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WKU Potter College of Arts & Letters

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"Through the message of Black Violin's music, we've spent the last 10 years working to encourage and empower people of all ages, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds to find what connects us, rather than shine light on what divides us. This past year alone, we've played for nearly 100,000 students and over 125 public shows across the US and Europe. We've taken this opportunity to spread a message that challenges the world's view of what it means to rise above labels, be daring enough to follow their passion and most of all, be true to themselves. As black men living in America, we understand challenges and we also understand the power of 'I can't' yet we decide to live by and promote the power of 'I can.' We realize that every opportunity to connect our diverse fans is an opportunity to break down the barriers that separate us, empower individuality and encourage progress. Our UNITY tour, with concert dates throughout the US, will be our most energetic and inspired shows yet." #BLACKVIOLUNITY

Wil B. & Kev Marcus

Black Violin performed at WKU as a part of the 2016-2017 Cultural Enhancement Series (CES) February 21, 2017 at Van Meter Hall. Photo by Bryan Lemon. Learn more about the CES at www.wku.edu/go/ces.
Welcome to the Spring 2017 issue of Arts & Letters. The year 2017 will be one of significant transitions for Potter College and WKU. Dr. Gary Ransdell will step down as president on June 30 after 20 years at the helm. His successor will be Dr. Timothy Cabon, a Potter College alumnus (M.A. Communication, 1994), who comes to us from the University of Kansas. Potter College will soon welcome five new department heads, as veteran leaders retire, return to the faculty, or take new positions elsewhere. We will also see the retirement of several senior faculty whose service to the University equals nearly 150 years of collective experience. There are exciting curricular changes, new programs, and innovative research and teaching ventures. These truly are exciting times on "The Hill."

Anyone who has spent any time in the Fine Arts Center will probably have peeked in on the uniquely furnished office of Dr. Erika Brady, who will enter transitional retirement at the end of the academic year after 29 years of service. Her office chronicles the eclectic nature of Folk Studies. There you will find everything from velvet Elvis portraits, to the simple craftwork of farm laborers, to Delta blues LP covers, to sock monkeys. Indeed, the room is a testament to the enduring passion of a master teacher seeking to interpret the material and spiritual cultures at home and abroad.

Dr. Brady’s collection, however, is also an excellent metaphor for the eclectic nature of Potter College and the many different ways our faculty and students seek to understand the fascinating idiosyncrasies of the human experience. As you will see, Potter College is alive and well, and fulfilling its mission to explore the past, shape the present, and create the future.

Happy reading,

Larry Snyder
Dean, Potter College of Arts & Letters
A sustainable jail garden and food justice service-learning project

BY NICOLE BREAZEALE

How might faculty design service-learning classes to maximize the intellectual growth of students and community members alike, but in ways that also contribute to sustained social change? Can pedagogy help to end oppression and exclusion in communities? These are the provocative questions raised in Randy Stoecker’s (2016) new book, Liberating Service Learning, and they have driven much of the recent work of Dr. Nicole Breazeale, a sociology professor with a teaching appointment at the WKU-Glasgow campus.

In January 2016, Dr. Breazeale and her students began a partnership with the Barren County Detention Center and several local farmers to construct a jail garden using sustainable agriculture techniques. This service-learning project, known as Project Breaking Ground, was integrated into three sociology courses, one agriculture class taught by Ms. Lindsey Reynolds, and one independent study course in psychological sciences (overseen by Ms. Melanie Asriel). During the spring 2016 semester, Dr. Breazeale structured her Sociology of Agriculture and Food class based on the Inside-Out Prison Exchange model. The class met on site at the jail, where 15 undergraduates and five incarcerated women studied together as peers, and completed the same assignments. The readings provided a historical overview of the contemporary agrifood system and emerging alternatives. Students learned to identity and evaluate the social and environmental impact of different types of agrifood practices. Farmers Josh Johnson and Tim Kercheville and several others then instructed the students in various low-cost techniques of sustainable agricultural production, including composting, creating healthy soils, hugelkultur construction, and beekeeping. The students incorporated these and other ideas into the design and construction of a three-quarter acre demonstration garden that thanks the facility. The garden features a wide array of plants and animals for year-round production, including asparagus, potatoes, greens, lettuce, strawberries, blackberries, blueberries, raspberries, tomatoes, corn, beans, peppers, peas, squash, bees, and chickens. Ms. Reynolds’s Environmental Science class designed and added a wagon-wheel herb garden.

Since May, the garden has provided all 200 inmates with several meals of fresh food each week. Inspired by Dr. Breazeale’s class, Jailer Matt Mutter established an official year-round jail garden work program. Josh Johnson provides regular farming support, offering weekly instruction to the incarcerated women who manage the garden. The WKU-Glasgow Greenhoppers also built a pergola in the garden that serves as a much-appreciated outdoor community meeting space. The SOKY Community Gardening Initiative, a collaboration...
"Using food from the jail garden and from area farmers, the students cooked an elaborate, fresh, locally-sourced meal which they served to 150 people at the neighboring soup kitchen."

