THE SPIRIT OF SCHOLARSHIP AND RESEARCH AT WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY
THE IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH/SCHOLARSHIP

I have always thought of a university as the major source for new ideas that make a positive difference in lives of people. These ideas are born from the creativity of people who subscribe to this philosophy and are free to push the limits of what is known through research and scholarship unfettered by prescriptive goals. Whether the research/scholarship results in a deeper understanding of the laws of nature or of the human spirit, it enriches our lives and serves the greater good of society. Universities are uniquely positioned to disseminate this information through instruction, presentations at conferences, and publication.

Research/scholarship also offers our students one of the most effective ways to learn. Students engaged in research/scholarship develop a higher order of learning than often can occur in the classroom. As students explore the world from artistic expression to zoology and move beyond the current boundaries of our disciplines, they must become intimately familiar with the knowledge base that exists and draw from a number of resources, some beyond their own discipline. In addition, the student must synthesize and analyze the information and gain insight. Whatever the result, it enables students to develop the skill of learning on their own and making thoughtful choices about difficult issues that face humanity. In this age of information overload, these skills will be essential.

Finally, in many cases research/scholarship is not free. The university provides the crucible for research/scholarship, but some of the ingredients must be purchased. Finding these resources can present a challenge. Writing proposals for grants for consideration by agencies or foundations is one significant way to acquire these resources. Resources from grants are essential in some disciplines for offering high quality instruction that the university cannot afford. I would suggest that writing grant proposals is of great benefit in focusing ideas and setting goals, whether or not they get funded. It is hard work, but the excitement and reward for being able to pursue your research/scholarly passion is well worth it. The articles regarding faculty research/scholarship in this issue demonstrate this fact.

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Dr. Eric Bain-Selbo has found a unique way to marry his studies in religion with his love for sports. Bain-Selbo, who serves as Department Head and Associate Professor of Philosophy and Religion at Western Kentucky University, will soon publish a book entitled Game Day and God: Football, Faith, and Politics in the American South.

About five years ago, Bain-Selbo attended a professional meeting and visited with a colleague who had begun research about University of Kentucky basketball fans. As he, too, had an avid interest in sports, he began to think about similar topics that would be appropriate for study in the South, and decided to research college football fans.
“Religion is like pornography,” he writes. “It can be very hard to define, but people seem to know it when they see it. Sometimes, however, what may not seem religious could be functioning religiously.” Thus, Bain-Selbo’s assumption is that if we think of religion in terms of myths and legends, heroes and saints, rituals and sacrifice, sacred sites and community, then we can come more and more to see sports in the modern world as religious.

“College football is bound with the history of the South,” he explained. “ Cultures themselves can be objects of worship. Southerners also have an identity of themselves that is separate from the rest of the country. My hope is that this book prompts people to think about these issues.”

Bain-Selbo’s book has been a three-year project that has included surveys, online research, and face-to-face interviews. As a football fan who grew up in Nashville and attended the University of Tennessee, he quickly learned the significance of college football in the South. The project began while he was chair and associate professor of the Department of Religion and Philosophy at Lebanon Valley College in Pennsylvania. His research focused on five schools in the Southeastern Conference: Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana State, Ole Miss, and Tennessee.

“In my survey of college football fans in the South, conducted during the 2005 and 2006 seasons, I asked participants to provide me with words that described the game day experience for them,” he writes. “Some of the words provided may or may not have religious connotations. For example, participants described the experience as fun, great, entertaining, drunk, utter chaos, and better than sex. Whether or not these make any sense in a religious context probably depends on what kind of religion you practice. But other terms were provided that easily could be used — and, in fact, stereotypically have been used — to describe religious experience. Friendship, fellowship, and community were used 40 times (out of a total of 220 surveys completed). These certainly are positive terms used to describe the experience of religious organizations, rituals, or institutions. Excitement or exciting (46 times), tradition (17 times), awe-inspiring or awesome (15 times), passion or intensity (11 times) also were used frequently. Even terms like spirit (three times), love (four times), hope (once), godliness (once), heaven (once), and energy (twice) were used.”

In short, Bain-Selbo found that more than half of the respondents used at least one religious or possibly religious descriptor to explain the game day experience. “This is significant given the deeply religious context of the fans,” he explained. “No region of the United States is more religious than the South. The South often is equated with the ‘Bible Belt.’ Any number of surveys and polls indicate that Southerners are more likely to attend church on a regular basis than other Americans.”

Bain-Selbo found that Southern fans identified their game day experience as emotionally positive and powerful, often using religious or possibly religious descriptors to express how they experienced college football. “When asked to rank a number of aspects of their lives (family, friends, church, work, hobbies, etc.), fans ranked football just behind church as the place where they have ‘the deepest and most positive emotional experiences,’” he writes. “Given the importance of religion in the lives of many Southerners, the survey information at a minimum is suggestive of the power and importance of college football.

“In the end, I’ve gone further than I thought and there’s more to it,” Bain-Selbo continued. “It’s truer for some people than I thought. College football functions as religion, but it’s more compelling than I thought.”

Through his research, Bain-Selbo has found that college football and
religion share many similarities including the following:

**A day of worship:** For college football fans, that day is Saturday.

**Well-known worship centers:** In the SEC, those include Bryant-Denny Stadium in Tuscaloosa, Alabama; Neyland Stadium in Knoxville, Tennessee; Sanford Stadium in Athens, Georgia; and Tiger Stadium, aka “Death Valley,” in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

**Large congregations:** Tens of thousands join together for Saturday worship.

**Fathers of their faith:** Each school has its own but probably none is larger or more revered than Paul “Bear” Bryant at Alabama. “Bear Bryant is a godlike figure in Alabama for many people,” he said.

**Rituals and symbols:** These include tailgating, pep rallies, team walks, fight songs, distinctive lettering or uniforms. “Tailgating is central to the whole ritual and is what separates college football from college basketball. You don’t just show up and go to the game and go home,” he said.

**Hard-core believers:** Like at church, the best seats and tailgating locations go to those who are longtime members or who arrive early.

**A sense of community/fellowship:** From the tailgating area to the stadium, thousands of people from various socio-economic and cultural backgrounds come together for one goal.

In addition to visiting game sites and conducting surveys and interviews, Bain-Selbo has conducted research on the Internet, read numerous books and reports on college football in the South, and visited the Bear Bryant Museum in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

“**Sometimes, however, what may not seem religious could be functioning religiously.**”

“In preparation for doing this, I would go to online chat forums and describe what I was doing,” he said. His survey results include the following:

- 33 percent of respondents ranked their college football team to be higher in importance in their lives than church.
- 39 percent ranked their college football team higher than church in regard to where they experience the deepest and most positive emotions.
- 48 percent ranked their college football team higher than church in regard to where they experience the greatest sense of community.
- 59 percent ranked college football ahead of church in regard to the amount of income they spend on each.

Bain-Selbo also takes a look at how college football has affected the issues of race and class in the South. “College football has played a role in helping the South overcome segregation,” he said, but “when looking at the issues of race and class, college football has functioned to preserve the status quo and preserve the wealth and class of the upper echelon of society.

“Also, there are different degrees of fandom and different degrees of people who go to church,” he explained. “We have the casual attendees and the first-pew people, for whom the institution is central to their identities and their lives. So it is with football.”

