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TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 6, 2015

CONTACT: Heidi Toth, heidi.toth@ttu.edu
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Texas Tech Partners with Dallas-area College to Offer Degree Programs

Students will be able to earn bachelor's degrees from the university while remaining in the Dallas/Fort Worth area.

Texas Tech University will soon have a presence in Dallas/Fort Worth.

Today (Jan. 6), officials from Texas Tech and Collin College in McKinney signed an agreement making the university the newest partner in the Collin Higher Education Center. Starting in the fall, students in the Dallas/Fort Worth area will be able to get a bachelor's degree from Texas Tech without leaving the area.

"Texas Tech University strives to provide opportunities for all students seeking degrees in higher education," Texas Tech President M. Duane Nellis said. "Extending our reach across the state and partnering with a great institution like Collin College furthers our commitment to offering a convenient alternative in obtaining a Texas Tech degree.

"We are excited about this partnership and look forward to the future with Collin College."

Texas Tech will offer bachelor's degrees in human sciences, general studies and university studies. Additional degree programs will be added as the program grows, officials said.

Collin College is a two-year public school that serves more than 50,000 students each year. Many students enroll intending to transfer to a larger university after their freshman or sophomore year, which they can do at the Collin Higher Education Center while remaining close to home. The center also partners with Texas A&M University-Commerce, Texas Women's University, the University of North Texas at Dallas and the University of North Texas. These institutions offer junior- and senior-level college classes as well as some master's and doctoral programs.

"We are thrilled to welcome Texas Tech University and look forward to expanding our partnership," said Colleen Smith, the interim district president of Collin College. "The jobs of the future depend on higher education. In fact, the number of jobs requiring a

bachelor's or master's degree is increasing, so this announcement comes at an important time.”

Dallas/Fort Worth is home to more than 35,000 Texas Tech alumni, so officials anticipate the additional degrees will be popular.

“Texas Tech provides outstanding higher education, and this alliance demonstrates a commitment by both of our institutions to provide exceptional opportunities for our community,” said Mac Hendricks, chairman of the Collin College Board of Trustees.

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TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 7, 2015

CONTACT: Heidi Toth, heidi.toth@ttu.edu
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Engineering Doctoral Student Recognized by Regional Transportation Center

Wesley Kumfer has studied how race, gender, age and ethnicity affect a driver's likelihood of being involved in a fatal accident.

Wesley Kumfer, a doctoral student in traffic engineering at Texas Tech University, will be honored in Washington, D.C., this week as the South Plains Transportation Center's (SPTC) student of the year.

The SPTC is a university transportation center (UTC) for the U.S. Department of Transportation's Region 6, which consists of Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. It is one of 10 regional centers in the country, each sending one student to the Council of University Transportation Centers awards banquet held in conjunction with the Transportation Research Board's (TRB) annual conference Jan. 11-15 in Washington, D.C. Civil engineering professor Sanjaya Senadheera, who is the associate director for SPTC, encouraged Kumfer to apply.

"Wesley's record as an outstanding graduate student in our transportation engineering program enabled us to nominate him for this award," Senadheera said. "What makes Wesley stand out is his strong dedication to all aspects of transportation, including research, teaching and service activities."

Kumfer will meet with other students from throughout the country and receive the award on Jan. 10. After that, he will attend the TRB conference, which is the largest transportation conference in the world. Kumfer is presenting two papers at the conference, including his research on how demographic factors play into fatal crashes in the United States. Only about 25 percent of the thousands of papers submitted to the conference are selected for presentations, so Kumfer's selection is notable, his adviser said.

"Wesley's research is focused on the effects of demographic changes on highway safety," civil engineering professor Hangchao Lui said. "Every year we lose 30,000 to 40,000 lives in traffic accidents in the U.S., and a large portion of fatal crashes are attributed to human errors. Driver behavior varies largely in different driver groups and the ongoing and future demographic changes present a big challenge to highway safety."

