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Art: Glenda Taylor
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Chemistry: Stephen Angel
Communication:
Laura Stephenson (interim)
& Tracy Routson (associate)
Computer Information Sciences:
Bruce Mechtly
Education: Gloria Dye
English: Tom Averill (interim)
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History: Tom Prasch
Kinesiology: Roy Wohl
Mass Media: Kathy Menzie
Mathematics and Statistics:
Kevin Charlwood
Modern Languages:
Miguel González-Abellás
Music: Ann Marie Snook
Philosophy and Religious Studies:
Harold Rood
Physics and Astronomy:
Steve Black
Political Science and Geography:
Mark Peterson
Psychology: Dave Provorse
Sociology and Anthropology:
Cheryl Childers
Theatre: Paul Prece

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News From the College
We are proud to share with you the fourth edition of Directions, the publication of Washburn University’s College of Arts & Sciences. Directions has proven to be a valuable way of staying in touch with our more than 14,000 alumni and friends.

The theme for this issue is “Education Then and Now.” Over the course of my own 35-plus years in higher education, I have seen many changes in the way we teach and the way students learn. If you have continued to be in contact with the university, you’ve probably noticed many changes, too. This line of thinking crystallized for me while listening to the “Last Lecture” of historian and Professor Emeritus Bill Wagnon at last spring’s Apeiron, our annual spring event that features our finest students presenting their work. You’ll see a condensed version of Bill’s stimulating remarks on page 2 in this issue.

Over Bill’s long and stellar career as an educator (and likely because of his training as a historian) he noticed how different things had become – students were different, expectations were different, physical surroundings were different. We thought you might appreciate his insights and want to compare them with your own. We’ve also included a profile of one of today’s up-to-date programs – creative writing – that demonstrates a creative style of teaching and learning.

We’re also bragging about some particularly interesting student work that shows just how far a Washburn undergraduate can go, if given support and encouragement. In fact, I imagine you will find this to resonate as equally true then as now: Washburn faculty still excel at engaging with students in personalized ways that bring out the best.

Please enjoy Directions. Whether your own “education then” occurred only recently or many years ago, you are a part of who we are today, and we are grateful.

Sincerely,

Gordon D. McQuere

Gordon McQuere, Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences

To learn more about the College, visit Washburn.edu/cas
Last April, Bill Wagnon, professor of history emeritus, gave a “Last Lecture” at *Apeiron*, the Washburn student research forum. He spoke about the 1968 and 2008 “bookends” of his Washburn career – and transformation as a teacher.

“When I began as an instructor at Washburn in 1968, I came as an ‘ABD’ – all but dissertation – and taught five classes for about $6,800 per year,” Bill Wagnon said. “I usually wore a Harris Tweed jacket and tie and smoked a pipe.” Wagnon wrote lectures for each class and students took in-class essay exams in blue books.

When Wagnon retired from Washburn as professor of history in 2008, he was teaching four classes on U.S. history. “I no longer smoked,” he said. “I wore blue jeans and, rarely, a tie.” In the last decade, students in Wagnon’s classes discussed possible interpretations of historical material, completed daily writing exercises, and submitted out-of-class essays online.

**REVISITING THE LATE ’60s**

After Wagnon spent his first year at Washburn reading lectures and marking up exams, he completed his dissertation in 1969 and won a postdoctoral fellowship to Harvard University.

Returning to Washburn in 1971, Wagnon taught courses on American business and economic history, the Vietnam War, and history of American women for the American citizenship department. Two people who helped shape his teaching approach included Carl Becker, a former University of Kansas history professor, and *Harper’s Magazine* editor Lewis Lapham.

“From Becker, I came to understand that ‘every man is his own historian,’ ” Wagnon said. “For Lapham, the objective of teaching history was to equip each student to ‘imagine the past.’ ” Wagnon came to see his job as helping students interpret the records of human experience as the method for imagining the past. He considered this an essential element in order for students to envision a future for themselves and their society.

