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Back Cover Photo: THCAS students Briana McRae and Amanda Curran visited the John Lennon Wall in Prague during their summer 2018 study abroad trip.

(Cover photos provided by ECU Facilities Engineering & Architectural Services, and Dr. Nicole Caswell)

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Welcome from Dean William M. Downs

Hello Friends of Harriot College ...

what a year 2018 was for East Carolina University and for the College of Arts and Sciences! I invite you to read through the pages of this latest issue of Cornerstone and to catch up on the successes of our students, the expertise of our faculty, and the dedication of our staff. I think you will be impressed, and I hope that you will follow us throughout 2019 as we continue our mission to serve the people of this great state.

As the largest and most academically diverse of ECU’s colleges and schools, the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences has a unique responsibility. Our disciplines are the heart of what makes this university special. Our imprint on each graduating class is indelible. Our research—across the natural sciences, the humanities, and the social sciences—is not the sort that gathers dust in libraries or that goes unnoticed in the real world. Our research matters. It wrestles with big questions, it seeks out solutions to pressing issues, and it changes lives.

Our scholar-teachers are having an impact on regional economic prosperity, on the preservation of fragile ecosystems, and on the fight against diseases such as diabetes, cancer, and Alzheimer’s. They are focused on the families of Eastern North Carolina. They are combating some of our society’s most enduring problems, such as domestic abuse and hunger. Their work informs public discourse and public policy. Our historians, archaeologists, poets, and novelists are routinely recognized for enriching North Carolina’s cultural capital. I am so proud that we are able to attract and retain a world-class faculty that is pushing forward the frontiers of knowledge, advancing science, preserving our past, and shaping our future.

As much as we emphasize the strengthening of our research profile, we remain dedicated above all else to effective, inspirational teaching. Our degree programs in biology, chemistry, medical physics, and psychology produce first-rate graduates who will go on to improve health care for the people of this state. Our programs in economics, criminal justice, public administration, and urban and regional planning produce graduates who will make our communities prosperous, safe, and sustainable.

Our programs in foreign languages and international studies produce graduates who are globally competent, globally connected, and globally competitive.

We are expanding opportunities for experiential learning through study abroad, internships, field courses, living-learning communities, and academic teams, such as the Model United Nations team that competed this past year in Washington, DC. Our students are winning awards, securing nationally-competitive fellowships, earning spots in top graduate programs, in law schools, and in medical schools. They are graduating from ECU and entering the job market with increased confidence. The value of a degree from Arts and Sciences at ECU continues to rise.

We look to the future with eagerness. The competition for college-ready high school graduates has never been more competitive in North Carolina. In response, we are making clear to high school seniors across this state—smart, talented, ambitious students not just from Pitt County, but Wake, Mecklenburg, Guilford, and indeed everywhere from Currituck to Cherokee—that they should make ECU and the College of Arts and Sciences their first destination. No matter where they come from, students who join us will ultimately graduate ready to be part of North Carolina’s next generation of leaders.

Cornerstone showcases some of the excellence that resides in Harriot College. It also affords us the opportunity to thank the many alumni, friends, and donors who provide invaluable support to ECU’s College of Arts and Sciences. On behalf of more than 500 faculty and staff, and on behalf of the more than 6,500 students who major in one of the 54 undergraduate and graduate degree programs in Arts and Sciences, please know how grateful we are for your support!

With regards,

William M. Downs
Dean
ECU has a strong commitment to educate and mentor students to be active participants of a knowledge-based, global economy. At the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences, this manifests in slightly more than 20 percent of its students having at least one global experience before graduation, primarily by earning course credits through study abroad. Studying abroad has a proven impact in creating productive citizens in the global marketplace and enhancing career success. A 1999 study of study abroad program alumni by the Institute for International Education of Students (IES)* found that studying abroad builds global competencies through:

- changing world views;
- generating better comprehension of cultural biases and values;
- building self-confidence and growing maturity;
- increasing diversity of relationships;
- allowing greater toleration of ambiguity;
- creating better understanding of non-verbal communication;
- and fostering increased flexibility and empathy.

The Institute of International Education (IIE) found that as a result, students who study abroad have better career success than average, including having higher starting salaries, quicker employment, greater success in graduate school acceptance, and a suite of skills that increase their hireability.**

HCAS plays a crucial role in generating study abroad opportunities for ECU students by faculty-led research-based and experiential programs that expose students to the rain forests of Costa Rica, ancient shipwrecks off the coast of Bermuda, city streets inspiring the great thinkers of Europe, ruins of ancient civilizations in the Middle East, centers of technological innovation in China, and unique marine ecosystems of South Africa. As a result, we lead the university in what proportion of our students include a study abroad experience in their education.

This leadership role could not happen without scholarships provided by our donors to help students fund study abroad. HCAS not only has college-wide scholarships for its majors, but also major-specific opportunities within different departments. All are the result of donations by HCAS alumni and friends. One donor links his and his spouse’s decision to fund an HCAS study abroad scholarship to his wife’s “life-changing” experience studying abroad. Her international experience ended up enriching both of their lives through maintaining strong ties with friends in other countries, hosting international students in their home, and supporting community organizations that foster international relations and understanding. By financially supporting students studying abroad, the donors hope they will experience a similar positive, inspiring lifetime impact.

Enabling ECU students the financial ability to study abroad has even more resonance considering that many come from families with limited economic resources and/or are first-generation college students – students who may have never met anyone who had traveled overseas, let alone had considered the possibility for themselves. Letters sent to study abroad scholarship donors from students express their gratitude and emphasize the long-term impact of their international experience. The students describe learning skills that will stay with them for the rest of their lives and make them better and more productive citizens. According to one student, the scholarship meant she was not limited from “experiencing all that the world had to offer” based on her family’s financial situation.