In the fall of 2016, Dr. Breazeale taught a follow-up course at the jail, entitled Food, Community, and Social Change. By that point a number of the students and jail staff were trying to change their diets and experimenting with home food production using techniques they had learned. Their collective struggle to access fresh, affordable food brought the issue of food insecurity to the forefront of class conversations. While the participants had improved the quality of the jail food, they wanted to use their knowledge to initiate a broader community conversation about the root causes of hunger and the pressing need for fresh food for everyone. To support their community effort, the course introduced students to theories of social change, community organizing techniques, and practices of leadership development. Using food from the jail garden and from area farmers, the students cooked an elaborate, fresh, locally-sourced meal which they served to 150 people at the neighboring soup kitchen. Immediately following the meal they hosted a community workshop intended to give voice to those who have firsthand experience with hunger, and to develop a plan for tackling this important issue. Both students and community members committed themselves sincerely to this project, and they have continued to meet after the conclusion of the course.

Dr. Breazeale’s Strategies of Social Research class conducted an initial evaluation of Project Breaking Ground and its impacts upon all the participants and the community at large. Samantha Johnson’s independent study work further expanded the scope and results of that inquiry. Several students presented their initial findings at the Southern Rural Sociological Society’s annual meeting in February, 2017, and also plan to publish the case study.

Nicole Breazeale is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at WKU. She is a Kentucky native and received her Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2010. Her research and teaching interests include sociology of community, environment, development, agrifood systems, poverty & inequality, and critical pedagogy. In 2016, Breazeale was named a national finalist for the Lynton Alward Award for the Scholarship of Engagement for Early Career Faculty.
Located high upon the top of the hill, the WKU Dance Program is a steadily growing and thriving program within Potter College, offering the only bachelor's degree in dance in Kentucky. Most students pursuing a dance degree wish to become performers, dance teachers, or work as choreographers. The WKU Dance Program recognizes the diverse dreams, goals, and needs of students and provides the preparation and experience needed for students to pursue their specific professional dance endeavors. Beyond providing technical training and performance opportunities, the program strives to create "thinking artists"—individuals who work to achieve their greatest potential as artists, technicians, and scholars.

With strong leadership and talented new faculty, the commitment to further the opportunities for both majors and non-majors studying dance at WKU has strengthened. As the program begins a new chapter, dance faculty aim to broaden the technical and performance-based offerings as well as create and support leadership and intellectual opportunities for students, all while increasing the scope of the program to engage an even greater number of dance students from the state of Kentucky and beyond.

Each student studying dance has specific technical, artistic, and/or scholarly goals, and it is this individuality and diversity that the Dance Program aims to embrace. Unlike many other collegiate dance degree programs, the WKU Dance Program uniquely prepares students for an array of dance-related careers. Some students will go on to teach various dance genres within the private sector. Others may pursue performance careers ranging from commercial/theatrical venues, such as Broadway, theme parks and cruise ships, to contemporary concert-based dance companies such as those that have graced the Van Meter stage in recent years. As varied as these goals are, so too are the needed learning experiences and training preparation.

Each academic year, the program invites a variety of professional dance artists, reflecting diverse styles and perspectives, to teach master classes or set choreography for performance by the WKU Dance Company. The program recently implemented 'Gotta Dance Fridays' with the support of the Department of Theatre and Dance, in an effort to enhance the education of degree-seeking students as well as impact all students within the department. These additional master classes and workshops encompass a multitude of discipline-related topics and provide learning activities that are fun, beneficial, and free for students. They also connect students to regional professionals. After participating in a master class with Laura Valentine, the founder and artistic director of the Nashville-based dance company Numinous Flux, junior dance major Trevor Edwards was invited to perform with the company. He shares that, "I never anticipated meeting an artist that would change my career path. I am incredibly thankful for having Gotta Dance Friday bring me this life-changing opportunity."

"I never anticipated meeting an artist that would change my career path."

Off-campus opportunities afford students with the experience of varied professional settings. Over the course of the past three semesters, faculty have taken students to perform or study both regionally and nationally. In fall 2015, dance program coordinator and Associate Professor Amanda Clark invited two students to perform her creative work, 'Turn Around', alongside professional tap dancer Jessica Williams (A.B. '12) in the Big Apple Tap Festival in New York City. Meghan McKinley, Assistant Professor, took seven dance majors to Louisville in spring 2016, to perform her original choreography, 'Drive', in DECA, a concert presented by the contemporary dance company Moving Collective. In fall 2016, dance faculty accompanied junior dance majors Hannah McCarthy and Trevor Edwards as they presented and performed in their original student choreography, 'Kerry and Ethan', at the Tennessee Dance Festival. Three other students performed faculty choreography within the same festival.
least once during a student’s time at WKU, the department provides them with the opportunity to attend a regional festival of the American College Dance Association (ACDA). During this event, students engage in master classes taught by educators from various university dance programs and perform choreography by WKU dance faculty or guest artists for adjudication. Additionally, the department invites a selected student choreographer to present a choreography for performance. This spring the program will take 20 dance students to the ACDA festival at Auburn University to perform guest artist choreography as well as student work.

