For more than 150 years, the University of Kentucky has been providing life-shaping education to generations of young men and women. To accomplish this task today, alumni support is needed as never before. Through outright gifts, and simple gift and estate planning, you can change lives and make a difference. You can help students follow in your footsteps.

To request more information without obligation, contact Beth Wells, Senior Director of Development and Advancement, College of Arts & Sciences, at 859-257-4541 or elizabeth.wells@uky.edu.

"I value my UK education."

"That’s why I support the College of Arts & Sciences’ Academic Excellence Fund. I’m proud to help today’s students achieve their dreams through scholarships, undergraduate research and education abroad opportunities."

Susan Tomasky ’74
Energy industry consultant and Former President, AEP Transmission

An Equal Opportunity University

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Dear Friends,

For the second year in a row, the University of Kentucky welcomed a record number of students – more than 5,000 incoming freshmen. As more students come to UK, the College of Arts and Sciences has made a strong commitment to helping students get the best start in their academic career.

In four years, the College launched four Living Learning Programs, in partnership with Colleges across campus, and is helping launch the Creative Arts LLP next fall. The Spring 2015 graduating class included the first alumni of Wired, the College’s first Living Learning Program. LLPs appear to have a meaningful influence in increasing retention and success rates, helping students decide on majors and career interests, and fostering a sense of community and lasting friendships. You can read more about our four current LLPs - Wired, STEMCats, Greenhouse and LEXengaged - on page 12.

LLPs are just one piece of the student success puzzle. We have much more to do to ensure that all of our students thrive at UK. The FastTrack program, in its fourth year, also had a record number of incoming freshmen participate. Three hundred and eighty-five students took part in intensive course work before the fall semester began, preparing them for the rigors of undergraduate classes and expectations. Read more about how the FastTrack program is preparing students on page 18.

As you read through this issue of Ampersand, you will have a chance to learn about some of the ways we are working to help students succeed, including: biology cohort scheduling (page 32), accelerated programs (page 33), and student employment opportunities (page 28), among many others.

As we look ahead, we eagerly anticipate the opening of our new state-of-the-art science building, scheduled to open in less than a year. I cannot overstate the transformative effect this building will have on the way we teach science at UK for decades to come. Learn more about the progress of our new Academic Science Building on page 4.

We are excited that the University’s new strategic plan prioritizes student success. The faculty and staff throughout the College of Arts and Sciences are deeply committed to our students. We are excited about the progress that we are making and recognize that none of this work would be possible without our alumni, donors and friends, whose support allows us to provide world-class education, research and service opportunities.

I appreciate and thank you for your continued support!

Yours,

Mark Lawrence Kornbluh
Dean, College of Arts & Sciences
kornbluh@uky.edu
A New Age of Science & Research Building for the Future

Construction on the University of Kentucky’s new Academic Science Building (ASB) began in fall 2014. Scheduled to open in fall 2016, the building’s design places integrated, engaged learning at its center piece.

Plans for the upcoming ASB emphasize environmental responsibility, utilizing natural light, outdoor teaching areas and rainwater recycling. But the value of the ASB’s design extends far beyond its construction — the innovative lecture halls and classrooms inside will help the College of Arts and Sciences realize its vision of improving science education through exciting new models of engaged in-class teaching.

The College of Arts and Sciences, together with its design and construction partners, JRA Architects and Messer, hosted a “topping off ceremony” in August 2015 to mark the securing of the last and uppermost beam atop the ASB. The ceremony signified completion of the structural phase of the three-story, $112 million project.

In addition, he is an outstanding mentor of doctoral students. All 20 of Carlson’s doctoral students have gone on to excel in professional positions. For more than two decades, Carlson has also provided clinical supervision to graduate students, interns, and residents at UK’s Orofacial Pain Center. Over the past five years, he has developed an internship program for students in clinical psychology, which will be evaluated for possible accreditation by the American Psychological Association.

In her expedition, she will also be photographing plastic waste, cleaning up beaches with local conservation groups and speaking with children and legislators about the environmental state of their waterways.

By completing this project, Pohl will set a world record as the youngest woman to solo kayak the Mississippi River.

Pohl’s daily blog about her journey can be found here: http://alyssumpohl.weebly.com/paddle-on
W

We thought we'd do one more run,” said Cory Zigmund about a trip he took to Colorado to visit his brother during the summer of 2013. They were on a backcountry glacier and planned to hike to the top and snowboard down. On the ride down, Zigmund hit a ditch on the rough slope and wiped out, completely dislocating his shoulder.

“WRD went right along with what I was doing in English and the things I would like to do in the future, which include writing about my experiences exploring both the more accessible outdoors and remote wildernesses,” Zigmund said.

English had been one of Zigmund’s favorite subjects in high school, and writing has always been a part of his life. In fact, during middle school, just for fun the kid his father wrote a book together. It was a story where kids traveled to a new dimension — having fantastic adventures that Zigmund has come close to experiencing in real life.

Hiking, climbing, snowboarding, and diving through both water and the sky — he’s explored a lot of terrain. This spring, Zigmund started his work on being the first student graduating with a Bachelor of Arts from UK’s Department of Writing, Rhetoric, and Digital Studies (WRD). Throughout his time majoring in English at UK, Zigmund took several WRD classes including Travel Writing and Multimedia Writing, and when he heard that WRD was offering a major, he sought information about what he would have to do to doubly major. He spoke with WRD faculty Beth Connors-Manke and Brian McNely and learned he only needed 24 additional credits. Not one to turn down an opportunity to try a new adventure, Zigmund went for it.

“Everyone in the WRD program has been phenomenal. They’ve been extremely helpful. Any questions I’ve had have been quickly answered. They’ve been outstanding,” Zigmund said.

And the praise goes both ways. McNely shared that “Working with Cory was one of the best things that could have happened to me as DUS (Director of Undergraduate Studies): helping him navigate a path to the degree helped me navigate the WRD curriculum, and it taught the administrators me and others of my new role in the department. Professors often note that they learn much from their students; this was definitely the case for me as I worked with Cory over the last year, in both my role as a faculty advisor, and as a professor.”

According to WRD faculty Joshua Abboud, Zigmund “represents the kind of student we look for in a WRD major.” Having worked with Zigmund in multiple classes, Abboud considers his student to be “bright, curious, hard-working, and possessing a self-awareness of how his work impacts the world around him. All of Cory’s work has shown an ability to connect his professional interests to his personal interests in innovative ways.”

Both Abboud and McNely note Zigmund’s ability to integrate his love for travel and exploration with his skills in writing and media. It was in their classes that Zigmund began developing a website that he had been previously theorizing, bringing his two passions together. It’s an outdoor adventure website — part guidebook, part survival manual, part trail map — that he’s compiled from his own experiences and written for people of all skill levels. He hopes to continue building it by collaborating with some of his friends who share the same interests.

Abboud has seen the progress of this project and explained that Zigmund wants to help “others find the same kinds of excitement he derives from these excursions, and he soughts that excitement contagion.”

Zigmund shared his belief that “you should always try to find ways to combine things you enjoy, with what experiences, what knowledge, and what education you have and put it all together. English and WRD will definitely enable you to write and inform your audience about whatever passions you share.”
Q. What did you think about dorm life? What was it like?
Baxter: “I moved into the new dorm on campus, which was Donovan Hall. It was brand new. Even though my parents lived in Lexington, I really wanted to live on campus and they were cooperative enough to let me do that. I lived on campus all three years I was there. I lived in a sorority house for two years. I loved living on campus, both in the dorm and at the sorority house. When you live on campus, you feel much more a part of the college community, and it is much easier to participate in the life of the campus. And I made life-long friends by living on campus.”