Clearly, study abroad affects personal and academic growth as well as career success. It is important not to forget that students also encounter the awe and wonder and excitement that comes with travel to another country. The comments in their Facebook posts and Twitter feeds, their exuberant expressions in photographs, the oft-repeated “it changed my life” provide no better reflection on the transformative nature of study abroad. **


To join their adventures and learn more about HCAS’s global reach, be sure to follow the HCAS Global Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/ECUHCASGlobal/ and Twitter feed @ECUHCASGlobal.
Finding East Carolina Abroad through the Humanities

by Garrett S. Yarbrough

A study abroad is often touted as a “once in a lifetime” experience, but the term “abroad” in its original 14th century definition was to be “at a distance from each other.” Being distant from our fellow people only once in our lives sounds counterintuitive in a humanistic sense, but spending four years in the humanities has knocked a bit more sense into me.

If you do a study abroad right, the distance home is not counted in miles, but in the familiar smiles you make with unfamiliar people. If I did not have the skills that I developed from my humanities education, the lasting value from my study abroad would be seen in my scrapbook photos rather than in the glowing horizons I find in well-trodden places.

From January to June of 2018, I was on exchange at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland, studying English and History.

I learned a great deal in the classroom on world literature and European history, but the field education I received was the most transformative. Once classes wrapped in May, I was chomping at the bit to explore the continent. Although the UK was not as huge a shake-up as adapting to life somewhere like Shanghai might have been, the unexpected minor differences were enough to feel consistently off balance.

Surprises like rearranged keyboards, superfluous fire corridors, and no “all-in-one” anything kept me uncomfortable enough to always add another 15 minutes to my commute. The academic period was busy, so I saw almost every breathtaking inch of Britain while we had classes, but I couldn’t wait to spend my last month backpacking with friends across new territory. However, I slowly discovered that almost everyone in the Strathclyde exchange program was heading home as soon as classes would end, a month before our rent and visas expired. I figured that if I was going to be uncomfortable no matter how second nature Scotland became, I wanted to get really uncomfortable.

It was an ineffable feeling when the sun was setting over my first day in Barcelona. Watching emerald green parrots peck at birdseed alongside the pigeons in a block-sized park under the Sagrada Familia, I realized that it was just through forward-thinking and a bit of gumption that I had gotten myself there. I knew I made the right call.

Despite worrying about it a week beforehand, it struck me that now was the time to use those four semesters of Spanish. The idea that I couldn’t simply speak to each person around me shocked me in that instant. Barcelona was the first place I had traveled outside of the UK, and it was the first time I felt truly alone—not in any sad way—but completely confident in my capability as an adult; ready to return to forge a future I can only call mine, and transform my home community and North Carolina in the process.

The interdisciplinary aspect of the humanities is what allowed me to closely connect with every culture I encountered.

The language barrier is a main deterrence of would-be travelers, but my foreign language requirement for my humanities majors made my experience in Spain the most immersive experience during my six months abroad.

Although nowhere near fluent, I was able to navigate and communicate at a basic level. But the most valuable aspect of being able to communicate in the host country’s language is that if you try to communicate in their language, people will immediately open up and warmly guide you through experiences that monolingual travelers would never have.

Before leaving Barcelona, I was determined to eat at a traditional tapas bar. Along the wharves, I stepped into the net-strewn tapas joint, probably the only non-fisherman in the place. Above the bumping elbows, boisterous laughter, and clinking plates, the massive server heard the door’s cowbell rattle behind me. He beamed ear-to-ear, slid two men aside, and rapidly wiped down a place for me at the counter.

I asked him to give me whatever he recommends (always the best option), and he disappeared down the bar and came back with pickled sardines and some spiced bread. Not at all what I expected, but it was way better than I expected, especially since I learned how to go about tapas from the people next to me.

I started speaking broken Spanish to the man on my right, and it turned out he could speak some English as an oil rig engineer from the University of Madrid! We practiced our two languages, but mainly I listened. The insider tips to touring Barcelona, local stories, and simply the local connection were invaluable, and they only stopped when the server grinned at me again as he closed the door behind us.

Thanks to the interdisciplinary insights through literature, history, and art I’ve gained at ECU, I knew what my
next step would be, because I was able to establish cultural context. If you have 15 minutes, intercultural communication skills, and a general knowledge of the respective culture, you can find something meaningful to experience wherever you are.

I truly became an “international” student.

I spoke to everyone I could to understand another facet of the region’s people and why each landmark mattered. As a result, I was able to avoid the typical tourist pitfalls and truly appreciate the value each second holds in every location.

Honing my social skills and utilizing foresight through the power of a sight’s humanistic background knowledge (or how to gain it quickly) became one of the greatest skills I gained from my study abroad. This lateral thinking inspired me to indulge in my creativity to stuff each day full of new adventures on the fly, or to maximize my plans with the resources I had.

My crowning achievement was my 15-hour “Paris Day,” but taking the time to let it all absorb is what makes the travel worthwhile. Each monument in Paris meant a whole lot more once I had spent a semester at Strathclyde, following translated family diaries from those under Vichy rule. The true weight of 9,387 sacrificed lives is no longer a statistic when you can see the sober expanse of white crosses that a photograph’s borders can’t contain, and then parasailer’s smiling again at Omaha Beach. Once

your American citizenship extends past the east and west coasts, you can truly appreciate the values that you carry with your identity.

Above all, the ability to be at “home” with others—regardless of nationality—is the greatest value I found abroad from a humanities education.