These professional opportunities are a critical component of the education and training provided by the dance program. As recent graduate Sara Pecina (A.B. ’16) states, “My experiences traveling to different cities and regions as a WKU dance student were not only thrilling as a performer but also opened my eyes to what other dancers were doing across the nation.”

The most notable transitions for the program in regards to performance opportunities are its collaborations with the Symphony at WKU and the newly-designed WinterDance concert. The WKU Dance Company has been invited to perform with the Symphony each semester since fall 2016. Performances include segments of The Nutcracker in Holiday Pops, Romeo and Juliet, and most recently in conductor Brian St. John’s original composition of T’was the Night Before Christmas. The WKU Dance Company also presents the mainstage dance concert, WinterDance; however, the production has taken a turn from a concert-driven choreography toward a more theatrical design intended to engage audiences of all ages. The revised concert reaches beyond the dance major to provide opportunity for musical theatre students to participate in a dance concert, thus gaining valuable and beneficial career preparation. The program’s most recent production, WinterDance featuring Adventures in Toyland, delivered a festive precursor to the holiday season, complete with dancing elves and enchanting toys.

While the program emphasizes performance opportunities, the dance student should be able to do more than simply dance. Students should be equipped with leadership skills and realize their intellectual potential. An increasing number of students engage in independent research and creative projects. Four dance majors will complete sponsored research and creative activity during the spring 2017 semester, with work ranging from the creation of a dance camp for underprivileged children to exploration of choreography and feminism as stimulus for the construction of original dance compositions. The National Dance Education Organization and National Honor Society for Dance Arts WKU Student Chapters create leadership opportunities for dance students as they creatively advocate for the art of dance and support increased educational opportunities for members and other WKU students. Their endeavors include community-based dance classes (such as those with Best Buddies), elementary school presentations, and children’s dance workshops. Additionally, dance faculty encourage and mentor students as they explore choreographic and teaching opportunities appropriate to each individual student.

Perhaps the most exciting addition to the program is the Summer Dance Intensive, first offered in 2016. Instructed primarily by WKU dance faculty, along with featured guest artist Jon Lehrer of Lehrer Dance, high school dance students engaged in daily dance technique and theory classes, learned repertoire of the WKU Dance Company, and presented a formal performance in Russell Miller Theatre. This experience proves a great opportunity to connect with young dancers from across the country.

Typical of many academic units, the dance program has experienced a period of transition, yet the energy could not be stronger. The program celebrates its highest enrollment in the undergraduate dance degree program and looks forward to further growth and development, while continuing to create “Thinking Artists,” engage audiences young and old, and extend its reach beyond south central Kentucky.

Amanda Clark is an Associate Professor and Dance Program Coordinator at WKU, teaching all levels of jazz and tap dance technique, along with various dance theory courses. She is the artistic director of the WKU Dance Company. She has presented original choreography both internationally and nationally. Her primary research interests lie in dance history and pedagogy, with specific focus on the development of jazz and tap dance.
Red-Headed Folklorists From the East

BY DAVID LEE

For some 30 years, Michael Ann Williams and Erika Brady have been at the heart of WKU’s outstanding Folklore program. Michael Ann joined the WKU faculty in 1986, and Erika arrived in Bowling Green three years later in 1989. Together they have brought an already-impressive program to even higher levels of excellence. Michael Ann has played particularly important leadership roles, both at WKU and nationally. She became the first department head of the newly established Department of Folk Studies and Anthropology in 2007, a position she has held ever since, and she is a recent President of the American Folklore Society. A highly productive scholar in spite of these additional responsibilities, Michael Ann’s work reaches from architecture to music, and WKU has named her a University Distinguished Professor, its highest faculty honor.

“Michael Ann and Erika are those landmarks for so many, especially me.”

Erika was the first WKU recipient of the prestigious Acom Award, presented annually by the Kentucky Council on Post-Secondary Education to an outstanding faculty member at a Kentucky university. She works with Family Practice medical residents at the UofL Medical School, familiarizing them with nonconventional health belief system in their region. Famous for her ability to bridge different communities, she is perhaps the only flat-picker in the National Thumb Pickers Hall of Fame! As the host of Barren River Breakdown broadcast on WKU’s Public Radio, she has been a regular Saturday visitor in homes across much of the Commonwealth, sharing her considerable expertise on “American music with roots.”

Michael Ann and Erika have both announced that they will enter the university’s Transitional Retirement program at the end of the spring 2017 term. Each in their unique way, Michael Ann and
Meal Choices & Singing Voices

BY AMELIA ROLLINGS

Western Kentucky University offers a unique program that sponsors and fosters faculty-mentored undergraduate research and creative activity. The Office of Research and Creative Activity offers Faculty-Undergraduate Student Engagement (FUSE) awards that include up to $3,000 for project-related expenses and for the student and faculty member to travel to present the results at a research conference. The grant also awards a $500 stipend to the student upon completion of the study.