Dr. Eric Bain-Selbo received his bachelor’s degree in religious studies at the University of Tennessee (Knoxville) and his master’s degree in religion from Miami University of Ohio. He received his Ph.D. from the Divinity School of The University of Chicago, where he studied religious ethics. He has published numerous articles, reviews, and essays, and has presented numerous papers and lectures. In addition to **Game Day and God**, he has published **Judge and Be Judged: Moral Reflections in an Age of Relativism and Fundamentalism** (Lexington Books, 2006) and **Mediating the Culture Wars: Dialogical Virtues in Multicultural Education** (Hampton Press). His family includes his wife and two children and, in his free time, he loves to golf and watch college football.
LAST YEAR, DR. JOHN CIPOLLA, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF MUSIC, JOINED THE WORLD OF SOLO PODCASTERS WITH A SHOW ABOUT PRACTICING AND PERFORMING ON CLARINET AND SAXOPHONE. IN ONE RECENT SEGMENT, HE TELLS LISTENERS THAT IN ADDITION TO WARMING UP THEIR FINGERS AND THEIR LIPS, THEY MUST “WARM UP THEIR EARS” AS WELL.

He knows what he is talking about. As a musician, Dr. Cipolla’s breadth of experience includes playing with New York’s Radio City Music Hall orchestra as well as with the Cats orchestra on Broadway, and recording with the accomplished Kentucky-born clarinetist/saxophonist and WKU Professor Emeritus Doc Livingston. And as a teacher, he has been helping students learn better practice and performance techniques since he came to Western several years ago. The podcast is one of the many ways Dr. Cipolla combines his love of music with his love of teaching.

For John Cipolla, music is a lifelong journey. “Music takes a long time to learn. I’ve been at it since fifth grade — I’m forty-six and I’m still learning,” he said. Before taking up an academic career, Cipolla worked as a full-time musician in the New York City area. “I was a freelance woodwind player. I played Broadway shows, studio recording sessions, the NYC Opera, Radio City,” he said.

While in New York, Cipolla earned a Bachelor’s of Music in saxophone performance from the Eastman School of Music. “I spent my first year at Juilliard, but didn’t like it,” he recalled. “But I did meet Wynton Marsalis there. He was a year ahead of me, and we became friends.” Marsalis went on to be a famous performer, but as Dr. Cipolla points out, even his stellar career began with someone — another musician or a teacher — who inspired and encouraged him. Today, in his position with the WKU
"I’m a perpetual student. I love to practice." His practicing techniques have evolved over the years, he said, but underlying any successful practice regimen is a commitment to setting goals and then sticking with the process until you reach them. Learning music, he said, “is a forever process, hammering away at it and achieving little milestones.” Ideally, he added, he would practice “about three hours a day,” but that isn’t always possible. “There’s a fair amount of maintenance required for woodwind players,” he explained, “especially in the muscles of the face. So I try to keep a routine of an hour a day at least. When I was in high school and college, though, I would practice four to five hours per day.”

Superior musical performance, Cipolla believes, requires a technical mastery of the music that can come only with many hours of practice and review. One of his podcasts deals with recording projects. One recent CD recording, Misbehavin’, done in conjunction with Doc Livingston, has been well-received. “I felt like it was a milestone to put the project together and get it out there,” he said. The CD received many excellent reviews from the press and is now available through the popular website CD Baby.

Cipolla also performs live, which allows him to experience what he calls “the personal human impact.” He added, “I play a lot of solo recitals and chamber music, but I also look for focused recording projects where I can work for longer periods in preparation for the project, and hope to attain a richer and deeper musical experience for myself and the listener.”

Behind all the public performing and teaching lie many, many hours of practice time. But he doesn’t resist that part of his job at all:

Music Department, John Cipolla hopes to contribute in some measure as a role model and inspiration to a new generation of musicians.

After Eastman, Cipolla earned a Master’s of Music in clarinet performance from Rutgers University, all the while continuing to perform in New York’s Broadway shows, recording sessions, and the Radio City Music Hall Orchestra. In 2000, he left New York for the University of North Carolina at Greensboro to complete a Doctorate of Musical Arts, then joined the music department at Western.

Today, his days consist primarily of practicing, teaching, and performing. “The university setting is great for me both as a performer and as a teacher. The sense of security is something I never had when I was just performing, even though I’ve always gotten plenty of work as a musician,” Cipolla said.

In addition to teaching classes at Western, he also pursues his own recording projects. One recent CD recording, Misbehavin’, done in conjunction with Doc Livingston, has been well-received. “I felt like it was a milestone to put the project together and get it out there,” he said. The CD received many excellent reviews from the press and is now available through the popular website CD Baby.

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with “internalizing” music, taking it apart and getting to know it from within, so that all aspects of it are familiar. To illustrate what happens when a person has internalized a piece of music, he hummed the first pitch of “Happy Birthday.” He said, “You see? If someone gives you the first pitch, you can sing it easily because it’s so familiar.”

Despite his current job title, Dr. Cipolla said, he perceives himself “more as a performer/teacher rather than as a traditional college professor.” As part of his application for this job, he had to write a statement of his teaching philosophy. He explained, “I said I wanted to help the community and to be a source of help for younger people interested in the clarinet and saxophone.” And that is precisely what he does at WKU. “I teach people at the college level, but I also deal with people outside the university, especially at middle schools, high schools, and regional, national, and international music conventions,” he said.

Cipolla encourages the young musicians he deals with to approach music as a problem-solving exercise: to learn the music inside and out, and then to put together a quality performance or recital. “To stick with learning the music and then to do the recital, that’s a big achievement for them,” he said. To help students understand the process of performing and how it relates to teaching, he performs solo recitals at WKU every year for his students to attend. “My role when I play onstage myself is to be a representative, a model, so the students can learn to reach higher and to play as well as they can.”

Dr. Cipolla’s foray into the world of podcasting began after he was forced by his busy schedule to turn down requests to speak or play at area schools. “I’d get requests to go to high schools to work with students, but I couldn’t always go because I was busy doing my job here. So I started doing audio recordings they could access.” He added, “I’ve gotten lots of positive responses from band directors and students.” To listen to these music podcasts, go to digitalcommons.wku.edu [search “Cipolla”].

For the future, Dr. Cipolla plans to continue doing what he loves: performing and teaching. He will continue to speak at conferences and play at recitals, and he hopes to do another CD recording soon, possibly featuring a clarinet quartet playing jazz and swing music. He will also continue mentoring young musicians, and helping them recognize that to learn music is to learn something that helps them develop confidence and solve problems, which are things they can take with them in life, no matter what they do in their careers. “The process of learning music teaches them to stick at something until they reach their goal,” he said.

Behind all this activity in a busy professor’s life is a total commitment to music itself. To sum up his commitment and passion for the art, Cipolla said, “I simply love music — I go to bed thinking about it, I dream about it, and I wake up thinking about it.”
MOST PEOPLE TIE AND UNTIE KNOTS THROUGHOUT THEIR LIVES WITHOUT GIVING THEM A SECOND THOUGHT. CLAUS ERNST AND UTA ZIEGLER, HOWEVER, HAVE GIVEN KNOTS A GREAT DEAL OF THOUGHT. IN FACT, THESE TWO WKU PROFESSORS SPEND MANY OF THEIR WORKING HOURS CONTEMPLATING THE MATHEMATICAL AND COMPUTATIONAL PROPERTIES OF KNOTS.

