. go.illinois.edu/Career-Success-F22



93%
SECURED FIRST
DESTINATIONS
LAS GRADUATES
2020-2021



Professor of communication delivers Dean's Distinguished Lecture on media stereotyping

Travis L. Dixon, a professor and director of graduate studies in communication, delivered the annual College of Liberal Arts & Sciences Dean's Distinguished Lecture last spring. His talk, titled "The Centrality of Media Stereotyping and How It Impacts Us," examined the power of media stereotypes and stereotyping over our collective consciousness. Much of Dixon's research focuses on the prevalence of stereotypes in the mass media and the impact of stereotypical imagery on audience members. He also has partnered with community groups that address racial inequality. go.illinois.edu/Dixon-F22

In pursuit of the dangerous squall line tornadoes

Scientists from the University of Illinois are leading a multi-institutional project, called Propagation Evolution and Rotation in Linear Storms (PERiLS), which is the first major effort to learn more about how squall lines generate tornadoes. "Quasi-linear convective system (QLCS) tornadoes are harder to predict than their supercell cousins," said **Karen Kosiba**, lead scientist of PERiLS and research scientist in the Department of Atmospheric Sciences. "If we can learn how, why, when, and where QLCS-spawned tornadoes will form, then we can make better predictions, more precise and longer-lead time warnings, and save lives." go.illinois.edu/Tornadoes-F22



Secretary of the Smithsonian Institute **Lonnie Bench** (center, in tan) received a warm welcome from the College of LAS during a campus visit in May. Bench is the first African American and the first historian to serve as head of the Smithsonian. He received an honorary degree during his visit.



It was a busy winter and spring for **faculty investitures** in the College of LAS, with four professors being named to endowed positions. They included **Brendan Harley** and **Hyunjoon (Joon) Kong** being named Robert E. Schaefer Professors in Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering; **Douglas Mitchell** (pictured above with **John and Margaret Witt**) being named the John and Margaret Witt Professor of Chemistry; and **Andrew Suarez** being named the Jeffery E. Lowe Professor in Integrative Biology.



Truman Scholarship awarded to political science major

Mariama Mwilambwe, a junior at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, was awarded a \$30,000 Truman Scholarship. She was selected by the Truman Foundation based on her academic success and leadership accomplishments, as well as her likelihood of becoming a public service leader. Mwilambwe said she seeks to dismantle food insecurity for vulnerable populations through actions such as supporting small farmers, reducing reliance on processed foods, creating community gardens in low-income areas, and building more-efficient food pantries. go.illinois.edu/Truman-F22



The gifts to last a lifetime

Amy Seetoo (司徒達森) (MA, '70, teaching English as a second language) believes that the teaching of English should also teach aspects of day-to-day English-speaking cultures. That's why she has established the C.C. Seetoo Family Scholarship Fund, named in honor of her father, **C.C. Seetoo** (司徒金城), and mother, **Te-hsiu Wang Seetoo** (司徒汪德秀), at the U of I. Seetoo also wanted to show gratitude toward the U of I's teaching English as a second language program, within the Department of Linguistics, and the faculty members who helped her navigate a successful career and rewarding life. go.illinois.edu/Seeto-F22

U of I selected to lead \$15 million Mind in vitro project

The National Science Foundation awarded a 7-year, \$15 million groundbreaking project to a multi-university team led by the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. The project, entitled "Mind in vitro—Computing with Living Neurons" will imagine computers and robots that are human designed, but living. Several researchers from UIUC are involved, including professors **Hyunjoon Kong** in the Department of Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering and **Sepideh Sadaghiani** in the Department of Psychology. go.illinois.edu/Mind-vitro-F22



U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin, left, and NSF Director Sethuraman "Panch" Panchanathan greet each other in Research Park (University of Illinois Research Park.)

'Our lives are the most interesting research projects'



Alumna connects the Chicago Bulls to the community

As director of community relations for the Chicago Bulls, **Erica Bauer** (PhD, '10, communication, photographed here with Chicago Bulls player and former U of I star Ayo Dosunmu) connects the NBA basketball team with the Chicago community. With Bauer at the helm, the team is poised to amplify community violence prevention efforts throughout the city.

Family: Partner Molly Spooner and son Charles Spooner-Lyon



Spanish students work with nonprofits to help people navigate COVID-19

Inspired by their course SPAN 232: Spanish in the community, with Spanish professor **Ann Abbott**, students **Anthony Erlinger** and **Kathleen Flores** (at left) both supported special programs funded by the state of Illinois to help immigrant communities during the pandemic, often using their Spanish language skills to connect with their clients. Erlinger was a pandemic health navigator at Immigrant Services of Champaign-Urbana and Flores worked at The Refugee Center in Champaign. go.illinois.edu/Community-F22



So much to share—so little space. For more about these LAS news stories and others please visit las.illinois.edu/news

What is an example of the most interesting aspect of your job?

The most interesting aspect of my job is getting to know the players, so that we can pair them with community work that aligns with their passions and interests. Maximizing the influence of basketball through strategic partnerships, impactful programming, and charitable investments amplify community violence prevention efforts throughout Chicago. 🗨️

In hindsight, what about college best prepared you for your life and career?

Learning to critically analyze scholarly texts and how to conduct research best prepared me for my career. 🗨️

What do you like to do when you're not working?

When I am not working I like to work on curriculum projects related to my children's album, "Girl Power Songs," about Black women who changed the world. 🗨️

Please describe your proudest achievement.

My proudest achievement is choosing to stay true to myself by taking a non-traditional career path. 🗨️

What have you learned that you'd like to share?

I believe that our lives are the most interesting research projects we will ever conduct and that we should scrutinize our life's data and draw our own conclusions. 🗨️

By Kayleigh Rahn

For more alumni profiles, visit go.las.illinois.edu/LASatWork-F22

THE ENGINEER GUY

By using YouTube to explain how things work, Bill Hammack earns one of his field's highest honors

You can find anything on YouTube: how to fix your sink faucet, funny cat videos, 10-hour loops of your favorite song—you name it. This is where **Bill Hammack** has made his stand to make engineering a more understandable and accessible topic for everyone.

Hammack, William H. and Janet L. Lycan Professor in the Department of Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering, has devoted his career to outreach. His most well-known effort, which has garnered millions of views, is his YouTube channel, *engineerguy*, which

can be accessed through engineerguy.com.

In his videos, Hammack takes familiar objects and demonstrates their relation to engineering concepts, making them easier to understand. The videos are created for anyone who wants to know more about the world of engineering concepts in play around them; Hammack has made videos explaining everything from soda cans to pens, cameras, and even disposable diapers.

Bill Hammack, at left, in his studio. Since launching a YouTube channel to explain how things work, the professor has received millions of views. (Photo by L. Brian Stauffer.)

Hammack's prolific and engaging outreach efforts have been noticed. This past spring he was elected to the National Academy of Engineering (NAE) for "innovations in multidisciplinary engineering education, outreach, and service to the profession through development and communication of internet-delivered content," according to NAE. He's also a recipient of the Hoover Medal and has authored six books and several teaching guides, with a new book set to be published in March of 2023 titled "The Things

We Make: The Unknown History of Invention." Prior to his YouTube channel, Hammack created over 200 pieces for public radio explaining engineering and engineering careers.

Hammack makes his videos for two reasons. First, it fascinates him to figure out how to explain something complex to someone. "There's a challenge there. A puzzle if you will," Hammack described.