Thanks to my English and History degrees, I now have friends across all six continents (the ones you can visit friends on, at least). No matter the company, I was adopted into their fold: I became Canadian while hiking the alien crags of Skye, Scandinavian while adjusting to Glaswegian life, and Ukrainian while laughing in Munich. Being able to find familiarity anywhere is the true value of immersion.

The staple skills I gained from my experience in the humanities were the greatest advantage I found abroad; using lateral thinking and an interdisciplinary approach made me see what we could all gain from growing as

Renaissance men, once I saw the results in Florence. After traveling through Spain, France, Italy, Austria, and Germany, Scotland remains my favorite because of its nature’s passionate individuality reflected in the warmth of its people. I felt a lot of eastern North Carolina there. Finding East Carolina among strangers redefined “home” as anywhere I can find the familiarity of a human smile.
My name is David Sager, and I’m a doctoral student in Clinical Health Psychology (CHP) at East Carolina University, under the tutelage of Dr. Sam Sears. Although I’m an eastern North Carolina native, my path to this program was not as direct as a drive down highway 264, but I can’t imagine a better place to be at this point in my own journey of service.

I was born in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, in 1984, where I was raised as the oldest of five siblings. I began my adult academic journey at Nash Community College in 2002, while also working full time.

However, supporting myself and going to school began to feel like a rut, and I wanted a change and a different kind of challenge. To this end, I enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in 2004, and spent the next five years learning what leadership, dedication and service meant.

I was assigned to an airwing military occupational specialty (MOS) and stationed in Yuma, Arizona, while also spending time in southern California and New Mexico. I finished my enlistment in 2009 at the rank of Sergeant, having deployed to Iraq in 2006, participated in various Marine Corps research and development (R&D) programs in 2005 and 2007-2008, and spent an award-winning year managing the living spaces for all the single Marines in my squadron from 2008-2009.

While these experiences were formative, none of these had the effect on me that a suicide attempt in my squadron had; not just the suicide attempt itself but seeing how that attempt affected others in the squadron, particularly those close to that Marine.

My intent as I approached the end of my enlistment was to return to school with the aid of the GI Bill, but I wasn’t sure yet for what. Before I could decide though, my future wife entered my life. She was also a Marine, and near the beginning of her enlistment, so I delayed returning to school until she also finished her enlistment.

While working in Yuma as an Army ballistics R&D contractor, I continued to research my options for returning to school. The ongoing elevated rates of active duty and veteran suicides, along with my experience, continued to weigh on my mind. Military service had given me so much, so how could I give back?

By the time my wife completed her enlistment in 2012, clinical psychology was the clear answer. East Carolina University was also a clear answer by this time.

As my wife and I had narrowed down options for returning to school, it was difficult to find one university that met both of our undergraduate needs and my graduate study requirements. ECU was one of the few universities that met all our requirements, and the institutional dedication to service, combined with my familiarity with the region, helped cement the decision to make the long move, with the family now including two young children, from Arizona back to North Carolina. After quickly finishing an associate’s degree at Wayne Community College, I transferred to ECU in Fall 2013.

It was at East Carolina where I truly felt academically challenged, on track, and at home.

I was fortunate to meet and engage with many wonderful professors, administrators, and students across the university, from Dr. Jensen in the German Department to Dr. Roberts and Dr. Collins in the Philosophy Department.

Dr. Roberts as well as Dr. Coghill at the Pirate Academic Success Center also afforded me the opportunity to serve ECU students as lead philosophy tutor from 2014-2015. Dr. Collins successfully challenged me to switch from a minor in philosophy to declaring it as a second major.

While these relationships were rewarding, the most critical relationship as an undergraduate was formed with Dr. Christyn Dolbier in the Department of Psychology. Although I was unknown in the department as a transferring junior, Dr. Dolbier took me on as an undergraduate research assistant and provided needed mentoring and training, including overseeing my senior honors thesis.

My Educational Journey
by 2nd Lt. David Sager

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It was during the process of producing my senior honors thesis that my path crossed with Dr. Sears. Early in my senior year, I applied to the Clinic Health Psychology (CHP) program at ECU but did not yet have the qualifications to push my application to the top. I continued to work with Dr. Dolbier in my senior year finishing my senior honors thesis, presenting at Research and Creative Week, and earning a grant for some of her research.

I graduated from ECU Magna Cum Laude in 2015 with...
David represents the best of ECU. His excellence in the military carried over to his college work. He carries himself like a pro and is an asset to our program. We are proud of his past and future service to our nation.”

— Dr. Samuel F. Sears, professor, department of psychology, department of cardiovascular sciences

During the application process, the faculty in the program were understanding and supportive, but none more so than Dr. Sears. He consistently impresses on his students that the true learning requires getting outside of our comfort zones, and he has modeled this every step of the way in supporting myself and others in the program currently interested in military psychology.

The support from my mentor, in particular, and the department at large reflects the overarching ethos of service at ECU.

While participating in this incredible field, I did not lose sight of what brought me to psychology, and I continued to assess my options. The Marine Corps does not have its own medical corps, so returning directly to my former branch was not possible. Between my familiarity with an air-power environment from the Marine Corps airwing, and the Air Force’s lead in providing mental health services among the three main military branches, the Air Force presented as the best fit.

I applied for the Health Professions Scholarship Program with the Air Force in 2017 and was accepted to begin Fall of 2018. This scholarship will fund me over the remaining two years here at ECU. I swore into the Air Force Reserves as a 2nd Lieutenant on ECU’s campus on July 13, 2018, with the support of Lt. Col. Wimmer and the ECU Air Force ROTC. Upon entering active duty with the Air Force, I will serve as a military psychologist at the rank of Captain.
DEAN WILLIAM M. DOWNS
Welcomes
The New 2018-19 THCAS Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty
Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences

Department of Anthropology

Ryan Schacht
Assistant Professor of Anthropology; & Research Associate, Population Sciences, Huntsman Cancer Institute
Research Interests: Social and Ecological Determinants of Health Across the Lifecourse
Previous Employment: Postdoctoral Scholar, University of Utah

Degrees: PhD & MA, University of California, Davis; BS, University of Nebraska, Lincoln
Little Known Fact: “By the time I was 13 I had moved 11 times and lived on three different continents.”

