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CLAS News

DECEMBER 2022

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 28

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

CLAS Welcomes New Leaders

This past summer, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences welcomed Dr. Michael Mathias as Interim Dean. He was subsequently appointed Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences in November. Also this semester, Dr. Justin Dunmyre joined the CLAS leadership team as Interim Associate Dean.

In his email announcement to the campus, President Nowaczyk stated, "Dr. Mathias has a long history of commitment to FSU and has the full confidence of the administration and CLAS leadership. Mike has provided leadership in many roles here at FSU and I know he will continue to lead and serve the mission and vision of both FSU and CLAS."

Dr. Mathias previously served as Chair of the Philosophy Department, as well as Interim Associate Provost and Interim Provost. He brings to the Dean position substantial leadership experience at all institutional levels with strategic planning, decision-making, and resource allocation.

Dr. Dunmyre joined the CLAS Dean's Office after having previously served as the Mathematics Department Chair and has held a variety of leadership roles within shared governance. His portfolio in the Dean's Office comprises Faculty Affairs, Student Affairs, and Strategic Planning.

On the side of Faculty Affairs, he is the contact for many of the renewal/evaluation/tenure/promotion/sabbatical processes that come through the Dean's Office. He also oversees the new faculty mentorship program and is interested in supporting professional development within CLAS.

In the realm of Student Affairs, Justin helps the office process paperwork that involves students, such as late withdrawal forms. When students reach out to the Dean's Office with concerns, Justin is the point of contact. Blending Faculty and Student Affairs, he is focused on the Dean's Office initiative regarding student success in CLAS classes. In particular, he is interested using data to start conversations and support departments in making sustainable and desirable changes that do not sacrifice rigor as we pursue continual improvement of our classes.

Finally, in terms of strategic planning, Justin serves on the Academic and Institutional Effectiveness Committee. He helps to support department chairs in the strategic planning process which plays a critical role in the program assessment and review processes. Justin's goal is to help departments make their assessment practices to be both impactful and sustainable.

Limnology Students Present Posters

Students in Dr. Kate Sheehan's Introduction to Limnology course presented posters depicting class projects that they carried out over the semester. Over the term, as a class, they collected various samples, including water quality measurements in the field and in the laboratory, and collections of plant-like and planktonic organisms from local waters. Each student then took charge of one of the datasets that resulted from these samples and many expanded on the class samples by collecting more on their own, and created a poster to describe their methods and results. Approximately 20 guests attended the poster session that was held in the atrium on the 3rd floor of Compton Science Center on Dec. 8.

FSU STEM Summit Planned for Summer 2023

Twenty high school students will be invited to interact with FSU STEM instructors during an immersive four-day, three-night experience at Frostburg State University being planned for next summer. The event will be open to residents of Allegany and Garrett counties in Maryland, as well as neighboring Mineral County, WV, and Somerset and Bedford counties in Pennsylvania.

The primary purpose of the event is to reinforce and expand high school students' knowledge in STEM fields and stimulate their interest in a career in STEM professions. Students will be using techniques, approaches, tools and instruction in a variety of fields such as Biology, Mathematics, Physics, Engineering, Chemistry, Geography and Computer Science.

The working title for the event is, "FSU STEM Summit: Space Mission Frostburg." Day One there is a mission briefing in the FSU Planetarium. The prompt is that through observations using the James Webb Space Telescope, it has been determined that there is a handful of planets in the Goldilocks Zone that could possibly support life. The teams of students will need to examine available evidence and conduct experiments while at the summit to determine to which single planet a probe should be sent. Only one can be chosen because this will be a multi-billion dollar endeavor and the NASA space agency does not have unlimited funds or human resources. The students will also receive basic instruction in concepts relating to building and controlling a space probe. On the last day of the event, each team will present their findings and sell their recommendation to a panel of NASA representatives comprised of local STEM professionals, and possibly FSU graduates employed at the space agency. That panel could determine which team best used science and investigation to address the scenario.

Funding has already been secured from Northrop Grumman and the FSU Foundation, and a proposal for additional funding has been submitted to the Appalachian Regional Commission. Other partners for summer 2023 include University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science—Appalachian Lab, Ibex Biosciences, and Berkeley Springs Instruments.