Thelen: “Blanding III was really great. It was interesting because everyone on my floor congregated together all the time and became really good friends. I’m actually now living in a house with four guys I had not known before my freshman year who I met in the dorms. So dorm life for me was really great.”

Q. Why did you choose UK?
Baxter: “I had lived in Lexington. My father was a big sports fan. I’d been going to see the Wildcats play football and basketball since I was in junior high. I wanted the kind of atmosphere that UK was going to offer me. I had attended an all-girls’ college for my freshman year and wasn’t impressed with the experience I was having. I wanted the UK experience, and I never regretted my decision to transfer.”

Thelen: “I chose UK over three other schools. One, because I got the most scholarship money here, and two, because I remember walking on the tour by the steps of POT and was like ‘ok this is where I’m going to school.’”

Q. What was UK like during your time in college and what do you think about the changes happening at UK over the next few years?
Baxter: “It was very small compared to what it is now. I think there were about 5,000 students. The campus itself was much smaller. When I was there, we knew everyone. We knew what sororities everyone was in, what fraternities they were in and it was a lot of fun because it was so much smaller then. I don’t even recognize it now when I go back. I don’t even know where I am on campus in general. Most of the buildings I’m not familiar with. So it was just a very different place than it is now.”

Thelen: “I think it will be really great in a few years. I think it’s definitely going to look fantastic, but it is a lot of construction. Ultimately, it will be really great especially when I look back as an alumna. I think it’s headed for good things.”

Q. Describe your favorite memories from your time at UK?
Baxter: “I would have to say that my favorite memories are my cheerleading days. It was wonderful being able to be at the games. I felt like such a part of the campus and student body. It was really a treat to get to travel with the team. It was a really wonderful experience for me. It gave me a lot of self-confidence and my fellow cheerleaders were really fun to be with.”

Thelen: “I had come back from the library late one night my freshman year and walked into my dorm. Everyone on the floor had started hanging out. I came in and I was just so tired and ready to shower and go to bed. Everyone was just sitting there and they all looked at me and were like ‘Nick, come hang out!’ If it wasn’t for that moment, if they hadn’t asked me to hang out, I wouldn’t be living with the people I’m living with and it would have changed a lot.”

Q. Did/do you participate in activities or clubs?
Baxter: “I was a cheerleader for two or three years. I was also on the synchronized swimming team. When I was at the university we didn’t have women’s sports like they do now. We were called the Blue Marlins. We put on shows. It was just a lot of fun and now it is an Olympic sport - so it was

continued on p10
important! I was also a member of the Kappa Alpha Theta sorority. I really enjoyed sorority life. I had a lot of friends in other sororities and I lived in the sorority house for two years. I was also involved in student government and many Greek activities.

Thelen - “I play on the club soccer team. I’m also an A&S Ambassador for the College of Arts & Sciences. I’m on the K Book editorial board. Last semester, I took part in a collaboration between writers and artists called ‘Gather, Connect, Create’ and we worked together and had an exhibit as part of the Beaux Arts event.”

Q. Did/do you have a favorite professor?

Baxter - “I had a favorite English professor. I don’t remember his first name but it was Professor Grabstein. I had several classes with him. He was a very tough teacher, but an excellent professor.”

Q. What were/are some of your favorite classes?

Thelen - “I really enjoyed ‘The Road’ by Cormac McCarthy. I read "The Great Gatsby" in high school, and had to read it again for American Literature. We looked at it and examined it in different ways. It really struck me this time around.”

Q. What was/is your favorite hangout spot on campus? Off campus?

Baxter - “As an English major I had to do a huge amount of writing. I do believe that was a big benefit to me in law school, especially for the bar exam. I went on to teach English, speech and drama before I went to law school. But for law school, I think that the writing was probably the most valuable thing I learned.”

Thelen - “I think that UK has prepared me a lot because the curriculum, especially in the literature classes, has really taught me to take my time and pace myself with my writing.”

Q. How did/is your time at UK prepare/preparing you for life after graduation?

Baxter - “As an English major I had to do a huge amount of writing. I do believe that was a big benefit to me in law school, especially for the bar exam. I went on to teach English, speech and drama before I went to law school. But for law school, I think that the writing was probably the most valuable thing I learned.”

Thelen - “I think that UK has prepared me a lot because the curriculum, especially in the literature classes, has really taught me to take my time and pace myself with my writing. I think it’s helped me focus and helped make it more of a science. I have a few career goals. I would definitely like to become published. I have also been working with some friends back home, trying to put together an annual art exhibition. I want to make it a platform for young artists in high school. Ultimately, I just want to write whether it be for a magazine or a newspaper.”

Q. What advice would you give current or incoming English students at UK?

Baxter - “I would advise them to make the most of their college years – to study hard, work hard, and to play hard as well. There is never another time in their lives when they will have the opportunity they have during those years where they have wonderful academic access and wonderful social life access and clubs to join, societies to belong to and all the wonderful professors and opportunities the College of Arts & Sciences will give them. I would urge them to get embedded in the college community and learn to become a responsible adult and to enjoy themselves socially and responsibly. Every part of your life is unique, but this is such a unique time in their lives academically and socially. I would just tell them to make the most of it, enjoy it, prosper from it and lay a foundation for the rest of your life there. They certainly have the wonderful opportunities at the University of Kentucky to do that. I’d.”

Thelen - “Be prepared to read a lot. If you don’t read the texts, you won’t do well. I know that sounds simple, but it’s funny to me how many people I sit with in class who don’t read the material. They are limiting themselves. Be prepared to read and work hard. It can get tedious at times with reading so many papers, but just have perseverance. I would say to just trust yourself and if it’s something you want to do, then you should definitely do it.”

As an English major I had to do a huge amount of writing. I do believe that was a big benefit to me in law school, especially for the bar exam.”

Q. Are there any books you were assigned to read that had an impact on your life or that you really enjoyed?

Baxter - “I don’t remember any specific titles, but the books I read in English literature were very important to me in my teaching career. When one studies English literature, one also learns English history. And so you end up teaching not only literature, but history as well. I have also enjoyed learning the English history for myself and my travels since English history impacts the history of so many other countries.”

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Q. What was/is your favorite hangout spot on campus? Off campus?

Baxter - “My favorite campus hangout spot was the Student Union. We got physics.”
FROM REGULAR OLD DORMS TO AN EXPERIENCE THAT TRANSFORMS

Living Learning Programs at UK are changing the way students engage in their first year on campus.

In fall 2011, the College of Arts and Sciences embarked upon its first foray into offering first-year UK students a Learning Living Program. Louis Hahn, who graduated with a B.S. in biology this year, was a member of that very first class of Wired. He sat down with Nathan DeWall, psychology professor and one of the inaugural co-directors of Wired, to reflect on his experiences with the Living Learning Program and discuss how it has helped shape his future.

Louis: I had a friend who was also coming to UK in the fall and at that point I also decided that I wanted to come here, and she actually brought it up to me. It just all looked really fascinating to me. I decided to apply and get in.

Nathan: If you could think of some specific story or cool things that happened socially in Wired during your first year, what might they be?

