



# *DIRECTIONS*

**WASHBURN**  
UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Fall 2019

# WASHBURN UNIVERSITY

## COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Morgan Hall 209 · 1700 SW College Ave · Topeka, KS 66621

Phone: 785.670.1636

washburn.edu/cas · facebook.com/washburncas

**Dean:** Laura Stephenson  
*laura.stephenson@washburn.edu*

**Associate Dean:** Matt Arterburn  
*matt.arterburn@washburn.edu*

**Assistant Dean:** Kelly Erby  
*kelly.erby@washburn.edu*

**Assistant Dean:** Tracy Routsong  
*tracy.routsong@washburn.edu*

## Department Chairs

**Art:** Kelly Thor

**Biology:** John Mullican

**Chemistry:** Shaun Schmidt

**Communication Studies:**  
Jim Schnoebelen

**Computer Information  
Sciences:** Bruce Mechtly

**Education:** Cherry Steffen

**English:** Vanessa Steinroetter

**History:** Tom Prasch

**Kinesiology:** Roy Wohl

**Mass Media:** Maria Stover

**Director, Mulvane Art Museum:** Connie Gibbons

**Mathematics & Statistics:**  
John Mullican, interim Chair

**Modern Languages:**  
Miguel González-Abellás

**Music:** Craig Treinen

**Philosophy & Religious Studies:**  
Ian Smith

**Physics & Astronomy:**  
Karen Camarda

**Political Science:** Bob Beatty

**Psychology:** Cindy Turk

**Sociology & Anthropology:**  
Mary Sundal

**Theatre:** Sharon Sullivan

## Table of Contents

4 Film Festival a Smash Hit

6 Leading the Way

8 Uncovering the Evidence

10 Inaugural Blitt Fellow Sets a High Bar

12 Art in the Family

13 Composing *The Sacred Veil*

14 Speaking of the Past

16 Why We Walk on Two Feet

17 Department Highlights

*Directions is a publication for Alumni & Friends*  
Fall 2019 Vol. 11

### Writers, Editors, and Photographers:

Monique Robins  
*monique.robins@washburn.edu*

Michaela Saunders  
*michaela.saunders@washburn.edu*

### Contributing Photographers:

Peggy Clark, Emily DeShazar, Michael Gleason, Alexandra Klaes

### Cover Art:

Yue Li, Washburn art student  
*The Oriental Rhythm*, oil on canvas

# “What’s New in the College?”



It’s a question I’m often asked and often struggle to answer. It’s like choosing from a grand array of flavors at an ice cream store—with such abundance, how do you decide? So this year, instead of big scoops, *Directions* is handing out miniature tasting spoons so you can sample the many unique endeavors underway in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Creativity abounds in the College, not only in traditional arts such as painting, filmmaking, and music but also in the study of political movements, evolution, leadership, and forensic anthropology. One of the many exciting developments this year is the closer collaborative bond we are developing with the Mulvane Art Museum under the direction of Connie Gibbons. This relationship is already benefiting students with the establishment of the Irwin Blitt Fellowship, which provides students the opportunity to study, curate, and create art inspired by the Rita Blitt art collection.

Indeed, many of the creative endeavors of the College are shared with our community. Whenever you are in the Topeka area, please know you have a standing invitation to attend exhibits at the Mulvane Art Museum, musical concerts, theatre performances, our WIFI Film Festival (see page 4), and the frequent and varied panels and public lectures we regularly host. See [go.activecalendar.com/washburn](http://go.activecalendar.com/washburn) for the current schedule of events or [facebook.com/washburncas](https://facebook.com/washburncas). Of special note this spring is our WU-mester programming around the topic of citizenship and suffrage. Among the exciting activities planned are the unveiling of the Mulvane’s stunning collection of Brian Lanker photos of influential African American women, the debut at the Sunflower Music Festival of a commissioned work for chamber orchestra composed by Libby Larsen and inspired by the words of Ruth Bader Ginsberg, and a scholarly conference featuring keynote speaker Sarah Deer, a MacArthur fellow and National Women’s Hall of Fame inductee (see page 7 for more details or visit [washburn.edu/wumester](http://washburn.edu/wumester)).

One of the joys of the College of Arts and Sciences is experiencing the richness and variety of our academic disciplines. As a dean with a sweet tooth, I always want to taste them all. I encourage you to indulge as well.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laura A. Stephenson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping initial "L".

Laura A. Stephenson, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences

# Film Festival a Smash Hit

Imagine you threw a party hoping at least 200 guests would attend and instead received almost 2,000 RSVPs from all over the world. A similar surprise greeted organizers of the Washburn International Film Institute's (WIFI) inaugural film festival, which was held April 11–13, 2019. Despite a shoestring budget and fewer than seven months to shepherd the event from conception to closing ceremony, the festival was a spectacular success and boasted a staggering number of participants.

The brainchild of Assistant Professor Matthew Nyquist, the WIFI Film Festival was conceived as part of events celebrating the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Mass Media Department. But both Nyquist and Professor Maria Stover, Chair, are quick to credit the many campus and community partners who helped make the festival a reality.

"It takes a village to throw a film festival," Stover paraphrased. "We are so grateful for the support we received from our partners on and off campus."

A new festival can take years to grow to noteworthy size, so the original goal was a modest 200 film submissions. However, as new submissions continued to flood in, it was clear the festival's potential had been underestimated. At final tally, WIFI received 1,968 films from over 100 countries. Previewing and judging the entries became an exciting but daunting task. Fortunately, more than 45 campus and community individuals stepped in to serve as judges.

One volunteer judge was Washburn University President Jerry Farley, who selected the short documentary *For a Better Life* by director Yasmin Mistry for the President's Award. Farley described the festival as "an opportunity to show the rest of the world what kind of university we have and what kind of city we have. Almost 2,000 films submitted means there are at least 2,000 more people who know where Topeka is, and we hope that will grow."

Over 90 films were screened during the three-day festival, most in Washburn's Rita Blitt Gallery. Connie Gibbons, Director of the Mulvane Art Museum, said WIFI "fits with how we serve the students, campus, and community." Gibbons also noted filmmaking is a familiar and accessible art form, which involves many different skills, including script-writing, editing, and cinematography, among others, and WIFI deeply nurtures those skills in Washburn students.

While the large number of submissions was dazzling, the real surprise was the high quality of the films. *Skin*, a narrative short film, went on to win an Academy Award after it was submitted to WIFI. Another notable submission was *#TAKEMEANYWHERE*, directed by actor Shia LeBeouf, who starred in the Transformer movies.

WIFI was also proud to host featured guest Allan Holzman, an Emmy award-winning editor and director who has worked with Stephen Spielberg. Holzman gave Washburn students feedback on projects, held Q&A sessions, and made plans to return to teach a master class on editing. He described Washburn as "a mecca of intellectual opportunity" in his keynote address and was enthusiastic in his support for Washburn students and the quality of their work.



WIFI artwork created by students  
Taryn Reed and Balin Schneider.



*Promotion still from  
Seeing Scarlet,  
written and directed by student  
Ethan Jackson and produced  
by students Blake Hopper  
and Madeleine Switzer.  
Pictured: actress Carmen Anello.*

Film festivals are fun for audiences, but it's difficult to overstate their importance in the industry. Mass Media and French major Balin Schneider, who created graphic art designs for the festival, explained that festivals are usually how distribution companies find new films. Schneider described film festivals as “a community of people in the industry mingling with people not yet in the industry.”

