

8-2016

The Update, August-October 2016

University of Northern Iowa. College of Humanities, Arts and Sciences.

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2016 – 2017

AUGUST – OCTOBER NO. 1

THE UPDATE

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, ARTS AND SCIENCES

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Body Image - a moment from Outlines/Shadows (Kendra Gliem)



Laurie Smukler

SCHOOL OF MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP BENEFIT CONCERT

The UNI School of Music hosted the 35th Annual Scholarship Benefit Concert, with the theme being “Postcards from...” The concert began at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, September 23 at the Great Hall in the Gallagher Bluedorn Performing Arts Center (GBPAC) on the University of Northern Iowa campus.

The concert featured guest artist Laurie Smukler, violin, who appeared with the Northern Iowa Symphony Orchestra. Smukler is currently a faculty member at the Juilliard School. She started playing as a soloist with the Cleveland Orchestra at age 14, began her studies at the Cleveland Institute of Music. The founding first violinist of the Mendelssohn String Quartet, Smukler has been co-director of the Collection in Concert series at the Pierpont Morgan Library, and has played on many chamber music series. Smukler has also been a guest artist at numerous festivals. She has been on the faculties of Purchase College Conservatory of Music, Kneisel Hall Chamber Music Festival and School, the Manhattan School of Music, Mannes College, and the Bard College Conservatory.

In addition to Smukler’s appearance with the orchestra, faculty artists Ross Winter, Heather Peyton, Katherine Osborne, James Jenkins, Cayla Bellamy, Polina Khatsko and Dmitri Vorobiev also performed. The Northern Iowa Wind Symphony, combined UNI Choirs and more were also featured. The intermission featured a performance by the UNI Suzuki School during a ‘chocolate course.’ A reception complete with hors d’oeuvres and champagne was held in the lobby after the concert, with music provided by Bob Dunn, guitar, as well as post-show performances in Davis Hall by UNI Opera and UNI Jazz Band students.

The Scholarship Benefit Concerts have been raising scholarship funds for exceptionally talented music students and students in need for over 30 years.

CHAS BRIEFS



THOMAS HOCKEY OSTERBROCK AWARD

CEDAR FALLS, IA – The Prize Committee of the Historical Astronomy Division (HAD) of the American Astronomical Society has awarded the 2017 “Donald E. Osterbrock Book Prize for Historical Astronomy” to University of Northern Iowa Professor Thomas Hockey for the Biographical Encyclopedia of Astronomers. This prize is awarded “biennially to the author(s) of a book judged to advance the field of the history of astronomy or to bring history of astronomy to light.”

The Biographical Encyclopedia of Astronomers consists of four volumes, filled with biographies of 1,800 astronomers. Hockey, who was editor and chief of the project, was assisted on the venture by 430 authors from roughly 40 different countries. The first edition of two volumes was published in 2007, and the second edition was published in 2014.

Hockey and the eight editors under him met to discuss the project about once a year. Hockey says the process took about seven years, and attributes the success of the project to the internet. Without the internet, Hockey says a project of this magnitude would be nearly impossible.

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY SIX-YEAR ACCREDITATION

The Electrical Engineering Technology (EET) program in the Department of Technology, College of Humanities, Arts, and Sciences, University of Northern Iowa, is the only four-year bachelor degree program in engineering technology in Iowa. The EET program is accredited by the Engineering Technology Accreditation Commission of Accreditation Board of Engineering and Technology (ABET).

On August 20 of 2012, the EET program got its first ABET accreditation that traced back to September 30, 2010. However, this accreditation was due to expire on September 30, 2016. On January 13th, 2015, the EET program requested to the ABET to initiate a reaccreditation evaluation visit. On June 30, 2015, the EET program submitted a Self-Study Report to ABET. The report provided a comprehensive general review about the EET program within the past six years. From October 11 to 13 of 2015, an evaluation team from ABET visited the UNI campus and conducted a comprehensive evaluation on the EET program. The results from the conducted evaluation were extremely positive with only a few minor improvements needed. Ever since, with the support from the Department of Technology and the College of Humanities, Arts, and Sciences, the EET program worked with its Industrial Advisory Board to implement the improvements identified by the ABET evaluation team. In May a Final Response Letter was submitted to ABET to state the improvements that the EET program had implemented to meet the accreditation requirements set by ABET. On August 31, ABET issued a letter to UNI and indicated that the EET program is accredited to September 30, 2020.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