He also hopes to inspire the next generation of engineers. "We don't want to rob society of that next generation of innovators that are going to mitigate climate change, control pandemics, avoid famine, and anything else that's going to happen," Hammack said.

"We don't want to rob society of that next generation of innovators that are going to mitigate climate change, control pandemics, avoid famine, and anything else that's going to happen."

Hammack considers outreach to be vitally important. In 1998, Hammack decided to finish his research mission and direct all his energy toward engineering outreach. In the early 2000s, intrigued by the rising popularity of YouTube, and despite not being familiar with how to make effective videos, he began filming segments about engineering from within his department, using an unused lab as a studio.

"We just failed completely," Hammack said, of those early efforts. "Then we figured out the recipe. It is kind of like the advice they give you for dating: Just be yourself."

In the early days, Hammack's videos would snare about 2,000-3,000 views. As his skill with video and delivery improved, however, so did the size of his audience. Now, some videos have received more than 1 million views. Hammack has learned that YouTube is more than an entertainment site.

"I think my colleagues wondered what the heck I was up to and what was I doing with this toy thing, because YouTube was kind of a novelty then. We realized that, as everybody else did, people were turning to this for serious information," Hammack said.

Now, with more than 1 million subscribers and nearly 75 million views, Hammack has been able to reach a worldwide audience and

educate them on engineering. He is constantly replying to comments on his videos, and he throws the doors open to more discussion by providing a separate email and phone number for anyone who wants to chat. People look forward to his next show eagerly—and even expectantly.

"I often get messages if I haven't posted recently saying 'Are you dead?'" Hammack said. "As we are updating the website, the maintenance page actually says, 'and Bill is not dead.'"

By Allison Winans

To check out a running list of award-winning LAS faculty members, visit go.illinois.edu/FacultyAwd-F22



LANDMARK MOMENT FOR ETHNIC, GENDER, AND WOMEN'S STUDIES

A new building will mark the significance of academic units that work to reduce inequality and prejudice



At some point in the not-too-distant future, campus will break ground for a new building for academic units in ethnic, gender, and women's studies.

The units that will be brought together under one roof include the Departments of African American Studies, Asian American Studies, Gender & Women's Studies, and Latina/Latino Studies, and the Program in American Indian Studies. Combined, these units currently include about 60 faculty and staff members in offices scattered around campus.

It's worth noting that each of the units devoted to these fields of study arose out of activism and an urge to address inequalities and history that prevent people from reaching their full potential. That's why, while a new,

unified space for these departments is good for collaboration and scholarship, it will, most importantly, lead to a better understanding of some of our society's most divisive issues.

resilience to resist racism, and the critical need for publicly engaged scholarship to further advance equality in the U.S.

“Probably the most important thing (students in ethnic and gender and women's studies are) learning is the history that they weren't taught in high school that informs why marginalized groups face the issues they face today.”

What does this mean? **Ruby Mendenhall**, professor of sociology and African American studies, and the assistant dean for diversity and democratization of health innovation at the Carle Illinois College of Medicine, said that some of the most important things her units focus on include historical and current manifestations of racism, the power of culture and

Isabel Molina-Guzmán, associate dean for inclusive excellence in the College of LAS, put it another way: “Probably the most important thing (students in ethnic and gender and women's studies are) learning is the history that they weren't taught in high school that informs why marginalized groups face the issues they face today.”

THE HISTORY OF THE UNITS

Units in ethnic and gender and women's studies emerged at the U of I in the wake of the cultural movements of the 1960s.

African American studies originated in 1969 as the academic branch of the Faculty Student Commission on Afro-American Life and Culture. In 1970, the commission became the Afro-American Studies Commission, which joined the College of LAS in 1974-75 as the Afro-American Studies and Research Program. In 2008, the program became the Department of African American Studies, offering bachelor's degrees.

Asian American studies traces its roots to 1997, when the U of I, responding to student demands, organized the Asian American Studies Committee. The Asian American Studies Program started in 2000. In 2012, the program became a department, and an undergraduate major was established. The department celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2017.

American Indian studies began as a concept in the 1980s and 1990s as American Indian faculty members, staff, and students called for a space and academic recognition. The

Native American House opened in 2002 along with the formation of the Committee on Native American Programs. In 2005 the university established the American Indian Studies Program (later renamed the Program in American Indian Studies), granting undergraduate minors in 2008 and graduate minors in 2009.

The U of I began offering courses in women's studies in 1970. In 1980, the Office of Women's Studies moved to the College of LAS, and the program created the women's studies minor. In 2003, the program added gender studies to its name, and in 2004 it established a **gender and women's studies** major. In 2010, the program became the Department of Gender & Women's Studies.

The Department of **Latino/Latina Studies** began taking shape in 1992, when a coalition of student activists and their allies lobbied the university to respond to the underrepresentation of Latina/Latino students on campus and incorporate additional scholarship on Latinas and Latinos. The Latina/Latino Studies Program was established in 1996 before being changed to a department in 2010.

DETAILS FOR NEW BUILDING TAKING SHAPE

Plans for a new building to house all the LAS units in ethnic and gender and women's studies are expected to be well underway by the end the year.

In October 2021, the College of LAS announced the plan to construct a building, and planners are nearly finished with a feasibility study.

The project is moving into the conceptualization stage where a site will be chosen and plans drawn up. This stage will include input from faculty as well as students, said **Derek Fultz**, director of facilities for the College of LAS.

“With five independent units coming together under one roof, we want to make sure everyone feels included, and everyone feels like they’re a part of the process. We’re being very careful to make sure we’re doing it right,” said Fultz.

Though the conceptualization stage could be complete by 2023, it may be up to two years before the construction process begins.

Faculty members and others in the affected units are pleased with the plans for a new building. **Mimi Thi Nguyen**, chair of the Department of Gender & Women's Studies, said they look forward to having more space for faculty members and students to work, study, or gather for club meetings and events.

“I would say that the new building is crucial to gender and women's studies,” Nguyen said.

ALUMNI MOVE ON TO MEANINGFUL CAREERS

While plans for a new building are still a work in progress, it's already clear that the project is a worthwhile effort.

Graduates in ethnic and gender and women's studies have gone to be everything from Chicago aldermen to civil rights and immigration lawyers, activist organizers, nonprofit directors, social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, and employees at Google. Many organizations that want people who are informed about issues of inequality have found candidates at the U of I.



Mari Rozella Latham graduated in 2019 with honors, double-majoring in African American studies and political science.

She worked as a mental health technician with youth behavioral and psychiatric units before taking her current position in Florida as the research and development coordinator for the SPARK initiative, a non-profit dedicated to youth mentorship, social and emotional learning curriculum development, and community services.

She said that the experiences and knowledge she gained at the U of I, as well as her faculty-mentors, are significant reasons for her success.

“The Department of African American Studies changed my life for the better in many ways,” Latham said. “I have had a few positions and each one of them gave me an opportunity to utilize the knowledge I gained with African American studies to make my workplace better, to serve my community more fully, and to empower myself and my clients, students, and patients.”

Q&A: ISABEL MOLINA-GUZMÁN, ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE IN THE COLLEGE OF LAS

Why is it important to have ethnic and gender and women's studies under one roof?

The individual programs will remain independent. What they'll have are state-of-the-art facilities that communicate the importance of these units on our campus. These facilities will hopefully have spaces for collaboration and classrooms. It will allow us to feel a sense of interdisciplinary collectivity.

Why are programs in ethnic and gender and women's studies important?