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Kumfer, who plans to graduate in May, said he started this project because most traffic engineers are researching more efficient roads, and he found a niche that looked more at educating drivers and creating safer driving experiences. He and Liu started a software-based driver's education program on behalf of the Texas Department of Transportation, which they are sharing with rural teenagers in the South Plains. It's geared toward teenagers, who approach driving differently than do adults.

"Ideally, if we could develop better educational materials that target them where they're at and help them to realize they aren't invincible and very likely to engage in this sort of behavior, that would be great," Kumfer said. "I'd like to save lives with my research."

For more on this story and Kumfer's research on urban cycling and driverless vehicles, click [here](#).

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TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 7, 2015

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Texas Tech Reclassified with Prestigious Carnegie Honors for Service Learning, Community Engagement

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching again has recognized Texas Tech University for its commitment to community-based service and outreach initiatives.

Texas Tech is one of 240 U.S. colleges and universities selected by the foundation for its 2015 Community Engagement Classification. The university was one of the original 76 colleges and universities to receive the classification in 2006. Since then, 361 campuses have achieved the designation.

“Texas Tech continues its dedication to service learning and community outreach, and the Carnegie Foundation’s recognition underscores that commitment,” said M. Duane Nellis, president of Texas Tech University. “We are honored that the Carnegie Foundation has recognized Texas Tech for its exemplary institutionalized practices of community engagement. The Community Engagement Classification is an exciting move in Carnegie’s work to extend and refine the classification of colleges and universities.”

Unlike the foundation’s other classifications that rely on national data, this is an “elective” classification – institutions elected to participate by submitting required documentation describing the nature and extent of their engagement with the community, be it local or beyond.

This approach has enabled the foundation to recognize elements of institutional mission and distinctiveness not represented in the national data on colleges and universities.

In order to be selected for the Carnegie Community Engagement designation, institutions must provide descriptions and examples of institutionalized practices of community engagement that show alignment among mission, culture, leadership, resources and practices.

Birgit Green, director of academic engagement and partnerships at Texas Tech, submitted the materials for the university’s reclassification application. She said she was proud of the university’s community involvement at the local, national and global levels.

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“Our faculty and students, for instance, partner locally with agencies such as the South Plains Food Bank and Link Ministries to address issues of hunger and homelessness in the region while also working with villagers in Africa to help them implement effective agricultural practices for sustainable food supply,” Green said. “These activities improve teaching and learning while also producing research that makes a difference in communities.”

Central to the classification process is a documentation framework developed by a team of advisors to help applicants and reviewers assess the nature of an institution’s community engagement commitments.

This year, 241 first-time applicants registered to receive the application, 133 institutions submitted applications and 83 were successfully classified as community engaged institutions. Similarly, 188 campuses were eligible for reclassification, 162 submitted an application and 157 were successfully reclassified.

“This is the first time that there has been a reclassification process,” said Amy Driscoll, consulting scholar for the Community Engagement Classification. “We are seeing renewed institutional commitment, advanced curricular and assessment practices, and deeper community partnerships, all sustained through changes in campus leadership and within the context of a devastating economic recession.”

The classification lasts until 2025.

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 7, 2015

CONTACT: K'Leigh Sims, kleigh.sims@ttu.edu
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Texas Tech's Online Programs Ranked by U.S. News & World Report Worldwide eLearning's programs are ranked in three different areas.

U.S. News & World Report recently released its [2015 Best Online Programs](#) rankings, where Texas Tech University's [Worldwide eLearning](#) received a spot in three different areas, all for graduate programs – computer information technology, engineering and education.

In 2014, Texas Tech's online engineering and education programs were ranked but both advanced to a higher ranking this year.

“One of our most important goals here at Texas Tech is to increase the student engagement academically, whether it may be here in Lubbock or other areas,” Texas Tech President M. Duane Nellis said. “With our online programs, we can help students near and far achieve their education goals, and I commend Worldwide eLearning faculty and staff for their strong efforts in helping students to do so.”