**CRITICAL THINKING, DAILY WRITING**

Another element in Wagnon’s development as a teacher came from his discovery of “In Search of America” in the late 1970s. The collection of historical documents encouraged students to recognize conflicting evidence in history and form their own conclusions.
“I shifted from reading lectures to engaging students in discussions about using the records to envision the past,” Wagnon said. He also focused on the central theme of Paul Boyer’s book *Enduring Vision* – that all of American history has been an enduring struggle to maintain a common sense of who Americans are as a people.

The final development in Wagnon’s teaching came in the late 1990s when he realized that daily out-of-class writing assignments about the topics covered in class would improve students’ composition skills – and clarity. “The final exam was a 10-page essay devoted to a student’s understanding of the enduring struggle to find a common national identity,” he added.

**EXPANDING INTERESTS & PERSPECTIVES**

Early on, Wagnon participated in many activities that reflected what he referred to as “the transformation of the Ivory Tower into an institution fully engaged in the world,” including becoming executive director of the International Center of Topeka and creating a university-community partnership to address decaying neighborhoods. From 1992 to 2001 Wagnon also chaired the history department – which had separated from political science in 1983 – and oversaw significant curriculum revisions.

“In 1968, American history textbooks started with the Pilgrims; when I retired, textbooks began with the migration of Asian peoples to the western hemisphere,” Wagnon said. “When I began, African-Americans were merely liberated slaves; when I retired, they had become forces shaping the search for a common national identity. When I began, women rarely appeared in the vision; when I retired, they had joined their male counterparts as participants in the struggle.”

**PROFESSOR & POLITICIAN**

Wagnon’s passion for education led him to become education liaison to the Kansas Legislature for Gov. Joan Finney in 1992. In 1996 Wagnon got elected to the Kansas State Board of Education and participated in what he called “raucous debates” as he advocated for school-curriculum standards that integrated world history and Kansas history.

In 2008 Wagnon retired from both the Board of Education and Washburn – and noted “remarkable changes” in the way he operated as a historian, professor, colleague, and citizen over four decades.

“Although this wasn’t the role I’d been trained for in graduate school in the 1960s,” Wagnon said, “my career developed in response to the character of Washburn University, the environment of Topeka and dynamic forces in American society.”

**EARLY INSTRUCTOR** Wagnon (center) with the American citizenship department in 1970.

“Bill Wagnon rekindled my passion for studying history when I took my first class with him at Washburn in 1987. Bill also encouraged me to pursue graduate study at the University of Kansas, and the senior thesis I wrote under Bill’s guidance became the basis of my graduate study and the subject of my first book.”

Rusty Monhollon, a senior associate in academic affairs at the Missouri Department of Higher Education. Monhollon’s book *This is America? The Sixties in Lawrence, Kansas* (Palgrave, 2002) received the Edward H. Tihen Publication Award from the Kansas State Historical Association in 2003.

For more “then and now” images, see page 8.
CREATIVE WRITING PROS

Three Award-winning Writers Teach Three Kinds of Creative Writing, Plus How to Get Published.

When Thomas Averill, professor and writer-in-residence, joined Washburn in 1980, the English department offered one beginning creative writing class. Today, three faculty members teach seven classes on three branches of creative writing: fiction, Averill; poetry, Eric McHenry; and creative nonfiction, Sarah Smarsh. Together, these active and award-winning writers serve as powerful role models for students.

“We make ourselves vulnerable by writing right alongside our students and reading rough drafts with them,” Averill said. His novels include *Secrets of the Tsil Café* (BlueHen/Penguin Putnam, 2001) and *The Slow Air of Ewan MacPherson* (BlueHen/Berkley, 2003). In 2006 the Kansas Arts Commission recognized Averill with its Fellowship in Fiction award.


“Our first-hand experience helps us know how to talk to students, not only about practical matters – like finding a publisher and pitching an idea – but also emotional matters – like not letting rejection get you down and not letting success make you insufferable,” McHenry said.