Louis: One thing I remember was the Study for the Cure initiative that we did. A lot of the students were really ambitious and wanting to make a difference in the community and we came up with a program called Study for the Cure. The idea was that local businesses would donate money for each hour that we studied which would benefit the UK Children’s Hospital. It was just an amazing experience because all of us rally together. We had 200 people that lived in Keeneland Hall and tons of people showed up to the event as well. We were all just studying so it was academic-focused. It was a great way to actually accomplish things and motivate each other and at the same time, do something for a great cause. College can be very competitive sometimes but when you’re really apart of an LLP everybody wants to see you succeed and you want to see the people around you succeed as well.

Nathan: How do you think that Wired is helping you move beyond UK?

Louis: The connectedness is what it comes down to a lot of the time. It’s knowing that I have all these great connections that I made when I was 18-years-old and knowing that I’m always going to have those moving forward. It’s a great thing to know that I have friends and mentors and supervisors that I’ve had since I was 18 that I can always go back to with questions. They can help me moving forward as I move into professional careers.

Nathan: If you could go back to the first day that you moved in, when we were helping you move in, what piece of advice would you give yourself that you wished you had known that you know now?

Louis: This is going to sound cliché to a certain extent, but just be yourself. It’s the only person you can be. Everybody is worried being in a new environment. They don’t know what they’re doing. At the end of the day, people will enjoy you for who you are. They are there to help you, especially when you’re a member of an LLP such as Wired. People were just so supportive. I didn’t have to worry about pretending to be interested in something or anything like that or not being true to myself. There are these great classes that you’re a part of. The professors that are teaching them are there to mentor you and help you. They’re interested in this small environment and community-based learning program as much as you are. The people around you are there to help you succeed as well. All you can do is embrace who you are and stay driven.

Wired is all about connecting students with each other and with faculty in the community and really making the University of Kentucky, which is a very big university, a very small place.

Louis: I was an Arts & Sciences Ambassador for a year. I taught UK 101. I really wanted to make a difference with the incoming freshmen as well. I saw that as a way to do it, to help them in their transition. I also became an Undergraduate Instructional Assistant for the STEMcat program so I once again was helping freshmen students in their adjustment to college and seeing how they learn. I got involved in undergraduate research, which was really awesome.

Nathan: Wired is all about connecting students with each other and with faculty in the community and really making the University of Kentucky, which is a very big university, a very small place. What drove you to be a part of Wired?

Louis: I had a friend who was also coming to UK in the fall and at that point I also decided that I wanted to come here, and she actually brought it up to me. It just all looked really fascinating to me. I decided to apply and get in.

Nathan: How did your first year in Wired form the rest of your time at UK?

Louis: Wired was a great launching pad for myself. It really promoted how I wanted to be involved on campus and the things I wanted to do moving forward. So, I became an Arts & Sciences Ambassador for a year. I taught UK 101. I really wanted to make a difference with the incoming freshmen as well. I saw that as a way to do it, to help them in their transition. I also became an Undergraduate Instructional Assistant for the STEMcat program so I once again was helping freshmen students in their adjustment to college and seeing how they learn. I got involved in undergraduate research, which was really awesome.

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Link to the full podcast on A&S website: http://wired.as.uky.edu/first-chapter
The whole country is talking about STEM attrition – especially for women and Sciences. “There is a real effort to reverse this trend.”

The program, which wrapped up its first academic year, began in the fall of year of coursework?

How can schools improve both competency and time to degree for STEM students? How can they expose incoming students to the variety of career opportunities in STEM fields? Most importantly, how can programs reduce the rate of freshman attrition – a factor which reveals that a stunning 40 percent of students in biology, chemistry and math leave STEM after or before the second year of coursework?

“The whole country is talking about STEM attrition – especially for women and minorities underrepresented in STEM – as well as the low level of diversity in these fields. When we analyzed our data at UK we found those same problems,” said Thushani Rodrigo-Peiris, a post-doctoral scholar in the biology department working on STEMCats with program director and Department of Biology chair Vincent Cassone and Adrienne McMahan, Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Student Affairs and Residential Colleges at the College of Arts & Sciences. “There is a real effort to reverse this trend.”

The result of this effort is STEMCats, an innovative new Living Learning Program created through a grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. The program, which wrapped up its first academic year, began in the fall of 2014 with 225 students (including 72 from Bluegrass Community and Technical College) and is already showing positive effects on student success.

STEMCats creates a sense of community by building course sections specifically for participants, but it also addresses the problem of student attrition by making institutional improvements in the teaching methods and courses themselves. New introductory classes incorporate research on effective teaching methods, emphasizing hands-on, inquiry-based learning and student-centered teaching. Students are also educated on the diversity of STEM careers through regular lectures and demonstrations. According to Rodrigo-Peiris, one of the key components for fighting attrition is to expose students to a wide variety of career possibilities – including many they may have never considered.

“A lot of students just target medical school and have anxiety because they can find it difficult or uninspiring. We are putting them at ease by revealing all of the jobs available for them, exciting careers they aren’t aware of,” she said.

This component was put into practice during this past spring semester when STEMCats students engaged in a semester of original research, working with STEM faculty to learn how laboratory science is conducted while addressing real-world issues through hands-on exploration. Research positions are rare for freshmen, but with 17 departments and 62 faculty members involved in STEMCats, participants had a wide range to choose from.

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Students in David Atwood’s lab prepared a compound capable of removing arsenic and mercury from water. As Atwood points out, this kind of experience is vital for educating students on the realities of working in a laboratory.

“Students obtain direct, hands-on knowledge of laboratory research. They are able to see chemical concepts from coursework put into practice in the lab,” he said.

Randall Voss says he really appreciated the chance to work with a group of 12 freshmen focused on a single goal rather than several students working individually on separate projects. “I think it is more likely to involve students in a project that truly advances science,” he said. “I think the program is additionally valuable because it introduces these freshmen to the scientific process at a very early stage in their experiences at UK. This has the potential of moving more students toward careers in research and academia.”

Voss included the results of his students’ work in an International Institute of Health (NIH) grant proposal, as well as a presentation he will deliver on behalf of his team at the 2015 International Lamb Development and Regeneration Conference.

Research in Alan Fryar’s lab resulted from a proposal submitted in 2014 to study water quality in and around Lexington. His students collected eight rounds of water samples from sites behind the Gluck Equine Research Center and McConnell Springs, testing them for levels of dissolved oxygen, pH and heavy metals, among other factors.

“I had people who served in this role for me and they helped me on the right path. I wanted to do the same thing,” he said. “As a senior, it brought it all full circle for me.”

Looking back, Appelman feels the new UIA role was a success because it bridged the gap between students and faculty. “It’s good because you’re a student – so you’re more on their level – but you’re also older and you’ve been through it. You help build support, and it makes a good resource for the students,” he explained.

I n recent years, STEM fields – science, technology, engineering and mathematics – have been confronted with new issues on both an academic and professional level. With predictions of a shortage of STEM employees on the horizon, concerns over STEM education are rampant.

How can schools improve both competency and time to degree for STEM students? How can they expose incoming students to the variety of career opportunities in STEM fields? Most importantly, how can programs reduce the rate of freshman attrition – a factor which reveals that a stunning 40 percent of students in biology, chemistry and math leave STEM after or before the second year of coursework?

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In this year’s STEMCats program, many participants live together in one dorm and UIAs, supplemented by peer mentors, are helping with day-to-day adjustments – both ideas borrowed from Wired, another UK Living Learning Program.

“We are building on institutional experiences, on the successes faculty and colleges (within the university) have achieved so far,” explained Rodrigo-Peiris. Importantly, opportunities are also being made for students to follow the program if they can’t live in the STEMCats-sponsored residential hall.