In addition to her creative activities, Dr. Amelia Rollings, Assistant Professor of Musical Theatre (Voice) in the Department of Theatre and Dance, has established a line of quantitative research in voice pedagogy. Rollings’ most recent publication assessed the effects of shoe heel heights on postural and acoustical measurements of female singers. Another recent study by Robin Liton examined the effects of vocal style (belt or leg) on the head position and jaw opening of female musical theatre singers. Last year, Rollings expressed an interest in mentoring undergraduate students interested in voice research. Josiah Howlett, a junior B.F.A. in Performing Arts (Musical Theatre) major, responded with excitement. Howlett and Rollings surveyed the existing literature in this area and discovered that although much anecdotal advice existed, the topic had not yet been researched empirically. Howlett and Rollings received a FUSE grant to complete the study and present their findings at a conference.

The data collection occurred over several weekends. Participants did not eat or drink anything after midnight and reported to Gordon Wilson Hall the next morning. Howlett and Rollings then recorded the participants singing a cut of “Climb Ev’ry Mountain” from The Sound of Music. They randomly assigned each participant to one of two meal groups that offered similar caloric values with different macronutrient values (low fat/high carb vs. high fat/low carb): (1) McDonald’s fruit and oatmeal with a bottle of water; and (2) McDonald’s sausage and eggs with a bottle of water. A third control group only drank a bottle of water and did not eat a meal. After waiting 45 minutes, participants recorded the song selection again.

Results indicated that participants, on the whole, perceived that they sang much better in the post-test recording after eating and drinking. While both groups experienced decreased acoustical energy in the post-test compared to the pre-test, the sausage-and-eggs group decreased more than the fruit-and-oatmeal group, which responded similarly to the control group. Howlett and Rollings speculated that the singers could have overcompensated in the pre-test because they had had no water or food since the night before. After eating and drinking, singers could have felt more relaxed and did not feel the need to over sing, thus decreasing spectral amplitude. Some singers, especially in the sausage-and-eggs group, reported experiencing thicker saliva, or an increase in mucus after eating, however, the acoustical data, although statistically significant, exhibited small, nuanced changes of less than 1 dB in amplitude. Howlett hypothesized that future research might ascertain whether a listener could even detect these small differences in vocal timbre. The data of this study alone indicate that although a majority of these particular singers thought they sang much better after eating and drinking, very little difference, at least acoustically, actually occurred.

Howlett and Rollings subsequently traveled to Scottsdale, Arizona, to present their study in poster form at The Fall Voice Conference. A couple of weeks into the process, the conference organizers contacted Rollings to confirm that Howlett did not have any graduate degrees. He was the only undergraduate accepted to present at this conference on a program with medical doctors and speech-language pathologists. It was a huge honor for him, the Department of Theatre and Dance, and for WKU. Howlett also enjoyed learning from several sessions of podium presentations and panel discussions, including topics of surgical voice techniques, voice therapy, occupational voice, transgender voice, and vocal performance and pedagogy.

The FUSE grant program at WKU allows undergraduate students to engage in research and to take advantage of the many opportunities that exist in the academic world. Prior to travelling to Arizona, Howlett had never been on an airplane, never stayed in a hotel by himself, and never presented a research study at a professional symposium. Rollings believes this is exactly why FUSE grants are so meaningful to WKU students. "Many undergraduate students enter WKU and have not experienced anything beyond the borders of Kentucky," she stated. "A FUSE grant can be absolutely life-changing for many students. I am so proud to be part of an institution that finds undergraduate research important."

Amelia Rollings, assistant professor of musical theatre at the University of Arizona, has received a Fulbright grant to teach and conduct research in the UK. Howlett also recently received a Fulbright grant to teach and conduct research in the UK. She is currently working on a project that investigates the effects of sleep on vocal performance.
International Year of South Korea

BY LAUREN REYES

1. Opening Reception
The International Year of South Korea kicked off with a reception at the ASPECTS exhibit in the FAC Main Gallery. The exhibit featured works by Korean artists in America as well as new media art by Korean artists, and faculty and staff were joined by special guest Wonju Seo, contributing artist to the ASPECTS show. Guests had a chance to sample Korean dishes and hear about the exciting schedule of events and courses that will comprise the IYO South Korea.

2. Maestro Byun
Dr. Paul Hondorp, music department faculty, hosted Maestro John Byun, a choral clinician and Director of Choral and Vocal activities at Riverside City College. Maestro Byun visited the music department to lead a clinic for the WKU High School Choral Invitation Festival as well as coach the WKU Chorale through a challenging South Korean folksong arrangement.

3. Film Festival
The Hallyu Wave is a term used to describe the popularity of Korean entertainment and pop culture around the globe, and the Hallyu Wave came to WKU's campus in the fall with a film festival showcasing what this creative juggernaut is all about. Drs. Ted Hovet and Alison Youngblood, English department faculty, led the festival, which included smaller art house films as well as big budget blockbusters. Each film included a pre- and post-viewing discussion for viewers to further explore the significance what they saw.

4. Ted Hovet Class
Dr. Ted Hovet, English department faculty, incorporated the IYO South Korea into his World Cinema course in fall ’16. He showcased the South Korean films Poetry and The Power of Kangwon Province, and hosted a discussion for students to engage the films’ themes and the nature of South Korean cinema.