Because of their importance, understanding the technical aspects of organizing a film festival is an important career skill for those intending to work in film. Students who participated in planning and working the event were passionate about the practical application of the skills they learned. “Being on this side of a festival is a tremendous advantage when I submit films to other festivals,” Schneider said. “I have a clear idea of how to submit a film and how it will be judged.” He also noted Washburn is the only university in the region whose film program curriculum focuses on the practical side of filmmaking in addition to theory.

Festivals also give filmmakers the irreplaceable experience of being in the room while an audience views their film. Film major Ethan Jackson directed *Seeing Scarlet*, which won both the Golden Ichabod Award for best student film and the Audience Favorite Award. Jackson noted that seeing the audience reaction was not only enlightening but thrilling. Mass Media and German

major Blake Hopper, who produced *Seeing Scarlet*, commented that the festival was inspirational to him for two reasons: the scope of experiences represented in so many international films, and meeting local filmmakers, including high schoolers.

It was not just film majors who were able to put their skills to practical use during WIFI. Everyone in the Department of Mass Media contributed their talents to the festival, including whole classes of students. Mass Media students designed the festival logo, T-shirts, program cover, promotional videos, and much more, and they completed those projects as part of a real-world learning experience enjoyed by the community rather than as isolated class assignments. “This is what our students can create,” Stover said. “This is what they’re capable of.”

Expression through film, once constrained by the expense of the technology and the need to be physically near production studios in Hollywood, is now relatively affordable and accessible. This new accessibility opens up doors for Kansans. Stover was excited by the high-quality submissions from area high school students, noting these students are storytellers already, even as teenagers. Nyquist, who grew up in Kansas, left for Hollywood to make movies, and then returned, is also excited by the future prospects. “Being from Kansas doesn’t mean you can’t do great things in film – here or there,” he said.

*Filmmaking is an international language.*

*Maria Stover*

**Experience  
WIFI 2020!**

**April 2 – 4  
washburn.edu/wifi**

# Leading the Way

Graduates of Washburn University's newest Master of Arts program are Ichabods making change. From across Kansas to Alabama, graduates of the Communication and Leadership program are putting their new knowledge and skills to work.

When Kendra Grizzle began seeking a master's program, she was focused on career advancement. In the process of completing her Master of Arts in communication and leadership at Washburn University online, she achieved the results she had aspired to and made a positive difference in her community she hadn't imagined.

She heard about the program through a co-worker and was interested initially because "it combined the two things I feel are essential for individuals, businesses and organizations to succeed: solid leadership and communication," said Grizzle, who was promoted a few months after graduation in May and now serves as Registrar at Sterling College.

The format of the online program — eight-week sessions, rather than the 16 weeks of a typical semester — was a plus, Grizzle said, because it allowed her to finish quickly and stay focused on her goals. And even though the program was completely online, save for the choice she made to present her

final assignment, an action project, in person, she built strong relationships with her classmates and professors.

"We stay in contact. The learning environment and level of engagement made me feel as if I were on campus in my own home," Grizzle said. "I am proud to be an Ichabod and would highly recommend the program."

That emphasis on connection is by design, said Michael Gleason and Mary Pilgram, who launched the program in 2017. Gleason, who was Director of the Leadership Institute until late summer, and Pilgram, who was Chair of the Communication Studies Department until August, are excited to watch it grow in their new roles. (Gleason is now faculty at an institution in Iowa. Pilgram, an Associate Professor, is phasing into retirement. James Schnoebelen is the new Chair of the Communication Studies Department.)

"We took a bit of an unorthodox approach," Gleason said of the program's creation. The graduate offering "recognizes the strengths of two units and creates a unique product. It's an interesting way to approach this and allows the students to really explore the curriculum."

Pilgram said that exploration is evident in the individualized student approaches and results.

The capstone is an action project rather than a thesis. Pilgram described it this way: "This is an interdisciplinary project where they demonstrate the application of communication theory and



*Master of Arts in Communication and Leadership May 2019 graduates and faculty. First row: Mary Pilgram, Kendra Grizzle, Colleen Hanna, Ronald (Alex) Fountain, Tracy Routsong. Second row: Michael Gleason, Aaron Gardiner, Michael Hughes.*

## MA in Communication and Leadership

- All undergraduate majors welcome

- No GRE required

- Completely online

Visit [www.washburn.edu/mcl](http://www.washburn.edu/mcl)

to complete an interest form.

leadership theory. Projects are often related to their job or their community.”

Grizzle, who has three children participating in youth sports through the Lyons (Kansas) Recreation Commission, decided prior to her final capstone assignment that she wanted to apply her new knowledge and skill toward creating a more positive environment for those recreational players 12 and younger.

She spent time observing boys, girls, and co-ed teams and recording the amount and types of conflict present at each game. She researched youth sports and discovered approximately 13 million children are involved, but many stop playing by age 12 because of conflict with parents, spectators, coaches, or teammates.

“So my thoughts were that if we trained coaches and officials in methods to better handle conflict and ways to redirect young players, we could see a shift locally in the attitudes, high school participation numbers, and provide skills for the future so children better know how to handle tough situations,” Grizzle said.

To that end, she created a video training series and made several recommendations to the commission. Among the suggestions they implemented are required meetings for the volunteer coaches in each sport with provided resources, including the training videos. All game officials in the organization are required to complete a video training as well.

This is the first year of implementation, but Grizzle hopes to follow up with a survey at the end of the season to find out if coaches feel more equipped to positively lead their teams.

As the only fully online Master of Arts in Communication and Leadership in Kansas designed for working adults, Pilgram said the program is filling a gap. “For so many career paths this is a related degree,” Pilgram said. “Word is spreading.” She noted that this degree strengthens and enhances career skills for many professions.

# Mark your calendars!

## WU-mester 2020: Citizenship and Suffrage

“WU-mester,” a recent initiative at Washburn, fosters a university- and community-wide conversation on a timely topic.

For spring 2020, our topic is “Citizenship and Suffrage.” 2020 marks an election year, the 150th anniversary of the 15th amendment that recognized the voting rights of African American men, and the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment that did the same for women.

Below is a list of dates for selected WU-mester programming. Be sure to check [washburn.edu/wumester](http://washburn.edu/wumester) for updated information and events.

**January 21–February 4, 2020: American Bar Association Law Library of Congress 19th Amendment Traveling Exhibit,** Washburn School of Law Library.

**February 10, 2020: Public Lecture by Flonzie Brown-Wright,** civil rights and voting rights activist, Mulvane Art Museum.

**February 14–June 13, 2020: I Dream a World: Portraits of Black Women Who Changed the World,** Mulvane Art Museum. Visit [washburn.edu/mulvane/exhibitions/exhibitions-blocks/2020-Exhibits/IDreamAWorld.html](http://washburn.edu/mulvane/exhibitions/exhibitions-blocks/2020-Exhibits/IDreamAWorld.html).

**March 16–20, 2020: 99 Years of Empowering Voters and Defending Democracy: League of Women Voters Exhibit,** Washburn University.

**March 27–28, 2020: The Right to Vote—A Conference at the Centennial of the 19th Amendment.**

See: [suffrage.wuhistory.com](http://suffrage.wuhistory.com).

**April 2–4, 2020: WIFI Film Festival.** See p. 4 or visit [washburn.edu/wifi](http://washburn.edu/wifi).

**June 19–27, 2020: Sunflower Music Festival,** featuring the debut of an original composition by Libby Larsen for a work for chamber orchestra with narration, focusing on the evolution of women’s voting rights.

# Uncovering the Evidence

When local and regional law enforcement agencies encounter cases with unidentifiable remains, the Washburn University Forensic Anthropology Recovery Unit (WU-FARU) answers the call.