Nonfiction and freelance writer Sarah Smarsh, assistant professor, has written for *The Huffington Post* and Midwestern newspapers. She’s won awards from the Society of Professional Journalists and Kansas Press Association, and her books include *It Happened in Kansas* (Morris Book Publishing, 2010) and *Outlaw Tales of Kansas* (Globe Pequot Press, 2010).

“I have all sorts of stories that shed light on the particular challenges of nonfiction writing – being true to your sources, the psychological experience of writing about one’s family, and so on,” Smarsh said. “I also can provide students with practical advice on the business side of writing – from query letters to advances to self-promotion.”

Another factor in the program’s success: giving creative nonfiction the status it deserves. “Memoir, biography, and narrative journalism have dominated the publishing world for almost two decades, but most undergraduate programs are still stuck in the old fiction/poetry dichotomy,” Smarsh said. “In offering all three genres to students, Washburn’s program is quite progressive.”
REAL EXPERIENCE REQUIRED
About 60 English majors are pursuing Washburn’s creative writing emphasis, taking classes in beginning and advanced fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction as well as capstone courses.

“Our program requires experiences typically encountered at the graduate level – editing *Inscape*, a national literary journal in Publishing Lab, and examining literature through a writer’s lens in a class called Reading as Writers,” said Smarsh, who also serves as *Inscape* advisor.

Students completing the creative writing curriculum are well prepared to be full-fledged writers, with graduates becoming spokespersons, grant writers, and newsletter editors.

“All of our students have to get experience in getting assignments and sending out their own work,” Averill said, adding that many also become quite skilled in securing “commissioned” work for businesses and nonprofits. In addition, more than a dozen graduates of the program have pursued advanced degrees.

“One of our students, Gary Jackson, recently graduated with a Master of Fine Arts degree in poetry from the University of New Mexico,” Averill said. “He just won the Cave Canem Poetry Prize and has a book, *Missing You, Metropolis*, just out from Graywolf Press.”

The program’s emphasis on writing well is even attracting students going to law school – a distinction that makes perfect sense to McHenry.

“All of our courses help to engender a seriousness about language that’s essential not only to writers but to people in general,” he said. “All students stand to benefit from using language more skillfully, whether they plan to be poets, engineers, diplomats, or paramedics.”

ENGAGED FACULTY
McHenry with English majors (from left) Niel Thompson and Bailey Smith and freshman Rachael Metzger.
Some students dream of recording an album with their band in a professional studio. Others dream of traveling abroad to apply their knowledge of exercise physiology. Here, read about two Washburn students able to realize their dreams – and gain an edge in their careers – through the Washburn Transformational Experience (WTE).

Introduced in 2005, the WTE program provides typically juniors and seniors with opportunities to acquire practical experience in their fields of study. While not a requirement for graduation, a WTE supports students in becoming enlightened individuals and gives them a competitive advantage when applying for jobs or post-graduate study.

Working with guidance from a faculty advisor, students can complete one of four WTE programs: Scholarly or Creative, Community Service, Leadership, and International Education. Depending on the project, each student could be eligible to receive a financial grant of up to $1,000 to complete a WTE project.

For Matt Mirsch, a drummer and Topeka senior majoring in music education, his transformational experience began when he and fellow musician Scott Stormann, a Topeka bassist, formed the band Echo Lake in 2002. Thanks to WTE, the five-member ensemble – including Topekans and Washburn students David Hess, guitarist/lead singer; T.C. Gomez, saxophonist; and Michael Spangler, electric guitarist – chose to complete a Creative project by recording the band’s first album.

With the approval of Mirsch’s advisor, Tom Morgan, director of percussion studies at Washburn, Echo Lake recorded “3445 B” at The
Culture House recording studio in Olathe, Kan., last June. Former Washburn student Brandon Graves, a faculty percussion instructor at The Culture House, produced the six-song CD, which can be purchased through Amazon.com and iTunes.

“The WTE has given us a financial advantage that most starting bands don’t have,” Mirsch said. “Our album has really amazing sound quality that we wouldn’t have been able to afford on our own.”

In addition, the WTE gave Echo Lake real-world insight into the business side of music. “I know Matt and the rest of the band learned much about the recording process, and now they are learning about the marketing process,” Morgan said.