5. Carol Jordan Class
Carol Jordan, Theatre and Dance instructor, incorporated a discussion of Korean theatre through the centuries in her East Asian Theatre course in spring ’17. Students also studied a contemporary South Korean play about traditional theatre performers that served as a basis for a recent film, The King and the Clown, and Carol hosted a screening of the film for the campus community in April.

6. JinMan Jo Exhibit
The Identity, Energy, and Communication exhibition by Korean artist JinMan Jo (curated by David Marquez, art instructor) was displayed in the FAC Main Gallery in January and February, culminating with an artist talk and reception on February 23. Thick steel bends during forging and hammering, Thin wires worked together show interconnectedness. Weak materials, overlapping and interconnecting with each other, become strong. Each piece makes an undeniable contribution to the whole.

7. Tim Rich Talk
Dr. Tim Rich, Political Science department faculty, gave a talk titled "North Korea: Fact, Fiction, or Propaganda" that explored the turbulent reputation of South Korea's neighbor. Despite sensationalism of impending war and leaders acting irrational, Dr. Rich suggests that we question our assumptions and view North Korea's actions as rational and far more predictable than conventional wisdom would suggest.
The goal is for Connections courses to draw upon multiple perspectives and cross the boundaries of traditional academic disciplines.

Filling the third tier of courses – the Connections categories – has proven the greatest challenge. Here is where scarcity of resources and a need for greater institutional commitment have posed serious problems for the Colonnade Program. In part, this is because the Connections courses are the one area of the program that requires faculty to create something new. The goal is for Connections courses to draw upon multiple perspectives and cross the boundaries of traditional academic disciplines. In addition, Connections courses should appeal to a broad range of students, not just one group of majors. This means existing courses must be heavily revised or that new courses must be created. In a time of diminishing resources – loss of faculty lines, growing pressure to increase majors, loss of professional development funds – it is entirely understandable why some departments are reluctant to invest in Connections courses. Some departments are simply unable to spare the necessary faculty time, and so a stronger institutional commitment is necessary. The Colonnade Committee has presented Academic Affairs with several proposals designed to raise campus awareness of the Colonnade Program. It remains to be seen if the necessary resources will be provided.

More information about the Colonnade Program is available at www.wku.edu/colonnade.
Sports Branding

PROGRAM AT WKU  BY KEN PAYNE

Dr. Randy Deere was well on his way to establishing the largest graduate program at Western Kentucky University in the School of Kinesiology, Recreation and Sport. The Master of Science in Recreation and Sport Administration degree — with offerings in athletic administration and facilities/events management — was unique on the national scene. It was available completely online through WKU’s Division of Extended Learning and Outreach.

Randy Deere had an idea
— a great idea, it turns out.

But Deere knew he could do more by reaching out to external partners in the WKU campus community. And the first partner that came to mind was the nationally-recognized School of Journalism & Broadcasting, at the time Potter College’s largest program with nearly 1,100 majors.

“As we were looking to expand our existing graduate programs in sport, we looked at the availability of graduate programs in sport media and branding across the country,” Deere said. “Because of the success we had experienced in the online graduate concentrations in athletic administration and facility/event management, we believed SJR had all the resources available to create and offer a graduate concentration in this important but underrepresented area.”

Combining the strengths of the SJR faculty in sport administration and management with the strengths of the SJR faculty in public relations and advertising created a top-notch, interdisciplinary graduate program, according to Deere.

“As I look back on the development of this graduate concentration, I can’t imagine any two schools from two different colleges working together in a more positive manner,” Deere commented. “Of my 31 years at WKU, this was one of the most pleasant and positive collaborations in which I was ever involved.”

The master of science in Recreation and Sport Administration with a concentration in Sport Media and Branding launched in fall 2012. It allows graduate students from throughout the world to explore the context and complexities of sport media relations, sport branding, digital media production and distribution, and sport sponsorships.

The two-year, 33-credit-hour graduate program assists students in the pursuit of competitive jobs in sport media, public relations, sport marketing and advertising. But the program’s online delivery model really sets it apart from other programs. Students can continue working in their communities, while gaining specialized knowledge and acumen they can leverage into career advancement.

Deere’s idea has produced talented and successful graduates. Among them:

Don’t Sweat the Small Stuff — Jeb Robins

Robins started the program knowing the challenges that lay ahead. A healthcare specialist for the U.S. Army, he knew the possibility of an extended deployment always existed. But Robins was determined to not let small things like spotty technology and missions stand in his way.

“Taking a graduate course while deployed to Afghanistan brought many interesting challenges,” Robins explained. “First, the internet was not very reliable. It could be down for a variety of reasons to include the weather, or a blackout (when a soldier dies and officials have yet to inform the next of kin). I just learned early not to rely on having Internet all the time.”

Robins deployed in 2014 as part of an aerial reaction force. “This means that if something was going wrong, or had gone wrong in our area, we were called up,” Robins continued. “It did not matter the time of day or what we were doing, we had minutes to get onto our Blackhawk helicopter and go to wherever we were needed. We could be gone for a few hours to a few days.”

Because of this, Robins knew he needed to be proactive in his schoolwork. “When the semester started, I tried downloading everything I could to my laptop,” Robins said.