TSERING KYI

WOMEN GENDER STUDIES

BY JANEY GRAVEMAN

Although Tsering Kyi already has an English Literature degree from India, she's joined us on campus in the UNI Women and Gender Studies Program. Kyi is a Tibetan refugee born in India, and her grandparents took political asylum in 1959. Since graduating in India, Kyi has decided to go to UNI as a result scholarship program, and from her interest in Women's and Gender Studies.

Since having started at UNI, Kyi found the campus to be larger than what she expected. It was also hard starting off at UNI because English is her second language, and sometimes it is difficult to articulate well with others. Fortunately, having approachable and helpful professors has made her feel more at home on campus. She has also met new people that make her feel accepted and feel like she has the freedom to express herself. Even though she already has been going to UNI for a month, the Rod Library is her favorite place to stay to learn and meet others. Kyi also believes that since starting at UNI, her peers and professors have been boosting her confidence in regard to her studies, and she believes that they will have a strong impact on her future work.

Kyi is happy with her decision to be in the Women's and Gender Studies program at UNI. She is passionate about it, and believes that the courses are something that will play an important role in her life. The program, she says, is interesting and her professors are very helpful. She believes that the readings for her classes are challenging, knowledgeable and thought-provoking. For prospective students wondering if they should join Women's and Gender Studies, Kyi believes the program is essential if you have a keen interest in

learning about women and gender. "The studies will not only shape your perspective, but it will help in great length to change many lives too," Kyi says.

If money wasn't an issue for Kyi, it would be a dream to open a non-governmental organization for slum children in India. However, Kyi still has plans to make a difference back home in India. After graduating from UNI in 2018, she plans to go back to her community in India. She wishes to work at the Tibetan Women Association and women empowerment desk, along with teaching there as well.



Tsering Kyi

NIKKI HARKEN

USMC EDUCATION WORKSHOP

BY CHRISTINE EFFERDING

This summer, Professor Nikki Zumbach Harken had the opportunity to spend a week at the United States Marine Corps (USMC) “Key Leaders in Education” workshop in Quantico, Virginia. She was selected as one of 100 educators from around the nation. Adam Crise, a UNI graduate currently serving as an Officer Selection Officer for the USMC, nominated Harken for the experience. He says of Harken, “I remember her being very impactful as a teacher when I had her class. I know that a lot of students look up to her and that she is a leader on campus. Those reasons coupled with her interest in the military and I knew that she would love to learn about how we make Marine Officers and what Marine Officers do.”

Going into the workshop, Harken says she was honored and very excited. Two weeks prior to leaving for Quantico, she received a very detailed itinerary, but most of it was in military jargon so she didn’t quite know what to expect. Still, she was excited to meet the other educators and have the chance to network with education professionals from around the country.

Once at the workshop, Harken says the group participated in many of the experiences that Marine Corps officers engage in when they first arrive at Quantico. The first day, they participated in a Conduct Leadership Reaction Course, which tests physical strength, mental capabilities, problem solving, and strategic thinking. They also visited and trained with the Marine Corps Martial Arts Center of Excellence, flight simulation, tactical decision games, a visit to the USMC Museum, and even had lunch in the Mess Hall. Harken also had a meeting with several USMC officers

including one of only 13 female colonels. Harken says her feelings coming away from the experience are hard to explain. “I always appreciated our military – but I realized, as civilians, how much we don’t understand about that life. It’s relatively easy to think about our freedoms on Memorial Day and the 4th of July. As an educator, I enjoy the freedoms our military fought for daily. The life I live, every day. I have the right to teach material that is controversial, I can disagree with our government, I challenge students to question the status quo – all of those actions. I do that without ever thinking I will be harmed. I do that every day without worrying about a phone call asking me to lay down my life for that right. Knowing other people would lay down theirs so I can continue teaching our youth is very powerful... and humbling,” she explains.