Department of Biology

Patrick Horn
Assistant Professor of Biology
Research Interests: Role of Lipids in Plant Growth and Development to Engineer Healthier Plants for Environmental and Human Health
Previous Employment: Research Associate, Michigan State University

Degrees: PhD, Biochemistry, University of North Texas ('13); BS, Biochemistry, University of Texas at Austin ('08)
Little Known Fact: “Prior to deciding to pursue a career in research, I was in the final stages of completing a teacher certification program to teach high school biology/chemistry and coach baseball/football.”

Department of Chemistry

Jun-yong Choe
Associate Professor of Chemistry
Research Interests: Structural Biology; Drug Discovery for Diabetes and Cancer Treatment Targeting Carbohydrate Transporters; Carbohydrate-related Proteins; Protein Engineering
Previous Employment: Associate Professor, The Chicago Medical School, Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science

Degrees: PhD, Biophysics, Iowa State University of Science and Technology ('01)
Little Known Fact: “Our group is one of the few that does both structural biology and functional studies on glucose transporters.”

Department of Chemistry

Heather Vance-Chalcraft
Assistant Professor of Biology; Faculty Fellow, Office for Faculty Excellence; and Director of Outreach, Biodiversity Initiative
Research Interests: Biology Education - Improving Student Success, Impact of Graduate Teaching Assistant Training, and Research Experiences using Citizen-Science Projects; and Community Ecology - Predator-Prey Interactions and Impacts from Changes in the Environment
Previous Employment: Teaching Associate Professor, Department of Biology, East Carolina University

Degrees: PhD, Biology, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign ('03); BS, Biology, Wittenberg University ('97)
Little Known Fact: “I enjoy wading through ponds and streams to catch insects.”
Ausmita Ghosh  
Assistant Professor of Economics

Research Interests: Health Economics; Pharmaceutical Utilization; Health Policy

Degrees: PhD, Indiana University (‘18)

Little Known Fact: “I love traveling, especially exploring national parks. Most recently, I was visiting the Hawaii Volcano National Park and witnessed the spectacular surge of the lava lake in the crater, which was a presage to the looming seismic event. The following day, within a couple of hours of departing from the island, the Kilauea volcano eruptions began.”

Stephen Moysey  
Professor of Geological Sciences, and Director of the Center for Water Resources

Research Interests: Water Resources Sustainability; Groundwater Fate and Transport; Non-Invasive Imaging; Inverse Theory and Decision Making; Geoscience Education; Virtual Reality

Previous Employment: Associate Professor (joint appt), Environmental Engineering & Earth Sciences, and Engineering & Science Education; Co-Director, Center for Geospatial Technologies, Center for Excellence for Next Generation Computing & Creativity, and NRT Program in Resilient Infrastructure & Environmental Systems, Clemson University

Degrees: PhD, Stanford University (‘05); MS, University of Arizona (‘99); BSc, University of Alberta (‘96)

Little Known Fact: “Love to surf!”

Department of Economics

Department of Geological Sciences

Hannah Cooper  
Assistant Professor of Geographic Information Science

Research Interests: GIS; Remote Sensing; Coastal Geography; Sea-level Rise

Previous Employment: Research Assistant and Instructor of GIS, Florida Atlantic University

Degrees: PhD, Florida Atlantic University (‘18); MA, University of Hawai’i at Mānoa (‘13); BA, University of Hawai’i at Mānoa (‘11)

Little Known Fact: “My interest in sea level change stems from my family’s long-term activities in the excavation and preparation of marine fossils, and more recently, dinosaurs.”

Department of Geography, Planning & Environment

Samantha Mosier  
Assistant Professor of Political Sciences

Research Interests: Food and Agriculture Policy and Administration; University-Community Partnerships; Sustainability; and Resilience

Previous Employment: Assistant Professor of Political Science, Missouri State University

Degrees: PhD, Political Science, Colorado State University (‘14); MPA, Auburn University Montgomery (‘09); BA, Public Affairs, Huntingdon College (‘07)

Little Known Fact: “I used to be a professional camera operator.”

Department of Political Science

Aimee W. Smith  
Assistant Professor of Psychology

Research Interests: Pediatric and Young Adult Chronic Illness (e.g. epilepsy, sickle cell disease), Processes and Outcomes, including Medication Adherence; Healthcare Transition; Academic Functioning

Previous Employment: Adherence Center Research Fellow in Behavioral Medicine and Clinical Psychology, Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center

Degrees: PhD, Clinical Child Psychology, Kent State University (‘16)

Little Known Fact: “I’m still on track with my News Year’s Resolution to read 52 books this year!”

Department of Psychology

Charting a course...
NEW LIFE SCIENCES BUILDING
AN ARTIST’S RENDERING
CONSTRUCTION SET TO BEGIN APRIL 2019
WITH A COMPLETION DATE OF AUGUST 2021
Dr. Eileen Angelini
David Julian and Virginia Suther Whichard Distinguished Professor in the Humanities

Dr. Eileen M. Angelini, whose major research interests include French and Francophone culture, literature and history, joined the faculty of East Carolina University this fall as a visiting distinguished professor in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures.

Angelini is the 2018 David Julian and Virginia Suther Whichard Distinguished Professor in the Humanities. Housed within the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences, the professorship is made possible through a generous donation by the Whichard family in honor of David Julian and Virginia Suther Whichard of Greenville.