Each year, U.S. News ranks higher education institutions and programs in various areas, including:

- Student engagement
- Faculty credentials and training
- Student services and technology
- Peer reputation
- Admissions selectivity

The 2015 rankings for Texas Tech include the online graduate computer information technology program at No. 13, the [Whitacre College of Engineering](#) graduate program at No. 20 and the online graduate education program at No. 107. This is the first year Texas Tech's computer information technology program has been ranked.

The engineering and education programs both tied with four other higher education institutions, but the Whitacre College of Engineering remained in the top 20 and is the highest-rated institution in Texas. The education program advanced from No. 166 to No. 107.

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Recently Texas Tech [climbed U.S. News' rankings](#) for the 2015 year among national universities, coming in at No. 156, five spots higher than 2014 and up nine from 2013. This ranking increase was the largest among the Big 12 Conference public institutions and the second highest among all conference schools.

“Texas Tech is dedicated to providing top quality online education programs to our students no matter where they live,” assistant vice provost Justin Louder said.

“Worldwide eLearning works with Texas Tech faculty, staff and students to make sure our online education programs are of the highest quality and these rankings highlight that commitment.”

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TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY™

Advisory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 8, 2015

CONTACT: Heidi Toth, heidi.toth@ttu.edu
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Burkhart Center, Hospitality Services Cutting Ribbon for Quiznos Restaurant
Students from the center, who are on the autism spectrum, will staff the sandwich shop.

WHAT: The grand opening of Quiznos Sub Sandwich Restaurant in the [Burkhart Center for Autism Education & Research](#) on the Texas Tech University campus. Hospitality Services will manage the restaurant, and it will be staffed almost entirely by Burkhart Center students, all of whom have disorders on the autism spectrum.

This location creates a unique partnership for the Texas Tech campus by establishing a learning lab as a real world working environment for individuals with autism. This Quiznos will accept dining plans and will be the first Quiznos on campus to serve breakfast.

Texas Tech President M. Duane Nellis will speak. Tours and samples will be available after the ribbon cutting.

WHEN: 11:30 a.m. Monday (Jan. 12)

WHERE: Burkhart Center, 18th Street and Flint Avenue

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CONTACT: Janice Magness, Transition Academy director, Burkhart Center for Autism Education & Research, Texas Tech University, (806) 834-3725 or janice.magness@ttu.edu.



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 9, 2015

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Texas Tech Advances to the Final Four of Chess

The university's chess team secured a spot at the 2014 Pan-American Intercollegiate Chess Championship.

Ranked No. 3 in the nation, Texas Tech University's [chess team](#) qualified for the Final Four of Chess in New York City recently at the [2014 Pan-American Intercollegiate Chess Championship](#), hosted at the University of Texas-Brownsville (UT-B).

Texas Tech competed against some of the top intercollegiate chess teams in the nation and had one of four teams (Texas Tech's A team) go undefeated.

"This year we had tough challenges from Webster University, Duke University, Columbia University and Yale University," chess program director Al Lawrence said. "But coach Alex Onischuk's tournament strategy paid off for our teams."

Webster University took the Pan-American championship with all three of its teams finishing in top spots. Texas Tech's A team went undefeated and its B squad beat UT-B's best group, ranked fourth in the nation, helping to take them out of the competition for the Final Four.

"Our biggest goal was to make the Final Four at the Pan-American Intercollegiate Chess Championship," Onischuk said. "Our Texas Tech players were resilient, especially when meeting unexpectedly strong teams, and our players really worked together as a team to make the Final Four happen."

Texas Tech's A team ultimately scored 4.5 points out of 6, securing a spot at this year's Final Four at the prestigious New York Athletic Club. Texas Tech will take on Webster University, the University of Texas-Dallas and the University of Maryland-Baltimore County. Each team will play each other once, and the winner of the championship is determined by total game points.