All of our programs arose out of student activism on this campus. They wanted to see themselves represented in the classroom and in research areas. That's our history: responding to students who wanted to have their experiences, their history, and their courses taught through diverse perspectives that were not represented in other majors and departments. These departments have pushed the established majors to think about the curriculum they teach and to be more responsive to the students in the classroom. I think that's still one of the most important roles. We create space for students to really think deeply about contemporary historical issues, sociological issues, from a diverse perspective.

We have award-winning researchers investigating important contemporary and historical questions. We're one of the few universities that actually has stand-alone departments and programs in these areas. All these units are interdisciplinary, so we've been able to impact a whole range of departments.

By Dave Evensen, Christian Jones, and Allison Winans

Making our standardized tests better

Xun Yan studies the assessments we use to gauge our language and literacy

To many of us, the idea of testing brings to mind bright lights, biting pencils, filling ovals, and (hopefully) the sweet relief of proving that you know the material. **Xun Yan**, a professor of linguistics, however, wants to know more about tests and what they tell us about test-takers.

What's your area of expertise?

My area of specialization is language testing—in particular, speaking and writing assessment. My specific research interests include scale development and validation, rater behavior and training, a psycholinguistic approach to language testing, assessment literacy for language teachers, and test score use in educational settings. In most of my research, I employ a largely linguistic approach to examining characteristics of speaking and writing performances to help better understand the construct of language proficiency, psychometric qualities of test scores, and validity and fairness evidences for language tests.

What are you currently researching?

I am currently working on several projects, which, although situated in different assessment and research contexts, all aim to innovate assessment methods used to measure language proficiency. In these projects, I examine the cognitive processes humans engage in when communicating in speech

LAS Experts

or writing and then translate these cognitive processes into constructs to be measured in language assessments. The ultimate goal of this line of research is to create language assessments that are more effective, efficient, and accessible.

Another line of my research focuses on the use of large-scale, standardized tests for admissions purposes in higher education contexts. I have helped numerous admissions officers and policy makers to better understand the meaning of language proficiency test scores and how standardized test scores predict academic performance of international students at university settings.

What makes you proud?

The Department of Linguistics at Illinois has become a popular destination for students interested in studying language testing around the world. I consider this as my proudest achievement.

By Dave Evensen

For more faculty profiles, visit go.las.illinois.edu/LASexperts-F22

RESEARCH IN LAS

New discoveries, books, and initiatives are underway every day in the College of LAS. Here are just a few of them. For more about these and other stories, please visit las.illinois.edu/news



Neal Davis, left, and Ryan Shosted

U of I researchers make Deseret Texts available for study

Two Illinois researchers are developing resources for studying the Deseret Alphabet, created by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and used briefly in the 19th century. Linguistics professor **Ryan Shosted** and computer science professor **Neal Davis** created the Illinois Deseret Consortium to make available transcriptions of texts written in Deseret for researchers to study and rediscover the alphabet. Their website, go.illinois.edu/deseret, includes phonemic transcriptions of texts so researchers can search for the phonemic spellings without using the Deseret characters.

go.illinois.edu/DesText-F22



Troy Zaremba

The launching of the blizzard balloons

Graduate students **Andrew Janiszkeski** (MS, '20; atmospheric sciences) and **Troy Zaremba** (BS, '18; MS, '20; atmospheric sciences) were tasked with launching weather balloons in Plymouth, Mass., amid a Nor'easter. They were part of the NASA Investigation of Microphysics and Precipitation for Atlantic Coast

Threatening Storms campaign, a 5-year study of snowstorms in the Eastern and Midwestern U.S. They worked with **Bob Rauber**, atmospheric sciences professor and director of the School of Earth, Society & Environment.

go.illinois.edu/Balloon-F22

What happens when vampire bats flock together?

An unusual study brought vampire bats from distant populations together for four months and tracked how the bats' gut microbes changed over time. Researchers—including **Karthik Varlagadda**, former doctoral candidate, and anthropology professor **Ripan Malhi**—revealed that gut microbiomes of bats became more similar the more often they engaged in social behaviors with one another. Understanding how microbes are transmitted may help scientists reduce the spread of pathogens like rabies.

go.illinois.edu/Bats-F22



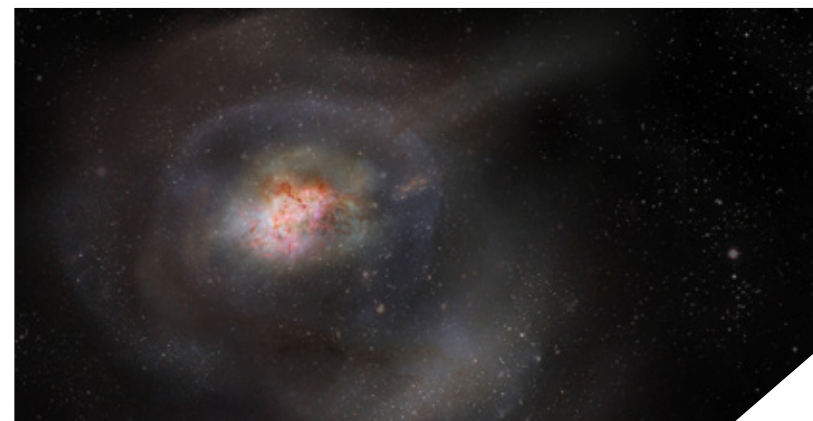
Research could enable assembly line synthesis of amine-containing drugs



Professor M. Christina White (front), along with, from left, Brenna Budaitis, Siraj Ali, and Devon Fontaine

Lycan Professor of Chemistry **M. Christina White** and graduate students **Siraj Ali**, **Brenna Budaitis**, and **Devon Fontaine**, have discovered a chemical reaction that creates a simpler process of making tertiary amines, found in some of the most impactful human medicines. This reaction transforms the traditional building process—that requires highly-specialized conditions specific to each molecule—into a procedure that can be carried out in general conditions open to air and moisture with potential for automation.

go.illinois.edu/Amine-F22



Studying post-starburst galaxies

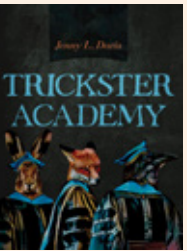
Post-starburst galaxies were previously thought to scatter all of their gas and dust in violent bursts of energy. Now, a study, co-authored by Illinois astronomer **Decker French**, reveals that these galaxies don't scatter all their star-forming fuel after all. New data reveal that these dormant galaxies hold onto large amounts of turbulent gas; however, they're not using it to form stars. In fact, it is less than 10-percent as efficient as similarly compact gas.

go.illinois.edu/Starburst-F22

Books in LAS

“Trickster Academy,”

by **Jenny L. Davis**, professor of anthropology and American Indian studies, is a collection of poems that explore being Native in academia—from land acknowledgement statements, to mascots, to the histories of using Native American remains in anthropology. Jenny L. Davis' collection brings humor and uncomfortable realities together in order to challenge the academy and discuss the experience of being Indigenous in university classrooms and campuses. (The University of Arizona Press)



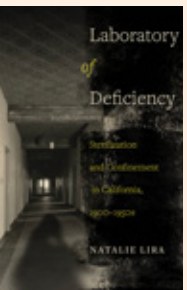
“Natural Disasters”

by **Stephen Marshak**, professor emeritus of geology; **Robert Rauber**, professor of atmospheric sciences; and **Neil Johnson**, an instructor of geosciences at Virginia Tech University, offers students examples of the devastating impact that geologic and atmospheric disasters have on communities. Through vibrant and detailed visuals, engaging writing, and extended case studies, the book helps explain the science behind these catastrophes and the societal factors that shape our responses. (W.W. Norton)