“It is an incredible honor for me to have been selected as this year’s David Julian and Virginia Suther Whichard Distinguished Professor in the Humanities,” Angelini said. “I am delighted to be teaching courses and contributing through workshops and public lectures to conversations relating to the humanities.”

Through the professorship, Angelini said it is a “true privilege” to “serve as an advocate for the importance of studying languages, literatures and cultures, and engage not only with students and faculty in the department, college and university, but also with the East Carolina community at large.”

As Whichard Distinguished Professor, Angelini will teach a course each semester and host other specialized symposia.

Her first event on Sept. 11 was a FaculTea gathering co-hosted by Joyner Library, where she discussed the Occupation of France during World War II. Angelini showed a documentary film in which she and her co-creator Barbara P. Barnett interviewed Holocaust survivors, hidden children and a member of the French Resistance about their experiences during that time in history.

Angelini taught a course in the fall semester on French Cinema Classics - Francophone History and Culture through Film, where students learned how France, New England, Louisiana, Quebec and Belgium’s history and culture influence current policies on international relations.

On October 18, the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures celebrated student achievements and inducted its most outstanding students into the National French (Pi Delta Phi), German (Delta Phi Alpha) and Hispanic Honor Societies (Sigma Delta Pi). As a member of the Pi Delta Phi Executive Board, Angelini installed the new chapter of Pi Delta Phi at ECU. For the ceremony, Angelini delivered a presentation on “Languages: Life’s Cultural Currency.”

This spring, Angelini will teach a course in French Literature in Translation – War and Memory in France, where she will demonstrate how the impact of events of World War II and the Occupation of France still play a major role in the cultural and economic forces at work in contemporary France.

“My hope is to impart onto my students the need for understanding and respecting the perspective of those who come from diverse cultural backgrounds,” Angelini said. “In today’s ever-shrinking global environment, where individuals from a wide variety of cultures come into contact with one another more rapidly and more commonly than ever before, the need for enhanced cross-cultural communication and cultural sensitivity is highly significant.”

Professor of French Dr. Marylaura Papalas (above), hosted a reception at her home in honor of Angelini following the FaculTea event on Sept. 11.
East Carolina University’s commitment to addressing the challenges faced by rural communities in receiving fresh water is one issue the director of the Water Resources Center plans to address. Dr. Stephen Moysey has been hired as a professor of geological sciences and director and lead scientist for the center.

The center, which is housed in the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences, is a cross-college initiative that includes scientists and faculty from Harriot College, the College of Engineering and Technology, and the College of Health and Human Performance. Members of the center include Randall Etheridge, assistant professor of engineering; Charles Humphrey, associate professor of health education and promotion; Alex Manda and Siddhartha Mitra, associate professors of geological sciences; and Michael O’Driscoll, associate professor of coastal studies.

“Eastern North Carolina faces a wide range of water-related challenges and opportunities for a sustainable and resilient future,” Moysey said. “The activities of the center will pursue fundamental science that has real-world consequences. By empowering rural stakeholders through inclusive research and education initiatives, we will strive to improve the role of science-based decision making across these communities.”

Moysey comes to ECU from Clemson University, where he most recently served as an associate professor of environmental engineering and earth sciences; associate professor of engineering and science education; and co-director of the Clemson Center for Geospatial Technologies, the Center of Excellence for Next Generation Computing and Creativity, and the graduate program in Resilient Infrastructure and Environmental Systems.

“I am honored to lead ECU’s efforts in addressing water issues in North Carolina and around the world,” Moysey said. “The university has shown a substantial interest in advancing this area of transdisciplinary research, and I have been impressed by the large and diverse community of faculty that are eager to collaborate.”

Dr. Steve Culver, chair of the Department of Geological Sciences, commented, “Stephen Moysey is a great addition to ECU’s interdisciplinary team of researchers that deals with water resource issues. As director of the Water Resources Center within Harriot College, he will lead and help define the future direction of research, education and outreach in all things related to water.”

Moysey’s short-term goals include identifying strengths and interests among the ECU faculty, centers, and university research clusters and to align these with funded research opportunities within the ECU Water Resources Center.

To support this effort, he will lead recruitment efforts for three new faculty hires who will play key roles in building...
focus areas for the center – one each in chemistry, engineering, and geography, planning and environment.

“I am also working to identify stakeholders interested in partnering on data-driven initiatives to address resource issues in different community and industry contexts. Such partnerships are particularly important in the eastern portion of the state where there is a sparsity of water data, which ultimately increases uncertainty and risk when stakeholders and the public need to be informed to make decisions about regional growth,” Moysey said.

In this effort, Moysey will look for opportunities to pilot community-based initiatives that can support water education through citizen science and science communication activities.

For example, Moysey is exploring the potential for students working in North Carolina to partner with sister cities in Puerto Rico in an effort to compare, contrast and communicate how physiographic and socio-economic settings contribute to risk and resilience in their communities.

Looking into the future, Moysey has a number of goals for the center and its research cluster.

“Given the existing emphasis on water-related research at ECU, the cluster is poised to become an important focal point for integrated research and education activities for the campus,” Moysey said. “As the activities of the cluster grow over time, we will need to increase the resources available to enable faculty to pursue large-scale, multi-investigator grants. For example, providing research personnel and facilities across departments to support faculty and students in the collection, analysis and curation of data is critical to increasing our capacity for high-level research at ECU.

“Similarly, this research will require the creation of new interdisciplinary graduate degrees along with programs to recruit and retain the best students to fill them. If we are able to provide these types of infrastructure supports, and we are able to focus the efforts of our students and faculty participating in the cluster, ECU will have a strong potential of emerging as a national leader for water research.”