This husband and wife team has broken new ground in the theoretical modeling of physical knots — knots that exist in certain polymer chains and some DNA molecules. Dr. Ernst, a member of the Mathematics and Computer Science Department, is currently a leader in the field of knot theory, and oversees a grant-supported research project. Dr. Ziegler, also from the Mathematics and Computer Science Department, has created software which can deal with three-dimensional models of long, knotted entities, those with tens of thousands of crossing points (the simplest knot has only three crossing points). In other words, these researchers deal with really, really big knots — the kind that do not exist in the visible world.

The mathematical field that deals with physical shapes and surfaces is called topology. Topologists like Dr. Ernst deal almost exclusively with theoretical models, although he has a box full of intertwined plastic pieces, some of them children’s toys, which he uses to demonstrate the principles of knot theory to his students. For her part, Dr. Ziegler has her own toy models. In her artificial intelligence (AI) class, her students use Lego pieces to build working robots and vehicles that move. “We have an artificial intelligence lab here, and even though I’m not doing research in AI right now, I like to stay involved with it,” she said.

Both Ernst and Ziegler are natives of Germany who met after they came to the United States for what they each assumed would be a temporary stay while studying at Florida State University. “I just wanted a year abroad,” said Ernst. Ziegler arrived in the country as part of a program sponsored by a German-American friendship club. “One of the schools the club worked with was FSU, to which I applied and was accepted,” she said. “It was only supposed to be for nine months.”

They both ended up working on Ph.D.s, Ernst in mathematics and Ziegler in computer science. After taking a topology class, Ernst became a research assistant in a project involving knot theory. “It was more or less a chance event, my getting involved with knots,” he said. “But then I became really interested in biological and physical knot structures, which led me to knotted molecules.” (Most molecules are not knotted.)

Ziegler’s involvement with knots came later. “I started in artificial intelligence,” she said. “But I had a microbiology minor when I was studying in Germany, which involved looking at DNA.” Shortly after they took the jobs at WKU, Ernst, Ziegler, and a colleague at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte got the idea to develop and encode an algorithm to explore complicated physical knots. They were awarded a National Science...
Foundation (NSF) grant, which allowed them to hire seven student research assistants. So far, the project has generated numerous journal articles for Ernst and Ziegler, as well as several master’s theses for their assistants.

It’s a complicated project, and takes some patient explaining. “Knot theory comes from physics,” explained Dr. Ernst. “What we are trying to do is take a large knot and track thousands of crossings. It’s too big to look at on paper or in a physical model.” The underlying question is, he said, “How much length do you need to make a complicated knot, one with thousands of crossings and a fixed thickness?”

Research-based data about knotted molecules such as polymers and DNA has many possible applications, but right now the team is just trying to establish the statistical properties of these structures. “This knot project is basic research,” Ernst explained. “Science is full of examples where people have made discoveries which may or may not have an obvious payoff. This is about creating and manipulating data that might be used by later researchers.”

But that’s not all that these active professors do. Because of his established place in the field of topology, Dr. Ernst gets invited to attend conferences all around the world. “Last year I got to go to a wonderful conference in Venice,” he said. “I hope to go to Japan for one on knots and macromolecules.” And Dr. Ziegler has other research projects and interests. “I’m on a cyber-defense grant, and am working on a project that involves Internet security,” she said. “We’re aiming at testing software developed to detect when a network is under attack, and to give the software a standardized rating.”

Like Ernst, Ziegler also teaches for the Gatton Academy. They both praise the program highly, and say they hope their own two children will someday participate in it. “I’ve been very happy to get involved in the Gatton Academy,” said Dr. Ziegler. “Those are the best and brightest students I’ve ever taught.”

About the Gatton Academy:
The mission of the Carol Martin Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science in Kentucky is to offer a residential program for bright, highly motivated Kentucky high school students who have demonstrated interest in pursuing careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The Gatton Academy also seeks to provide its students with the companionship of peers; to encourage students to develop the creativity, curiosity, reasoning ability, and self-discipline that lead to independent thought and action; and to aid students in developing integrity that will enable them to benefit society.

For more information, visit www.wku.edu/academy

The mathematical field that deals with physical shapes and surfaces is called topology. Topologists like Dr. Ernst deal almost exclusively with theoretical models, although he has a box full of intertwined plastic pieces, some of them children’s toys.
LESSONS
in
Family Leisure

BY MICHAEL J. SOBIECH
A UNIVERSITY COURSE CATALOG AND A LOVE OF KAYAKING HELPED STEER RAYMOND POFF TO A LIFE OF LEISURE — WELL, IF NOT EXACTLY A LIFE OF EASE, THEN A LIFE OF EXAMINING LEISURE AND ITS IMPACT ON HUMAN BEHAVIOR.

Shortly after starting college at Brigham Young University, Dr. Poff knew that school was where he was supposed to be, but he did not know what he was supposed to be studying. An assignment to research two possible majors led him to read through the entire course catalog. “I literally started in the front and went through it page by page. When I came to Recreation Management/Youth Leadership, like several students here on Western’s campus, I was surprised: ‘You can major in that?’”

A course catalog led Poff to his Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees, but kayaking and canoeing led him to his doctoral dissertation. “I was finishing up my MS at Indiana University, and I was thinking, ‘I’m done. No more tests. No more classes.’ Then I got a job running the BYU Outdoors Unlimited program through their student center. But within a short period of time, I found myself asking research questions: ‘I wonder why people do this?’ or ‘It would be interesting to study that.’” Poff’s questions led him back to Indiana, where he received his Ph.D. in Leisure Behavior. Today he is an associate professor in the Department of Physical Education and Recreation at Western Kentucky University.

Although questions about degree and career are now settled, for Dr. Poff, serious questions remain about the role of leisure; in particular, he has been examining its possible impact on family life. Poff’s interest in this area is a natural one: he and his wife, Sandee, have four children, the oldest of whom he is now introducing to both fly fishing and Scouting. (Poff himself is an Eagle Scout.)

While at Indiana University, a fellow doctoral student and friend, Ramon Zabriskie, developed instrumentation for measuring family involvement: The Family Leisure Activities Profile (FLAP). When using FLAP, researchers focus on “core” and “balance” activities. “Core activities are what we do with our families everyday,” explains Dr. Poff. “It could be shooting hoops together, having dinner together, playing a board game, hanging out and watching a movie; every family is going to be different. Balance activities are atypical. I don’t want to say that they’re unusual, but we don’t do them as often. For instance, my wife and I went to Brazil to visit her parents who are there on a two-year mission for their church. We had never been to Brazil before; this was exceptional for us and would be considered a ‘balance’ activity. Again, these activities will vary with each family. Going on a camping trip may be a balance activity for those who rarely camp. Or if my family doesn’t go bowling on a regular basis, then bowling can be a balance activity,” continued Poff.
“Now, if all you ever did was go on family vacations, you would probably end up with some issues. If everything was balance, those fundamental skills that you build in your everyday activities would be missing. Without those skills and relationships and fundamentals that you’ve built in core activities, you’re probably not equipped to function well in your balance activities. Dr. Zabriskie’s FLAP is based on a theoretical model that would suggest that a healthy family needs core and balance.”