The number one thing Harken has taken away from the experience is that “failure leads to perseverance and perseverance leads to excellence.” Harken has long been an advocate for failure. “Failure,” she says, “happens when we don’t know or don’t put forth the amount of effort it requires to do something well. It’s easy to proclaim what we do well, it’s much more difficult to recognize weakness.” She learned that at Quantico cadets fail, and at times the goal is to make them do so. By identifying weakness, they can work and persevere through challenges until they reach excellence.

Harken says that now more than ever she uses this in her teaching pedagogy in order to challenge her students on a higher level. She recognizes that the students might be confused or fail, but thinks that’s okay because the weakness can then be recognized and improved upon. Harken says, “For me it’s not just about content knowledge, but about being the very best human being they can be.”



Nikki Harken

SCIENCE IN THE MEDIA, \$30,000 GRANT

BY CHRISTINE EFFERDING

The University of Northern Iowa faculty have been working to engage students in community service through science. The Science in the Media project spearheaded by Dr. Christopher Martin, Professor of Communication Studies, is one branch of this extensive effort. The project developed in Martin's discussions with Dr. Kamyar Enshayan. Enshayan, director of the Center for Energy and Environmental Education, who is working on a larger grant from the Roy J. Carver Charitable Trust, on Science in Action.

Science is often dismissed or poorly covered in the news media, and the project is designed to remedy that problem. Faculty, staff and students in the Department of Communication Studies will research, create, and implement projects to strengthen the relationship between science and the news media so that news stories can improve public discourse. They have developed two approaches to involve students, faculty, and the community.

The first approach is through a Science in the Media Resource Bank. The goal is to empower journalists and the public with the information to tell better stories, and work hard to verify their information. Students will research potential topics by consulting with leading environmental scientists in the state and region, and translate the specialized knowledge into easy to use tip sheets on these major issues. IowaWatch.org, an independent, nonprofit, and nonpartisan investigative news service, has agreed to be one of the project's primary journalism partners. IowaWatch.org shares its stories for free with news outlets across the state.

The second approach is getting Science in the Media in high schools. The program would like to stay true to UNI's historical mission as a teaching institution and take their "Science in the Media" workshop on the road to high schools, working with the Iowa High School Press Association. Student fellows would lead the training effort with support from faculty advisors, the goal being to build capacity for science reporting from the ground up, starting with young journalists and their teachers.

There are a lot of findings from scientists, particularly regarding issues that relate to living in Iowa, that need to be "translated" by journalists from expert knowledge to everyday common sense. Martin says the recent floods in and around the region are a reminder of why we need to execute change and distribute scientific knowledge to the public. "We are living in a time of climate crisis, with serious threats to our water quality, our soil, and the rest of our natural environment. Science can contribute a great deal to public discourse about solutions, but we need to bring that science into the discussions and make knowledge-based decisions and public policies."

Students involved with the project will gain experience in examining scientific reports, translating scientific ideas and questions into a more public vernacular, and teaching high school students about the challenges and triumphs of reporting evidence based science stories.

THEATRE

CORNERSTONE THEATRE PERFORMANCE

BY CHRISTINE EFFERDING



Cast members from Outlines/Shadows -
a Theatre UNI presentation for
Cornerstone students. Fall 2016

For the past seven years, the UNI Department of Theatre and the Cornerstone Program have collaborated to produce a theatrical presentation that dramatizes Cornerstone's common read or put on a production that reflects the common read's themes. This year the common read was a collection of works by different authors, entitled "The Best American Nonrequired Reading 2015."

The Theatre Department selected "Wear Areas" by Sheila Heti, Heidi Julavits and Leanne Shapton, and "You are in the dark, in the car..." by Claudia Rankine from the collection. These pieces dealt with identity, how people treat and look at their bodies, and how our own bias and prejudice color the way we look at others. The Theatre faculty and students worked together to draw similarities between the two pieces, and integrate stories from their own experience to put together a theatrical staging reflecting those themes.

Workshop on the performance started on August 7, and went up until school began. Each day the students and faculty worked on the text and design. Professor Matt Weedman, who wrote and directed the piece, worked with the students on analyzing the common reads and generating discussions, stories and events that shaped the body of the script. Professor Jennifer Sheshko Wood and Ron Koinzan worked with them on bringing to life the design of the scenery, projections, and lights.