In addition to his role as director of the center, Moysey will teach a hydrogeology and environment course (GEOL3500) beginning this spring. He also intends to increase opportunities for student engagement though research, outreach and study abroad opportunities.

“I am excited about exploring opportunities to engage ECU’s undergraduate students in efforts to understand and tackle the challenges faced in their home communities,” Moysey said. “My passion for water is rooted in experiences that I had as an undergraduate student, so I appreciate the importance of building the opportunities that will inspire and enable our students to become future leaders in the stewardship of our water resources.”
East Carolina University professor of sociology Dr. Mamadi Corra is spending a year in Washington, D.C. Corra was named to a Science and Technology Policy Fellowship from the American Association of the Advancement of Science, the world’s largest general scientific society.

Corra is among 300 new AAAS fellows recognized by his peers. Through the fellowship, which runs from Sept. 1 through Aug. 31, 2019, Corra is working with the Judicial Branch of the U.S. Government, specifically at the Federal Judicial Center – the research and education wing of the Federal Judiciary – located in the Thurgood Marshall Judicial Building.

“The fellowship program is a highly competitive and prestigious one, and receiving the fellowship is a great honor,” Corra said. “So I feel very honored and humbled to receive this award.”

Corra’s main area of teaching and research is in social stratification and inequality, broadly defined. More specifically, his research focuses on social psychology – power and status; race, ethnic, gender and class inequalities; and immigration. He has taught courses in introduction to sociology, principles of sociology, sociology of the family, social structures, social inequality, and racial and cultural minorities.

According to the AAAS website, the Science and Technology Policy Fellowship provides opportunities for scientists and engineers to contribute to federal policymaking while learning firsthand about the intersection of science and policy by addressing today’s most pressing societal challenges.

“High-profile faculty awards like this, and the social and cultural capital they build, make important contributions to our efforts to rise to national prominence as a great university,” former department chair and professor of sociology Dr. Bob Edwards said. “Dr. Corra’s full-time residence as a policy-relevant research scholar in the Capitol will extend and strengthen Harriot College’s professional networks and working relationships in support of its emerging Washington-based academic initiatives and potentially do the same with ECU’s emerging collaborative endeavors with Howard University.”
"Receiving the fellowship gives me the unique opportunity to fulfill a long-standing aspiration – to apply my scientific (sociological) knowledge to public policy," said Corra.

As an example, Corra mentioned that in his first two-and-a-half weeks in Washington he learned something new about a policy-relevant issue that is of personal interest to him as a visually impaired individual; that the accessibility of federal courts may only be framed in the context of the federal judiciary.

“A goal of mine is looking at accessibility issues in the Federal Judiciary with the hope of developing a policy document on improving the accessibility of federal courts,” he said.

“I believe one of the key aspects of being an informed and actively involved citizen is to be aware of how your government works and to contribute in its improvement,” said Corra. “The Science and Technology Policy Fellowship gives me the unique opportunity to do this, while also doing something that I love – research that is public and applied in nature … timely research that is policy-relevant and in a key aspect of our government.”

Corra came to ECU in 2003. He received his Ph.D. in sociology from the University of South Carolina, and his master’s in business administration and bachelor of science degrees in sociology and business administration from Gardner-Webb University.

Since 1874, the AAAS Fellows program has recognized researchers for scientifically or socially distinguished efforts to advance science or its applications. Previous Fellows include astronomer Maria Mitchell, who discovered a comet that now carries her name; inventor Thomas Edison, whose creations included the incandescent light bulb; and anthropologist Margaret Mead, whose field research on culture and personality attracted much acclaim. For more information about the AAAS, including all fellowship programs offered, visit https://www.aaas.org/.
K’Shylah Whitehurst  
Winterville, NC  
Degree: Chemistry

K’Shylah Whitehurst is the first person in her family to attend an university, and she set the bar high during her time at ECU. She was a member of the Chemistry & Physics Living-Learning Community and completed more than 300 hours of community service. One of her most memorable volunteering activities was traveling to Panama through Global Brigades to teach children hygiene practices at a free clinic. And for the past three years, K’Shylah was involved in Dr. Jitka Virag’s research in the Department of Physiology in the Brody School of Medicine.

Professor quote: “She is unwittingly a trailblazer for her generation and she is a star of the future and precisely the type of student ECU needs to continue to recruit if we aspire to be the next great national university.”

William Zahran  
Fayetteville, NC  
Degree: Biology

EC Scholar and Honors College student Will Zahran packed numerous experiences into his four years at ECU, from studying abroad in Prague to writing for the student newspaper, all while maintaining a 4.0 GPA. His main focus, however, was biology. Will joined an ongoing research project studying the ecology and behavior of eastern bluebirds at ECU’s West Research Campus, becoming a trusted data collector and group leader. He was also included in the 2017 State Employees Credit Union (SECU) Public Service Fellows Program, where he ignited a passion for science in Eastern NC students attending summer camps at Sylvan Heights Bird Park.

Professor quote: “Will has the sort of smile that can light up a room, personality to interact with a diverse group of people, and listens more than he speaks. In short, he has the necessary analytical, written and oral communication, critical thinking and personal skills to succeed in any endeavor to which he commits.”

Mira Sampath  
Greensboro, NC  
Degrees: Multidisciplinary Studies, Psychology and Philosophy

Triple major and ECU senior Mira Sampath embodied leadership and service as a student on campus. She served as a leader with the Global Medical and Dental Brigades, an international movement of students and medical professionals working to implement sustainable health systems. She founded the ECU chapter of UNICEF, a student group that works to raise awareness of humanitarian crises around the world. Mira was active with the Chancellor’s Student Leadership Academy, volunteered at the Pitt County Care Clinic and Greenville Community Shelter Clinic as a Spanish translator, and participated in the Inaugural Honors Undergraduate Three Minute Thesis Competition, where she was named the Grand Champion.