Texas Tech qualified for the Final Four [last year](#), finishing third behind Webster University and the University of Maryland-Baltimore County.

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“We are extremely proud of our chess team and staff and look forward to their continued success in the upcoming 2015 collegiate chess championship,” said Juan Muñoz, senior vice president for [Institutional Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement](#) and vice provost for [Undergraduate Education and Student Affairs](#).

The Texas Tech University Chess program – part of the Division of Institutional Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement – offers outreach programs to more than a dozen area schools and can provide teaching materials and other assistance on request.

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TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 12, 2015

CONTACT: George Watson, george.watson@ttu.edu
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Department of Communication Studies Now in College of Media & Communication

The department's move from Arts & Sciences is expected to strengthen collaboration and enhance the student's educational experience.

The [Department of Communication Studies](#) has officially moved from the [College of Arts & Sciences](#) to the [College of Media & Communication](#) with the official ribbon cutting ceremony held today.

The Department of Communication Studies now joins the departments of Advertising, Journalism & Electronic Media and Public Relations in the College of Media & Communication. One of the original departments at Texas Tech, the Department of Communication Studies involves all dimensions of human communication and uses research, both in theory and in practices, to uncover the most effective and appropriate forms of communication.

"I think it will be better for teaching, for securing research grants and for the vision for the future to have all the scholars, practitioners and educators together in one building but with a joint focus that will help us meet that future with a clear vision," Media & Communication Dean David Perlmutter said. "In our workplace, students need to have the whole repertoire of oral, visual and written communication skills."

For more information on the move, click [here](#).

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 12, 2015

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Quiznos Ribbon Cutting Celebrates Collaboration with Burkhart Center

This partnership will allow students with autism spectrum disorder to get work experience in the food service industry.

The newly opened Quiznos Sub Sandwich Restaurant at Texas Tech University is more than just a quick lunch stop. It represents a unique partnership between a higher education institution and a corporation and is aimed at providing work experience for young adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Texas Tech officials cut the ribbon on the new sandwich shop late Monday morning, which is now officially open. The [College of Education's Burkhart Center for Autism Education & Research](#) collaborated with Texas Tech's [Hospitality Services](#) and Quiznos to bring the sandwich shop to the Burkhart Center building at 18th Street and Flint Avenue on the Texas Tech campus. Hospitality Services staffers will manage the restaurant, but most of the line employees will be Burkhart students, all of whom fall somewhere on the autism spectrum.

Janice Magness, the director of the Burkhart Center's Transition Academy, said she wanted to include a coffee shop in the new building, which would give students a place to work where faculty and coaches could be close by and help as needed. When she approached Hospitality Services about the idea, it got bigger.

Hospitality Services managing director Kirk Rodriguez said after talking with Magness, they wanted to provide something more expansive than a coffee shop, because the coffee shop would only provide very limited work experience to the students and also would make turning a profit, or at least breaking even, difficult. At that point he reached out to Quiznos, which already had a store on campus, and the corporate leadership liked the concept as well.

After a bid process, construction began on the new restaurant. More than a year later, it's ready to go.

"This new Quiznos demonstrates the continued partnership and a commitment to education between Hospitality Services and the Burkhart Center," Rodriguez said. "This

outlet will not only serve the campus community, but will also provide individuals with autism the needed skills to better themselves in a real-world working environment.”

Students are already doing internships at Goodwill, the Student Union, the Garrison Center and a few other places in Lubbock and on campus. This is the first food service employer and is a good option for those students who want to work in restaurants after graduation, Magness said.

“We are honored to work alongside the Burkhart Center and Texas Tech University to launch this unique and important program,” Quiznos Chief Development Officer Kenneth Cutshaw said. “The new Quiznos location will not only serve as a real-world learning lab for Burkhart Center students but will also continue to nurture the Lubbock community and those who live and work here.”