Alexandra Klales, Assistant Professor and board-certified forensic anthropologist, and her team of volunteer students in the forensic anthropology program have consulted with law enforcement agencies and coroners throughout Kansas and western Missouri.

Washburn is one of just two U.S. institutions to offer an undergraduate Bachelor of Science program in Forensic Anthropology. The addition of the WU-FARU program, which launched in 2017, makes Washburn one of only five institutions in the nation where undergraduates can assist with forensic anthropological casework, Klales explained. At Washburn, that opportunity is offered only to students who have completed foundational courses in forensic anthropology. On site at crime scenes, they are supervised by Klales, who teaches in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. New Anthropology faculty member Ashley Maxwell joined WU-FARU in January 2019 and also helps supervise the students.

“Fieldwork gives our students a competitive edge for graduate programs and jobs,” Klales said. “Our field is small and very competitive, so we try to give them every advantage with these unique experiences.”

For local and regional agencies, the support provided by the recovery unit team means the answers needed from investigations come more quickly.

“Having that expertise there really helps,” said Lewis Crider, administrator and Director of Investigations at the Shawnee County Coroner’s Office. In cases where human remains are found, “we call them to help us collect the remains. They bring the team out, map, and collect. We help search and flag, but they do the recovery. It’s nice to have a resource close by. It most definitely speeds it up.”

When the fieldwork is complete, Klales and the team spend many hours in the lab completing microscopic and macroscopic analyses to determine a biological profile of age range, ancestry, sex, height, and cause of death. That information allows law enforcement investigators to narrow a missing persons list for a positive identification and allows coroners to determine the cause and manner of death.

Agencies pay a small fee for services, which is used to fund student research, conference attendance, supplies, equipment, and maintenance of the new WU-FARU recovery van. The van makes it possible to more easily bring equipment into the field and transport the recovered remains to the WU-FARU lab for analysis.

Klales, who has more than a decade of casework experience, said the experience of fieldwork also creates meaningful opportunities for her students to talk about and practice the self-care necessary in forensic fields.

“I tend to disassociate the job that I am doing from the victim as a person,” Klales



*The WU-FARU van, donated by Frontier Forensics Midwest.*

said. “I don’t want to know information about the victim’s name, life, or their family, if possible.”

This distance from the humanness of the victim is easier to maintain, she said, when the recovered remains are unidentified and only bone. When working cases that are in the media at the same time or high profile, such as a plane crash, or when the remains are not only skeletal, “that part can be very emotionally taxing.”

Students are debriefed after each case with the health services and counseling resources at Washburn, in case they are needed. Training like this at Washburn prepares students for when they encounter these situations in their careers.

In addition to field experience, student research is a big part of the entire forensic program at Washburn, which also includes the departments of Biology, Chemistry, and Computer Information Sciences within the College. Everything from that research to recovery work helps students build their career networks, too.

“We’re doing forensics, not only teaching it. Holly [O’Neill, Assistant Professor, Chemistry], Josh [Smith, Assistant Professor, Biology] and I are involved in the American Academy of Forensic Sciences professional organization, training, research, and casework. That’s what sets Washburn apart,” Klales said. “The program is definitely growing rapidly. I think it will continue to grow because of those unique experiences.”

Expertise in forensic anthropology is sparse, with only three board-certified practitioners in Kansas and only 91 currently active worldwide. That means Klales and the team are already close to capacity in the number of cases they can support.

Klales also regularly provides training and runs a series of summer short courses that allow investigation professionals from around the world to learn new skills, enhance their skills and network with their peers. This past summer, professionals from California to the United Kingdom attended these summer courses on Washburn’s campus.

Crider, from the Shawnee County Coroner’s Office, participated in one of those courses and enjoyed the networking within the field as well as the coursework.

“It was really good,” he said of the course. “It’s excellent having that teaching resource right here.”



*Analysis underway during the “Fatal Fire Recoveries” summer short course.*

# *Inaugural Blitt Fellow Sets a High Bar*

In 2019, the Mulvane Art Museum joined the College of Arts and Sciences. The resulting opportunities for artistic and academic collaboration for students and faculty are exciting. An example of this collaboration is the newly created Irwin Blitt Fellowship; the Fellowship's first recipient, Stevie Delgado (*bfa*, '19) unveiled her artwork this September.

Each Blitt Fellow has the opportunity to curate Mulvane's Rita Blitt Gallery as well as display their own art, and Delgado was inspired by both Blitt's art and the gallery itself. "I fell in love with the quality of the architectural space and the way it interacted with Blitt's work, especially her acrylic sculpture," Delgado said. "I saw potential for how Blitt's work and my own artistic vision could intersect. As an intermedia artist, the brightness of the gallery and its atmosphere was alluring as a creative workspace."

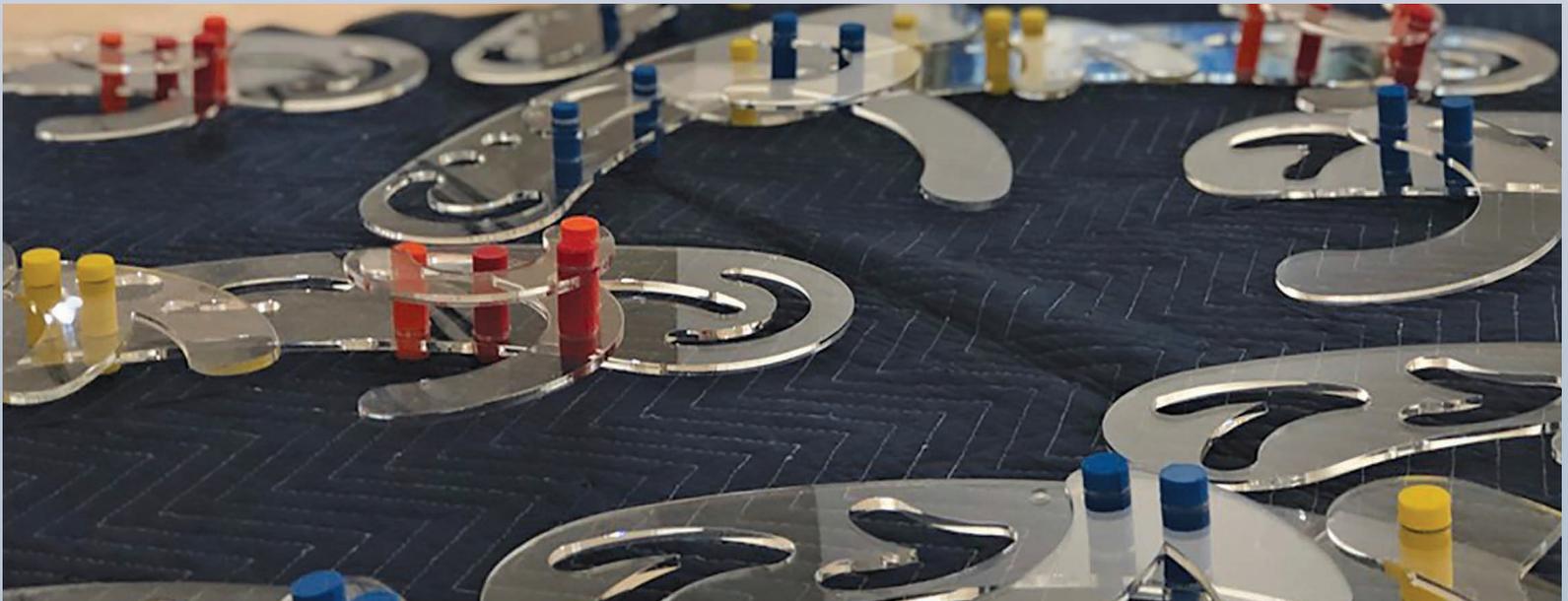
Delgado spent a year working on her project, researching and selecting from thousands of Blitt's available pieces in the museum's permanent collection, and writing the display labels that accompany each piece of artwork in the exhibition. It is rare for an undergraduate student to have the chance to curate an exhibit, but Delgado proved up to the task. "Stevie showed us the possibilities of the gallery," Mulvane Director Connie Gibbons said, adding Delgado has "set a high bar" for future Fellows. Gibbons also noted that seeing the Blitt collection curated by fresh eyes made the pieces feel new.