Professor quote: “Mira leads with integrity and passion, remaining calm and concise, yet even-handed and equitable—all great qualities to have in a student leader.”

Nadiya Yerich  
Greenville, NC  
Degrees: Multidisciplinary Studies and Public Health Studies

EC Scholar and Honors College student Nadiya Yerich says attending ECU is one of the best decisions she ever made. Her time at ECU fostered an interest in medicine, specifically how health care can work with humanities and social sciences. For an internship, Nadiya spent four weeks in Nepal at a teaching hospital, learning about the impact of biomedicine on Nepali culture. She also studied abroad in Peru as part of a public health research project observing women’s health issues in the country’s highlands.

Professor quote: “Nadiya is the type of student that professors pride themselves in teaching, as she is engaged and willing to accept challenges. She truly wants to learn, and it shows through all of her work and interactions with the material, classmates and professors.”
When Major Karen Riggsbee ‘88 was promoted to deputy chief of the Raleigh Police Department in summer 2018, she became one of the top three leaders in an agency that employs more than 800 officers and 100 civilian staff. She joined fellow Deputy Chief Robert Council ’92 and Chief Cassandra Deck-Brown ’87. All three are graduates of the criminal justice program at East Carolina University.

“Knowing we have that common bond is really cool,” Riggsbee said. “I think it’s good for ECU – we were not picked because we went to ECU, but the fact that we all went there is a plus.”

“It’s absolutely cool,” Council added. “We’ve known about our connection to ECU but to end up in leadership positions in the department is special. It shows the university gave us a good, positive foundation and that we’ve taken the education there and put it to work.”

Interestingly, Riggsbee, Council and Deck-Brown didn’t know each other while attending ECU, but their paths crossed throughout their careers with the police department. And each took different paths to their current positions.

Council was confident in pursuing a criminal justice degree. He wanted to do something that involved helping others and didn’t require being inside all day. An internship steered him to the Raleigh Police Department, where he has worked since attending the police academy in 1993. He became deputy chief in 2017.

Riggsbee and Deck-Brown were less sure at the start of their criminal justice journeys.

“I was like a lot of students in that I didn’t know what I wanted to do. I took a class in criminal justice and fell in love with it. One class led to another and it was truly the path I was meant to go down,” Riggsbee said. “The instructors and professors were not just academics but had been in the field and were really able to give us a sense of what it was like to work in criminal justice.”

After graduating, Riggsbee got her master’s degree at the University of South Carolina followed by a park ranger position with the Raleigh Police Department. She worked her way through the department and now oversees field and special operations as well as the detective division.

Deck-Brown came to ECU planning on becoming a nurse. That turned out to be a bad fit, so she pivoted to criminal justice, where “there was no doubt I had chosen the right major,” she said.

Deck-Brown was offered a position with the Raleigh Police Department shortly after graduating and has worked there for 31 years as a patrol officer, a crime prevention-community relations officer and a detective, among other duties. In 2013, she became the first African-American woman to head the department and the first chief chosen from within the department since 1994.

“It was probably one of the most humbling, surreal, greatest life-impacting experiences a person could have,” she said. “You don’t take it lightly. I accepted that charge with honor. There have been a number of times I’ve pinched myself."

She is also on the advisory board for ECU’s criminal justice program and comes back to campus often.

Dr. William Bloss, chair of the criminal justice department, said having three alumni at the top of the Raleigh police department is beyond impressive. – “I can’t take credit for it, but my predecessors did an excellent job of providing a high-quality undergraduate education that prepared them for graduate success,” said Bloss, who didn’t teach Riggsbee or Council but works with Deck-Brown on the advisory board.
Students Benefit from Alumni and Donor Gifts to University Writing Center

East Carolina University and Harriot College students receive valuable benefits from the University Writing Center preparing them for academic and professional success.

In fall 2017, ECU English alumni Wanda (’75) and Jon Yuhas (’78) gifted an initial $5,000 to establish the University Writing Center priority fund. The purpose of the fund is to continue the vital work performed by the center.

“The writing skills we ourselves learned at ECU have served us well in building successful careers. Writing is important to every profession,” said Wanda, executive director of the Pitt County Development Commission and a member of the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences Dean’s Advancement Council.

“In our professions, we both see well-educated people who, because their writing skills are not good, miscommunicate important information. Writing standard operating procedures, legal documents, medical instructions or providing technical specs all start with solid basic writing skills.”

However, not every question about writing can be covered in the classroom, a concept Jon knows well from when he taught freshman composition.

“Poorly written work says something about the writer’s intellect and character that is almost impossible to redeem,” said Jon, human resources manager at the Roberts Company in Winterville. “The ability to express thoughts in writing is crucial to success in any endeavor.”

Through the UWC, students at all levels may seek support in drafting, editing and revising written papers for university classes and preparing them for written communication projects they may encounter in their careers. All services provided are free of charge.
“I have learned to be an advocate for students, a leader, a counselor and a member of a larger, dedicated family that is committed to supporting ECU’s students, faculty and staff,” said Monica Bloomberg, graduate student and consultant at the UWC. “My experiences collaborating with writers and my fellow consultants solidified my decision to pursue a service profession where I can continue interacting with the community and impacting the lives of others.”

Dr. Nicole Caswell, director of the center said, “Writers who visit the UWC might see the impact more immediately on a particular assignment, but the skills they have gained will serve them long after that assignment is completed.”