With help from WKU, Dr. Poff has been able to help bring a national — and international — reach to the FLAP. “In the back of my mind, I’ve always had an interest in doing research in the family leisure area. And so I applied for and received a Faculty Fellowship here at Western. I saw this grant as the means to do something.” Poff then contacted Zabriskie. “The idea was to take the instrumentation that he had developed, and some work other researchers were doing, and for the first time do a nationwide study to see if what they were finding with these smaller samples would hold true nationally.”

But how does one determine the relationship between football in the backyard, trips to Yosemite, and the health of a family? “When I was researching my dissertation, I used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), which allows us to look at multiple constructs, or ideas, at the same time, and analyze the relationship between those ideas. If I were looking at the relationship between outside temperature and mood, I could measure the temperature directly with a thermometer — that’s quantifiable. But I would have to use some other instrumentation to determine the person’s mood because, unlike outside temperature, mood is a ‘latent construct.’ A ‘latent construct’ is an idea or concept that we’re trying to measure, but we can’t measure directly. With SEM we can take multiple concepts (such as family leisure involvement, family communication, and satisfaction with family life) and identify

“Having fun with your family brings with it some seriously good fringe benefits”
what, if any, relationships exist between them.”

Previous studies used smaller samples and looked at a more narrow range of issues. But Poff and Zabriskie’s nationwide study allows for a larger number of connections to be made. “They’ve done this piece and that piece of the puzzle. But SEM allows us to bring the pieces together in a survey using a national sample.” And the results of their research? “Generally speaking, the findings of this study and the model we developed match the work previously done by others. Because this study was not experimental in design, we cannot currently say that family leisure functioning causes satisfaction with family life. But we can say that there is a statistical relationship between satisfaction with family life and family leisure involvement, and these other pieces. Dr. Zabriskie and I are very excited with the outcome.”

Poff and Zabriskie have recently carried out countrywide surveys in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. “Initially we thought funding would limit us to a pilot study, which would have restricted the kind of analysis we could have done. Thanks to some additional, unexpected financial support from BYU’s College of Health and Human Performance, what started off to be a pilot study turned into a full-fledged international study with around 500 families in New Zealand, 900 in the United Kingdom, just over 1,000 in Australia, and around 1,200 in Canada. This is great because we were originally thinking we would only be able to survey a couple hundred in those countries. Now we have more than enough data.”

Poff hopes that this research will not stay limited to just the English-speaking world. “If our model and instrumentation seem to hold up, and we get consistent findings from other English-speaking countries, then we’ve got the world.” Of course, this phase would bring with it new challenges. “One of the early questions we’re going to have to ask is, ‘What does family leisure mean in different cultures?’ As we expand this to different languages and societies, we will end up, in some ways, almost starting over with each culture because we will have to go back and say, ‘Okay, are we even talking about the same things?’”

But while Poff wants the study to go forward into the world, he also wants to go backwards. “In the core and balance theory, I suspect that there’s at least one other piece to this new model that is an influencing factor. I want to investigate what precedes family leisure involvement. What precipitates it? Why does one family participate in core/balance activities? And why don’t others? What is it that precedes and lays the groundwork for family leisure involvement?”

While Dr. Poff continues to raise questions, he believes that the results so far have great potential benefit for society and families. “I think this could help those who are making decisions about what recreational opportunities are available for families. But I think the biggest benefit is that this work will help people to start having a clearer understanding of leisure’s importance. It is not a waste of time; it definitely appears to have a relationship to essentials such as communication, family functioning, and satisfaction with family life.”

Poff affirmed, “Having fun with your family brings with it some seriously good fringe benefits. And personally speaking, as a parent of four, that’s a good thing for me to remember.”

“One of the early questions we’re going to have to ask is, ‘What does family leisure mean in different cultures?’”
“WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH MATH AND PHYSICS?” THE PROFESSOR OF ENGINEERING HALF-JOKINGLY ASKED GEORGE KONTOS. “WHY DON’T YOU GO INTO COMPUTERS?” KONTOS RESPONDED WITH HIS OWN QUESTION: “COMPUTERS?” IT WAS 1969, YEARS BEFORE LAPTOPS, HIGH-SPEED HOME INTERNET, OR EVEN THE WORLD WIDE WEB ITSELF. “I DECIDED TO GIVE COMPUTERS A TRY BY TAKING A CLASS, AND I FELL IN LOVE WITH THEM,” SAID KONTOS. BUT DR. KONTOS NOT ONLY FELL IN LOVE WITH COMPUTERS — HE ALSO FELL IN LOVE WITH USING THEM TO TEACH. AND TODAY HE RESEARCHES HOW TO BRING THE BEST PRINCIPLES FOR UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION IN A PHYSICAL CLASSROOM INTO CLASSES THAT MEET ON-LINE.

Kontos, an assistant professor of business at Bowling Green Community College, Western Kentucky University, grew up in Greece, where he received his BA in mathematics from the University of Athens. From there, he went to the University of Texas at Austin to pursue a graduate degree initially in physics, and then in math. But when Kontos graduated, he left with what was then a relatively new degree: a Masters in computer science.

Although his first love was mathematics, and his next was computers, Kontos always had another love. After teaching for a few years in both Iran and Iraq, he headed back to Texas, to the University of Houston, in order to pursue a doctorate in education with a focus on computers. “I felt like computer science, at least back then, and math were too abstract. I wanted to be closer to the students, to be more in touch with the human element. And so I found that education would be the right choice for me.”

If it has been the right choice for him, it has also been the right choice for his students, for Dr. Kontos is a strong proponent of Arthur Chickering and Zelda Gamson’s prominent study, “Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education.”
According to Chickering and Gamson, effective undergraduate education...

1. Encourages contact between students and faculty
2. Develops reciprocity and cooperation among students
3. Encourages active learning
4. Gives prompt feedback
5. Emphasizes time on task
6. Communicates high expectations
7. Respects diverse talents and ways of learning

“I’m a firm believer in the seven principles (see above), and I believe that every teacher should strive to follow them.” But there is a problem here. It is not that the principles are either hard to understand or limited in their applicability, for as Kontos points out, “they are common sense and easily transferable to other areas.” Neither is the problem a lack of agreement: “We all know that prompt feedback is important. We all agree that students should be able to communicate with the faculty, that there should be a connection.” The problem Kontos sees is a lack of application: “Teachers may look at the principles and say, ‘Big deal. I know this.’ But,” he asks, “do you do it?”

A further challenge is the application of the seven principles to on-line classes since the principles were initially intended for the traditional, face-to-face classroom. In fact, according to Dr. Kontos, it is “only recently that they have sparked the interest of teachers and specialists in on-line class teaching environments.” But at state and national conferences, Kontos shows educators how to implement these fundamentals in classes where they do not “see” their students. “For some time, possibly because of technological limitations, application of some of these principles was challenging in an on-line setting. But advances in technology are making it easier. I go out and talk about the seven principles to spread the word, especially to instructors who are new to on-line teaching.”