Delgado's own artwork, *Suncatcher*, is a die-cut acrylic chandelier formed from flat pieces of acrylic held together by 3D-printed pegs in the colors of the sunrise (see picture of the pieces before assembly below and finished piece, right). She first created cardboard models and did extensive testing to determine how to shape each piece, attach the pieces to each other, and create the spaces inside each piece so they would best catch the light. She then created the actual pieces of the final chandelier. In order to do this, Delgado had to learn to work with the complex computer programs used for the 3D printer that formed the pegs and the laser cutter that cut and pierced the sheets of acrylic.

Chandeliers were a component of Delgado's previous intermedia artistic work; she incorporates them in honor of her grandmother, who made chandeliers out of broken glass. Blitt's acrylic work inspired Delgado to re-interpret and evolve her vision of what a chandelier could be. Gibbons said it was exciting to watch Delgado's growth as an artist over the course of the year.

The name of the exhibit is *To Kiss the Sun*, and it will be on display until Saturday, February 8th, 2020.

*Pieces of Suncatcher before final assembly.*





*Stevie Delgado with her Suncatcher chandelier  
and a painting by Rita Blitt, Caught in Paint 1 (2002).*

# Art in the Family

The annual art show at The Rice Gallery of Fine Art in Overland Park, Kansas, is a prestigious and selective national art show; of approximately 500 applicants in 2018, only 65 were approved for exhibition. Impressively, not one but two Washburn artists were represented in the show... and they are related.

Washburn art student Yue Li's composition, *The Oriental Rhythm* (see cover), was among those selected, a rare accomplishment for a student. Li is the niece of Ye Wang, Associate Professor of Art, and his painting, *Return to Classicism – Young Girl Reading* (below, left), was not only exhibited but also won the first-place award.

Wang's *Return to Classicism* series of oil paintings reinterpret classic works overlaid with reflections of the modern world, as if the subjects are seen through glass. Paintings from his series have won many awards, including Best of Show in the National Juried Exhibition in Monmouth, IL. The first step in their creation is an exacting photo shoot. Wang recreates the original masterpiece and all objects in it, requiring him to create or hire expert work in tailoring, jewelry, ceramics, and/or carpentry, depending on the original. Wang then uses the photos as references as he creates the paintings.

One of his inspirations for the series was Lewis Carroll's novel *Through the Looking Glass*. Wang says as a Chinese immigrant he still sometimes feels separated from his adopted culture by a transparent wall – the reflections in the painting convey that sense of distance and separation. The photos and paintings can be seen on his website: [yepaintings.com](http://yepaintings.com).



*Left:*  
Return to Classicism -  
Young Girl Reading  
Ye Wang  
oil on canvas



*Right:*  
Young Girl Reading  
Jean-Honore  
Fragonard  
1770, oil on canvas  
National Gallery  
of Art  
Washington, DC

# Composing the Sacred Veil

Deep grief is complex, messy, and painful, and those in Western culture – and America, specifically – are seldom taught to prepare for it or given sufficient space or outlet to experience it when needed. This reality was a core premise in a presentation given by Tony Silvestri, Lecturer in History, as part of the 2019 College of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Faculty Lecture Series. “As a culture,” Silvestri said, “we do not do grief well.”

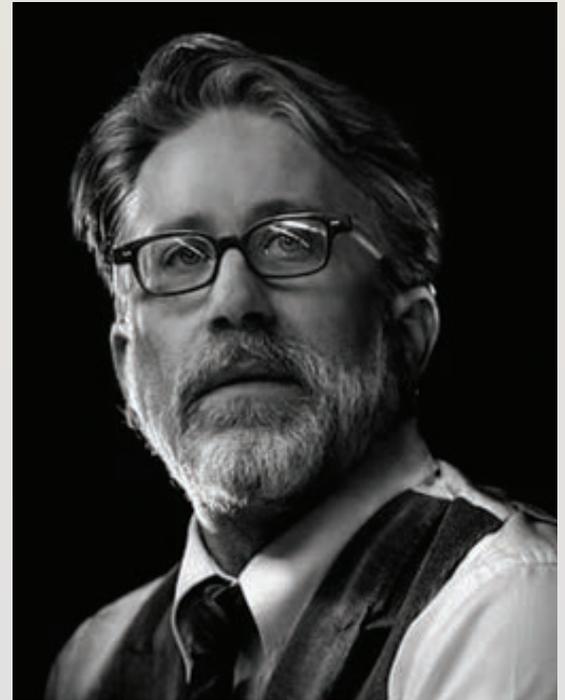
In his presentation, “Lifting the Veil: Creativity and Healing the Wounds of Deep Loss,” Silvestri conveyed to his audience his experience using art as a method for processing grief. He explained that during his labored recovery from the loss of his wife to cancer, he wrote the lyrics for a major choral piece and poured his pain into the work. This emotionally-charged art, *The Sacred Veil*, was a collaboration with renowned choral composer Eric Whitacre. Both men strove to authentically capture the heart-breaking intimacy of the trauma, grief, and recovery in the lyrics and the music. As a result, the composition bears such powerful emotional resonance that it invariably moves audiences to tears.

However, before he was able to write the lyrics to *The Sacred Veil*, Silvestri’s first breakthrough in releasing his grief happened while painting a religious icon. During the many hours he spent creating the icon, he came to think of the subject as the Angel of Silence and envisioned this angel as the one who had collected the prayers said by family and friends in his wife’s name.

Silvestri strongly advocates the use of art as a method of processing and releasing the pain of grief. But he notes that “as a culture, we also don’t do art well.” Many people struggle to self-identify as artists, and therefore do not give themselves permission to create art, even when others will never see their work. Silvestri asserts that for the purpose of processing grief, the quality of the artistic work is irrelevant – even scribbling with a black and red crayon in each hand can be a healing experience. Rather than quality, it is the *intention* that matters. The catalyst is the act of purposefully using creativity as a release, to touch and ultimately heal a wound that cannot otherwise be touched.

“Fill [the art] with your grief,” Silvestri said, “and you will help yourself heal.”

In addition to being a noted lyricist whose musical collaborations are performed all over the world, on the Washburn campus Silvestri’s creativity and passion make his history classes among the most popular on campus.



*Tony Silvestri*

## XI. YOU RISE, I FALL

Listening to your labored breath,  
Your struggle ends as mine begins.  
You rise; I fall.

Fading, yet already gone;  
What calls you I cannot provide.  
You rise; I fall.

Broken, with a heavy hand  
I reach to you, and close your eyes.  
You rise; I fall.

*Excerpt from The Sacred Veil*

# Speaking of the Past

Making the past come alive for students is a challenge for any history instructor. Kerry Wynn, Associate Professor in the Department of History, has found an innovative approach that succeeds in doing just that, and her “history in the community” classes have excited the imaginations of students.

In Spring 2019, Wynn taught a course titled “U.S. Women’s Political Movements of the 70s and 80s” based on this approach, which is far more hands-on than a traditional lecture class and allows students the opportunity to work as professional historians.