“Downloading simple things such as a syllabus often took several minutes. Watching a video often took hours just to have it load so that I could watch it. Then I had to watch it in parts and take very detailed notes. That way, if I needed to go back to refresh my memory, I did not have to watch the video again but could just read my notes.”

Robins said deploying overseas and going to school at the same time came with perks, too. “You don’t have a lot to do on deployment...
other than work." Robins said. "This let me focus more on school when I had the time. Since this master's degree focused on sports, it also kept me entertained, and I looked forward to whatever I needed to do next."

Balancing Work and Study — Maria Huggins

Huggins, assistant director of Championships for the Big 12 Conference, knew she needed a graduate degree to advance her career. But balancing work and study was always a consideration. "I was skeptical of my ability to take charge of my learning with an online program, but the resources provided by my WKU professors have made keeping up with assignments as seamless as when I was on campus for undergrad," Huggins said.

The flexibility the SMB online program offered drew Huggins to it. Huggins plans to graduate from the program in May 2017 and use her newfound skills to advance career options.

"With the ebb and flow nature of sports management, being able to adapt my academic schedule to my work schedule has been a tremendous benefit," Huggins said. "I have been pleasantly surprised by how much I've learned and how easy the online process has been," she continues. "But don't be fooled, the classes themselves are challenging and have pushed me academically, so much so that I feel prepared enough to pursue a terminal degree. I am confident that my graduate degree, along with my professional experience, has prepared me to take on significant leadership responsibilities in my professional future."

Life in the Fast Lane — Trent Brock

Trent knew he wanted to be a media gatekeeper from an early age.

"I was fascinated by local news coverage, particularly the weather forecasts," Brock said. "News became my passion. I completed my undergraduate degree from WKU in broadcasting, but I knew that wasn't going to be enough. Broadcasting is highly competitive. I needed to stand out from my peers."

While working at WBKO-TV News Channel 13 in Bowling Green, Trent became familiar with the importance of digital media and social media.

"I also enjoyed sports, and I knew athletics were never going to disappear. So the SMB program was right up my alley," Brock explained. "But life never seems to wait for Trent Brock."

"Two months into the master's program, I accepted a job at WVLV-TV Channel 8 in Knoxville, Tennessee," Brock added. "While at WVLV, my boss often referred to me as a social media and web 'superstar.' The ability to complete my degree online while working full time was incredibly valuable."

A few months after completing his master's degree Brock faced another opportunity too good to pass up.

"I packed up and moved north to Louisville, Kentucky, to launch the 11 p.m. newscast at WDRB," Brock said. "Once again, I was able to leverage knowledge gained from the SMB program to decide what audience we were targeting, how the show would be different from the 10 p.m. newscast, and what would make us different from other networks."

Brock's life in the fast lane now finds him in Tampa, Florida, working as a marketing content specialist for Vology Inc., an IT services and solutions company.

"Our clients include the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and Tampa Bay Lightning," Brock added with pride. "I'm responsible for writing news releases, posting to social media, shooting and editing small videos, composing eBooks, writing blogs, etc. — basically every skill I learned in the SMB program."

"I packed up and moved north to Louisville, Kentucky, to launch the 11 p.m. newscast at WDRB..."
Many of those involved in WKU’s Student Government Association are Potter College students. Potter College Dean’s Council of Students member Murphy Burke investigates what drives these students to be involved in this student organization and how a liberal arts education is shaping their future in leadership roles and public service.

Student Government Association (SGA) President Jay Todd Richey is not quiet when it comes to his pride in being a student in the Potter College of Arts & Letters.

"As a senior majoring in both Political Science and Asian Religions and Cultures with a minor in Legal Studies, my experience at WKU has, in many ways, been defined by the Potter College of Arts & Letters," Richey, a senior from Glasgow, explains. As a two-term Student Body President, Student Regent on the WKU Board of Regents, and founder of the Student Coalition for Renters’ Rights, he points to his course load within the Potter College as a key part of his preparation to serve in those roles.

For Richey, the faculty members of Potter College also play a big role in encouraging students to become involved with student government as a means to influence campus decisions.

"(Students and Potter College faculty) have a shared sensitivity to social justice and the desire to enact positive change in our communities, state, and nation. We challenge ourselves to think outside our circumstances and witness the world from unique perspectives," Richey said, pointing out a relationship he sees as unique to the faculty within the college.

Megan Armstrong, a Morehead junior majoring in Political Science and Public Relations and serving on the SGA Judicial Council, recognizes this relationship as well, pointing out the role faculty play in encouraging students to become involved with student government as a method of campus engagement. She was excited to be a part of a campus wide presidential debate watch party leading up to the 2016 elections. The event was co-sponsored by the Department of Political Science, the Political Engagement Project, and the SGA.

"It was nice to have people of differing beliefs take part in the debate watch party to show that WKU is politically engaging," Armstrong states.

Many of those involved in SGA see it as an opportunity to apply the skills learned in the classroom. Emily Houston, a junior from Winchester, serves as the Potter College Senator in the SGA. An English, French, and International Affairs triple major, Houston was elected by, and represents, the student body of Potter College. As Student Affairs Chair, she also works to allocate funding to student organizations.