While the two original texts were included in the script, the majority of the words came from the students' own experiences with body

image, racism, prejudice, family and how they view the current world. Sheshko Wood says the students' stories "connected the Cornerstone students more solidly to the content of the common read, because they recognized themselves in the words."

In the second week of school, the students performed the piece 11 times, allowing for the Cornerstone sections to come during their class periods. Professor Matt Weedman then led a talk back after each performance and engaged the audience in a discussion about the process. The student performers were also able to reflect on what the experience was like for them and talk to the audience. Theatre Major Kendra Gliem, an ensemble actor in the production, says she "wanted the viewers to take away the importance of what is happening in the world right now" and be more empathetic to how other people view themselves.

Rachel Morgan, Cornerstone instructor and program co-head, says seeing the production and connecting it to the common read, her students were able to have classroom conversations about privilege, gender politics, and identity. Morgan says, "Seeing the actors tell their stories juxtaposed to the text helped my students not only understand what they read and see their own stories, but most importantly, the stories of others. As a new college freshman, it can be easy to disengage, given the recent experiences of leaving a hometown, a history of friendships, and physical closeness of family. However, the texts and the play really connected students to the stories of strangers during their second week of school."

The Cornerstone faculty uses the experience to spur writing assignments and Literature Circles as well as whole class discussions. Morgan's students are in the process of writing their first narrative essay, which is related to "Wear Areas," and how we create those wear areas. A student in Professor Deb Young's class said the production helped them understand "not who I am, but why I am." In class discussion in Morgan's class, a student said that for the first time he realized how scary it could be to move through America as an African American male.

Poet Mark Doty says "Literature makes other people more real to us." By combining a reading and performance experience, the collaboration between the Department of Theatre and Cornerstone created a successful and powerful production.



Political Discourse - a moment from
Outlines/Shadows (Keegan Patterson)

EMBARC

SENIOR SEMINAR SERVICE

BY CHRISTINE EFFERDING

This year, Dr. Cara Burnidge is trying something new with the Study of Religion major senior seminar by incorporating service-learning into the curriculum. Through the Service Learning Institute held this past May, Burnidge was able to meet and develop a partnership with the Ethnic Minorities of Burma Advocacy and Resource Center (EMBARC). EMBARC is a non-profit organization that helps Burmese refugees resettle in Iowa, and that values and maintains refugee empowerment and leadership. It is led by refugees who have successfully resettled and are now helping newly arrived refugees with their transition.

EMBARC has a mentorship program that pairs refugees with members of the community to work on English language skills and learning about American culture. Burnidge says, “Seemingly simple notions of knowing where to buy food and how to get there are often arduous tasks to a family newly resettled who not only does not speak English but has never heard of Hy-Vee.” Her senior seminar has partnered with EMBARC to help the organization develop the curriculum for refugee job readiness.

Throughout the semester, the class will develop job readiness modules as a part of the job readiness curriculum for future mentors to use with their refugee mentees. Burnidge says, “The simple yet profound idea motivating the class is that while UNI students are preparing themselves for careers by preparing their resumes, cover letters, applications, interview skills and the like, they will also be helping others in the Cedar Valley community do the same.”

Religion folds perfectly into the students’ service as religion is at the heart of much of the refugee resettlement in Iowa. Burnidge says, “Governor Branstad has made it clear that he sees faith communities as holding prominent roles in refugee resettlement.” The relative responsibilities of churches and the state is a topic regularly discussed in religion courses. Students will study how the politics of religion affects the issue, and also look at how religious leaders and organizations are solving this problem.

Burnidge is drawing on past experiences for the creation of this partnership. After she graduated, she took an AmericaCorpsVISTA position with the Kansas Campus Compact at the University of Kansas. Her job was to help establish its newly created Center for Service Learning. She helped faculty members incorporate service-learning into their class and learning goals. The Senior Seminar Course at UNI is the first time she has had the opportunity to do so with her own class. Burnidge says, “It has been an interesting experience because it feels like I’ve come full circle and now sit on the other side of the table.”