Serving as co-directors for the STEM Summit are Keith Terry and Linda Steele from the Dean's Office. Participating faculty will include Jason Speights and Jamil Abdo (Physics and Engineering), David Puthoff (Biology), Katie Gares (Chemistry), Bill Wetherholt (Geography), and Mike Flinn (Computer Science and Information Technologies).

Dr. Julie Wang to Retire in January

Dr. Julie Wang will retire from her position as a Professor of Mechanical Engineering in the Department of Physics and Engineering at the end of the fall 2022 semester. Julie began her employment at Frostburg State University in the fall of 2004. She has served on the department assessment committee, curriculum committee, evaluation committee, marketing committee, and capstone committee. Julie has served as the coordinator for the Collaborative Mechanical Engineering program since 2007. This is a very important role serving as a liaison between Frostburg State and the University of Maryland College Park. Julie has provided support in the preparation for the engineering programs accreditations (ABET), the accrediting agency for engineering. She has also served as the advisor of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers student organization.

Julie has received high praise from her students for all of the assistance she has provided. Her colleagues in the department and throughout the university speak highly of her. She will certainly be missed, and we wish her well in her retirement.

Physics and Engineering, Theatre Collaborate on *Silent Sky* Production

A casual chat between faculty at a fall 2019 convocation led to 2+ years of planning and countless hours of work on the hybrid theatre production/ planetarium show, *Silent Sky*, held in FSU's Multimedia Learning Center in October.

Darrell Rushton (Theatre and Dance) suggested to Jason Speights (Physics and Engineering) that they collaborate in some way. Rushton's original thought was having student actors assist with content or produce a small show in the planetarium. When he came across a copy of Silent Sky, written by Lauren Gunderson, he knew that the first line about the omnipresent stars would make it perfect to bring to life in the planetarium.

After COVID delayed production, the project was finally brought back to life in summer 2022. Darrell Rushton conducted extensive research on the subject of the play, astronomer Henrietta Leavitt, and enlisted Matthew (George) Georgeson to train the student stage management crew and do lighting, sound, and technical direction. Olivia Trees, a costumer who had designed the show at Marshall University, loaned FSU the costumes, and helped to fit, design, and work on the production from a distance. Trees also mentored FSU student designer, Leo Manocchio.

"The biggest challenge was that there was no space in the planetarium," said Rushton. "There was no off stage area whatsoever, so every item of furniture or prop an actor used had to be brought on from a flight of stairs, since the theatre is essentially a kiva with a steep rake." According to Rushton, this led early on to the concept that the set could be created out of shipping crates, as there are multiple lines about Henrietta Leavitt's work with the star plates being both portable and sent to her long distance via shipping crates.

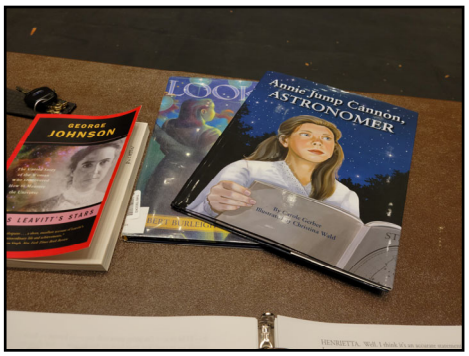
On the planetarium side of the production, Jason Speights helped set the scenes above the audience using panoramas to depict Wisconsin, the Harvard Observatory, an ocean liner, and Cambridge, MA. The positions of the sun, moon, and stars changed for different times of the day, night, and year; in some cases, the sky moved to provide a sense of passing time. Some of the scenes were further enhanced by showing the locations of stars mentioned in the play and the constellations they are in. Several new, full-dome images were created such as an artist's rendition of the Milky Way, the Small Magellanic Cloud, and dozens of images from the Hubble Telescope. The planetarium was pushed to its limits by flying the audience through the Milky Way to the Small Magellanic Cloud, with a simulation of pulsating stars there, all for the brief "ah-ha!" moment of Henrietta Leavitt's discovery. As part of the ending, the audience visited two star forming nebulae, a cluster of galaxies, orbited the Earth, and then flew to the Moon and landed there.