During the first part of the class, students conducted oral interviews in person or via phone with women who were active in politics in the 1970s and 1980s; they then created podcasts based on those interviews. The course culminated with a community history day, where the local community was invited to come to Mabee Library with personal family documents they wanted digitized. Both Wynn and the students were enthusiastic in their praise of University Archivist Martha Imparato, library intern Olivia Banzet, and the Mabee Library staff for the work they did in making the event possible.

History and Political Science major Emily Stanley took Wynn’s previous history in the community course, which focused

on pastor and social activist Charles Sheldon, and enrolled in Women’s Political Movements because she had so loved the previous class. She knew it would be a hands-on experience, but she was still surprised at the opportunities the class gave her. Most notably, Stanley was enthusiastic about the chance to interview women who are heroes of hers, including Kansas Senator Oletha Faust-Goudeau and former Governor Kathleen Sebelius. “I didn’t know I was going to get to talk to Kathleen Sebelius!” Stanley exclaimed, explaining she had long admired Sebelius and her work and was thrilled to get a chance to speak with the former Governor one-on-one about her career and experiences.

Stanley’s project partner, Mass Media and Political Science major Melissa King, also cited the Sebelius interview as her favorite part of the class. King noted she and Stanley spent an hour talking to Sebelius about her advocacy and activism, an experience she would not have had in a traditional class.

*Emily Stanley and Melissa King interviewing former Governor of Kansas, Kathleen Sebelius.*



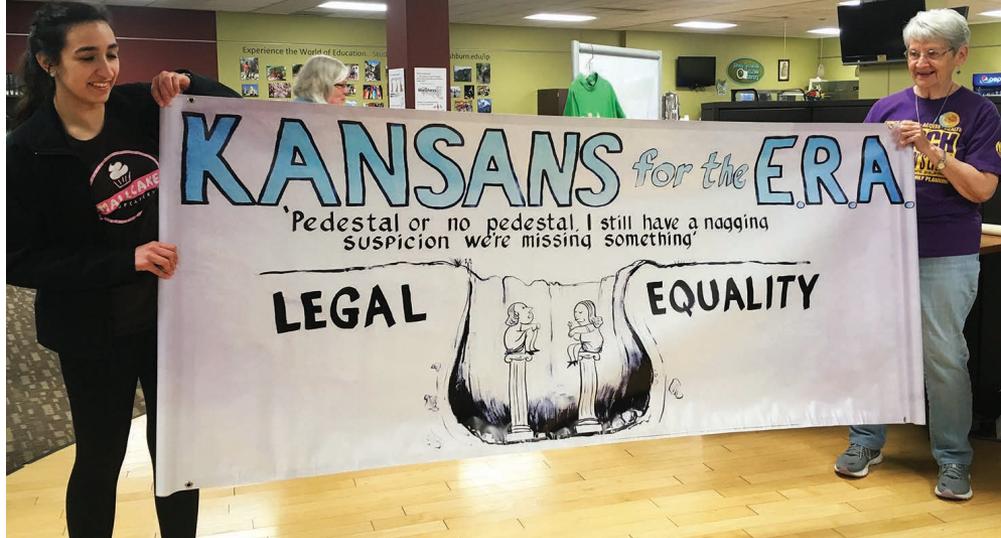
Kerry Wynn intends to offer this class again and will be continuing the interviews. If you would like to share your experiences in women-centric political movements of the 1970s and 1980s, please contact her at 785-670-2062, or email [kerry.wynn@washburn.edu](mailto:kerry.wynn@washburn.edu).

“The course really gave me a passion for elevating women’s voices and continuing the legacy of what women fought for and continue to fight for,” King said. “We all better understand the importance of elevating women’s voices in systems of power.”

As the class progressed through the semester, the materials the students created were archived digitally, and a website was made to collect those materials and provide public access. Each student’s podcast, interview transcripts and recordings, and digitized documents are available through this website: [womensmovements.wuhistory.com](http://womensmovements.wuhistory.com).

Creating podcasts of their interviews was an unusual step the students did not anticipate but enjoyed. Wynn was inspired by Robin Morris, an Associate Professor in history at Agnes Scott College. Morris has her students create podcasts for class projects, and she visited Wynn’s class to describe the process and provide examples. Wynn said she and the students are grateful to Cynthia Heath, Washburn graduate (*ba*, ’71) and Washburn University Alumni Association and Foundation Trustee, who generously donated the funds to bring Morris to campus and to help with the podcast equipment.

In addition to Heath and Morris, many outside sources contributed to the success of the class. Wynn provided the students with a list of potential subjects who had agreed to be interviewed, and Melissa King noted the women she interviewed were excited



*Marissa Alcantar and Marilyn Ault holding an ERA rally banner.*

to participate. Additionally, Joan Wagnon, Topeka’s first female mayor and wife of Washburn History Professor Emeritus Bill Wagnon, was instrumental in making the class the rich experience it was. The class also worked closely with the local chapter of the League of Women Voters.

Wynn was grateful that both the History Department and the College of Arts and Sciences foster innovative classes and non-traditional approaches to pedagogy. She praised the students as well, for being willing to be in an “experimental” class and diving into the assignments with gusto, many doing far more than was required.

That work has paid off for the students. “These abstract figures,” Stanley said, “we got to see that they’re real people.” Stanley added that she enjoyed doing the interviews so much she is likely to incorporate oral interviews into future class projects.

She also said the project inspired her to talk to her grandparents about local historical events and her own family history. “Everyone thinks their hometown is boring. These history in the community classes have made me appreciate local Topeka history.”

*“This class confirmed that Washburn is the right school for me.”*

*Emily Stanley*

# Cosmic Rays, Wildfires, and Bipedalism: Why We Walk on Two Feet

Brian Thomas is no stranger to attention from popular culture science media. A Professor in the Department of Physics and Astronomy and prolific researcher on the topic of astrophysical events, Dr. Thomas was nonetheless surprised by the amount of media coverage of his research article “From Cosmic Explosions to Terrestrial Fires?” which he co-authored with Dr. Adrian Melott from the University of Kansas.

Published in the *Journal of Geology* in May 2019, this study extends research Thomas began during his doctoral work, and focuses on how astronomical events affect life on Earth. According to Thomas, his field of research lends itself to the study of “apocalypse” scenarios – meteors landing on Earth, for example – and therefore often excites the imagination of science-focused media that cater to audiences outside of academia.

The hypothesis of Thomas’s study is that cosmic rays from a nearby exploding star, a supernova, penetrated the Earth’s atmosphere to a much greater extent than typical radiation, setting off chains of atomic events poetically called “air showers” and leading to tremendous lightning storms on the Earth’s surface. The lightning produced wildfires that in turn caused deforestation on a global scale. With forests suddenly becoming savannas, the proto-humans had to adapt – they could no longer remain tree-bound but had to walk upright to cross the newly cleared land in search of food.

Thomas and Melott’s hypothesis is supported by carbon deposits found globally in soils that correspond with the timing of the cosmic ray event, during the transition from the Pliocene Epoch to the Ice Age. These carbon deposits indicate wildfires on a global scale occurred during this era, regardless of the specific area’s regional climate. These deposits were previously unexplained by the scientific community; Thomas and Melott’s hypothesis provides a potential cause. The presence of iron-60 deposits found globally in the strata of sea beds formed in that era are another clue that fits with

their model. Such deposits suggest light from a supernova penetrated the Earth’s atmosphere at that time.