"We are reformers: never satisfied with the status quo, unafraid to challenge decisions and actions with which we disagree."

"Serving in these positions has helped to make me a more well-rounded student," she explains. "It gives me the chance to participate in a professional organization that is dedicated to serving the students of WKU."

For students preparing for careers in public service or leadership positions, the SGA is one way of learning the challenges and benefits of these roles early on.

"Though [student government] is definitely no United Nations, it has been the perfect stepping stone for me. SGA helps me to be a part of something bigger on this campus, just like Potter College does," Houston states.

For James Line, a senior from Bedford majoring in Political Science and minoring in History and Journalism, it is no mystery why so many students are a part of Potter College and SGA. Line serves as Chief of Staff within the Executive Branch of SGA and points to the shared values of Potter College and SGA as a reason many PCAL students seek out spots in student government. He explains how the skills learned in Potter College departments are essential for campus leadership.

"The purpose of a liberal arts education is to teach students to think critically, understand the value of empathy and understanding, and develop fuller, more informed senses of the world around them," he explains. When participating in student government, these are all traits that Line identifies as beneficial for representing the students of WKU.

He specifically points out the critical thinking skills Potter College scholars hold and how those prove necessary when serving as an SGA student leader. Every week, students write and vote on bills that aim to identify and solve campus problems. Students have worked to make campus dining to-go containers more sustainable, provide scholarships to students with disabilities, and help fund a student legal services office, among other projects. Beyond campus, SGA students lobbied for higher education funding at the state capitol last year, and in February.

To Line, this is an extension of the issues discussed in the classroom.

"The values of Potter College are conducive to a culture of service, and I'm proud of the work PCAL scholars do every day as student leaders in SGA," he explains.

What happens when these students meet opposition? For Richey, opposition is just part of the challenge.

"We are reformers: never satisfied with the status quo, unafraid to challenge decisions and actions with which we disagree. For Hilltoppers committed to taking their academic focus and applying it to actually affecting students' lives, our student government is a prime example of what Potter College values look like in action."

Murphy Burke is the Director of Public Relations for the WKU Student Government Association. She is a junior majoring in Public Relations with a double minor in Legal Studies and Citizenship & Social Justice. Murphy also competes with WKU Forensics, which takes her all over the country for speech and debate competitions.
A Matter of Facts

BY GUY JORDAN

Last summer, by keeping (most of) my facts straight, I won $169,000 on a game show called 500 Questions. For two nights, there I was answering trivia questions for $1,000-a-pop on prime time network television in categories ranging from baseball to photography, silent film, and philosophy. It was an amazing and surreal experience. I have been involved to one degree or another in competitive trivia and academic competitions since I was in high school. My wife (Carol Jordan, an instructor in the Department of Theater and Dance) and I met as teammates on my university's academic team. Trivia competitions will always be an important part of my life.
"But is trivia really trivial?" In my case, an obsession with learning and remembering things meshes quite well with my job as an Associate Professor of Art History. Knowing as much as possible about different subjects and topics both within and outside of my area of expertise helps me to be a better teacher and a better scholar. Yet when I teach, I am often reminded that not everyone shares this love of facts. Almost every semester, when I read my teaching evaluations, I inevitably get a comment that reads something like this: "Dr. Jordan is a good professor, but why does he make us memorize a bunch of stuff when I can just look things up on Wikipedia?" My response is a phrase I utter at the beginning of every class I teach: "Facts matter." They really do. A student can have a brain that is as powerful as the most advanced conceivable computer processor, but if there isn't anything on the hard drive, that student is going to have a difficult time making sense of complex situations. They will not know what to look up on Wikipedia because they will be unaware even of the scope of their own ignorance. A keen awareness of my own ignorance is the real reason, I think, that I did so well on 500 Questions. It wasn't that I knew so much (admittedly, this helped), but that I knew what I did not know.

Contestants who control the board on 500 Questions keep on playing so long as they never get three consecutive questions wrong. I managed to avoid this fate for 241 questions and thus prevented any of my five talented challengers from knocking me out. Most of the attention paid by my family, friends, colleagues, and fans who watched me play has been on the 169 questions I answered correctly. While this is flattering, I also missed 72 of them. That is a lot of wrong answers. So the key to my success was to spread, as much as possible, those mistakes out across the duration of each 30-question round. I did this by tacking back and forth between areas of strength and areas of weakness so that, when I made a mistake in a category that did not agree with me (something like "Celebrity Fashion"), I could erase that wrong answer by choosing a category in which I was strong (something like "The Renaissance"). Each of the five boards I was confronted with on 500 Questions became, effectively, a test of how well I knew myself. I realized that under the glare of the lights and the stress of having so much money at stake that I was not particularly good at the head-to-head "Battle" questions. I certainly did not want to be stuck facing off against a highly motivated opponent when I had two questions wrong and my survival was on the line. So when I had no wrongs on the board and little to lose, I went hunting for them. I tried to remove them from the game so that, in sticky situations, I did not have to deal with "Battle" questions very often.