Through collaboration with programs such as FastTrack and biology cohort scheduling, STEMCats will continue to grow in order to meet the demands of STEM education. Numbers already demonstrate that enrollment for women and minorities in STEMCats surpasses university averages.

“We are trying to incorporate all methods of teaching and exposure we can recognize as effective,” Rodrigo-Peiris said. “We are making progress. It’s all an experiment.”

“I think STEMCats is going to help give a lot of freshmen similar to myself the keys to success in a STEM career along with a love for knowledge attained through firsthand research,” Johnson added.

Want to support future STEMCats? Contact Beth Wells at elizabethwells@uky.edu or 859-257-4541 to find out how to name the new STEMCats lab in the new Academic Science Building.
The Development of Greenhouse

In 2014, the College of Arts & Sciences and the College of Agricultural, Food and Environment paired together to create the Greenhouse community to engage students with sustainability issues relevant to campus, the Lexington community and the regional environment. Students get to know Lexington from the bottom up to understand how the environment shapes the human community, and vice versa. Through field trips and other co-curricular activities, students learn about sustainability efforts in the region. Greenhouse students extend their classroom learning through community engagement with local organizations and through connecting with like-minded students committed to developing a sustainable campus and Lexington community. Greenhouse allows students to immerse themselves in interesting courses and learn from dedicated faculty members.

FALL 2015

All Greenhouse students take:

Connected Course:
Pathways and Barriers to Environmental Sustainability
The course introduces the principles of environmental sustainability in the context of the campus, local and global communities, including food deserts and local food production, the role of urban forests in providing ecosystem services, energy production and use, consumerism, transportation, water sources and uses, storm water, traffic, deforestation, and methods for protection and restoring ecosystems.

Students participated in one of three tours with the Fall class:
- Local food tour where students visited the Lexington farmers market and then volunteered at Southeast, a local non-profit.
- FEMA tour where students toured a FEMA storm water project site.
- Bread box tour where students toured FoodChain and Broke Spoke to learn more about local sustainable businesses.

SPRING 2016

Students choose one of three courses:

A World of Rivers
Using Ellen Wohl’s book “A World of Rivers” as a foundation, the class explores the multiple roles of rivers and how humans interact with them. Activities included readings, movie viewings, a canoe trip on the Kentucky River, reflective writing, and group discussions.

Energy and Society
Students in this course examine energy production through a social science lens. Topics covered included climate change, the extraction and burning of fossil fuels (coal, oil, and natural gas); nuclear energy; renewable energy sources (wind, solar, hydropower, biomass, geothermal); challenges to transportation sustainability; and the politics and power dynamics limiting social change around energy production and use.

Real World Sustainability: Stepping into the Community
This course provides students with the opportunity to learn how others have developed new ideas in the service of sustainability, and how they are implementing those ideas through the development of various types of organizations. The focus of this course includes learning about specific organizations on campus and in Lexington, that in some way address a goal pertaining to environmental sustainability. Students learn more about the individual organizations, but also about how each organization is formed, where the kernel of the idea comes from, how they are sustained financially and through volunteers, and how they define and measure their own success in accomplishing their objectives.

Student who participate in the Real World Sustainability class participate in a mini-internship. Sites have included:
- Seedleaf
- Broke Spoke
- Arboretum
- UK Herbarium
- UK Urban Forest Initiative
- Big Blue Pantry

The Sustainability Challenge
This course examines the challenges and benefits associated with living a more sustainable lifestyle. Students gain first-hand knowledge by making personal changes in their lives and encouraging others to do the same. Expect lots of hands-on activities. Typical course activities include blogging, guest speakers, and field trips.

Engaging in the Community

As a member of this living learning community, students are introduced to ideas, concepts and notions of civic engagement, considering the opportunities and obstacles which enhance and impede engagement. Civic engagement is applied to students’ day-to-day life. Through course readings, discussions, guest speakers, and off-campus tours, students obtain an understanding of the larger community in which they live, Lexington, and in grasping the multifaceted character of Lexington, students leave LEEXengaged able to encounter any American city as an involved community member. This community focuses on engagement, service learning and social justice.

Horse Capital of the World

During the 2015-16 academic year, LEEXengaged is reflecting on Lexington as the Horse Capital, looking at the horse community from the perspectives of African American jockeys from the past, women in the industry, high stake holders, animal welfare advocates, among others.

Students this year are:
- Visiting and learning about the historical importance of the East End of Lexington.
- Taking a ghost tour of Lexington.
- Touring a famous horse farm.
- Taking part in an arts project.
- Listening to city dignitaries.

...
A TRANSITION MISSION
FastTrack and FOCUS programs continue to expand with the College’s spotlight set on student success

By Guy Spriggs
Photography by Dana Rogers
Illustration by Jourdan Rahschulte
A&S academic advisor James Thomas, revealed that the FastTrack program has become an integral part of efforts to help students transition to the college classroom and set them up for success in the College of Arts & Sciences.

The curriculum for FastTrack has expanded over the last four years, and now gives students invaluable introduction to UK’s math, biology, chemistry, engineering, Spanish and WRD courses.

A key part of the program’s continued growth is the recent addition of FOCUS (FastTrack Orientation for College Undergraduate Success), a component built around developing the non-academic skills students need to achieve in college and set them up for success in the classroom, meet faculty and find out about resources.

FOCUS grew out of sections of A&S 100 aimed at providing outreach to students on academic probation. The course, which was co-taught by A&S academic advisor James Thomas, revealed valuable points of intervention in mitigating the anxieties and challenges that can limit student potential. Both exit, and student response surveys suggest the course was a success even in its initial stages, reflecting a significant improvement in retention for participants in the course when compared to the university-wide average.

“We found we were helping those students stay at UK, and they were commenting about how this should be available to everyone,” Thomas said. “We talked to Ruth Beattie about developing an angle of FastTrack that mirrored the tracks that existed, but was a continuation of our course, focusing on transitioning to college and applying it to all students.”

Ruth Beattie, professor in the Department of Biology and associate dean of advising, works with program faculty to manage content and offer logistical oversight. She says FOCUS is an essential part of how FastTrack prepares students for the level of analysis and work expected at UK. “FOCUS activities are geared toward study skills, learning strategies, note-taking skills, time management — things students need to succeed,” Beattie said.

As a result, student feedback on the program is overwhelmingly positive. FOCUS participants Joannan Duff, Monet Proctor and Kelsi Webb all found the program — and the FOCUS content in particular — instrumental to their success and say they would recommend it to anyone. Duff appreciated learning about on-campus services and says the program made it more possible to achieve academic success as a freshman. Proctor says the program made it more possible to achieve academic success as a freshman. Proctor said FastTrack helped her develop productive learning strategies, note-taking skills, time management — things students need to succeed. Webb felt the activities suggested the course was a success even in its initial stages.

The components of the FastTrack program are relatively simple: students come to campus a week before the start of the fall semester and have six hours of classroom instruction each day built around the coursework they will take in the upcoming term. However, the benefits of the program are huge, and its successes have led to significant growth.

Thirty-nine students participated in FastTrack’s first year and 50 joined the second year (2013). In those first two years, FastTrack students performed much better in fall math and biology coursework than students who did not enroll in the program. In 2014, as curriculum expanded and FastTrack became linked to the STEMCats Living Learning Program, the number of participants swelled to 270.

“Being part of FastTrack and STEMCats results in much better retention. Students who do both are retained at a 94 percent rate, which is huge,” Beattie said. “The program has grown quite considerably — this year 365 students participated.”