“Laboratory of Deficiency: Sterilization and Confinement in California, 1900–1950s,”

by **Natalie Lira**, professor of Latina/Latino studies, reveals how political concerns over Mexican immigration—particularly ideas about the low intelligence, deviant sexuality, and inherent criminality of the “Mexican race”—shaped decisions regarding the reproductive future of Mexican-origin patients. The book documents the ways Mexican-origin people sought creative resistance to institutional control and offers insight into how race, disability, and social deviance have been used to justify confinement and reproductive constraint. (University of California Press)



The legacy of a giant



David Sepkoski, the Thomas M. Siebel Chair in the History of Science, has co-written an essay, “Ideology as Biology,” that examines the influence of racism in the career of Edward O. Wilson, a giant in the study of biodiversity conservation who was once called a modern-day Darwin. Drawing

from recently discovered personal correspondence from Wilson, the essay has “forced a reckoning about legacies of racism in biology,” Sepkoski said. [Find the essay at go.las.illinois.edu/Ideology-F22](http://go.las.illinois.edu/Ideology-F22)

Study: Political polarization is leaking into social situations

Partisanship is a particularly potent source of group identity in contemporary American politics, and a new paper co-written by an Illinois expert in political psychology says the growing chasm between opposing groups isn’t limited to interactions in the political realm. Evidence suggests that “affective polarization” leaks into and colors social situations that previously existed beyond the reach of partisan politics, said **Thomas J. Rudolph**, the Lincoln Distinguished Professorial Scholar of Political Science.



go.las.illinois.edu/Polarization-F22



Unlocking the mystery of the Great Unconformity

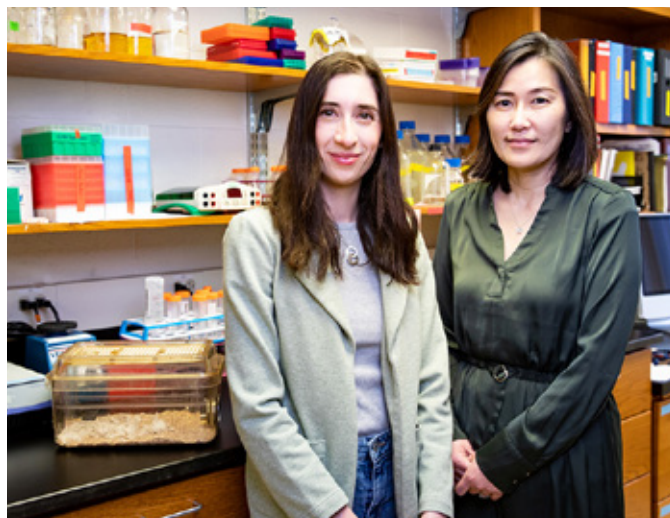
Geologists were able to estimate the age of a mysterious section of the Grand Canyon called the Great Unconformity—a section where rock with as much as a 1.3-billion-year age difference overlap. Using zircon-helium thermochronology, **Olivia Thurston**, a former post-doctoral researcher at the U of I working with geology professor **William Guenther**, found that the Great Unconformity was “broadly related to” the assembly of Rodinia approximately 900 million to 1.3 billion years ago. A broader deep-time thermochronologic transect is still needed to fully understand the multiple mechanisms that created the Great Unconformity.

go.las.illinois.edu/Unconformity-F22

Team identifies compound with potent antiseizure effects

Researchers studying epileptic seizures of the temporal lobe – the most common type of epilepsy – discovered a compound that reduces seizures in the hippocampus, a brain region where many such seizures originate. The study found that the compound, known as TC-2153, ultimately reduces seizure severity in mice by decreasing the activity of hippocampal neurons, said Illinois doctoral candidate **Jennifer Walters**, who led the research with molecular and integrative physiology professor **Hee Jung Chung**.

go.las.illinois.edu/Antiseizure-F22



From left, Jennifer Walters and Hee Jung Chung



Studying the decisions of artificial intelligence

Ben Levinstein, a professor of philosophy, was recently awarded a Mellon grant to study artificial intelligence. He will work with computer science faculty at U of I and visit a computer science lab at Carnegie Mellon which is focused on cooperative artificial intelligence. Levinstein wants to better understand computerized decisions. “We’ve been at it for a while in philosophy, but over in computer science and machine learning and artificial intelligence, they’re literally teaching computers how to learn,” he said. “This is important for epistemologists to know about because the theory of knowledge is being directly put into practice.”

go.las.illinois.edu/AI-F22

Regional public universities make local economies more resilient



From left, Greg Howard, Russell Weinstein, and Yuhao Yang

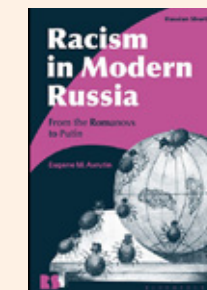
Regional economies are subject to the whims of business cycles that can lead to job losses and lower incomes. New research finds that counties that are home to regional public universities are better able to withstand adverse economic shocks, resulting in fewer losses in employment, income, and population, said **Russell Weinstein**, professor of labor and employment relations and economics. Weinstein’s study co-authors are economics professor **Greg Howard** and graduate student **Yuhao Yang**.

go.las.illinois.edu/Resilient-F22

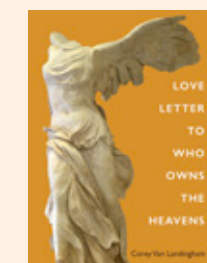
“**Hatred of Sex**,” by **Tim Dean**, James M. Benson Professor of English, and **Oliver Davis**, professor of French studies at the University of Warwick, links Jacques Rancière’s political philosophy of the constitutive disorder of democracy with Jean Laplanche’s identification of a fundamental perturbation at the heart of human sexuality. Sex is hated as well as desired, the authors contend, because sexual intensity impedes coherent selfhood and undermines identity. (University of Nebraska Press)



“**Racism in Modern Russia: From the Romanovs to Putin**,” by **Eugene Avrutin**, professor of history, analyzes a wide range of printed and visual sources in the first serious attempt to understand the history of racism over a span of 150 years. An examination of the complexities of racism, the panoramic book asks powerful questions about inequality and privilege, denigration and belonging, power and policy, and the complex historical links between race, whiteness, and geography. (Bloomsbury)



“**Love Letter to Who Owns the Heavens**,” by **Corey Van Landingham**, professor of English, considers the way that the absence of touch—in acts of war via the drone, in acts of love via the sext, in aesthetics itself—abstracts the human body, transforming it into a proxy for the real. “What love poem / could be written when men can no longer / look up?” this book asks, always in a state of flux between doubt and belief. These poems attempt to make bodies concrete and dangerous, immediate and addressable, once again. (Tupelo Press)



THE GREAT RECONNECT

The College of LAS reaches abroad with a deeper sense of purpose

Even in high school, **Steph Lepak** knew that she wanted to study abroad in college. As a first-generation American born to Polish parents, she could see herself enjoying an amazing educational experience while living with relatives in her ancestral homeland. And once she was accepted at the University of Illinois, she wasted no time making that vision a reality, deciding to spend her very first semester abroad.

“I was just so set on it, I booked my ticket and everything,” said Lepak, who touched down in Poland just as the COVID breakout in Italy was starting to make global headlines. And then — the entire world shut down.