Admitting one's ignorance is not always easy, but acknowledging it and working through it was fundamental to my success. This is true not only on 500 Questions, but also in my work as a professor. The most important words I ever say in a classroom are "I don't know." Because no matter how smart we are or how much we know about a given topic, there will occasionally be a pointed question from a student that even the most knowledgeable professor cannot answer. And these are the very best questions. They can take a discussion in a new direction and suggest fruitful research topics that produce new knowledge. But without a systemic mastery of facts, one cannot begin to figure out where the gaps in our understanding lie. We will not be able to determine what those really good questions are, the questions whose answers we don't yet know.

Guy Jordan is an Associate Professor of Art History in the Department of Art. He is also the Faculty Advisor for the WKU Academic Quiz Team. Guy is currently ranked as one of the 50 best quizzer in the world per the results of the 2015 and 2016 World Quizzing Championships administered by the International Quizzing Association each June. In 2015, his score ranked him as the 6th best quizzer in the United States and placed him in the top 0.016% of all test takers. In 2016, he won $169,000 on the game show 500 Questions and remains the program's all time biggest money winner.
Experiencing New Art

and gaining the perspective to apply it to the old.

BY HILARIE SP ANGLER

It all whizzes past, the lights, people, color: the aliveness happening right outside my own comfort zone. Everything that is intriguing to me, all of the opportunities that are waiting to be taken, all presented at once. As I look out on the beginning of my first experience working in New York City, I see the city, the art, and the people with their aliveness; it's quite electric. I see the actors and performers on the street, bravely advocating for their own individual art. They are warriors in the midst of a battle that people advise against. All of the dreams I have had about my career plans seem to be matching up. For as of now, I have reached the peak of all that I have ever wanted to do: to live amongst the artists, the advocates of life, to learn from them. I see in everything, the life and opportunities that this place is rolling in. I see the bravery in those that live in such a mess and still find ways to make it beautiful.

It still blows my mind that I spent twenty-eight days in New York City working with a theatre company that completely embodies everything that I have ever been interested in when it comes to art. "Prototype: Premiere Festival for new Opera and Music Theatre" presented me with many things: lessons, gifts, friendships, and contacts. But perhaps the most important thing that Prototype gave me was perspective. Perspective is a word that, sometimes, is more undervalued than it deserves. Perspective is powerful, and it has the potential to both bring things together and to wreak havoc.

During my experience working with the festival, I worked at the HERE Arts Center on the world premiere opera, Mata Hari, written by librettist Paul Poets and Composer Matt Marks. My tasks spanned a range of pre-show tasks: setting props, prepping the stage, giving cues, to filming performances and working front-of-house. Each job given to me by my superiors helped me to learn more about the way a professional show is run. Mata Hari was a beautiful show, receiving positive reviews from the New York Times and The New York Classical Review. I remember the night that both newspapers came to review the opera, tensions ran high, everyone biting their nails, and then I was, still in disbelief that something I was working on was being reviewed. Little moments like that one made me realize how lucky I was to be experiencing so much.

I worked on Mata Hari throughout the festival, but also was able to expose myself to the world of avant-garde opera by seeing every show in the festival. Although I was there to work, learning about my musical and theatrical crafts came full circle through the opportunity to truly observe contemporary performance and how people made their own passions "work" in new and innovative ways. I also able to create beautiful connections amongst the artists with whom I worked.
connections, friendships, and even some who extended job offers. Each connection I experienced made my gratitude for the opportunity at hand even stronger. It is also a great day when I am able to discuss the work of Bell Hooks with Prototype Artist M. Lamar.

In addition to my internship, I also tried to gather information and conduct research for my undergraduate thesis, which is centered around community-building and creating development in communities using the arts. As the only intern from the south to be working for Prototype, it was interesting to converse and learn about how the arts were reaching communities that I was not familiar with. I feel as though Kentucky can be greatly enriched if we tapped more into our arts resources. The beauty of places like New York City lies in the saturation of such artistic opportunity and the readily-available open mindset to approach these opportunities. I grew up in Appalachia before moving to Bowling Green and that weighs, heavily, on my desires to keep innovating and advocating for the arts in our state. Kentucky has a rich culture and is embedded with stories of the people who helped to build it. Living in New York, possibly the most influential art capital in the world, for a

Art cannot change the world, but it can contribute to changing the consciousness and drives of the men and women who could change the world.

I cannot express gratitude enough to the people that believed in this project that I took on, no matter how eccentric it seemed in my explanations. There is such a strong bond amongst artists and amongst communities embedded in the arts. Within these bonds and these communities, it is often found a unique and beautiful camaraderie that makes taking risks and making big decisions that much easier. Within these communities, love and sincere belief in the abilities of students, like myself, are found. I'm thankful for the knowledge and the drive that the WKU Theatre and Dance department has been pushing me to fully tap into since my first day in the program. I am thankful for their willingness to listen to passions and say, "Let's do this." Support makes the greatest difference in getting from point A to point B. I am thankful for their acceptance and belief in my own set of passions and aspirations. I am thankful for the unity that it brings amongst our artistic communities. I am thankful for the art that it creates and supports.
The 2017-2018 WKU Cultural Enhancement Series presents

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