The restaurant is the latest addition to the Burkhart Center’s building, which opened in November 2013 and is full of classrooms, offices, a gym, a model apartment and observation rooms. For seven hours each day, the building is home to a dozen young adults who have autism spectrum disorder. They are students in the Transition Academy, a premier center in the region for research, education and assistance for families affected by autism.

The Burkhart Center was established in 2005 and is named for Jim and Jere Lynn Burkhart, who have made significant contributions to the establishment and mission of the center. The Transition Academy, the center’s flagship program, is for 18- to 30-year-olds who have graduated from high school. Students learn job, life and social skills; the goal is to help students live and work independently.

This Quiznos will accept dining plans and is the first Quiznos on campus to serve breakfast. It is open from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

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TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Advisory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 13, 2014

CONTACT: Kari Abitbol, kari.abitbol@ttu.edu
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Texas Tech University School of Law Hosting Energy Law Symposium

The event will feature discussion on current and future trends and tendencies impacting the oil and gas industry.

WHAT: The *Texas Tech University Law Review* and *Texas Tech Administrative Law Journal* will host an Energy Law Symposium at Texas Tech University School of Law.

WHEN: 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Friday (Jan. 16)

WHERE: Mark & Becky Lanier Professional Development Center Auditorium, Texas Tech School of Law, 1802 Hartford Ave., Lubbock, Texas

WHO: Featuring speakers from Haynes & Boone; DLA Piper; Winstead; Jackson Walker; Texas Commission on Environmental Quality; and the Texas Railroad Commission.

Topics include multimillion dollar liability for de facto energy partnerships under Texas law; re-emerging and emerging trends in oil and gas law stemming from shale deposit production; and commodities financing and hedging.

The symposium is approved for six Texas Continuing Legal Education credit hours (one hour ethics).

\$100 registration fee to attend live; \$150 registration fee for live streaming. Breakfast (7:30 a.m.) and lunch are provided.

Register [here](#) and visit <http://energylawsymposium.com/> for more details.

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TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 14, 2015

CONTACT: Heidi Toth, heidi.toth@ttu.edu
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Texas Tech First University to be Featured on Actors Hall of Fame Website
Department chairman Mark Charney said Theatre and Dance's community outreach played a role in its selection.

Texas Tech University's [Department of Theatre and Dance](#) is the first university to be featured on [DramaNotes](#), an online news and information service for college students and educators in dramatic arts that went live today (Jan 14). The Actors Hall of Fame Foundation created the website, which connects people online and through Twitter (@drama_notes).

Mark Charney, chairman of the Department of Theatre and Dance, said Texas Tech was chosen as the first university to be featured in The Actors Hall of Fame because of the department's unique and groundbreaking work with community organizations and outreach, which mirrors the work The Actors Hall of Fame does on a national scale.

He anticipates this spotlight will benefit Texas Tech in recruiting students attracting performers to the university, especially for WildWind Performance Lab, one of the department's signature training programs.

"When a national organization that concentrates on honoring folks like Meryl Streep and Olivia de Havilland profiles a university, it will reflect well upon our training and our interest in outreach," Charney said. "We will feature this honor when we recruit to show our national prominence in theatre and dance arts."

DramaNotes taps into the vast community of college students and educators to connect and share the latest news about dramatic arts, from local school productions to major Hollywood movies, Broadway plays and all forms of short-form content. It features interviews, breaking news, local productions and in-depth profiles of dramatic arts and theatre programs from around the world.

"This is a core part of our mission – to support dramatic arts education," Rusty Citron, president of The Actors Hall of Fame Foundation, said. "DramaNotes provides an exciting new platform for students and educators to connect and be inspired."

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Emerson College, Santa Monica College, Yale School of Drama and Lynchburg College will be featured on the site in the future.

About The Actors Hall of Fame Foundation

The Actors Hall of Fame is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to restoring and supporting dramatic arts education in schools. For more information, please visit our website at www.actorshalloffame.org

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CONTACT: Rusty Citron, president, The Actors Hall of Fame Foundation, (310) 906-5997 or rustyc@actorshalloffame.org or Mark Charney, chairman, Department of Theatre and Dance, Texas Tech University, (806) 864-1683 or mark.charney@ttu.edu.