It’s a moment that **Elly Hanauer**, assistant dean of LAS International Programs, will never forget. “In the spring of 2020, we evacuated about 800 students,” said Hanauer. “Everyone who was abroad that semester was asked to return home.”

Because she was staying with family, Lepak managed to avoid the return flight, but there would be no study abroad program. Like thousands of other students, she spent her first semester taking her regular courses virtually from her room on the other side of the world.

Flash forward a couple of years, and it’s a very different story. With global COVID-19 restrictions easing around the globe, LAS students are once again expanding their vistas, enjoying a wide variety of study abroad programs, from short-term faculty-led courses abroad to semester-long programs with internships and research opportunities. As a Benjamin A. Gilman

International Scholarship recipient, Lepak was able to snag one of the latter, which took her to Asturias in Spain last spring.

Now a Spanish major, Lepak became fully immersed in the culture, taking classes on history and interning with a sustainable development consultancy. The latter involved writing analyses and

reading reports in Spanish, which dramatically enhanced her vocabulary and competency. “There’s a different kind of learning that comes with studying abroad,” said Lepak. “I’ve learned so much about Asturias and the society here in Spain in general.”

That deep dive into local culture happens by design, according to **Daniel Maroun**, director of undergraduate studies, Department of French & Italian, who works closely with study abroad programs in France. “We do not ever want to duplicate the American educational experience inside a foreign country,” explained Maroun.



Members of the new Global Leaders Program in the College of LAS stop for a recent photo in Colombia. The program brings together international and domestic students to create solutions to societal issues. (Photo from LAS International Programs.)

Much of the learning experience abroad is experiential or service-based and takes place in museums, town halls, and even the homes of local artists and authors, steeping students in the local culture. Through those interactions, Maroun said, students learn to see the world from another viewpoint, which is an essential part of any liberal arts education.

study less common languages, to explore Wolof, one of the main languages spoken in Senegal. “I feel like the deep understanding I gained on these during my time abroad was the perfect culmination of my undergraduate studies.”

Studying abroad was made more meaningful by the fact that it almost didn’t happen.

“We do not want to duplicate the American educational experience inside a foreign country.”

“We need to have different perspectives, and we need to have practice at this whole concept of intercultural competency,” said Maroun. “To be capable of representing diversity, administering equity, and promising inclusion, you — as an individual — need to experience that.”

Kaya Van Dyke, a global studies major who recently completed a study abroad in Senegal, agreed. “While I learned a lot in my studies back home, it was very impactful for me to learn about international development and aid efforts from the perspective of Senegalese teachers and to have the opportunity to see these efforts in practice,” said Van Dyke, who earned a Boren Scholarship during her junior year. She used the scholarship, which provides federal funds to

With a global pandemic closing borders around the world, it would have been easy for Hanauer and her team to switch off the lights. But instead, they innovated, creating virtual courses that kept students engaged with the outside world, including a European studies course team-taught by resident directors from Vienna, Paris, Rome, and Granada.

Maroun is a big fan of the course, which examined how “smart cities” are using technology to improve their operations and environmental sustainability efforts. “It created this transatlantic informational exchange between students who wanted to talk about global matters and European resident directors who are experts in their field,” he said.



Steph Lepak said that studying in Spain taught her to make the most of everything. (Photo courtesy of Steph Lepak.)

LAS International Programs (LASIP) also developed Virtual Global Experiences, which provide students with virtual internships and research opportunities with organizations and companies around the world. For these and other efforts, the University of Illinois International Student and Scholar Services awarded LASIP the 2020 ISSS Award for Outstanding Unit. Still, Hanauer said, virtual courses and internships are no substitute for the type of hands-on learning that comes from studying abroad.

“In our field in particular, we’ve learned that the virtual realm is complementary,” said Hanauer. “It doesn’t replace the experience of getting on a plane and living in another country and culture. It doesn’t replace living with a host family. It doesn’t replace meeting other students from around the world.” Which is why she’s excited to see in-person, study abroad programs finally make their return.

It’s a gradual process, said Hanauer. The pandemic isn’t over, which means the university is adjusting to a patch-work quilt of regulations that vary from country to country. “Most of our students abroad last spring were in western Europe, with a few in Latin America,” she said.

There are a few, however, who’ve managed to make it further afield, including **Fola Olumola**, another Boren Scholarship winner and political science major who spent the last semester studying Arabic in Oman. Like many students, she said the immersive nature of the program enhanced her language studies, but she also bolstered her sense of independence.

When her first apartment put her in the middle of a strong English ex-pat community, for example, she made the decision to relocate so she could be more immersed in the language and make local connections. That effort paid off, and soon she was spending time with friends who invited her into their homes.

“The virtual realm is complementary. It doesn’t replace the experience of getting on a plane and living in another country and culture.”

It wasn’t Olumola’s first time abroad. She’s also been to China and taken part in a short-term program in Italy exploring the plight of migrants. “It was an insightful experience that broadened my interest in how migrants adjust to a new country and what governments or non-profits can do to support them,” she said.

The impact of studying abroad can last long after students return. For Olumola, who graduated last spring, her experience helped her decide that she’d like to continue working with migrants through programs like International Rescue Committee. She also received a Fulbright grant to teach university students in Turkey next year.

For Lepak, it helped her decide which courses she really wanted to pursue during the rest of her time at Illinois. For Hanauer, the latter underscores the need to expose students to global perspectives as early as possible, which is why she advocated for the U of I, and LAS in particular, to launch the Global Classrooms initiative. The program, which incorporates a virtual educational exchange, pairs professors teaching similar subjects around the world, exposing the students in their classrooms to different perspectives.

Individual professors have been creating these exchanges for years, but Global Classrooms elevates the concept to an institutional level, helping faculty find global partners, overcome language and technical difficulties, and develop syllabi

that make the most of the opportunities that these exchanges provide. While it may have been born out of the pandemic, it’s an innovation that could have a lasting impact, engaging large numbers of students in global learning from their first year on campus and encouraging more students to consider the benefits of international engagement and study abroad.

As for Lepak, she’s glad she took the leap to Spain, calling it the most amazing experience of her life. “There’s a word they use here in Asturias called ‘aprovechar,’ which means ‘to make the most of.’ It’s kind of a mouthful in English, but we always use it,” said Lepak. “You’ve got to make the most of everything.”

By John Turner



Venetria K. Patton

A MINUTE WITH THE DEAN

➤➤ **Venetria K. Patton** just finished her first year as Harry E. Preble Dean of the College of LAS. She talks about the future of LAS.

Large numbers of students applied to LAS for the 2022-23 school year. What trends are you seeing?

Our applications were up not only in high-demand majors such as CS+X, psychology, and economics, but also in newer majors such as brain and cognitive science and more established majors such as sociology, history, gender and women’s studies, English, creative writing, and communication. This suggests the continued interest of students in a wide range of majors across the liberal arts and sciences. ”

What have you learned in your first year on the job?

My first year has really reinforced what an amazing university this is—from talented students, dedicated staff, to amazing faculty. Throughout the year, I met with groups of students who spoke about their classes, internships, and research experiences. They were thriving, despite the challenges of the last few years. Graduating students felt that LAS had prepared them well for jobs and graduate school. I was also regularly impressed by staff who go the extra mile to assist students. Sometimes we

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.

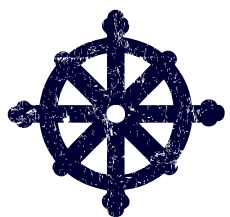
are able to recognize our staff with awards, but more times than not our staff simply go about their jobs quietly, making an incredible impact.