Participation in the program also has benefits beyond the classroom. “Students can get settled and organized, but they can also learn to navigate campus, experience the classroom, meet faculty and find out about resources. It makes a huge difference to students,” Beattie said.

“We’re trying to get them connected to everything we do,” Thomas said. “What FOCUS does is find that X factor: what stops them from succeeding as best they can. If we can find that, we can better address student needs.”

“I would really recommend FastTrack for any incoming student, not just those in the STEM disciplines. And because we’ve expanded it, it really is open to anyone. I would love to see every A&S incoming major taking part in the program,” Beattie added.

The program’s success has led to significant growth and opportunities for students who may slip under the radar. “I believe every student we admit can graduate from here — no doubt in my mind,” Thomas said. “What FOCUS does is find that X factor: what stops them from succeeding as best they can. If we can find that, we can better address student needs.”

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As FastTrack faculty taught a number of participants in the summer of 2015, FOCUS similarly expanded to improve outreach across the university. Two new courses — ASPIRE (Academically Sound Preparation for Involving Research Education) and RISE (Resource Inflated Sessions in Education) — provided a research-intensive curriculum for students with an area of academic concern and mentoring opportunities for students who may slip under the radar.

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Learn how you can help make LLPs, FastTrack, and other student success programs available to more students. For more information contact the development office at giveback@uky.edu or 859-257-4541.

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Gurney Norman was born in Grundy, Virginia, in 1937. He grew up in the southern Appalachian Mountains, and was raised alternately by his maternal grandparents in southwest Virginia and his paternal grandparents in eastern Kentucky. He attended Stuart Robinson School in Letcher County, Kentucky, from 1946 to 1955. Norman attended the University of Kentucky from 1955 to 1959, graduating with a degree in journalism and English. In 1960, he received a Wallace Stegner Fellowship in Creative Writing at Stanford University where he studied with literary critic Malcolm Cowley and the Irish short story writer Frank O’Connor.

After Stanford, Norman spent two years in the U.S. Army. He returned to eastern Kentucky in 1963 to work as a reporter for his hometown newspaper, The Hazard Herald. Leaving newspaper work to concentrate on his fiction writing, Norman took a job with the U.S. Forest Service as a fire lookout in the Cascade Mountains of Oregon in the summers of 1966 and 1967. In 1971, his novel “Divine Right’s Trip” was published in The Last Whole Earth Catalog and subsequently by the Dial Press and Bantam Books. In 1977, his book of short stories “Kinfolks,” which received Berea College’s Weatherford Award, was published by Gnomon Press.

In 1979, Norman joined the faculty of the University of Kentucky in the Department of English. In 1996, he returned to his role as fiction writer, filmmaker, and cultural advocate was honored at the 15th annual Emory and Henry College Literary Festival. In 2007, the Appalachian Studies Association awarded Norman the Helen M. Lewis Community Service Award, which recognizes exemplary contributions to Appalachia through involvement with and service to its people and communities. Norman was selected to serve as the 2009-2010 Poet Laureate for the Commonwealth of Kentucky. On May 8, 2011, Norman was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree from Berea College.

Julia Johnson was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1971. Julia Johnson is an associate professor of English and director of the new Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing program at UK. Johnson earned a B.A. from Hollins College and an M.F.A. in Creative Writing from the University of Virginia, where she was a Henry Hoyns Fellow. Prior to joining the faculty at UK in 2011, she taught at Hollins University, the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and in the Center for Writers at the University of Southern Mississippi. Johnson is the author of “Naming the Afternoon,” published by Louisiana State University Press, which won the George Garrett Fellowship of Southern Writers New Writing Award, and most recently, “The Falling Horse,” published by Factory Hollow Press. Her poems have appeared in “The Cincinnati Review,” “Poetry International,” “The Southern Poetry Anthology,” “Sentence: A Journal of Prose Poetics, Washington Square,” and numerous other journals and anthologies.
It’s quiet on the floor, except that I can hear from high up in the tower with vivid clarity the demolition of the Student Center outside my window, a curly mass of scrap metal on dirt where the bookstore stood just a day before. My office phone rings, always a kind of surprise in this age of email, and I pick up. It’s Gurney and he says:

We talk about how hot it is and I ask if he’s on his way and then encourage us to have the conversation via the phone, with parking such as hassle, the heat, etc. I’d sent him a few questions for this article and so we go over those again but in typical Gurney fashion, “Hi, Julia”

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he begins to tell a story:

“Have the students changed?”

I ask him. And we agree to hang up and for him to send the answer via email.

Digitization has changed my creative writing students a little. The digital evolution has changed even me. It has made us more innovative. Sometimes in class we all take out our iPhones and enter the same words at the same time to see if we can make the room explode. We tried this writing exercise 10 years ago but had no luck then either. Maybe we haven’t really changed at all.

What was the other question?

Questions of digital technology aside, I think today’s creative writing students are much like their counterparts 10 or 15 years ago. Most of them appreciate being invited to write stories from their imaginations or personal experiences. Most appreciate constructive criticism of their stories, including comments and suggestions by their peers. Especially pleasing to a writing teacher is the sense of humor among student writers of every generation. Sometimes creative writing is called “imaginative” writing. So when the students in one class undertook to make the walls of the classroom vibrate by all simultaneously entering “e pluribus unum” on their iPhones, I felt the slight tremor too.

I remember being surprised the first time I saw Gurney with his iPhone, a gift from his wife, Nyoka Hawkins.

My office phone rings, always a kind of surprise in this age of email, and I pick up. It’s Gurney and he says:

“I am going through my email folders to find some of Gurney’s early notes to me from four years ago, to find things he said earlier on the idea of a new MFA program. We’re now in the first summer after its inaugural year and I’ve been in Lexington exactly four years.

I find from yesterday this note:

Julia,

Don’t leave, I will be right over!!!!

Gurney

The digital conspiracy against me continues. I did not receive your email. Please send it again, let’s be in touch.

Gurney

Julia,

The digital conspiracy against me continues. I did not receive your email. Please send it again, let’s be in touch.

Gurney

Julia,

Don’t leave, I will be right over!!!!

Gurney

It’s late June and I’m typing at my desk in Patterson Office Tower, 12th floor. I’m listening for the elevator’s automated emphatic female voice to announce “12th floor!” and I’ll lean back in my chair to see down the hall, to watch for Gurney Norman to appear around the corner.

It’s quiet on the floor, except that I can hear from high up in the tower with vivid clarity the demolition of the Student Center outside my window, a curly mass of scrap metal on dirt where the bookstore stood just a day before.
I continue scrolling through the old messages and find so many, too many to include here. I am thinking about how fast the last four years have passed. And it seems like yesterday I had just moved into my new office (down the hall—I’ve since moved to a larger, swankier, corner office in the tower). Gurney pointed to the Joe Craft building and told me of the “mythology” as he put it, of Kentucky basketball. It seemed abstract, until a few weeks later, after classes had begun, when tents appeared. I thought it was an outdoors store expo of some sorts, displaying various tents, large and small, but then in hours, they multiplied by the dozens, and then by the hundreds. It was Big Blue Madness and I was in the thick of it. I come across an email from Gurney with the subject: “Planning for AWP Chicago 2012” (AWP is the national conference of writing programs).

December 9, 2014

Dear MFA Colleagues,

Be it known throughout the world that UK’s inaugural 2014 MFA Program and its historic, supremely successful ENG 607 Poetry/Fiction creative writing class was excellent, we knew we had created a success together. I wanted to mark the occasion with a flourish so I sent them the following email:

Dear MFA Colleagues,

I am grateful for the influences of Toni Morrison’s work, particularly “The Bluest Eye” and “Beloved.” Toni Cade Bambara reminds me to keep my voices clear and full of laughter. I am also grateful for Salvador Plascencia’s “The People of the Southside,” “On Love and Other Demons.” “On Love and Other Demons” reminds me to be lush in my writing.