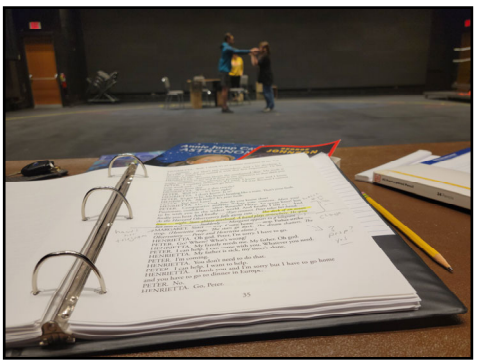
Reflecting on the experience, Dr. Speights shared how much he learned about the theatre process. "One of the most interesting things about the whole experience is how much problem solving goes into theatre production," said Speights. "The work we did together for those two months was a marathon of problem solving."

Rushton also loved learning more

about physics, despite the fact that his father was a high school physics teacher. "I learned a ton of concepts from astrophysics, including things like HR Diagrams, which could not have happened without Leavitt's work on Cephid stars," said Rushton. "Jason taught me an incredible amount of information about the stars and the history of astronomy, at least in the 19th and 20th centuries."

"Despite all of the work, this was by far the most fun I have had with an event at the planetarium," said Speights. "The cast and crew were all great to work with. It will be hard to beat!"





Music Lecturer Premieres Major Composition

The Music Department recently presented Dr. Mackenzie Jacob LaMont in a Faculty Artist Series concert where he premiered and livestreamed a major composition. The premier was intended to happen in fall 2020 but was delayed due to Covid.

The program featured LaMont on drum set and included several works composed by LaMont, as well as "Fun With Teeth" by Nate May and pieces by progressive rock groups Dream Theater and King Crimson. Fellow performers included keyboardist Dr. Jay DeWire, bassist Tom Harrison, baritone Gregory Scott Stuart, saxophonist Dr. Brent Weber, pianist Dr. Joseph Yungen, guitarist Shawn Zimmerman and the FSU Saxophone Ensemble.

LaMont is an active composer, performer (percussion), music educator, music copyist and arranger, and owner/operator of a small music recording company. His recent compositions have been focused on the environment as well as political and philosophical issues, with the sound world inhabiting a space somewhere between minimalism and post-progressive rock.

The performance is available for viewing on YouTube at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TVrZsTOSSx4&t=1975s.

In Memoriam: Dr. George (Brad) Rinard

Dr. George (Brad) Rinard, Professor Emeritus of Computer Science and Information Technologies, passed away on November 9, 2022. He had retired earlier this year after teaching at FSU for more than 30 years and serving as Department Chair of Computer Science and Information Technologies for several years.

Dr. Rinard was a respected member of the FSU community, known by many for his approachable, helpful, and genuine manner. He was active in shared governance, and he was a longtime new student advisor through Preview FSU. While chair of his department, he helped create new educational opportunities for students, playing a major role in the creation of the Information Technology and Secure Computing & Information Assurance majors. His colleagues remember him as a dedicated leader and caring mentor for students and faculty. Dr. Rinard advised thousands of students during his career, and his courses in computer science were eagerly anticipated by students. Despite heavy advising loads, he still found time for an intentional conversation with each student. Please keep Brad's family, colleagues, and former students in your thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.

Biology Faculty, Graduate Students Present Work at Conferences

An image of a red fox from student Erin Geibel's thesis research along the C&O Canal

Dr. Tom Serfass, a professor in FSU's Department of Biology, was an invited speaker at the 15th International Otter Congress in Sospel, Alpes-Maritimes, France, Sept. 19 to 23. Serfass spoke on the "Conservation Status of the North American River Otter in the United States and Canada: Assessing Management Practices and Public Perceptions of the Species."

Serfass, along with graduate students he works with in the Department of Biology, ***Erin Geibel*** and ***Bradley Blake***, participated in the 76th Annual Conference of Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies in Charleston, W.Va., Oct. 23 to 26. Geibel and Blake gave presentations on their respective thesis research projects: "Assessing Occurrence, Distribution and Occupancy of Carnivores of Conservation Concern Throughout Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park From Cumberland to Hancock, Maryland" and "Feeding Habits of the North American River Otter ('Lontra canadensis') in West Virginia."

Among Serfass' various research projects, he, ***Dr. Maggie Triska***, a 2010 graduate and honors awardee of Biology's Graduate Program, and Geibel and ***John Falker***, another current Biology graduate student, are evaluating factors influencing the distribution of carnivore species using remote-detection cameras along the C&O Canal National Historic Park from Cumberland to Washington, D.C. To support this research, Serfass recently received two grants totaling $159,912 from the National Park Service.