After learning about global astronomical events of the past, people often worry a similar event could happen today, and Thomas says, “Will this kill us?” is a common question he receives. In this case, the answer is definitely no – according to Thomas, the nearest star capable of exploding in the next million years is Betelgeuse, and it is too far away to cause the necessary chain reactions in our atmosphere. While not an imminent threat to humanity, powerful and impactful cosmic events continue to capture the imagination of readers and the curiosity of scientists like Thomas.



*Brian Thomas*

# Department Highlights

## Art

The **Art Department** welcomed new faculty: Lecturers **Dyan Green Akkouche** and **Madeline Eschenburg** and Assistant Professor **Kwok Pong (“Bobby”) Tso**. Recent graduate **Jenna Reed** (*bfa*, ‘18) was awarded the Donovan Cook Pre-K-12 Outstanding Teacher Award for Fall 2018 and **Bridget Cornwell** (*bfa*, ‘19) was selected as one of two 2019 “Teachers of Promise” from Washburn. **Katie Martin** (*ba*, ‘19), was a finalist for the prestigious Sibberson Award. Last year saw some major equipment upgrades: the Art Department was able to purchase two new kilns, ten new pottery wheels (perfect for Date Night/Throwing Night), eight new Mac stations for Photography, and renovated the Mac Lab. **Professor Marguerite Perret** served as lead artist/collaborator/facilitator for *Signaling Water: Multi Species Migration and Displacement*, an international exhibition focusing on water issues; artworks were displayed on the Sorbonne Campus, Paris and in performances on the bank of the Seine River.

## Biology

The **Biology Department** cheered **Maluki Radford** (*bs*, ‘19), who won the Sibberson Award at Spring 2019 Graduation; she is currently a first-year medical student at KUMC. Seniors **Katlyn Hays** (Molecular Biology and Biotechnology major) and **Ashley Cook** (Biology major) both held KBI internships during 2019; Cook graduated in May and is now employed at KBI, and Katlyn has been offered a job at KBI following graduation in December. The department is proud to announce **Associate Professor Takrima Sadikot** received the 2019 Award for Excellence in Science Teaching. **John Mullican**, **Associate Professor and Chair**, presented at the 2019 ASM Microbe Annual Meeting, while **Assistant Professor Joshua Smith** and student **Ashley Cook** presented research results at the 2019 North American Forensic Entomology Association meeting. Additionally, two new programs were approved effective Fall 2019: B.S. in Forensic Biology and B.Ed. in Biology Secondary Education.

*The Pi Gamma Chapter inducted 16 new members in the Tri-Beta National Biology Honor Society.*

*Dr. Priti Lakhani (bs, ‘91) was the Keynote Speaker.*



Untitled by *Shelby Reich*, art student



## Chemistry

The **Department of Chemistry** is proud to announce its re-approval for ACS accreditation. Graduate **Whitney Bergman** (*bs*, ‘19) received a Phi Kappa Phi Fellowship for her graduate studies in biochemistry at the University of Colorado. Three students completed research internship projects in forensics during Summer 2019: **Heather Smoker** for a comparison of slicing techniques for automotive paint chip analysis, and **Gretchen Hogan** and **Rachel McKiddie** for quantification of THC in marijuana samples. **Assistant Professor Holly O’Neill** was also involved in a summer collaborative project evaluating a portable method to test for marijuana consumption.



*In Spring 2018, WU Debate brought home its fifth Squad Sweepstakes National Championship at the National Parliamentary Debate Association (NPDA) Championships; in 2019, WU Debate won 8th place.*

# Communication Studies

The **Department of Communication Studies** debate team won invitational tournaments at Rice University and University of Missouri, and debate alumni continue to secure placements in top-flight law, graduate, and medical schools, including Harvard, Georgetown, and Penn State. Communication Studies majors completed internships with local companies, and nine presented capstone research projects at Apeiron and the Washburn Day of Transformation. The department saw changes this year: **Professor Jim Schnoebelen** became **Chair**, **Professor Tracy Routsong** was named **Assistant Dean of CAS**, and **Kevin O’Leary** and **Steve Doubledee** were promoted to **Senior Lecturers**. **Routsong** also won the Ned Fleming Award for Teaching Excellence in Spring 2018 and received the Washburn C-TEL Dedication to Teaching Excellence Award for earning the C-TEL Certificate 5 years in a row.

**Computer Information Science Associate Professor Rick Barker** serves his final term as Faculty Senate President this year. **Professor Nan Sun**

# Computer Information Science

traveled to Florida with eight students to the International Association for Computer Information Systems annual conference. The students, who worked in teams, presented their research findings related to bots in social media, cryptocurrency and personal technology. Students included: **Isaac Cason, Chris Ford, Brandon Habig, Ben Wolf, Aaron Spero, Angela Kiamco, Jessica Lancaster, and Abida Syed.**

# Education

The **Education Department** completed the CAEP national

accreditation process – all education programs are fully accredited through the national and state accreditation organizations. As part of a Kansas pilot program designed to increase the number of teachers for certain areas, 14 graduate students worked toward licensure in special education and three undergraduate students worked toward teaching licensure in elementary education. Additionally, the Para-to-Pro program saw 25 paraprofessionals working toward teacher licensure in special education. **Professor Gloria Dye** received the Herrick Service Award, while **Lecturer Tracie Lutz**, earned the Ned Fleming Excellence in Teaching Award in Spring 2019. The department hosted its second annual STEM Education Conference and its third annual STEM Middle Grades Camp, which was a week-long camp attended by approximately 40 middle school students.

The **English Department** had three English majors present scholarly papers at the Undergraduate Symposium of the Midwest Modern Language Association’s conference

# English

in Kansas City. Conference acceptance is competitive. **Anna Ciummo** (*ba*, ’19) will be pursuing an MFA at the University of Washington with full funding and a generous teaching assistantship package. **Assistant Professor Andy Farkas** published a short-story collection, *Sunsphere*. The English and Education departments sponsored the 25th Annual Literature Festival, which welcomed students from 5th to 12th grades from across the state. This is the third year Washburn has hosted the festival. **Assistant Professor Louise Krug** was awarded the C-TEL Innovative Teaching Award: Assessment Pillar and a C-TEL HICEPs Scholar Award. **Senior Lecturer Dennis Etzel, Jr.** received the C-TEL Teaching Innovation Award in HICEPs. **Kara Kendall-Morwick, Associate Professor**, received the Washburn C-TEL Dedication to Teaching Excellence Award for earning the C-TEL Certificate 5 years in a row.

# History

The **History Department** hosted the 39th annual District 3 History Day competition in 2019, which was attended by more than 240 middle school and high school students. History major **Brooke Manny** was selected to present her work on the influenza epidemic of 1918 at the 2019 Undergraduate Research Day at the state capitol. **Associate Professor Kelly Erby** was promoted to **Assistant Dean of CAS**. **Associate Professor Kerry Wynn** supervised the transition of the Map of Kansas Literature website to a new platform and held readings to launch the project - the new site address is [bit.ly/mapkslit](https://bit.ly/mapkslit). **Assistant Professor Bruce Mactavish**, Board Chair of the Brown Foundation, hosted a banquet commemorating the 65th Anniversary of the *Brown v. Board* decision. The banquet's featured speaker was Shannon Lanier, a ninth-generation direct descendant of Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings. **Professor Kim Morse** and Mayor Michelle de la Isla co-organized the Hermanitas Conference for Washburn and MANA de Topeka, which was attended by 200 young women from middle school and high school.