I meant to share my immortal proclamation with you earlier. As the recent semester was ending, morale in the inaugural 607 poetry/fiction class was excellent, we knew we had created a success together. I wanted to mark the moment with a flourish so I sent them the following email:

I archive that email in the folder marked Important. &

“Planning for AWP Chicago 2012.”

Think 50 years ahead, collect materials for our successors.

Trust me, 50 years go by fast.

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Dec 9, 2014
Honors, fellowships, awards, the Dean’s List — these are markers of academic success at UK. Fostering student success is the foundation of the College of Arts & Sciences, but it is not limited to academic success. The Student Employment Office and many departments that employ students help student employees pursue their professional passions and allow them to build transferable skills along the way.

Stephanie Morris, program manager in the A&S Student Employment Office, is equal parts liaison and advocate for the 115 students she places in positions in the college. She’s often students’ first professional contact in their job search. Morris sifts through resumes of applicants when a new position opens and selects a few to interview before passing on her recommendations to the hiring department.

A&S offers student employees valuable skills on the road to professional success.

BY SARAH SCHUETZE
ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANDI CLARK
When meeting with potential new student employees, Morris says she knows pretty quickly if the student is a good match for a position. She asks herself, “Do they make eye contact with me? Do they talk really easily or do I have to pull answers out of them?” And sometimes, she admits, it’s intuition and a good sense of what the department managers are looking for.

When Morris interviews students for jobs in A&S, she listens for their skills and qualifications, but also pays attention to their interests and passions. She says that she might recommend them for a position even if she was “missing out on creative abilities lie, it’s being that human element in there, and I had to pinpoint where I feel my intuition and a good sense of what the department managers are looking for.”

In this way, Morris is truly an advocate for student employees. “You have to get them to stop and think about what they want to do and what they can do, and what might be the best fit for them,” she says.

“Creating an atmosphere that allows students to feel valued and important makes a difference in the output you see,” Allen said. “When someone is given that kind of creative freedom, it’s wonderful to watch them fly.”

In addition to being valued staff and pursuing professional dreams, student employees are getting essential work experience and building skills that will help them when they enter the workforce — many with impressive resumes and portfolios.

Unlike the projects done for a class, tasks done as an employee in the Hive, the Advising Office or in a department have “real world” components. Student employees have to consider deadlines, customer expectations, budget and time constraints, goals of the college, and applications of the final project.

“My hope is that our student employees believe that the experience they are receiving in the College of A&S, and specifically in the Hive, is one that prepares them for a career doing something they are really passionate about,” said Bradley. “Nothing pleases me more as a supervisor of students than when I receive a call from an employer interested in hiring one of our students for a full-time position.”

A&S offers student employees the first steps toward professional success. **“I applied for the job on the off chance that I would get it, and it’s changed my entire life.”**

-Kendra Sanders

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Morris does what she can to help students think of these positions as stepping-stones to a career. She’s working with the hiring departments to implement bi-annual reviews so student employees can get feedback on their output. She’s also working to develop workshops to help students refine their resumes and prepare for interviews. Another future endeavor includes field trips for students to get connected to area businesses. The Hive has arranged those for its student employees for years, and some former Hive employees have even gotten jobs at the companies they have visited.

Bradley are co-directors of the Hive, Every college student has to decide on a major, but fortunate students also find their passions while in school. Faculty and staff — many with impressive qualifications, include field trips for students to get connected to area businesses. The Hive has arranged those for its student employees for years, and some former Hive employees have even gotten jobs at the companies they have visited.

Bradley both emphasize that student employees in the Hive are treated as staff, not as students. In fact, Morris says that students serve the college as valued staff members and work side-by-side with full-time staff. They project manage, they make presentations to college professionals, and make real contributions to the college.

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A&S offers student employees the first steps toward professional success.
What this does is shrink the university. Even in a Registrar and the A&S Dean’s Office, students were and see plenty of other people they know because characteristics and courses needed to fulfill the collaboration between advisors, the University city in the entire state of Kentucky. In order to supplement the resources enabled by UK’s size will have as many as four to six courses in the same in cohorts of roughly 20 students. Through collaboration between advisors, the University Registrar and the A&S Dean’s Office, students were grouped together based on incoming academic Start this fall, biology majors were block scheduled in different – not radical, but a fundamental change in biology major. This means incoming biology majors who, with just a little nudge, can be successful. We want to do that,” Hedge said. &

They’re in every class,” said Jesse Hedge, assistant dean for enrollment management & decision support in the College of Arts & Sciences.

According to Ruth Beattie, associate dean of advising and professor in the Department of Biology, evidence suggests that students can feel isolated in a large program like biology and struggle when they don’t identify quickly enough with a major.

“It’s easy for someone to feel lost. We want to increase retention and student success rates, and this makes both the university and the major (itself) much smaller,” she said.

Cohort scheduling in biology looks to shrink the size of campus for incoming freshmen.

BY GUY SPRIGGS

It’s going to help form relationships and connections that will encourage students to stay here and do better. It will make a difference with individual students. There are students who, with just a little more help, can be successful. We want to do that,” Hedge said.

“We thought this would be a good way to help students form bonds, build relationships and get acclimated with the major and university,” added Raegan Wilson, senior scheduler and data analyst in the College of Arts & Sciences. “A lot of students come to college and don’t know many people. If they have 19 of the same students in all their classes, it won’t be quite as overwhelming.”

“Started this fall, biology majors were block scheduled in cohorts of roughly 20 students. Through collaboration between advisors, the University Registrar and the A&S Dean’s Office, students were grouped together based on incoming academic characteristics and courses needed to fulfill the biology major. This means incoming biology majors will have as many as four to six courses in the same section as the rest of their cohort.”

“Hey you look familiar!”

Accelerated Opportunities

The College of Arts & Sciences continuously strives to create and provide opportunities and programs for students interested in furthering their education alongside their undergraduate degree. There are now three opportunities for students in the college.

BA-MA University Scholars Program

The Department of Hispanic Studies and Department of Modern and Classical Languages, Literatures and Cultures has partnered with the graduate school to provide an opportunity for students to earn their B.A. and M.A. degrees in four years using the University Scholars Program. Highly motivated and well-prepared students can take advantage of this opportunity in the following four majors within the College of Arts & Sciences: Classics, French, German, and Spanish. By maintaining a good academic standing, students can enroll in graduate courses where up to 12 hours will count as dual credit toward both undergraduate and graduate requirements and graduate with both degrees within four years.

BS/MD Program

The BS/M.D. Accelerated Course of Study offers students the chance to complete a bachelor’s degree (B.S. or B.A.) in biology and earn an M.D. degree in only seven years. The program gives gifted high school students who are certain that they want to become physicians or physician-scientists the opportunity to combine their undergraduate and professional education at the University of Kentucky. Students in the program enjoy a wide array of benefits, including a rigorous undergraduate schedule, critical academic and career advising from select faculty, and opportunities to meet with and shadow specific practicing physicians in a select field of interest. The BS/MD program also provides enrichment experiences in the College of Medicine designed to acquaint students with research, clinical, and community service opportunities.

