Welcome from the Dean

Welcome to the Fall 2014 issue of The Dean’s Desk! As we enter the second month of the fall semester, the accomplishments of our College of Liberal Arts and Sciences students, faculty and alumni continue to make us proud. In August we welcomed the Class of 2018, sent our 14 Fulbright winners off to their overseas assignments and received some very exciting grant news. To stay up-to-date on news and happenings in our College, I encourage you to connect with us on the Web, Facebook and Twitter.

Sincerely,

Adele Lindenmeyr, PhD
Interim Dean

FACULTY FOCUS

NSF Awards $548,000 Grant to Support Dr. Dennis Wykoff’s Research

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has awarded a grant of $548,273 to Dennis Wykoff, PhD, the Dennis M. Cook Gregor Mendel Chair in Genetics in the Department of Biology in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, to support his research project in the College. The project, entitled “RUI: Evolution of Signal Transduction Pathways in Yeast,” investigates the extent to which the gain and loss of genes affects how an organism is able to respond to its environment. The project could lead to uncovering novel antifungal treatments. “Fungal diseases that are dispersed in the human body are often more than 50 percent lethal,” Dr. Wykoff said. “The number of antifungals available to physicians is extremely low, meaning that any new antifungal would be very valuable.” The project will be carried out at the College and will provide research training and experience for Villanova undergraduate and master’s level students. More
Dr. Barbara Romaine Receives NEA Literature Translation Fellowship

Barbara Romaine, PhD, Arabic instructor in the Institute for Global Interdisciplinary Studies, is one of 20 recipients of the NEA Literature Translation Fellowship for 2015. In total, the NEA plans to distribute $300,000 in this round to support the new translation of fiction, creative nonfiction, and poetry from 12 different languages into English. The Fellowship will support the translation into English of the historical novel A Cloudy Day on the Western Shore by Egyptian writer Mohamed al-Mansi Qandil. “Mohamed Qandil’s fiction speaks eloquently to contemporary and historical reality in the Arab world,” said Romaine. “The collision of East and West is a much-visited topic in modern Arabic literature and done well, it is not a crude study in irreconcilable oppositions, but is nuanced and provocative.”

More

Center for Statistics Education Receives Two National Science Foundation Grants

Recently the National Science Foundation awarded the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences’ one-year-old Center for Statistics Education a Data Science grant as well as a Training a New Generation of Statistics Educators grant. They came with awards of $285K and $571K to Villanova, respectively, helping solidify the University’s reputation as a national leader in statistics education. The goals of Center for Statistics Education, under the direction of Michael Posner, PhD, include promoting quality research among faculty and working to improve statistics education in the curricula across disciplines at Villanova, creating programs in statistics education for current students, providing professional development for statistics teachers in the greater Philadelphia region at the K-16 levels and conducting research on effective methods in statistics instruction and pedagogy.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Savannah Jacklin ’15 Spends Summer as NSF Research Intern

Savannah Jacklin ’15 CLAS is shooting for the stars. The Astronomy and Astrophysics major spent her summer as an NSF Research Intern at Vanderbilt University, studying the viability of using the new telescope Large Synoptic Survey Telescope (LSST) to discover new exoplanets. At Villanova she is president of the Villanova Astronomical Society, a Blue Key tour guide and a teaching assistant in several Mendel Science Experience Astronomy labs. Savannah enjoys sharing her love of astronomy with the general public. This summer she volunteered at Vanderbilt’s Dyer Observatory and at Villanova she gives tours of the public observatory in Mendel.
Student Researchers Study Fuel Cells at National Laboratory
This August, Dr. Bryan Eigenbrodt (second from right) of the Chemistry department took four Villanova students—Andrew D’Orazio (far left) ’15 CLAS, Timothy Marshall ’16 CLAS (second from left), Janelle Gerardi ’17 CLAS (far right) and grad student Tamanna Sultana (not pictured)—to Argonne National Laboratory in Illinois to conduct research into the development of more efficient fuel cell devices. Dr. Eigenbrodt and the students in his lab study the chemistry of alternative power generation devices and renewable biofuels.

Introducing the Class of 2018
They’re here! Last month we officially welcomed our freshman class. The College received nearly 7,700 applications for an enrolled class of 868. Fifty-four percent of the Class of 2018 were in the top 10 percent of their high school class.

ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENTS
Catherine Leimkuhler Grimes ’01 CLAS Named Pew Scholar
After graduating *summa cum laude* from Villanova University, Grimes received her Master of Chemistry degree from Princeton University and her PhD in Chemistry from Harvard University. Upon receiving her PhD, she conducted post-doctoral work at Harvard University and Massachusetts General Hospital as a Cancer Research Institute Postdoctoral Fellow. In 2011, she started her own laboratory at the University of Delaware in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry. Grimes and her lab are researching how the human body recognizes and responds to the presence of bacteria. Her work could help to advance antibiotic development, as well as enhance understanding of various autoimmune disorders. Grimes was named a 2014 Pew Scholar in the Biomedical Sciences by the Pew Charitable Trusts.

Karen Trosset ’87 CLAS Celebrates 10 Years with The Today Show
Karen Trosset ’87 CLAS (English) is a producer for NBC News. Since 2003, Trosset has worked with NBC producing special projects and exclusive interviews for the “Today Show,” “Dateline,” and “Rock Center.” Prior to working with NBC, Trosset worked her way up from her first job at ABC News as administrative assistant to producer of “Good Morning America.” Her work has taken her all over the world covering events such as the Gulf War, the 2008 Beijing Summer
Fulbright Winner Mark Bookman '14 CLAS Travels to Japan

Mark Bookman '14 CLAS is one of Villanova University's 2014-2015 Fulbright recipients, all of whom are from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. He graduated summa cum laude with a B.A. in Global Interdisciplinary Studies, minors in Japanese and Philosophy, as well as a concentration in Asian Studies. Currently in Japan for his Fulbright Grant, Mark seeks to explore the intersection of Japanese Esoteric Buddhist linguistic philosophy, epistemology, and soteriology alongside comparable typics in the Western philosophic canon. Upon the completion of his Fulbright he intends to pursue doctoral studies in Buddhism and Comparative Philosophy with the goal of becoming a university professor.