# Kinesiology

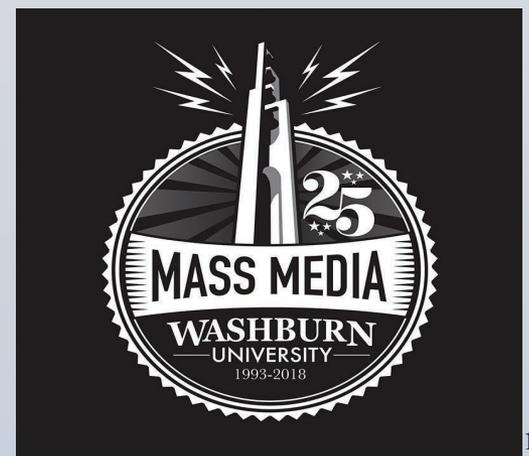
The **Department of Kinesiology** celebrated impressive student accomplishments this year. **Layne Nash** received a 2019 SHAPE America National Physical Education Major of the Year award. Out of hundreds of students nominated each year, only 50 receive this honor. And Exercise and Rehabilitation Science major **Joey Lewis** was selected as the Executive Director for the Mid-America Athletic Trainer's Association District 5 Student Leadership Council.

*Eleven Exercise and Rehabilitation Science majors provided medical coverage for the 2019 ROTC Buddy Competition at Clinton Lake.*

# Mass Media

The **Department of Mass Media** celebrated 25 years as an independent department and marked 30 years since the first issue of its alumni magazine, *The Messenger*. In the past 15 years, the magazine has been produced by students taking the Creative Media Practicum class under the guidance of **Senior Lecturer Regina Cassell**. The department welcomed two new faculty: **Assistant Professor Andrew Anglin** and **Lecturer Sam Finch**.

**Anglin** started a new Mass Media tradition of tailgating in the fall. The department launched an alumni newsletter thanks to **Assistant Professor Kristen Grimmer's** Public Relations 1 and 2 students. **Grimmer's** PR 2 students also planned and executed a Keynote Speaker Event featuring Topeka community leader Michel' Cole. This event included a Mass Media alumni After Hours that allowed faculty and former students to reconnect. **Assistant Professor Matt Nyquist** was instrumental in launching the WIFI festival and bringing in renowned Hollywood filmmaker Allan Holzman as a featured guest (see pages 4-5).



# Mathematics & Statistics

The **Mathematics & Statistics Department** saw 11 different students attend six regional and national conferences under the guidance of faculty members **Lecturer Beth McNamee**, **Professor Mike Mosier**, **Associate Professor Gaspar Porta**, and **Professor Jennifer Wagner**. **McNamee** was the recipient of the Washburn C-TEL Dedication to Teaching Excellence Award for earning the C-TEL Certificate 5 years in a row. **Professor Janet Sharp** developed a new B.Ed in Mathematics for Secondary Education degree program, and **Porta** designed a new interdisciplinary Game Design Minor. **Associate Professor Sarah Cook** was nominated for a National MAA Haimo Teaching Award in Spring 2018. Students **Jacob Andrews**, **Benjamin Nelson**, **Samantha Schmitz**, and **Jacob Talkin** held actuarial internships at Security Benefit Group.



# Modern Languages

In 2018 the **Modern Languages Department** collaborated with Visit Topeka to translate some of the Visit Topeka web pages into Spanish (see [VisitTopeka.com](http://VisitTopeka.com)). **Professor and Chair, Miguel González-Abellás**, created a podcast on Latin American literature for the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library. The department celebrated Spanish and Psychology major **Allison Elsbernd** (*ba*, '18), who won the prestigious Sibberson Award for graduating seniors. **Professor Courtney Sullivan** (French), and **Associate Professor Kerry Wynn** (History), published a book chapter reflecting on their experience teaching an interdisciplinary course on Women in World War II. Two faculty members enjoyed Sweet Sabbaticals in 2019: **Sullivan** traveled to Tahiti and **Senior Lecturer Georgina Tenny** visited Spain.

*Senior Lecturer Georgina Tenny and students on a study abroad trip to Cuba.*

# Philosophy & Religious Studies

The **Philosophy & Religious Studies Department** is proud to announce the creation of a new yearly endowed lecture series on philosophy, the Russ Jacobs Lecture, which is named in honor of the Professor Emeritus of Philosophy and former Chair of the department. **Lecturer Justin Moss** facilitated the inaugural lecture in November 2019, which featured Chike Jeffers, a philosopher of race and a researcher of Africana philosophy at Dalhousie University in Canada. The department was also given the opportunity to discuss the ethics of plagiarism and academic literacy in all sections of WU 101 during the Fall 2019 semester. **Assistant Professor Chris Jones** received a Student Life Achieving Excellence award, and a teaching award from the Leadership Institute. He also helped develop training sessions on best practices for faculty to refer students to campus mental health resources and initiated a discussion about student mental health among WU Counseling, Psychological Services, and faculty.



*Rik Hine won the Washburn First Year Experience faculty debate in April 2019 dressed as Tyler Durden.*

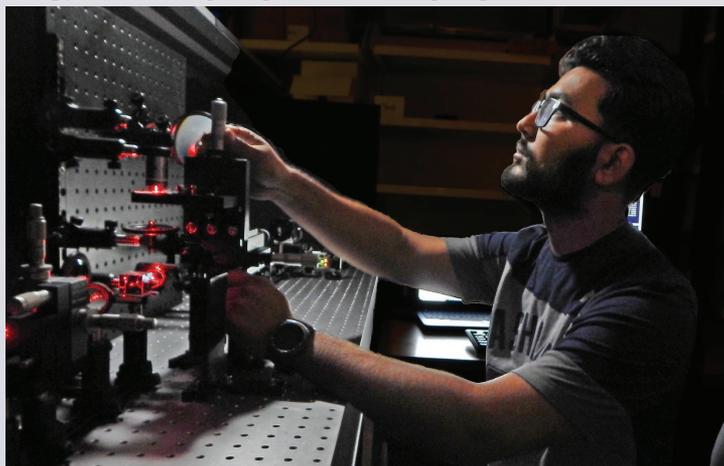
# Music

The **Music Department** welcomed several new faculty this year: **Sheri Cook Cunningham** became the **Director of Music Education**; **Von Hansen** is the **Assistant Director of Bands**; and **Silas Huff** is the **Director of Orchestras**. Former adjunct **Kelly Huff** was hired as a full-time **Lecturer**. **Michael Averett**, **Lecturer**, and **Tom Morgan**, **Professor**, performed with the HIS World Orchestra in Hong Kong, China, and Taiwan. Also, **Averett** and **Adjunct Brent Ferguson** recorded their debut album *Avalon*, set to be released in Fall 2019.

*This year the WU marching band purchased new uniforms, funded entirely by donations.*

# Physics

The **Physics & Astronomy Department** welcomed new **Assistant Professor Vincent Rossi**. Student **Jacob Oberle** was selected to present his research at the 2019 Undergraduate Research Day at the state Capitol; he was supervised by **Professor Brian Thomas**. **Matthew Christman** participated in the University of Chicago's summer Research Experiences for Undergraduates program in molecular engineering. With **Associate Professor Jason Emry** of the Biology Department, **Rossi** received a Washburn University Major Research Grant to study the use of fluorescent microscopy in measuring the presence of fungi in plant root structures.