Another highlight of my year has been faculty investitures. These ceremonies for professors who are receiving prestigious, named positions not only highlight the cutting edge research of our faculty but also their dedication to mentoring the next generation of researchers. ”

How have students and the college successfully begun to move past the pandemic?

Our students are truly resilient. They are so happy to be back to in-person classes and they appreciate our efforts to create a new normal as we continue to navigate the pandemic. We faced a real challenge in terms of the social isolation that was an unfortunate side effect of physical distancing, but our Student Academic Affairs Office increased outreach efforts to our students when instructors reported that they disconnected from their classes. We also learned much about online learning. Our students are innovative, so they made the most of virtual internships and other adjustments, and everything we’ve learned has allowed us to strengthen and diversify our educational opportunities. ”

By Dave Evensen



Department of Religion nears its **50TH ANNIVERSARY**

Academic unit teaches some of our most sensitive aspects of culture to a growing variety of students

Sometimes a good thing doesn't start with a kickoff gala or groundbreaking ceremony; it starts with a lot of question marks, like the ones surrounding the study of religion at the U of I in the 1970s.

Gary Porton, now a professor emeritus, was hired in 1973 as the first professor with a full appointment in religion at the U of I. Little did he know that someday his hire would be considered a landmark moment as the Department of Religion is poised to celebrate its 50th anniversary next year. Back in the 1970s it was unclear to some people why religion was being studied at a state-run university.

"Everybody at the university understood that the academic study of religion is something quite different from seminary and those kinds of places," said **Wayne Pitard**, professor emeritus of religion, who began teaching at the U of I in 1983. "But it was beyond the university level that there was concern that this might be problematic."

Times have changed. Since those uncertain first days, the Program for the Study of Religion became the Department of Religion in 2008, marking an important step forward for the unit. Acceptance and appreciation for the department's role has grown immensely. The department currently employs nine professors, a lecturer, two post-doctoral students, and six professors emeriti. Students study a variety of religions from Buddhism and Christianity to Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism. In Fall 2021 the department received its largest donation ever, \$1 million, to establish a program in Jain studies, making it the 28th U.S. school to develop such a program.

The department has begun collaborating with other academic units to increase cross-cultural perspectives. Recently the Department of Religion partnered with the School of Veterinary Medicine to offer a course titled, "Religious Perspectives on the Care of Animals" (VM 694). The course, first offered in Fall 2021, is the first of many such courses that the department plans to develop.



Jon Ebel

"We heal and support people better when we understand something about their religious perspectives."

The study of religion itself is also growing in its scope. Recently the department welcomed **Leonard Cornell McKinnis II** and **Alexia Williams**, the first two faculty members in department history to specialize in African American religions. Both also hold appointments in African American studies.

Ebel said that while the number of students who major solely in religion is relatively small, many students have double-majored in religion and other subjects such as mathematics, psychology, law, and microbiology. A larger number of non-majors have taken religion classes and come away with meaningful lessons, he added.

"Lawyers and people in business operate in a religiously diverse world and they'll have associates, partners, and customers who come from

different religious backgrounds. They will do better when they know their coworkers, customers, and partners better," Ebel said, "It feels risky to major in religion, because there is no direct pipeline from our major to Boeing, but it isn't as risky as it feels."

He's confident of the department's future and the potential it offers to students and alumni in today's world.

"The last 50 years in the study of religion at the University of Illinois have been amazing and transformative for students and faculty," Ebel said. "For me personally, it's an absolute thrill and an honor to be a part of it."

By Christian Jones

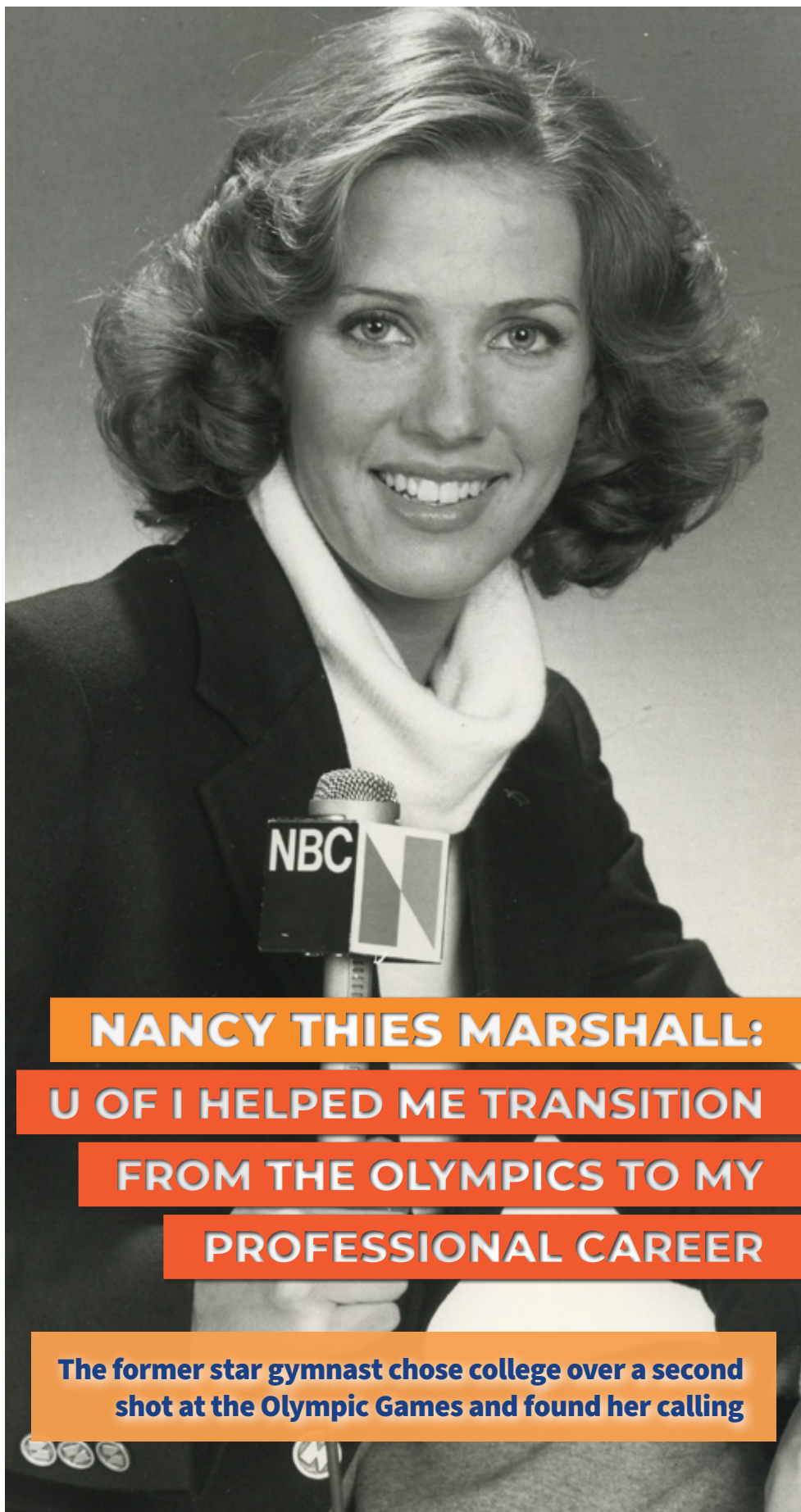
"We heal and support people better when we understand something about their religious perspectives," said **Jon Ebel**, head of the Department of Religion. "So what we hope to do is to help train better, more religiously alert and religiously sensitive doctors, nurses, and veterinarians (while expanding) these types of offerings into other corners of the university."