In 2018, another $10,000 donation to the center’s priority fund by Dr. Michelle Eble, associate professor of rhetoric and technical communication in ECU’s Department of English, and her husband Shane Ernst, senior vice-president of quality at Glenmark Pharmaceuticals, continues to show that the center’s mission is important.

“The director of the UWC, Dr. Nikki Caswell, has expanded the services of the center to meet ongoing student and faculty needs, and we saw an opportunity to invest in something at ECU that influences the everyday lives of students,” said Eble.

Caswell said the center is eager to serve the Greenville community in the future through events that will assist the public with writing cover letters, resumes, and grants as well as filling out job applications.

“I’m grateful for the donations to the UWC priority fund because these resources allow us to continue our mission on campus while simultaneously working to expand our services to the Greenville community,” said Caswell.

For more information about the UWC, visit ecu.edu/cs-acad/writing/uwc/.
2018 THCAS Homecoming

THCAS Third Annual Scholarship Luncheon

Photos by Rob Taylor Photography and Design
Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences
Annual Honor Roll of Donors

During the past year, hundreds of friends have generously supported Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences with their financial gifts. Contributions from institutions and individuals provide expanded programming, academic opportunities, and enrichment for students and faculty. The following list reflects gifts made to Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences from July 1, 2017, through June 30, 2018.

As with any donor list of this magnitude, it is extremely difficult to ensure that there are no omissions or errors. We have made every effort to carefully check the listing of each contribution. If for some reason a name has been omitted, or incorrectly listed, please notify Harriot College’s Director of Alumni Relations and Outreach, Jessica Nottingham, at 252-737-1753, so that we may correct our records. Thank you.

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Updated as of June 30, 2018
Jeffrey Brame Planned Gift
President of Brame GeoScience, LLC, Durango, CO

$250,000 planned gift to the Stan and Ann Riggs Endowment in Geological Sciences

"ECU and the Geological Sciences Department provided me an incredible education and overall learning experience as I received a BS degree in geology there during 1970-74. ECU geology professors Stan Riggs and Michael O’Conner had a particularly profound influence on me when they employed me as a field and lab geology research assistant during my last two years at ECU.

Stan and Mike took me as an unfocused sophomore geology major and offered me the beginning instruction and tools necessary to become a disciplined, high quality geological scientist. Stan was particularly instrumental in guiding me with his passion for geology and inspiring me to be the best geologist I could be. The out-of-classroom experience I received from Stan and Mike completely overhauled my pursuit of a geological career.

The strong knowledge base and passion for doing geology the right way that I received from Stan Riggs gave me a large part of the foundation to succeed in graduate school and in 42 years as a working professional geologist. Consequently, I felt a strong desire and obligation to show my gratitude to Stan and the ECU Geological Sciences Department with a financial support commitment.

The Stan and Ann Riggs Endowment became the obvious recipient of my desired commitment so I could channel my financial support into projects that Stan designed.

I am always proud to tell people that I have an undergraduate geology degree from ECU and that my geological mentor there was Stan Riggs, the best geologist I have ever known and a life-long friend."

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John Laliotes Political Science Library
by Dr. Alethia Cook

The Department of Political Science is undertaking a major renovation of its library space, thanks to the generous support of John and Ann Laliotes, who are both ECU graduates. John graduated with a degree in political science in 1969, and Ann graduated with a bachelor of arts degree in Spanish in 1969 and a master of library science in 1973.

Traditionally referred to as the Political Science Library, the space is vitally important to the department. Students use it as a place to study, network, work on group projects, and hold club meetings.

John appropriately described the space, saying "Critical thinking starts here," a quote that will be front and center in the library.

The space is also used for undergraduate and graduate seminar classes, graduate student and faculty presentations of their research, faculty meetings, and as a space to host important guests, including featured speakers and those who apply for faculty positions with the department.

The renovation designs transform the room from classroom to boardroom, increasing the room’s professionalism and that of those who learn there. It will further the department’s goal of helping its students to graduate prepared to enter their chosen career fields as young professionals,” said Dr. Alethia Cook, chair of the Department of Political Science.

“The redesigned John Laliotes Political Science Library will also be a great place to meet with prospective faculty members and invited guests, who will undoubtedly be impressed.”

The redesign will have a lasting impact on the department and its students as it will contribute to the department’s ability to attract, train, educate and prepare current and future political science professionals.

The Lalioteses have donated a total of $50,000 to the department for the renovation, and they intend to leave another $25,000 to the department in their estate plans. The ECU Division of Academic Affairs and the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences also have provided significant funding in support of the renovation.
Great Decisions 2019

The Department of Political Science and Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences are pleased to announce the plans for the 2019 Great Decisions Seminar Series

The Rise of Populism in Europe
Dr. William Downs, Dean, Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences

Nuclear Negotiations: Back to the Future
Speaker from the U.S. Department of State

The Middle East: Regional Disorder
Dr. Hanna Kassab, Political Science

Cyber Conflicts and Geopolitics
Dr. Armin Krishnan, Political Science

The United States and Mexico: Partnership Tested
Member of the Consul of Mexico in Raleigh team

Refugees and Global Migration
Dr. David Smith, Foreign Languages and Literatures

State of the State Department and Diplomacy
Dr. Alethia Cook, Political Science

Decoding US-China Trade
Dr. Vera Tabakova, Economics

We’re finalizing plans for some of the speakers. The times and dates are set. Specific dates for each topic and speaker will be released when the schedule is set. A registration interface will also be open at that time.

Time: 7:00 - 8:30

Location: ECU Campus, Rivers 102

Dates:
- January 15
- January 29
- February 12
- March 12
- March 26
- April 9
- April 23

For additional information or if you would like to support the series or sponsor a speaker, contact:

Alethia Cook
cooka@ecu.edu
252-328-5869