In his research and classes, Kontos pays particular attention to the first and the fourth principles. While all seven are essential, he believes that these two principles are the most significant — and the most challenging — for educators. For instance, a lack of contact between students and faculty has been a frequent complaint in on-line classes. “Sure, you can send a group e-mail to the entire class, but that’s not what I mean when I talk about applying the first principle; it’s making an actual connection with someone. It’s like you’re in a classroom and someone raises a hand and you answer his or her specific question — there’s a difference between talking to the whole class and talking to that particular student.”

For his own on-line courses, Kontos meets with each of his students at the beginning of the semester. Most of them live within the area, and so he asks them to come to campus for the first class session. But for those who cannot make it, he talks with them over the phone: “It is time consuming, but it is also very helpful.” He then ensures that they begin the process of establishing a connection with each other by having their first assignment being to introduce themselves to the entire class via Blackboard. (Blackboard is a widely used Web-based course management system that facilitates on-line teaching and learning.)

Back in the early 1990s, “the only way to communicate was through e-mail, and we had a chat section. But now we have so much more.” Various features of Blackboard, such as the ability to include photos and video links, help personalize the technology. “Blackboard provides opportunities for building friendship and community with the students.”
You can see pictures. They can see you, and you can see them. And with every new update, it makes on-line classes easier to handle for teachers and students alike."

While he concentrates on researching and applying all seven, it is the fourth concept — the need to give prompt feedback — that Kontos considers “the most important of the principles.” Here again he illustrates how you are what you research. He has been known to surprise students both with the immediacy and the timing of his e-mail responses.

“My computer is on at all times, day and night. If I wake up in the middle of the night, I’ll go check. And sometimes my students will say, ‘Wow! Don’t you ever sleep?’”

Another means to help implement the fourth principle is a simple-to-use tool that Dr. Kontos has been developing for assessing incoming students’ computer literacy. This instrument addresses the perennial problem faced by teachers on the first day of class: what do my students know? “You can have them raise their hands in answering a few simple questions, but that may give unreliable results because of peer pressure. Students may not be entirely candid when raising, or not raising, their hands because it is done under the watchful eyes of their peers. Or you can do a pre-test, but you’ll have to grade and tabulate it; that’s going to be good, but it will be a lot of work. And teachers don’t have much time — they need something quick.”

To help instructors know how to better customize their courses, Kontos has been promoting the use of his computer survey whose results can be quickly and easily determined with commonly used software. On the first day of class, he asks his CSCI 145 Introduction to Computing students to take the self-assessment test over how well they know computer vocabulary, e-mail, search engines, networks, and various types of software. They can grade themselves as well-informed (“I am an expert”) or uniformed (“I do not know any of it”). As a result of his students’ feedback through the survey, Kontos has been able to stress the areas in which his students believe themselves to be inadequate.

To statewide and national audiences, Kontos speaks about the survey’s simplicity, quickness, and its inter-disciplinary potential. “Adapting the tool to evaluate the level of understanding of entering freshmen in any course topic, such as mathematics or English, should be easy.”

While continuing his work with the computer literacy survey, Kontos is also studying how to implement the third of the seven principles: “Encourages active learning.” Currently, he is researching the impact of having students work with local communities in designing real web pages. “The students are asked to create a website for a local business. They then research the community, investigate ways to approach companies, and choose the particular business. The students tell the instructor which business’ website they will be developing (at no charge, of course), meet with the business to discover their needs, plan, and finally develop the website. At the project’s completion, besides evaluating the website, the teacher can contact the businesses and see how it all worked out.”

What does the future hold for the on-line classroom? “Ask me what the future of face-to-face classes is,” Kontos says with a smile. “I don’t see how we did it ten years ago, because the technology just was not there, but now we have so much. Really, though, you don’t have to use all that technology; you just need to remember, and practice, those seven principles.”
REACHING FOR HEALTH CARE EQUITY

BY MICHAEL J. SOBIECH

Illustrations by Emily Ballard
MINORITY WOMEN WHO ARE FACING THE POSSIBILITY OF CANCER HAVE AN ADVOCATE AT WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY. DR. CHRISTINE NAGY AND A TEAM OF SCHOLARS ARE SEEKING TO UNDERSTAND AND CHANGE THE DYNAMICS BEHIND AN ALARMING INEQUALITY: WHILE THEY ARE LESS LIKELY THAN WHITES TO CONTRACT EITHER DISEASE, AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY TO DIE FROM BOTH CERVICAL AND BREAST CANCER. UTILIZING A PRACTICAL, COMMUNITY-BASED MODEL, NAGY AND OTHERS HOPE NOT ONLY TO UNDERSTAND BUT TO SOLVE THIS DISPARITY.

When it comes to cancer, early treatment is the key to a cure; unfortunately, for many the system breaks down at this critical stage. “The reason for the disparity is that African American women are not getting screened,” states Dr. Nagy, an associate professor in the Department of Public Health at WKU. “And if cancer is not diagnosed early, then the possibilities for a good outcome diminish.”

If it can save their lives, why are women missing out on screening? “One of the major reasons is that they aren’t told. If you don’t know you should have a mammogram, are you going to have one? Perhaps that is changing now that we have more media awareness — we have more ads and public campaigns like the one that makes it very personal: ‘If you were my sister, I would tell you,’” Nagy said.

“You also have to take into consideration the fact that many areas are medically underserved — not everyone has easy access to screening. If your county does not have a hospital, or if it does not have adequate technology, or if your local area does not have a physician, then you will have to drive — if you have a car, and if you can afford the gas — a long way for proper care. Poverty compounds the problems. ‘How am I going to pay for this mammogram?’

“"You also have to take into consideration the fact that many areas are medically underserved — not everyone has easy access to screening."
Let’s say that I do get screened. I don’t have any money. Who’s going to pay for my surgery or my post-operative treatments? Who’s going to take care of my family when I’m in the hospital? Cancer is hard for anyone. But if you don’t have funds, it makes it even more difficult,” said Dr. Nagy.

The lack or lateness of screening — with its resulting higher death rate — causes some women to choose not to be screened because they believe that diagnosis of cancer at any stage is a death sentence. Dr. Nagy explained, “African American women are typically diagnosed later in the course of their breast cancer. If it had been caught early, then there would have been a significantly better opportunity for effective treatment. But if your experience with the disease as a community has been one in which if someone gets it, someone dies, then you will probably be fatalistic about your own chances and not enthusiastic about screening."

Dr. Nagy teamed up with researchers from other institutions, including the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), to eradicate the racial imbalance in cancer screening. With funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), they helped form the Alabama Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health Coalition (REACH 2010), which focused on decreasing and eliminating breast and cervical cancer disparities between African American and white women in six rural and three urban counties in southern Alabama. Nagy became part of the project for many reasons: her expertise in using a lay health advisor model in reaching out to local communities, a passionate and practical interest in evaluating the process of a study, and, perhaps, a moment of serendipity.

“My first job in Alabama was working on a Ford Foundation project in Green County, which at that time was one of the poorest counties in the United States. In that work, we used lay health advisors in dealing with maternal health issues. Lay health advisors are community members who, having fulfilled several, significant criteria, serve as a link between providers and consumers for improved public health. For this particular study, once the advisors completed a period of training, they worked one-on-one with pregnant women to try and reduce Green County’s high infant mortality rate.”