PHYSICS

NSF AT UNL

BY CHRISTINE EFFERDING

This past summer, Dr. Pavel Lukashev, an Assistant Professor at the UNI Department of Physics, and two UNI students, Ibro Tutic and Juliana Herran, participated in the National Science Foundation (NSF) Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) program at the University of Nebraska Lincoln (UNL) Materials Research Science and Engineering Center (MRSEC) facilities. Dr. Lukashev, who worked at UNL as a research assistant for a few years, knew about this program and advertised this highly competitive opportunity to students at UNI.

Herran, Tutic, and Dr. Lukashev performed theoretical and experimental studies of various Heusler compounds which are considered as candidate materials to exhibit highly spin-polarized current at room temperature.

According to Dr. Lukashev, a high degree of spin polarization in electron transport is one of the most technologically appealing materials that can be used in spintronics – an emerging technology utilizing a spin degree of freedom in electronic devices. An ideal substance to exhibit highly spin-polarized current is a room temperature half-metal, a material which behaves as a conductor for one spin channel and as an insulator for the other spin channel. Using first principles calculations, the team studied a candidate material which could exhibit such properties, a semi-Heusler compound, IrMnSb. In particular, they investigated spin-dependent transport properties of this material under hydrostatic pressure and epitaxial strain, and also studied how electronic structure of IrMnSb changes in low-dimensional geometry, i.e., thin film.

Everyone who attended had a positive learning experience. Dr. Lukashev and his colleagues wrote a few papers as a result of the research, while the experience got Herran and Tutic thinking about graduate school.

Herran, a Chemistry, Mathematics and Philosophy triple major with a minor in French studies, says the most memorable part of the experience was “interacting with scholars from a variety of backgrounds.” She would like to return to UNL next year, and is seriously considering graduate school in Nebraska.

Tutic, who is pursuing a Physics major and Math minor, says the most memorable part for him was interacting with people who had such a high drive for research and attaining advanced degrees in the field. “I think that when you are surrounded by these types of people, it just drives you more, because you see how hard everybody else is working and you want to work even harder,” he says. Prior to the program Tutic was unsure about grad school, but says he is now considering it as an option if he decides not to go into industry.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

OCTOBER – NOVEMBER

OBSERVATORY SHOW

Thursdays, September 1 –
November 3, 9:00 pm
McCollum Science Hall 137

OCTOBER DIGITAL IMAGE EXHIBIT

October 1 - 31 - 9:00 am
Rod Library

MAJORS IN MINUTES

October 24 - 7:00 pm
Old Central Ballroom, Maucker Union

FINAL THURSDAY READING SERIES FEATURING TAYLOR BRORBY

October 27 - 7:00 pm
Hearst Center for the Arts

CAB-TOBERFEST

October 27 - 7:00 pm
Maucker Union

HALLOWEEN HOUSE

October 28 - 4:30 pm
Second Floor, McCollum Science Hall

THEATREUNI: TWELTH NIGHT

October 28, 29, November 3-5 - 7:30 pm
October 30, Nov 6 - 2:00 pm
Strayer-Wood Theatre

GUEST ARTIST RECITAL: "SPIRITUAL STANDARDS" MARKUS BURGER, PIANO AND JAN VON KLEWITZ, SAXOPHONE

October 29 - 7:30 pm
Bengtson Auditorium, Russell Hall

FALL GRADUATION FAIR

November 2 - 10:00 am to 3:00 pm
Great Hall, GBPAC

UNI TEACHER EDUCATION INDUCTION CONVOCATION

November 2 - 4:00 pm
Great Hall, GBPAC

INTERNATIONAL COFFEE HOUR

November 3 - 3:00 pm
Room 113, Maucker Union

VIOLA FESTIVAL

November 5 (All Day)
Davis Hall, GBPAC

COUNTRY UNPLUGGED FEATURING: MARK CHESNUTT, LORRIE MORGAN, AND JOE DIFFIE

November 5 - 7:00 pm
Gallagher Bluedorn Performing Arts Center

UNI SYMPHONIC BAND

November 8 - 7:30 pm
Great Hall, GBPAC