*Physics majors  
Bijaya Basnet and  
Matthew Christman received  
K-INBRE Research Training  
Awards to support research they  
performed in the Physics  
department's light lab.  
(pictured, left: Bijaya Basnet)*

# Psychology

The **Psychology Department** congratulates former Psychology and Spanish major **Allison Elsbernd** (*ba*, '18), who was named as a 2018 Sibberson Award winner, and **Stephanie Jones** (*ba*, '19), who was a 2019 Sibberson Award finalist. Psychology MA student **Rebecca Griffith** presented at four national conferences. Former **Associate Professor Cindy Nebel** and psychology graduate students **Delanie Atteberry** and **Ana Lima** presented about effective learning strategies at the Society for Teaching of Psychology conference. Psychology MA graduate **Kelsey Moffitt**, under the supervision of **Angela Duncan**, **Lecturer**, published her thesis in *The Journal of American College Health*. Psychology student **Samuel Cox** completed an internship in Washington D.C. The Psychology Department hosted the 38th Annual Great Plains Students' Psychology Convention under the leadership of **Professor Mike Russell** and **Assistant Professor RaLynn Schmalzried**. **Associate Professor Jericho Hockett** received the A. Roy Myers Excellence in Research Award. **Hockett** received a C-TEL Innovative Teaching Award for the Assessment Pillar. **Schmalzried** received an Innovative Teaching Award for the Technology Pillar. **Michael McGuire**, **Associate Professor**, was appointed as the C-TEL Teaching Fellow in Active Learning.



# Political Science

**Political Science** students were very active in the Fall 2018 Kansas elections - the department co-sponsored two candidate debates with KTWU-TV and political science students prepared questions and helped with logistics. The students also interned for both the Democratic and Republican gubernatorial campaigns, while **Bob Beatty, Professor and Chair**, gave over two hundred interviews about state campaigns and co-moderated the final Kansas gubernatorial TV debate. In March, **Linsey Modellmog, Assistant Professor**, along with **Sharon Sullivan, Professor and Chair** of the Theatre Department, took students to the UN Commission on the Status of Women. And in the spring and summer of 2019, 25 Political Science students worked as interns in state and local government offices.

*Fourteen Political Science students participated in the 2019 Washburn Fukuoka program, studying for three weeks in Tokyo, Kyoto, and Fukuoka, Japan.*



# Sociology & Anthropology

The **Sociology & Anthropology Department** had six students participate in internships or study abroad experiences during Fall 2018 – Summer 2019: **Mackenzie Walls, Taylor Receuro, Holly Long, Laura Kennard, Abby Price**, and **Elizabeth Moore**. Anthropology major **Taylor Nickel** had original research published in *Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science*. Four Anthropology students: **Summer Mizell, Holly Long, Mackenzie Walls**, and **Susie Athey**, presented their original research at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences in 2019. Their research focused on refining and testing methods for estimation of the biological profile from skeletal remains. **Abby Price**, Sociology major, won 2nd place in the International Leadership Association Case Study Competition. Other activities included: the Applied Anthropology class worked with Bods Feeding Bods; the Culture and Food class participated in the Washburn India Fest; and the Social Class in the US class held the 2nd Annual Diaper Drive.

# Theatre

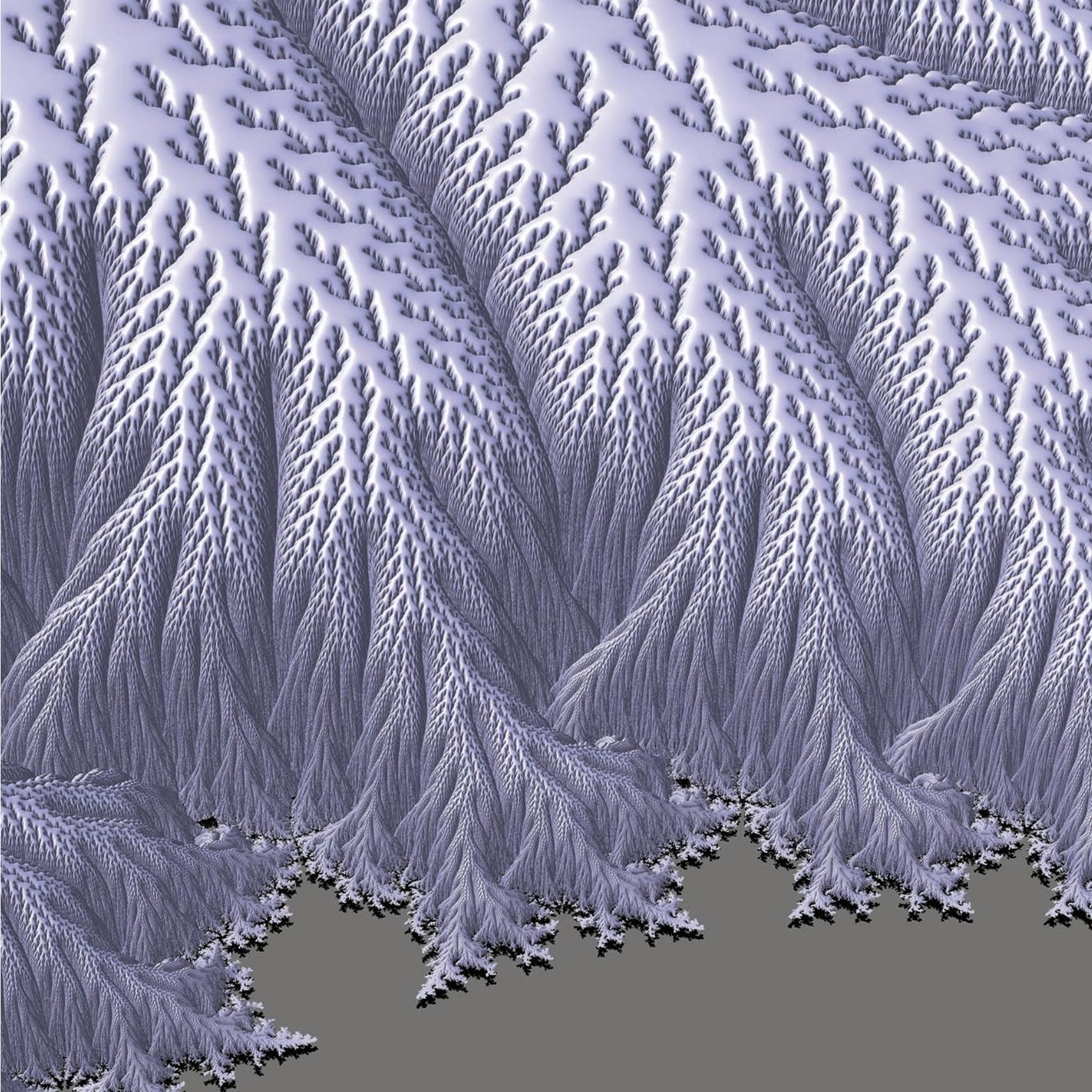
In Fall 2018, the **Theatre Department** enjoyed a WU Theatre

Reunion Show with performances by faculty, staff, and community members. With **Assistant Professor Linsey Modellmog** from the Political Science Department, **Sharon Sullivan, Professor and Chair**, took students to the UN Commission on the Status of Women in March of 2019; **Sullivan** also gave a presentation on human trafficking. **Assistant Professor Julie Noonan** presented at the prestigious ATHE, the Association for Theatre in Higher Education, conference in August 2019. The Theatre Department will be heavily engaged in fundraising all this year, in order to take students to the Edinburgh (Scotland) Fringe Festival, a festival showcasing innovative and experimental theatre. It is the oldest fringe festival in the world, and the students will develop and perform an original work. The first fundraiser was a sing and dance along showing of *The Greatest Showman* in September 2019.

*Curtains! was a smash hit in Spring 2019.*



*Next page: 3D computer-generated fractal pattern created by CIS Chair, Bruce Mechbly.*



**WASHBURN**  
UNIVERSITY

**COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES**

1700 SW COLLEGE AVE. TOPEKA, KS 66621

NON PROFIT ORG  
US POSTAGE PAID  
WASHBURN  
UNIVERSITY