The band’s greatest challenge? Differentiating Echo Lake from other bands in an oversaturated market. To gain local support, Echo Lake continues to play shows around Topeka and build the group’s online presence.

“I now know the magnitude of taking on a project like this,” Mirsch added. “It takes a lot of money, time, organization, and pre-planning. No matter where my career path leads, the discipline of striving for a goal and achieving it through hard work is a skill that will always serve me well.”

EMERALD ISLE AEROBICS
Asha Plattner, *AS Physical Therapist Assistant ’08, BA Kinesiology ’09*, of Sabetha, Kan., wanted to complete an International Education WTE that combined her passion for exercise physiology and international travel.

Through her advisor Patti Bender, assistant professor of kinesiology, Plattner found an internship with Crunch Fitness Premier in Dun Laoghaire, Ireland.

“The purposes of our internships are to apply classroom knowledge in a practical setting, improve skills and techniques, and develop professional behaviors,” Bender said. “Crunch Fitness offered Asha these opportunities, and I expected that the cultural setting of Ireland and a five-star facility would encourage reflection and the development of new perspectives.”

Plattner spent four weeks in Ireland in the summer of 2009. During the internship, she used her expertise in exercise physiology to work with people from all over the world, teaching classes in spinning, cardio kickboxing, and core strengthening. Plattner also developed unique exercise programs for each of her clients using the virtual training program, FitLinxx, which enabled her to track a client’s progress and adjust the program as needed.

“My internship at Crunch Fitness Premier confirmed my love of health, fitness, travel, and people,” said Plattner, who is currently taking graduate-level courses in theology at the Kanakuk Institute in Branson, Mo. “It has led me to strongly consider working as a traveling physical therapist assistant upon completion of the Kanakuk Institute.”

“As often as possible, education should indulge our wonder, allow us to follow our questions,” Bender said. “Living in another land breaks down the provincialism that sometimes acts as a barrier; these places are real, the people are real, and there is so much we can share with – and learn from – each other.”
Women work out in the new campus gymnasium in Rice Hall in 1895. At left: Luther Whittemore, professor of Latin and literature, and William Harshbarger, professor of mathematics and natural sciences.

Jason Dinkel, an exercise physiology major from Plainville, Kan., climbs the rock wall in the Student Recreation and Wellness Center.

One of the science classrooms in Rice Hall circa 1915. The room contained a lantern slide projector (at left), a forerunner of the modern slide projector.

Susan Bjerke, assistant professor of biology, teaches in the newly renovated Stoffer Science Hall, featuring high-tech classrooms and additional lab space.

Howard Taylor, instructor (far right), oversees a 1932 journalism class in Hartford Hall, which was torn down by the early 1950s.

Katharina Happe of Klagenfurt, Austria, works in Washburn’s high-tech editing lab with Charles Cranston, professor of mass media.
Washburn’s marching band poses in front of the Mulvane Art Museum in 1938. Founded in 1924, the museum is one of the oldest west of the Mississippi River.

Last October the Washburn University Marching Blues kicked off homecoming festivities with a parade around campus.

In 1955 the university library moved into the west end of newly built Morgan Hall. Twenty-three years later, Mabee Library opened in its current location.

Today, Mabee Library offers a computer classroom called the Information Literacy Suite, featuring a smart board, wireless access to the campus network, and laptops for students to use in the library.

Washburn students attend classes in mobile classrooms near Whiting Field House after a category F5 tornado ravaged the campus on June 8, 1966.

Opened in fall 2001, the Living Learning Center houses 400 Washburn students. A second-floor walkway connects the residential hall to Memorial Union.

Pictorial credit: Martha Imparato, Mabee Library Archives
The Art Department reports that Glenda Taylor, professor, recently took a sabbatical and worked at the Red Lodge Clay Center as part of a six-week residency. Daniel Warner has joined the faculty as an instructor of graphic design. Alumni and friends are invited to view the art faculty show at the Mulvane Art Center, which runs through Jan. 23.