Joint Master's Program in Environmental Management Under Development

University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES) and FSU have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a joint Master of Environmental Management (MEM) in Sustainability program.

This joint master's program will help to meet growing demand in the regional workforce. Environmental jobs in western Maryland are frequently being filled by graduates from non-regional institutions. These include positions as staffers and agency personnel in corporate sustainability, resource management, environmental engineering, and non-governmental organizations.

The 30 credit MEM program will be offered as an accelerated 4+1 pathway for baccalaureate students at FSU to reduce cost and time to degree.

"This program takes advantage of our long-standing relationship with UMCES and fits with our commitment to sustainability and addressing climate change," said FSU President Nowaczyk. The unique feature of the program is that it will be open to students from a wide variety of majors with interests beyond just the sciences (e.g., legal/regulatory, resource management, economics, and business).

The goal is to implement the program in fall 2023, starting with a small cohort of five students and building to 12 over five years. The curriculum will include courses in policy, business, and environmental science.

The program is currently going through campus governance and will be submitted to MHEC for approval. A program coordinator will be appointed in the near future.

FSU-TV Launches New Mobile App

On Monday, October 31, 2022, The Department of Communication at Frostburg State University launched its new streaming app for FSU-TV3. The launch was celebrated in the main lobby of CCIT from 11 am-2pm with a red carpet reception, treats, and the opportunity to meet our student producers. The app will broaden the reach and the clarity of the channel.

To kick off the app's available programming, ***The Halloween Spooktacular***, in its fifth year of production, was premiered. All five of the Halloween Spooktaculars on FSU-TV3, are available to stream on the free app.

"This is an incredible opportunity for the Department of Communication and Frostburg State University to showcase the talent and skills of students who work towards creating original programming for the area. We were limited to cable before, and we were not getting robust viewership, but the new app should reconnect us with the community and the world! The app is free and easy to download, so it's a win- win!" said Associate Professor Annie Danzi. "Updating to the CASTUS technology allows more flexibility with quality and control of the channel's signal. Many stations and networks are going over the top by offering apps for their programming and I am excited that our educational access channel is able to join with the other major content producers."

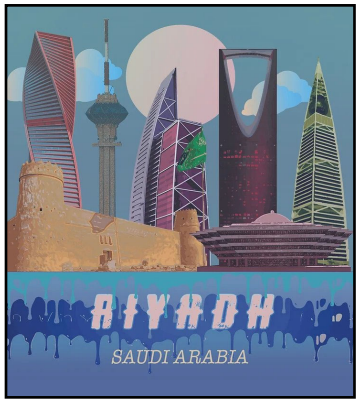
The app is supported by the Department of Communication and Frostburg State University. If you would like to support FSU-TV3, please visit www.frostburg.edu/GiveTV3. Your support will assist to provide additional educational programming on the App and the channel.

For information, please contact Melanie Lombardi, FSU-TV3 Cable Channel Manager, at mlombardi@frostburg.edu.

Above: Students download the mobile app during the Oct. 31 launch event. Below: QR code for downloading the mobile app.

Two Senior Art Students Win Awards at Art Show International's Online Juried Exhibition

Two senior Art and Design BFA students won awards in Art Show International's 6th Annual Online Juried Exhibition. Mohammed Aldawsari won an Honorable Mention Award for his poster design titled "Riyadh." Amaya Hatcher won a Finalist Award for her illustration titled "Secret." Both works can be found at this site, along with the other award winners: https://www.artshowinternational.com/winners-2022-open-6



Pictured above: "Riyadh" by Mohammed Aldawsari

Reflecting on his work, Mohammed writes:

> As an international student from Saudi Arabia, the land of many civilizations and arts throughout history, I think art is a part of my identity. Moreover, coming to the U.S. for an undergraduate program has given me a larger scope about the definition of art. The combination of these two events is what drives most of my artworks.
>
> I tend to use figurative designs and typography to create my artwork, in addition to the usage of symmetrical shapes and figurative ideas to produce my ceramics, there is a distinct and recurring passion in my work for non-objective sculptural form, both static and kinetic.
>
> Typography, ceramics, and iconography are extremely important for every product I create, not only as a source of information, but also as a way of communicating. They give the graphic designer a lot of space to express ideas in both a visually appealing way, and as a way of communication with the audience. Although my focus is graphic design, typography, and ceramics, I am deeply passionate about other disciplines such as art history, and the history of graphic design. I apply the knowledge that I have gained from these topics to create my artworks. I endeavor to make my creations universally appealing to the viewer.