In addition to promoting community involvement, Nagy is also a strong proponent of process evaluation. “Process evaluation looks at what happens throughout the whole gamut of a program. It’s like a chronological or historical overview but with a practical purpose in view. For instance, researchers write proposals that state that they are going to develop a coalition. The process evaluator will then ask questions like ‘Did you actually develop a coalition? Who were the members? How often did you meet? Did you meet as often as you said you would? Were the coalition members the right ones for the job?’” You’ll have a journal article that says, ‘Wow! We had great results!’ But why and how did those results happen? That’s what process evaluation should tell you.” It may not be the “glitzy” side of research, but process evaluation is essential for others in the field. “If the local public health department wants to develop a similar program, they need more than the results — they need to see what was done to achieve those results. They need to see the nitty gritty — both what worked and what might be improved or adapted. Process evaluation reveals how the puzzle was put together.”

Nagy was a great fit for REACH 2010, but that match might never have been made had it not been for
an accountant. “Dr. Mona Faoud, in UAB’s Division of Preventive Medicine, was submitting a clinical trial with the National Cancer Institute (NCI), and she needed a process evaluator. An accountant in their Office of Sponsored Programs said, ‘There’s a Dr. Christine Nagy who’s working on this other project; maybe she’d be a good fit.’ Dr. Faoud contacted me and explained what she wanted. I developed and sent her a process evaluation plan, and she called me back: ‘That’s what I need!’ And so I got to be a part of the NCI project, which later led to REACH 2010, because of an accountant.”

Strong community involvement made REACH 2010 a success. “From day one, the target audience was truly engaged in developing, implementing, and evaluating the program, which is a really big feat because it helps to create buy-in to the project; they definitely had a vested interest. And the results of everyone’s hard work were impressive: between 1998 and 2006, the disparity in mammography screening between African American and white women in the nine target counties went from 17% to 6%. And in some counties, screening rates actually became higher for African American women than white women.”

The success of the Alabama REACH 2010 project has resulted in the CDC funding the Mid-South REACH US Center of Excellence, which will work with Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, and Louisiana to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities concerning breast and cervical cancer. Nagy will serve as a consultant in this collaborative effort.

Nagy’s emphasis on the practical comes out not only in her research, but also in her teaching. “Our Master’s of Public Health is a practitioner’s program. We are trying to prepare women and men who will go out into the workforce and deliver programs and initiatives to assist in protecting and promoting the health and well-being of the entire community. Here at Western our class projects often couple students with a local organization to develop materials, field test materials, or assist with evaluation efforts on a ‘real’ project. For instance, one of our classes worked with the health department which had a grant from the March of Dimes. Certainly it is good to do something for the purpose of increasing knowledge, but you also have to have that practical side of things because students learn by doing. And when our students get out in the field, they have a portfolio that showcases not only knowledge but skills.”

Like the majority of her graduate students, Dr. Nagy was at one time an international student. Originally from rural Canada, she moved to pursue both her master’s of science and, eventually, her doctorate in school and community health at the University of Oregon (Eugene). Today, she shares her knowledge with students from around the world, some of whom are returning to improve public health in their home countries. “We have an honor student interested in breast cancer who is going to Qatar and the United Arab Emirates this summer. Like African American women here, their diagnoses are very late. She is interested in determining — and eliminating — the problems with women getting screened. And she is going to use parts of the questionnaire we used with the Alabama study in her work in the Middle East.”

For the women who have contracted it, cancer is no abstraction: it is a real threat not only to their lives, but also to the well-being of their families and communities.”
THE RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY DR. QI LI, AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF COMPUTER SCIENCE AT WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY, EMBODIES WKU’S VISION OF BECOMING A LEADING AMERICAN UNIVERSITY WITH INTERNATIONAL REACH. DR. LI’S RESEARCH IN THE FIELD OF FEATURE SELECTION AND EXTRACTION WAS RECOGNIZED INTERNATIONALLY AS AN ESSENTIAL SCIENCE INDICATOR IN APRIL 2007 BY THOMPSON SCIENTIFIC, AN ORGANIZATION WHICH ANALYZES RESEARCH PUBLISHED IN OVER 11,000 JOURNALS FROM AROUND THE WORLD TO IDENTIFY THE MOST INNOVATIVE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH.

Dr. Li began his academic career in China, where he earned a BS in math. In 2000 he moved to the United States, where he obtained a Master’s degree as well as a Doctorate in computer science. His previous research has included a comparative study on content-based music genre classification, a survey on wavelet applications in data mining, and two-dimensional linear discriminant analysis.

Attracted to WKU because of “expectations that faculty members are to have a good balance between teaching and research, and good internal funding opportunities,” Dr. Li has made Western his home for the past three years.

One of Dr. Qi Li’s fields of research involves work with facial recognition systems, a complex computer application that has the ability to automatically identify or verify a person’s identity using an image.

One of his fields of research involves work with facial recognition systems, a complex computer application that has the ability to automatically identify or verify a person’s identity using an image. The facial recognition software compares selected facial features from a digital or video source in a high-dimensional, or 3-D format, (from a security camera for example) to a known image of a person, such as a passport, visa, or driver’s license picture which is in 2-D, or low-dimensional format. Pattern recognition is then used to determine identity based on similarities between the high-dimensional and low-dimensional images. Typically, large amounts of high-dimensional data are generated. The data collected then must go through a process known as data mining to sort the information so that only the specific patterns, or facial features, such as the distance between the eyes, are incorporated in a search of the existing database of known images. However, as the data mining process occurs, the software must be able to recognize features and classify the information received into specific data despite variations in facial appearance due to factors such as light quality, facial size, and distance from an image source (i.e., security camera) through a process known as linear discriminant analysis.
Dr. Li explains, “Previous linear discriminant analysis methods are based on singular value decomposition, or generalized singular value decomposition, which are computationally expensive. Also, many engineering applications involve high-dimensional data that challenges an engineer’s hardware configurations, such as CPU, memory, and network. The high computational cost of these previous approaches becomes the bottleneck for research and implementation. Therefore, it is highly desirable to obtain a compact representation for high-dimensional data with minimal computational overhead.”

In 2002, Dr. Li began work on a method to reduce the costs involved in the data mining and linear discriminant analysis process while maintaining the reliability of the software and improving efficiency. Through a collaborative effort with Dr. Jeping Ye of Arizona State University, a long time friend and former colleague, Dr. Li began using a method of linear discriminant analysis called QR decomposition, which he explains is “scalable and has a much lower computational cost than previous methods with comparable classification accuracy. By applying QR decomposition, the linear discriminant analysis method we proposed first maximizes the between-class distance, and then minimizes the within-class distance. This process is known as dimension reduction. It is this two-step procedure that leads to the scalability and low computational cost.”

Currently, Dr. Li has focused his research efforts on embryonic imaging technology, specifically, image standardization. He explains, “Embryonic images contain spatial-temporal gene information, which can help genetic biologists discover gene expression patterns. With the rapidly increasing amount of publicly available embryonic image data, computational methodology was recently introduced to assist genetic biologists to examine an unknown gene expression pattern. A complete computational system contains the following steps: image standardization, stage classification, clustering, and querying. My current focus,” continued Li, “is on image standardization. A raw embryonic image may contain the following imaging variations: orientation, size, partial embryos, etc (see picture 1). Image standardization aims to remove these variations to build pixel-to-pixel correspondence so that the comparison between embryonic images are biologically meaningful (see picture 2).”