UK-BLUÉ: Bachelor-to-Law Undergraduate Education Program

The College of Arts & Sciences and the UK College of Law have collaborated to provide a program for students with an interest in law to enhance their academic success. The UK-BLUÉ (Bachelor-to-Law Undergraduate Education) program allows high achieving and strongly motivated students to earn both B.A. and J.D. (Juris Doctor) degrees in six years. The program is offered to students majoring in English, history or political science. Students will be offered enrichment activities in the College of Law that acquaint them with the legal, clinical, community service, and career opportunities that a law degree makes possible.

To learn more about Accelerated Opportunities please visit: students.uky.edu/accelerated-opportunities
A small, two-story building in Elkhorn City, Ky., is bursting at the seams with tools, posters, log books, union manuals, typewriters, train sets, more posters, safety gear, uniforms, train seats and other artifacts of Appalachia's railroad history.

USC senior and history major Taylor Adams notes, “They even have some things that are really hard to find now in railroad museums like dining car china and a vespascope, which is a massive piece of machinery that sits in the middle of the museum and is their crowning glory.”

Adams got to know the collection at the Elkhorn City Railroad Museum intimately last summer when she interned there for two months. It’s a small museum in a small town (she estimates that 500 people live there). The museum has a tiny budget and no paid staff — it’s run by three volunteers who worked on the railroad before the Elkhorn City train yard closed in 1981.

A museum like this one can instill pride in the community as well as help boost an area’s tourism. In addition to a beautiful natural environment, Appalachia offers a variety of historic tourism options — historical markers, museums, and heritage sites — and these can boost local economies. Therefore, by helping the Elkhorn City Railroad Museum, Adams was also helping the surrounding community.

“My job,” Adams explains, “was to capture some of the volunteers’ stories and to use what they were telling me along with my own historical research to create video narratives for the museum.” The museum had plenty of artifacts, but it was missing a sense of story to tie the pieces together. “A museum doesn’t just need stuff; it needs narrative,” she said.

As it was, people who had no knowledge of trains or the local railroad history might walk into the museum and think, “Huh, that’s cool stuff.” Adams points out that “the guys that work there can tell you everything about anything that’s in there, but there’s nothing there that I can go in and read.” A patron might leave the museum without really learning about why the railroad was so important to the area.

It’s perhaps no surprise that the importance of the railroad in Appalachia was directly related to the importance of coal mining in the region.

Trains and coal had a symbiotic relationship. “In the historical sense, people moved into the mountains to start mining coal in the early 20th century, so trains and coal really grew parallel,” Adams said. “The more coal companies there were, the more train tracks there were because they had to get that coal out and sent across the world. Coal was sent to Italy, Japan — all over the world.”

Elkhorn City was especially significant in this history because it was a major stop on the Clinchfield Railroad Route, a popular and important railroad in the area. However, the dependence on trains diminished in the mid-20th century as automobiles became more common, steam engines were traded for diesel, and coal mining became mechanized.

Despite relying on all this, Adams claims she’s not a historian of the railroad. She learned a lot about it through her internship at the Elkhorn City Railroad Museum, and she has personal investment in Appalachia.

She grew up in eastern Kentucky and became an Appalachian Studies minor after taking an introductory course her freshman year. “Through this course,” Adams said, “I discovered that I had a passion for the region and realized I wanted to do an internship there.”

Adams arranged the internship through UK’s Appalachian Center and received financial support for the otherwise unfunded project when she won the Department of History’s Daniel B. Rowland Community Internship Award.

The Rowland Internship awards students interested in doing community service, historical education, public history, or historical preservation. When Adams saw the announcement for the award, she felt like it was describing her.

Adams loves history, but she doesn’t want to go a traditional, academic route after she finishes her degree. She liked the idea of doing public history, but hadn’t had an opportunity to explore it until that is, she won the Rowland Internship. She says her time at the museum “gave me an idea of what it would look like to do public history work, and it really established that was what I wanted to do with my life.”

Adams was the first winner of the Rowland Internship, which is named after Emeritus Professor of History Dan Rowland who retired in 2012. Rowland’s research specialty was early Russian history, but he developed a passion for community engagement and history preservation in Lexington when he moved to Kentucky nearly 40 years ago.

Rowland was involved in community engagement before it was a real priority among academics. Nonetheless, he found a passion for the work.

“My feeling was, I have this one life to live and I’m going to live it the way I think is best and to take advantage of whatever opportunities come my way and do whatever I think is useful,” Rowland said. “I always think of this internship as a way to practice the craft that I love in a community setting.”

The most recent recipient of the Rowland Fellowship is Robert “Kody” Roark. He interned this past summer with the UK Tomorrow Corps to reach youth in Appalachian communities and encourage K-12 literacy through summer reading programming. Roark’s research interest is Appalachian music history. He says his experience with the Rowland Fellowship was “dazzling” and it was a “great opportunity.”

Reflecting on her graduate work, Rooney recalled a two-semester class she took from Dan Rowland, which she described as “dazzling.” It was obvious to all that Rowland had a passion for his area of expertise — really, “all things Russian,” as Rooney said. Rooney and Rowland also share a love of music and singing. In fact, they now serve on the board of a Lexington-based Bach choir. Also like Rowland, Rooney has always tried to find ways to be active in her community whether it be through hands-on involvement or providing financial support.

“Certainly in every town I’ve lived in, in a small way, I’ve been a part of getting things on their feet,” she said.

Read the full story at: as.uky.edu/dan-rowland
Roger Di Silvestro was born in Cleveland, Ohio, and raised in Nashville, Tennessee. He received his bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Kentucky in 1972. Di Silvestro served as CEO for Athlon Sports Communications, a media company specializing in publishing and sports marketing, and retired in 2006 after 30 years with the company. In 2006, Di Silvestro co-authored "The Art of Constructive Confrontation," a methodological guide to building productive personal and professional relationships with reduced conflict. Today, he spends the majority of his time traveling the world and teaching constructive confrontation.

Di Silvestro was an initial member of the College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Advisory Board. He is a lifetime member of the UK Alumni Association. In 2004, he created the Di Silvestro Professorship, dedicated to enhancing research excellence within the College of Arts and Sciences. Di Silvestro was instrumental in building the first YMCA Teen Center in Nashville, Tennessee. He has remained devoted to the YMCA "We Build People" program that operates safe and educational childcare programs throughout middle Tennessee. He was recognized by the College of Arts and Sciences in 2004 for his volunteer and philanthropic involvement. Di Silvestro has one son who is scheduled to graduate from UK in 2015.

Linda Challis Gill is a native Kentuckian from Louisville and Ft. Thomas. No stranger to adversity throughout her childhood, she learned how to overcome and succeed while growing up with an alcoholic mother. A scholarship allowed her to attend the University of Kentucky, and she received her bachelor's degree in 1962. After considering a career in teaching, Gill chose to travel and see the world instead. She joined American Airlines as a flight attendant and later worked in public relations. She later pursued graduate work in counseling at San Francisco State University. She has been involved for more than 40 years in professional volunteering in the academic medical communities of Stanford Medical Center in Palo Alto, Methodist Hospital in Houston and the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston.