Amaya writes this about her creative process:

> It all began for me by mimicking the techniques that others would show me. Then, I began to branch out from there as I continued to develop as an artist. My designs began to change and reflect how I felt in the moment. This is the reason my art themes are focused on the wonders of youth, whether it may be the reality of life, or the fantasy life refuses to bring. The majority of my work is done digitally to create the perfect atmosphere that I desire that cannot be achieved with analog.
>
> Currently, my designs tend to reflect the purity and innocence that we have growing up and at times wish to hold on to. I try to focus on influencing my viewers at an emotional level, while bringing out the best possible design outcomes. I use illustration, graphic design, and animation to create freely and captivate my audience.

Pictured above: "Secret" by Amaya Hatcher

Todd Doran Appointed as New Director of Physician Assistant Medicine

Dr. Todd Doran (Ed.D., PA-C, DFAAPA, AT (Ret)) has been appointed Professor and Department Chair & Program Director of the Physician Assistant Medicine Program at Frostburg State University. Dr. Doran was previously Professor and Director for PA Admissions at the University of Tampa from 2018-2022. He taught anatomy & physiology, clinical medicine, and clinical skills courses in addition to his administrative responsibilities. He has been faculty at multiple PA Programs in a variety of roles for the past ten years; notably Professor, Vice Chair and Associate Program Director at Meharry Medical College in 2018, and Associate Professor, Division Chief & Program Director at The University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center from 2014-2017. Prior to that, he was Senior Associate in Urologic Surgery in the Department of Urologic Surgery at Vanderbilt University from 2004-2014. He started as a PA in the US Navy from 1995-2004, working in multiple specialties and deployed with 1st Marines in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom and earning multiple decorations. Welcome, Dr. Doran!

James Saku, Geography professor, was a recipient of the Bill Kory Distinguished Mentor Award at the 2022 Annual Meeting of the Pennsylvania Geographical Society in Johnstown, PA. Congratulations, Dr. Saku!

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Have any interesting news items about faculty, staff, or students in your department? Submit them to Linda Steele (lsteele@frostburg.edu) for the next issue.

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

FROSTBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

John Lynch Honored by AAPT Appalachian Section

John Lynch, Lecturer in the Department of Physics and Engineering, was honored at the October 22 meeting of the American Association of Physics Teachers Appalachian Section. Lynch was presented with a Distinguished Service Award after being nominated by Mr. Francis Tam, FSU Professor Emeritus of Physics and Engineering.

"Dr. Lynch is a hardworking physicist who contributes quietly in so many ways to the Appalachian Section and to FSU," said Tam. For more than eight years he has served as the Section's Secretary-Treasurer. Since joining the faculty in 2017, Dr. Lynch has taught a wide range of introductory and advanced level courses in both physics and engineering.

"John has been conscientious about his responsibilities, encouraging and appreciating colleagues and students," said Tam.

Pictured above: John Lynch (left) is being presented a Distinguished Service Award by Dr. Joseph Wiest, AAPT Appalachian Section President.

Congratulations on this well-deserved award!

CLAS Hires New Administrative Assistant and Reorganizes Existing Staff

CLAS welcomed a new administrative assistant as Amanda Bucy joined the Departments of Social Work and Sociology in October. Amanda previously worked in the Admissions Office at FSU.

In addition, three existing staff members were reorganized and took on additional responsibilities. Connie Capacchione moved from the Communication Department to the Department of Psychology. Brittany Raley is continuing to serve the Math Department while also serving as the new Administrative Assistant for Communication, replacing Connie. Patti Graham, administrative assistant for Visual Arts, remains with that department half-time and is now half-time with the Department of Geography.

CLAS Students Win Majors Fair Awards

Several student organizations from CLAS were recognized for their displays at the recent Majors Fair held on Nov. 2. The Most Informative Display award went to the Psychology Club, mentored by Drs. Jocoy and Kennedy. The Student Members of the American Chemical Society were recognized as Most Engaging Crew for the second year in a row. SMACS showed students how to make lava lamps and how to put wooden skewers through balloons without popping them. Best Overall Display went to Women's Studies. Honorable mentions went to Visual Arts and Sigma Tau Delta– English and Foreign Languages. Congratulations to all!