Washburn’s Catron Professor of Art Stephanie Lanter and Marguerite Perret, assistant professor of art, are principal artists in the mixed media project “The Waiting Room,” which opened at the University of St. Catherine in November. The project involves major contributions by Washburn students and faculty, including Sarah Smarsh (English), Sharon Sullivan (theatre), Rachel Goossen (history) and Reinhild Janzen (art history). For more information about the exhibit, visit waitingroom.weebly.com.

The Biology Department reports that its graduates continue to have a high acceptance rate into medical, dental, graduate, and other post-baccalaureate schools. Graduate Casey McNeil, who’s studying molecular genetics, passed his doctoral oral comprehensive examinations at the University of Kansas – the first in his class of 27 students to do so. Graduate and Topeka veterinarian Mike Faurot became an adjunct faculty member. Biology majors presented research results at the Kansas IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (K-INBRE) Symposium, Kansas Academy of Sciences, and Washburn’s Apeiron student-research forum. Senior John Stamm, Tecumseh, shown at left with his mentor Duane Hinton, lecturer, received a prestigious K-INBRE Star Trainee Grant of $10,000.

Stephen Angel, chair of the Chemistry Department, noted that several publications, including the Los Angeles Times, covered the research findings of Rachel Atkinson, BA Chemistry ’03, BS Biology ’03, who discovered a novel technique that kills cancer cells. Angel received $15,000 from the National Institutes of Health, through the Kansas IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (K-INBRE) Program, to purchase lab equipment and supplies. K-INBRE also recognized three student research projects: Diana Crain, from Kansas City, Mo., presented the paper “Progress Towards a Multi-gram Scale Synthesis of 1,11-Diaza-6,16-ditosylamidacycloicosane: A Key Intermediate in the Synthesis of [46] Adamanzane” at the regional American Chemical Society Conference and received $4,000. Thomas Robben, Topeka, presented the poster “Formation of Azamacrocycles by a Two-step Process” at the same conference and also received $4,000. Samantha Corber, Topeka, received $5,000 for her research “Exploring the Roles of DbpA and RfmJ in E. coli Ribosome Assembly.”

The Communication Department announced that the Washburn debate team captured its first national title.
at the 2010 National Parliamentary Debate Association Championships. The NPDA event is the founding and largest parliamentary debate national tournament in the country. Washburn’s squad, one of 60 to compete, won the Overall Squad Sweepstakes. The competition measures the strength of the competing squads by tracking the four best individual teams of each squad through the entire preliminary and elimination rounds of the tournament.

The English Department welcomed Corey Zwikstra, assistant professor, from Temple University in Philadelphia. The 2010 Herbert and JoAnn Klemmer Lecture featured respected British literary critic and scholar Sir Christopher Ricks. With the retirement of Howard Faulkner, professor, Tom Averill, professor, is now interim department chair; Danny Wade, assistant professor, serves as associate chair.

New books by two members of the History Department have been released: Alan Bearman, associate professor, wrote *A North Atlantic Puritan: John Owen (1616-1683) and the North Atlantic Christian World*. Kim Morse, associate professor, wrote *Venezuela* (as part of the *Latin America in Focus* series) with Elizabeth Nichols, a professor of Spanish at Drury University. Tony Silvestri, lecturer, contributed four libretti to “Light and Gold,” the new CD of internationally renowned composer Eric Whitacre.

The Kinesiology Department hired Young Sub Kwon as a lecturer in exercise physiology. Kwon is an ACSM Registered Clinical Exercise Physiologist and a NCSA Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist with Distinction. The Athletic Training Education Program received continuing national accreditation for a term of 10 years by the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education.

The Mass Media Department recognizes the student staff of the Washburn Review Online for being finalists for the national 2010 Pacemaker award. Students in the Electronic Media emphasis produced a new show called “Across Campus,” which began airing weekly in November on WUCT Cable 13 and online. Mass media graduate Josh King was a finalist for the Sibberson Award.