Have you ever used digital photography software to edit pictures before printing? Image standardization, although much more difficult a task, is similar. Look again at the two images. The images are actually the same, but appear different because image two has been standardized (or “photo shopped”). Like cropping a picture to remove unwanted background scenery so the primary focus of the image is on the intended subject, Dr. Li has focused the image on the gene intended for study, thus removing any unnecessary and distracting background. He has also sharpened the image to make details more apparent.

Unlike consumer versions of photo editing software which allow users to manipulate images with just a few clicks of the mouse, image standardization used in the bioinformatics field is actually a series of operations which contributes to the overall quality of a microscopic image displayed on a computer monitor. The operations related to image standardization include sample preparation, formation of the image via microscope, digitization of the image through digital cameras, compression of the image, and transmission of the image onto a monitor display. Standardized images allow researchers to compare change over time and identify specific cells or other biologic information (i.e., genes), thus promoting human knowledge of the most basic intricacies of life and conditions that effect the quality of life. The knowledge gained from such research will result in tremendous gains in the areas of genetic, disease, and developmental research.
IN AUGUST OF 2004, A GROUP OF WOMEN, FORMER WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ATTENDING A CAMPUS REUNION, TOURED A SMALL STONE BUILDING CALLED THE ROCK HOUSE.

They had all lived at the Rock House when it was a dormitory for female students, most of them during the early 1950s. The building is now the base for the Anthropology program’s laboratories, and although none of the faculty was available at that time of the year, alumni affairs staff members were able to arrange a tour. By the time the fall semester started, the women’s stories began to trickle back to the program: memories of faculty and friends, bobby socks, curfews, and sneaking out of windows after dark to meet their friends and beaus. Dr. Kate Hudepohl, an anthropology professor at WKU, was delighted and fascinated by the contrast of campus life then and now. And also by the women, most of them now in their seventies, giggling about their escapades at WKU. “I got to talking with my research assistant at the time, and we thought, this is really cool,” said Hudepohl.

These images planted the seed of an idea which germinated into the Rock House Project. That fall Dr. Hudepohl and her students submitted a research proposal to the Kentucky Oral History Commission, a nationally recognized program affiliated with the Kentucky Historical Society, which collects oral history interviews from across the state with the goal of preserving the history of Kentucky and its citizens’ life experiences in their own words. By the spring of 2005, Dr. Hudepohl and her students received a grant which provided funding for the project.

For those not familiar with Western Kentucky University’s campus, the Rock House sits on the top of a hill across the street from the venerable Cherry Hall, with the statue of Henry Hardin Cherry, one of the earliest administrators of the college, keeping an eye on it. According to the 1949 Talisman Yearbook, the Rock House had been a private home until purchased by WKU and was originally used to house the music department. After that it was used for housing, first for women, then, during World War II for military air cadets.
After that it served as an athlete's dorm managed by the campus legend Coach E.A. Diddle. The women returned in 1949, and it remained a dorm until 1959. It has been called by various names: The Little Dorm, International Center, and most recently, The Rock House, because of its distinctive stone façade.

Dr. Hudepohl and her students began by contacting the organizers of the reunion, who were kind enough to share their list of names, about forty in all. Thirty-eight of those were viable, but some couldn’t participate due to illness, and some had passed away. Eventually, twenty-eight women participated in the interview process. Each woman was interviewed by an anthropology student asking the same set of questions. Many of them generously shared photos and even a diary about their experiences.

The subjects were also asked questions about being a female college student in the 1950s. “We were just trying to get a general view of what it was like to live there, what campus life was like.”

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The subjects were also asked questions about being a female college student in the 1950s. “We were just trying to get a general view of what it was like to live there, what campus life was like.”
this project was that every single woman we dealt with was incredibly gracious and open and giving. Almost every one had such positive happy memories of that time at Western."

Most of the women were interviewed elsewhere, but Dr. Hudepohl met with one of them on campus and they walked through the Rock House. About twenty-five girls could live there joined by the Resident Supervisor. One “dorm mother,” Dulcie Clark, lived there with her husband, a professor of industrial arts, and their two young sons. They shared two bedrooms and a little parlor on the first floor, and a dining room and kitchen in the basement. Some of the girls had dorm rooms in the basement as well, with the remainder of the rooms being on the first and second floors. Curtains were hung to separate parts of the residence. Some of the interviewees shared memories of Dr. Clark singing out, “man on the hall,” whenever he had to pass through some areas of the house. No other men were allowed beyond the small common parlor, and the women had to be in by curfew. A few shared how they sneaked out windows, and once they rolled in a keg even though they weren’t allowed to drink in the dorm.

Some of the ladies had lived in other dorms before and preferred the Rock House. It must not have looked like much compared to the other dorms, Potter Hall and West Hall. One student shared the moment when her parents almost didn’t let her stay because of how it looked. However, not only was it across the street from Cherry Hall where most of their classes were, it was also closer to the Goal Post, a local diner and hangout. If they had a choice the students preferred to eat there.

Another common denominator among the residents was that many of them belonged to the Western Players, the theatre club.

While Dr. Hudepohl didn’t mean to just pick female students to do the

“One of the most amazing things about this project was that every single woman we dealt with was incredibly gracious and open and giving. Almost every one had such positive happy memories of that time at Western.”
interviewing, it worked out that way, and for her one of the most interesting aspects was seeing the cycle of time — current student facing former student, exploring the contrasts between their generations. One of the things the students all had in common was the social network they developed while there. Connections that helped make it possible for over half of those interviewed to go on to graduate school, if not at WKU then elsewhere.

“I think the current students were engaged by how charming some of the stories were, but also taken aback by the different expectations for the genders. It’s easy for younger people to forget that there was such a thing,” said Hudepohl. One former student recalled an incident that underscored those differences. On a cold winter day she wore a nice woolen pantsuit to the Kentucky building to do some research and was kicked out for wearing pants because at that time only skirts or dresses were allowed in class and on campus, a far cry from today’s informal dress code. The women said that as soon as they got home they’d change into their ‘pegged up’ jeans and bobby socks.

While some of the former residents were uncomfortable answering questions about the gender discrimination, many admitted that they didn’t recognize it as such at the time. It wasn’t something they thought about much until the sixties. Hudepohl explained, “I didn’t know what to expect from women who had attended Western then. Were these rebels that were pushing the boundaries? Or were these women that were performing some norm?” Dr. Hudepohl felt that the stereotype of the young woman of that era going to college to catch a husband was disproved by the research. “These were women who had come to school with the idea of educating themselves to go into a profession.” Many of them did not marry straight out of college, instead going on to careers. And regardless of the challenges, two of those interviewed went on to get their doctorates, one of those in anthropology.

Dr. Hudepohl defines anthropology as the biological and cultural study of people, anytime, anywhere in the world. When WKU students study anthropology, whether they are majors of that discipline, or undergraduates trying to meet a general education requirement, they are being exposed to an expanded world view, vital in today’s global economy. “Finding out that there are very different people out there who make very different choices than you gives you a better understanding of yourself. Anthropology does that in particular because of its cross cultural and comparative approach.” This type of education creates more aware and engaged citizens. “It doesn’t mean that you have to decide to change your perspective,” she continued, “but if you learn there are other options out there, it helps you respect other people’s choices — that’s a place to start.”