The veterinary community, even beyond the U of I itself, has taken notice of what's happening here. Ebel and his colleagues are advising the University of Arizona's College of Veterinary Medicine on how to develop a similar course, and several national bodies of veterinary professionals have also reached out to the department for more information.

Ebel has talked to department heads in the College of Law, College of Education, and Gies College of Business about developing similar interdisciplinary courses in the curriculum.



The scope of study topics at U of I has grown. Alexia Williams and Leonard Cornell McKinnis II, both recently hired, are the first two faculty members to specialize in African American religions in the Department of Religion.



**NANCY THIES MARSHALL:
U OF I HELPED ME TRANSITION
FROM THE OLYMPICS TO MY
PROFESSIONAL CAREER**

The former star gymnast chose college over a second shot at the Olympic Games and found her calling

Making the flip from Olympian to college student was a new journey for **Nancy Thies Marshall**. After competing as an Olympic gymnast in 1972 at age 15, Nancy returned home to Urbana, Illinois, and continued as a member of the U.S. national team until her graduation from Urbana High School in 1975. Instead of postponing college to train for the 1976 Olympics, however, she enrolled at the University of Illinois and helped to build the newly created women's gymnastics program.

Having grown up near campus, Nancy felt a deep connection to the U of I. With most of her family, including her parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles attending Illinois, it seemed natural to follow suit. "Orange and blue ran through my veins," she said.

Nancy treasures her experience as the first female Olympian contributing to the early chapters of U of I's women's team program. She was named U of I's first ever Female Athlete of the Year in 1977, in addition to winning nine Big Ten titles, seven regional titles, earning All-America status on the uneven bars, and being named Big Ten Gymnast of the Year in 1976 and 1977.

During her time as an LAS student, she was contacted by NBC Sports to join their broadcast team to cover Olympic and Olympic-related events, which she did until 1984. She retired from competition after her sophomore year and transitioned to part-time network sports analyst while remaining a full-time student. She graduated in 1979 with an individual plan of study degree titled "The History of Journalism in Sports."

The degree provided her a mix of hands-on and academic experience that proved very beneficial for the first step of her professional career.

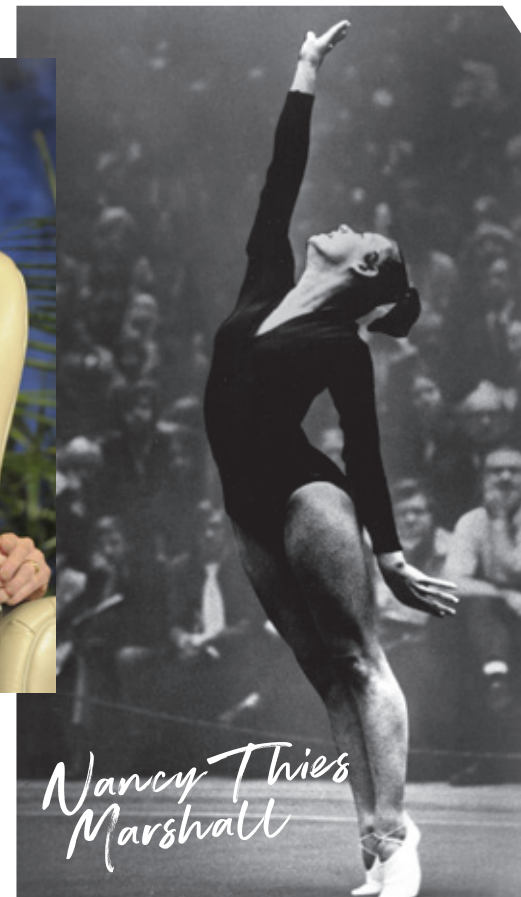
"Illinois was such a great launching point.



I had somewhat of an all-consuming identity of being an elite gymnast, living in a petri dish where a lot of people knew who I was and followed my career," Nancy said. "Yet, at Illinois I found strong supportive mentors who guided me through that transition from being an athlete to covering athletes at NBC Sports. I appreciated being able to grow professionally within a learning environment."

After graduation, Nancy married Charlie Marshall and worked in broadcast television for seven years. She took a break when their three children were young but eventually returned to her professional career, quickly discovering that she felt more comfortable behind the scenes than in front of cameras. She worked as a free-lance journalist, authoring two books as well as magazine and newspaper articles. In 1992, Nancy began helping USA Gymnastics to create an athlete wellness program. "Ironically, it was the first in the country and we were doing all kinds of very innovative things," she explained.

She was a representative on the USA Gymnastics Athlete's Advisory Council,



Far left: Thies Marshall worked as a broadcaster for NBC Sports, covering Olympic and Olympic-related events.

Center: Thies Marshall visited campus in 2017 to be inducted into the University of Illinois Athletics Hall of Fame.

Right: Thies Marshall was an Olympian at age 15, but instead of training for the 1976 Olympics she enrolled at U of I and helped start a new women's gymnastics program.

was significant throughout her career. Many of her favorite and most impactful courses were in rhetoric and journalism, which taught her how to communicate well.

"I was tapped by NBC Sports because I had 'Olympian' beside my name, but what continued to open doors for me was the academic and real-life training the U of I provided," Nancy said.

She has returned to the U of I to offer her time and expertise, including serving as a resident instructor with the Allen Hall Unit One program, where she led discussions and programs related to the Olympics, sports, women in the

“...at Illinois I found strong supportive mentors who guided me through that transition from being an athlete to covering athletes at NBC Sports.”

This experience revealed to her how much she loved developing programs and working with people. She shifted toward consulting with nonprofits, which led to a career in human resources and workforce development. She worked for 20 years in her adopted hometown of Salem, Oregon, including working as the associate vice president for people and culture at Corban University. Recently retired, she still works as a part-time consultant—when not on adventures with her husband and four granddaughters.

Nancy said that her U of I education

workplace, and more. In 2017, Nancy was inducted into the University of Illinois Athletics Hall of Fame.

"The U of I is a part of who I am," she said. "The combination of Urbana being my hometown and my desire to help write a new chapter for women's athletes at a school I loved made the choice to attend the U of I an easy one."

By Allison Winans

COMMENCING TOGETHER

For the first time since 2019, graduates from the University of Illinois and their supporters gathered at Memorial Stadium for spring commencement. Graduates from 2020 and 2021, whose ceremonies were curtailed for the COVID-19 pandemic, were also invited to attend. Some 2,429 undergraduates from the College of LAS graduated in May.

Photo by Fred Zwicky



Contrary to commonly accepted standards of morality

A plant biologist's views on sex triggered a storm of protest and debate on academic freedom

The story of **Leo Koch** is best understood in a 1960 frame of mind. That year, John F. Kennedy was running for president and Westerns such as Gunsmoke and Wagon Trail were the top shows on television. The eventual hit song "I'm sorry" was stalled in studios over concerns that the singer, Brenda Lee, was singing about love in a way unbecoming of a 15-year-old.

On March 18, 1960, the presses rolled at the Daily Illini, as usual. Its normal circulation in those days was only about 2,000, but its readership was higher that day as thousands of visitors were on campus for the start of the high school boys' state basketball tournament being played at the Armory and Huff Gym. Those who opened the newspaper saw a letter to the editor from Koch, a professor of biology. It bore the headline, "Advice on sex."