The Mathematics and Statistics Department reports that Jennifer Wagner, assistant professor of math, participated in the annual faculty colloquium. In response to this year’s topic, “The Book,” she prepared a presentation about sharing the beauty of math with those outside the discipline.

The Education Department planted and dedicated a tree in memory of Donovan W. Cook, who died June 16; he was an associate professor for 22 years. The department developed a collaborative partnership with KTWU and Washburn University Academic Outreach to provide PBS TeacherLine courses for graduate credit. Washburn is one of seven universities to become a National Graduate Credit provider for TeacherLine courses nationwide.

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Spanish, attended the IDIPAR language school in Asuncion, Paraguay, last summer. He learned Guarani, an Amerindian language that shares official status with the language of Spanish in Paraguay. Sophie Delahaye, assistant professor of French, took students to Paris last summer.

The **Music Department** reports that Catherine Hunt, director of music education, made three presentations at the 2010 Kansas Music Educators Association (KMEA) In-Service Workshop. Kevin Kellim, choral director, served as adjudicator and clinician for two sessions at the prestigious national music event “Festival Disney.” Rebecca Meador, associate professor, commissioned the composition “Tall Grass” (for flute quartet and string orchestra), published through Alry Publications and funded by a grant from the Educational Credit Union. Ann Marie Snook, department chair, appeared as a soloist with the Washburn Wind Ensemble in a performance honoring former U.S. Sen. Robert Dole at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. Lee Snook, chair of the vocal division, performed as a soloist with the Washburn Orchestra at the 2010 KMEA Workshop.

The **Philosophy and Religious Studies Department** announced that Mark D. Nanos spoke at the 2010 Thomas L. King Lecture in Religious Studies. Nanos, the Soebbing Visiting Scholar at Rockhurst University and lecturer at the University of Kansas, presented “Images of Jews and Judaism in Paul’s Letter to the Romans: Challenging Translation Decisions That Subvert Paul’s Message.” The 2011 King Lecturer will be Robert Jewett, guest professor of New Testament at the University of Heidelberg.

The **Physics and Astronomy Department** announces that physics major Keith Arkenberg, Topeka, will present research at the American Astronomical Society meeting in Seattle in January. Arkenberg’s research falls under the purview of a $500,000 NASA research grant, whose principal investigator is Brian Thomas, assistant professor. In October the Physics & Engineering Club launched a high-altitude balloon with an onboard camera. The balloon obtained meteorological data that Matt Miller, adjunct instructor, will use in the department’s meteorology classes.

**Photo from Physics & Engineering Club’s high-altitude balloon.**

The **Psychology Department** reports that the student paper “Working with Clay Decreases Anxiety Among College Students” by Melissa Linquist, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, will appear in *Modern Psychological Studies*. Student Kurt Einsel’s paper “Social Anxiety and Rumination: Effect on Anticipatory Anxiety, Memory Bias, and Beliefs” will appear in the *Psi Chi Journal of Undergraduate Research*. Each of these projects served as both a Washburn Transformational Experience and an honors thesis. Graduate student Christia Reeves presented her master’s thesis, “Experiential Avoidance Mediates the Relationship Between Anxiety Sensitivity and Disability Among Anxious and Depressed Outpatients,” at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies in San Francisco.

Karen Kapusta-Pofahl, lecturer in the **Sociology and Anthropology Department**, led 19 students on a study abroad trip to Ireland last summer. John Paul, assistant professor of sociology, completed a Master of Fine Arts degree. In conjunction with the Kansas Anthropological Association, Margaret Wood, associate professor of anthropology, took students on an archaeological survey of Union Town, a 19th-century trading post on the original Potawatomi reservation west of Topeka. Bruce Zelkovitz retired as department chair; Cheryl Childers, associate professor of sociology, has been named the new chair.

Tony Naylor, associate professor in the **Theatre Department**, received a Commendation of Excellence in Design from the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival Region V adjudication for his spring production of “Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead” (pictured on page 10).
JAPANESE GARDEN

The Leland Harvey Garden north of the art building is a memorial to Leland Harvey, BBA ’63.