Dr. Hudepohl, who earned her Ph.D. in anthropology at Tulane University in New Orleans, uses projects such as this one to give her students hands-on experience that will help them later in their own careers. As well as the Rock House project, they are working on local cemetery documentation, and she has taken one student to the Caribbean on a research trip to study the Caribs, one of the last indigenous groups of the area and her own special area of research. “It’s important to offer opportunities to apply some of what they’re learning
— to become more confident as young scholars — whether they go on to grad school in anthropology or do something totally different. WKU values and encourages this type of experiential learning.” Two conference papers have been read at state-level conferences based on the research gathered from the Rock House project and the students have put together a temporary exhibit at the Rock House. Currently Hudepohl is working on an article for a peer-reviewed journal about the subject as well.

When asked where she’d like to see this research go Dr. Hudepohl said, “I hope it continues indefinitely.” Especially since continuing research into the role of the dorms at WKU would offer more opportunities to involve the next generation of students. She’s curious about the other dorms’ residents, given how much the women loved the Rock House. Almost all the dorms were for the women since the men were considered to be better equipped to take care of themselves. It will be a challenge to track down many of these former students, particularly since many women change their names as they get married. But she hopes she and her students will be able to reach out to those who are still in the area, notably those who might still be working for Western and those who are descendents of former students.

On a personal level Dr. Hudepohl said this project gave her a deeper appreciation for local history. The ladies talked about knowing President Garrett, Coach Diddle, and Russell Miller, the theatre department head and sponsor of the Western Players. One woman told a story about Coach Diddle giving her a hard time in the hall for missing games, and she teased him back about missing plays. “That made the history of the campus more personal for me,” said Hudepohl. The interviews will all be transcribed and made accessible through the Kentucky Oral History Commission, so that future generations of scholars will be able to hear those stories.

Dr. Hudepohl concluded, “I think having a circle of memory is important about what things were like and because these are recorded oral histories, you give the people you’re interviewing a chance to tell their stories. The heart and soul of this project is these women getting a chance to tell their stories in their own words.”
Meat Politics in the Land of Plenty

Dr. Wes Berry of the Department of English is asking critical questions about a literary area that has received scant scholarly attention: how meat is represented in American literature and popular culture, and the role meat rhetoric plays in influencing the way animals are produced and consumed in the United States.

Dr. Berry intends to merge textual analysis of literature, film, television, and advertisements with travel writing and interviews with people who prepare meat and who consume it. He wants to find out if there is a rhetoric that can bring us closer to an ethical and sustainable relationship with animals.

The analytical design of Dr. Berry's project will be shaped by existing studies on the subject; accordingly, he will consider the centrality of meat to our culture, how it has been equated with masculinity and the oppression of women, and how meat has been advertised to the public.

Furthermore, he will look at texts that attempt to show the positive side of meat in society. This effort will include considering the significance of the hog to various cultures, the history of smoking and curing meats, competitive eating, recipes, and barbecue cooking competitions. This literary and cultural analysis should shed new light on America's indulgence of and fascination with meat.

Extremal Graph Theory

Dr. Bela Csaba of the Department of Mathematics is working with mathematicians on real life applications in computer networks. His goal is to embed substructures in dense graphs and tackle other embedding problems. He wants to increase the toleration of computer networks. He is also working on worldwide networks such as the internet and biological networks for metabolisms. Since the graphs are the models of real world networks, he is relating embedded substructures in graphs to define the networks.

The results will facilitate embedding one graph into another graph. This success will enable Dr. Csaba and his collaborators to attempt to resolve networking problems to prevent network corruption. This research is also useful in other areas of mathematics, such as algebra, number theory, and geometry.
**African-American Academic Accountants**

Harold Little, CPA, CIA, CMA, of the Department of Accounting in the Gordon Ford College of Business is at work on a project to identify every African-American to have ever earned a doctorate in accountancy from an American university. Dr. Little says the idea to create a database — which will include the name of the school where the professor currently teaches, the name of the school awarding the degree, the year in which the degree was earned, and the professor's teaching and research areas — arose from his work with the American Accounting Association and KPMG, LLP's Ph.D. Project.

During his three years of investigation, Dr. Little has visited over forty-four historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and traditionally white colleges and universities (TWCUs) and determined that approximately two-hundred five African-Americans have earned doctoral degrees in accounting from American universities. The first degree was earned in 1951. Of the approximately one hundred eighty African-American academic accountants who are still teaching and conducting research, nearly two-thirds are employed by white institutions. Interestingly, more than seventy percent of African-American academic accountants earned their undergraduate degrees from HBCUs.

Dr. Little’s research is supported by a research grant from Ernst & Young LLP, a Big Four public accounting firm. The grant has allowed Dr. Little to visit campuses of over sixty HBCUs and TWCUs. Collaborating with Dr. Little are Dr. Cheryl Allen, CPA, of Morehouse College, and Dr. Jennifer Joe, CPA, of Georgia State University.

Academic accounting is experiencing a significant shortage of educators. By some estimates, there are over two collegiate vacancies for every doctorate-holding educator looking for a position. In the tax and audit specialties, the shortage is particularly acute. The shortage is increasing as retirements occur and the number of accounting doctoral graduates declines. There are 50% fewer Ph.D. students in the United States today than there were just ten years ago.

The American Accounting Association, the KPMG Ph.D. Project, and the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants have initiatives to increase the number of Ph.D. students, and the accounting profession continues its efforts to increase the number of academic accountants from underrepresented groups (African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, and Native-Americans). Dr. Little believes his research will assist in this endeavor.

Dr. Little also has publications in the areas of procedural fairness, budgetary participation, corporate governance, and entrepreneurship.

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**Czech Theatre Field Research**

Dr. Andrea Grapko of the Department of Theatre and Dance has been funded with a New Faculty Scholarship by the Faculty Research Council to return to the Czech Republic to continue research about theatre director Evald Schorm.

Schorm was a politically and artistically significant director during the Soviet occupation from the 1960s through the 1980s; and the Soviets tried to marginalize him. This led to neglect in the preservation of his work and minimized his impact on Czech audiences.

Dr. Grapko will reclaim Schorm’s work and evidence the impact he had under the occupation. A book length manuscript will be the result of this research. The manuscript will point out the types of resistance to Soviet rule of a nation, artistic activity in a nation in crisis, how Schorm’s theatre maintained Czech nationalism and reflected social and political concerns of the people, and how theatre helped to achieve national aims that were ultimately successful by creating a close association with the people.

Resistance to the Soviet rule of the Czechs was partly reflected in the theatre by symbols and signs that conveyed criticism, dissatisfaction, and protest to receptive and eager audiences. Schorm’s documentaries and feature films reflected the life of the people under the occupation and served as a comment on socialism in the 1960s. After he was banned from producing in 1968, Schorm remained in Czechoslovakia and challenged the people to consider personal choices and to reject compromise with the regime.

Dr. Grapko will publish one of the few studies in English about Czech theatre during that repressive era.