Koch, responding to a student column lamenting 1 a.m. curfews, blamed a "serious social malaise" on campus caused by

"hypocritical and downright inhumane moral standards engendered by a Christian code of ethics which was decrepit in the days of Queen Victoria."

"With modern contraceptives and medical advice readily available at the nearest drugstore, or at least a family physician, there is no valid reason why sexual intercourse should not be condoned among those sufficiently mature to engage in it without social consequences and without violating their own codes of morality and ethics," Koch wrote.

By April, Koch was fired and a national debate over morality and academic freedom ensued. The American

Association of University Professors censured the U of I, and student protests against Koch's dismissal erupted from Illinois to Iowa and California. U of I President **David Dodds Henry** was hung in effigy in front of the U of I YMCA.

Letters for and against Koch poured in from 30 states and as far away as Norway. Newspaper editorial writers weighed in; the Harvard Crimson called Koch's firing "misplaced Victorianism" while the Chicago Sun-Times cited a letter by the Rev. **James Hine**, pastor and director of the McKinley Foundation at U of I, who called Koch's letter "the grossest oversimplification of facts and inadequate of a complex and important aspect of human existence I've ever had the agony to read."

The fact that Koch, hired in 1955, was not yet tenured made it easier for the university to dismiss him. In a letter explaining his decision, President Henry

Koch's letter to the editor appeared in the March 18, 1960, Daily Illini, during a busy weekend on campus. (Illinois Digital Newspaper Collections.)

called Koch's actions "contrary to the commonly accepted standards of morality." A July 1960 letter signed by 229 U of I faculty members, however, objected to the phrase.

"By including this charge, rather than judging the case strictly in terms of the professional responsibility displayed by Prof. Koch, the Board of Trustees has set a precedent that infringes on free inquiry, teaching, and discussion," the letter stated.

Koch took his case to court but lost, ultimately being denied hearings by both the Illinois Supreme Court and the U.S. Supreme Court. Thus ended the tenure of Leo Koch at U of I, but in the wake of his dismissal the university began revising policies for removing faculty, according to Matthew C. Ehrlich's book "Dangerous Ideas on Campus: Sex, Conspiracy, and Academic Freedom in the Age of JFK."

These new policies were put to the test a short time later when, in 1964, U of I



While the senate made clear it didn't support Oliver's views, it defended his right to state them. Henry recommended that Oliver be allowed to keep his position; the Board of Trustees overwhelmingly agreed.

The Board of Trustees has set a precedent that infringes on free inquiry, teaching, and discussion.

classics professor **Revil P. Oliver** harshly criticized President John Kennedy in the pages of American Opinion just a couple of months after Kennedy's assassination.

Faced with another professorial controversy, President Henry this time turned to the faculty senate for their opinion, according to Time magazine.

By then Koch was long gone. He landed a position at Blake College, a small liberal arts school on the outskirts of Mexico City, where he edited Mushroom Digest, a bulletin on growing mushrooms, according to the Daily Illini. Later he co-founded the Sexual Freedom League in New York City. He died in the early 1980s.

Koch is remembered a little differently among plant biologists. When he left the U of I, he left behind all his plant research, including an incredible collection of more than 8,000 plant samples.

It turns out that Koch was a renowned collector of mosses, liverworts, and hornworts. The University of Illinois Herbarium is still in the process of cataloguing them. **David Seigler**, a professor emeritus of plant biology who arrived at U of I after Koch, said that with help from experts around the country they've identified much of Koch's collection, but that a third of Koch's liverworts and hornworts hasn't yet been identified.

Koch collected samples on his own time from sites in California and the southeast United States, Seigler said. He also exchanged samples with researchers in Japan and Europe.

"He was considered by the other bryologists to be one of the leading people at the time," Seigler said. "Anyone in that field would still know about his collections. They were excellent. There are not many people who can identify them."

Koch may have been a little better at plant collecting than other responsibilities. According to university records, he was informed in 1959, months before he wrote his letter, that his contract would end in 1961. For all the lasting furor over his letter, it cut short his time on campus by only a year.

By **Dave Evensen**

LAS BY THE NUMBERS

This year's incoming freshman class is unlike any other in history.

How are the COVID-19 pandemic and related stressors affecting college applications?

Here's a glimpse of what we're seeing in the College of LAS.



+15.4%

Student applications in 2020-2022

compared to pre-pandemic averages

+37%

International students accepting admission

compared to 2021

489

Biology students accepting admission

The most of any LAS major

+14.3%

Students accepting admission offers

compared to pre-pandemic averages

+30%

African American students accepting admission

compared to 2021

68%

Students accepting admission who are from Illinois (2020-2022)

**Source: UIUC Office of Undergraduate Admissions.*

These numbers reflect LAS rising freshmen who accepted offers to attend UIUC this semester. Data were collected on Sunday, May 1.

180,000
strong

You're a member of one of the strongest and most brilliant groups in the country: the College of LAS alumni.

Learn more about volunteering, supporting students, offering and receiving career advice, awards, events, joining the alumni council, and other opportunities to get involved and make a difference.

las.illinois.edu/alumni

Take advantage of higher recommended charitable gift annuity rates



A charitable gift annuity (CGA) is a contract between you and the U of I Foundation (UIF). In exchange for your gift of cash or marketable securities, you get a tax deduction this year, and

UIF makes fixed payments for life to you or to one or two individuals you select. When your CGA ends, the remainder is directed to the purpose at LAS you choose. The recommended CGA rates increased by 0.4 to 0.5 percent as of July 1.

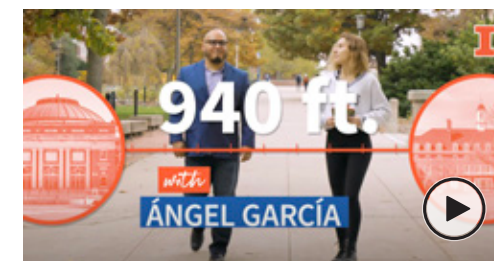
FOR MORE INFORMATION, contact **Jason James Shuba** at (312) 585-9038 or shuba@uif.uillinois.edu. (UIF does not issue CGAs in all states, the minimum age to start receiving payments is 60, and the minimum CGA gift amount is \$10,000.)

go.las.illinois.edu/CGA-F22



View playlists on our YouTube channel and hear directly from the faculty, students, and alumni that make LAS incredible.

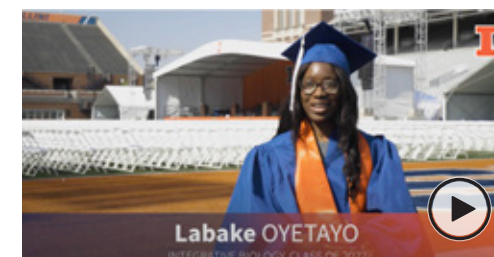
go.las.illinois.edu/YouTube



940 Feet series

Join LAS professors and students for a stroll from Foellinger to the Illini Union in this new series.

go.las.illinois.edu/940series-F22



The LAS student experience

Experience the magic of campus through the eyes of current students and recent graduates.

go.las.illinois.edu/StudentExp-F22



University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
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/contact-F22.

Moving forward:

THE ALTGELD AND ILLINI HALL PROJECT

Major reconstruction work will soon be fully underway for the \$192 million project to renovate Altgeld Hall and replace Illini Hall. New spaces, modern classrooms, and other upgraded features will make possible many more years of learning and opportunities.

For news, videos, and ways that you can contribute to the future of LAS and the U of I, please visit las.illinois.edu/giving/altgeldillini