In 1997, Linda and Jack Gill established the Gill Foundation of Texas, an educational philanthropy organization that has awarded nearly $35 million in gifts and grants. Linda serves as executive director of the Foundation, as well as advisor to the Gill Heart Institute at the University of Kentucky, advisor to the Gill Center for Biomolecular Sciences and board member of the Houston Methodist Hospital Community Council.
Dr. David H. Johnson was born in Dalton, Georgia. He received a bachelor's degree in zoology (1970), now housed in the Department of Biology, and a master's degree in botany (1972) at UK before returning to his home state to attend the Medical College of Georgia, where he received his medical degree in 1976. He served as Chief of the Division of Hematology and Oncology at Vanderbilt University Medical School from 1993 to 2010. Johnson was the inaugural recipient of the Cornelius Abernathy Craig Chair in Medical and Surgical Oncology and co-founded the Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center. In 2010, he relocated to Dallas to assume the Donald W. Seldin Distinguished Chair in Internal Medicine at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center.

Johnson's research is focused on developing effective therapies for lung cancer. He has received numerous awards for his research activities. In 2014, he was named to Thomas Reuters' list of the World's Most Influential Scientific Minds. Johnson has served as chair of the Board of Directors of the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) and is currently a trustee of the ABIM Foundation. In 2004-2005 he served as president of the American Society of Clinical Oncology and championed the development of one of the country's first cancer survivorship programs along with a pioneering cancer quality care initiative. Johnson is an elected member of the Association of American Physicians, master of the American College of Physicians and fellow of the American Society of Clinical Oncology.

Bobbie Ann Mason was raised on her family’s dairy farm in Mayfield, Kentucky. Mason received her bachelor’s degree in English from the University of Kentucky in 1962. At UK, she was a staff member of the Kentucky Kernel and wrote a weekly satirical column. Gurney Norman was one of her first inspirations as a writer. She took creative writing courses from Robert Hazle, who was a mentor to a cluster of writers — including Norman, Wendell Berry, James Baker Hall and Ed McClanahan — who all made their way back to UK to teach in the Department of English. She earned her master’s from Harpur College at Binghamton University in 1966, and after finishing her doctorate in literature at the University of Connecticut in 1972, she turned to writing fiction. In 1980, during a period of renaissance of the short story, The New Yorker magazine began publishing her fiction.

Mason’s first book of fiction, “Shiloh & Other Stories,” won the PEN/ Hemingway Award, and her first novel, “In Country,” was made into a Norman Jewison film starring Bruce Willis and Emily Lloyd. She has received the Arts and Letters Award for Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, as well as a Guggenheim Fellowship and a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Mason’s writing has won the Kentucky Book Award and the Southern Book Critics Circle Award. Mason is former writer-in-residence at the University of Kentucky (2001-2010). Her most recent novel, “The Girl in the Blue Beret,” venturs into World War II and the ways it is remembered.

Kevin Kiernan is the T. Marshall Hahn Senior Professor of Arts and Sciences Emeritus at the University of Kentucky. He spent his entire 35-year career (1970-2005) in the Department of English at UK, specializing in Old and Middle English language and literature, as well as digital humanities. Kiernan received his bachelor’s in English from Fairfield University and both his master’s and doctorate in medieval studies from Case Western Reserve University. He was made a full professor at UK in 1981, served as chair of the Department of English from 1986 to 1990 and was elected Distinguished Professor of Arts and Sciences in 1999. Kiernan earned grants and fellowships from such groups as the American Philosophical Society, the National Endowment for the Humanities, The National Science Foundation, IBM and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. In 1992, in collaboration with students and colleagues from across the university, Kiernan founded the Collaboratory for Research in Computing for Humanities, which provides infrastructure and support for faculty undertaking projects in the digital humanities.

His first book, “Beowulf and the Beowulf Manuscript,” revolutionized the dating of Beowulf and established him as a leading authority on the manuscript. Kiernan was asked to produce an electronic edition of this treasure by the British Library in 1992. Now in its fourth edition, the Electronic Beowulf is available for free online, hosted by the University of Kentucky. Its 21st anniversary was celebrated in three sessions in Kiernan’s honor at the 2014 International Medieval Congress at Western Michigan University.
A Q&A with ASS Alumna Christina Holsapple

Christiana Holsapple, from Lexington, Ky., graduated from UK in 2012 with a bachelor’s degree in International Studies with a concentration on development and Eurasia. Holsapple recently received a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship (ETA), which allows her to teach English in Moldova for a year and allows her to carry out research for her own linguistics project. Holsapple’s passion for international travel and learning about the world and its people has taken her to many different places across the globe. She recently caught up with Holsapple, who is currently working in Australia and Singapore, to find out more about her international experiences and her future endeavors.

Q: How did your experience at the University of Kentucky play a role in your life and desire to work internationally and study other cultures? Is there a pivotal moment during your time at UK that really hit you and made you realize what you wanted to do with your life?

A: In 2010, I participated in a summer study abroad program in Kyiv, Ukraine, with KIIS (the Kentucky Institute for International Studies) led by Dr. Adrian Madison of Morehead State University. This was a phenomenal program, which gave me a taste of study abroad and helped me settle in on international studies major. Specifically at UK, Professor Cynthia Strussman inspired me to pursue my decision to pursue further studies abroad and eventually a career abroad. She is still the best professor I have ever had and instilled in me a passion for Russian language and culture with effective, interactive teaching and constant encouragement to participate in extracurricular activities. With her support, I was awarded a National Security Education Program Bureau Award to study abroad in Kyiv, Ukraine, my senior year, which opened many doors for me career-wise.

Q: You are fluent in the Russian language. When did you become interested in learning/studying Russian language and culture and why?

A: In seventh grade I read Anton Chekhov’s short story, “The Bet,” and I remember finding it the most profound and exhilarating thing in my 12-year-old world. This was really the first time I remember learning about the existence of places like Siberia, Stalingrad and Crimea. I remember thinking what a neat idea it was to unite 15 different countries with one language and value system.

Q: Why did you choose to study abroad for education abroad program?

A: When I was a student at UK (2008-2010), the shelf of number of programs offered was vast. I volunteered for a year in the education abroad office as a peer advisor and I always found it great how many different resources were available for interested students. Studying abroad, especially for longer periods of time, makes you more curious, confident, and self-sufficient – an important attributes for college students, regardless of major.

Q: You’ve done a lot of work in Eurasia, in places that aren’t as well known such as Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. Although we don’t hear about them in the news, what is unique about these areas?

A: Anywhere is fascinating in its own way, but these sorts of destinations stand out for me because they remain so untouched by western influence. In particular, in 2013, I worked with USAID in Jizzakh, a small, post-conflict town in Kyrgyzstan. It was the town where the first revolution in the former Soviet Union began in 1989. At the time, it was a time machine back to the Soviet Union, still-standing statues of Lenin and Stalin and all. Being nearly the only westerner and English speaker in the entire town was a very unique experience and one that provided me with firsthand insight into the way of life in rural Kyrgyzstan. On another note, I loved being surrounded by stunning natural wonders during my time in these countries. Even in Kyivsk, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, from the central square you can see snow-capped mountains on the horizon. The mountains, caves, lakes, and desert scenery I was surrounded by in these countries don’t often make it into the news or tourist lists, but the more untouched natural beauty and absence of tourism infrastructure is what made visiting them so much more interesting.

Q: Of all the places that you have traveled or worked, which is your favorite?

A: A hard question to answer — there are pluses and minuses everywhere! Within the next two years I would like to begin my master’s degree in Russian or Eurasian Studies. I’m very much looking forward to learning about the powers that manage to stay independent despite being surrounded by bigger, influential powers. I’ve always dreamed of seeing the Northern Lights and once more in international education, and within the next 10 years, I would like to gain professional fluency in two more languages and begin a Ph.D. in linguistic anthropology. That’s the rough blueprint I’ve drawn up for myself at this point, but we’ll see how things work out.

Q: Why do you think education abroad is important for college students?

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