Expert Pitch

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 15, 2015

CONTACT: Emily Gardner, emily.e.gardner@ttu.edu
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Expert: Martin Luther King's Vision Makes Progress, Still Not Fulfilled

Pitch

As Martin Luther King Day approaches Monday (Jan. 19) and in light of recent racially divisive events, the 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the release of "Selma," King's message of interracial harmony is still relevant today.

Expert

Karlos Hill, assistant professor of history, (806) 742-3744 or karlos.hill@ttu.edu

Talking Points

- The 50th anniversary of the marches in Selma, Alabama, and the movie based on them
- The controversy surrounding Martin Luther King's depiction in "Selma" and the film's contributions
- King's theoretical reaction to "Selma"
- King's theoretical reaction to recent events
- The effect of King's legacy as a result of recent events

Quotes

- "The film, 'Selma,' brings the story of the civil rights movement to a new audience, particularly a younger generation who have no relationship to that past. It also brings King's message to a new generation who have no deep familiarity with King and what he stood for. That's the contribution the film is making. It's exposing the history of that march and King's message to a new generation."
- "Listening to the filmmaker talk about it, the message I think she is trying to make is to connect the struggle for civil rights to a much broader struggle for human rights. We should think about the quest for African-American civil rights in much more universal terms than we typically do and think about it not just as an African-American story, but as an American story. When we think about the film in that regard I think it's going to have a powerful impact on how people think about the era and how people think about today in the wake of Eric Garner's death. The film couldn't have come out at a better time than right now."
- "We tend to talk about and reflect on King a lot because he's one of the very few people in American history who have a federal holiday, and so we are always talking about King in one way or another. There's a lot that could be said about him and his meaning, but I think, the most important thing to talk about right now in relationship to King is Ferguson, Missouri, is Tamir Rice, is Eric Garner, because for people out there looking

for ‘What do we do? Where do we go next?’ one place they can look is to King. King has a clear philosophy for how you go about creating social change.”

- “Whether it’s Eric Garner, whether it’s Michael Brown, whether it’s Tamir Rice, whether it’s other instances where unarmed African-Americans were shot and killed by police officers, King would have been critical of those things because African-Americans disproportionately fall victim to police brutality or the use of excessive force, and King would recognize that it’s a systematic problem. Because of those things, he would have spoken out against them.”
- “There has been progress, and King is a big part of that change, that progress. But that doesn’t mean his vision has been fulfilled. There is still much work to be done, and issues like the Michael Brown and Eric Garner cases illustrate that. It’s not tarnishing King’s message the least bit, what it’s showing is his vision hasn’t been fulfilled and perhaps more than any time before, we need to hear King’s message and King’s voice of calm, his voice of what he would consider creating the beloved community.”

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Expert Pitch

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 15, 2015

CONTACT: Heidi Toth, heidi.toth@ttu.edu
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Film, Pop Culture Experts Available to Discuss Oscar Nominations

The Internet needed less than an hour to get angry about the Oscars' "Lego Movie" snub. Were any other movies, actors or directors ignored for political or other reasons? Will this year be the year Wes Anderson, director of "The Grand Budapest Hotel," finally wins an Oscar? Or will "Selma," with all that is happening in the United States, sweep every category in which it is nominated (which is not every category), earning America another tear-jerking acceptance from a rapper?

Dean Nolen, an assistant professor of acting in Texas Tech University's [Department of Theatre and Dance](#), can answer Oscar questions. For 20 years he has written and edited "[The Film Encyclopedia](#)," considered the most comprehensive English-language film encyclopedia and has been an actor on film and TV shows for many years. Nolen is a member of the Screen Actors Guild and votes in the SAG Awards, so he has seen almost all of the Oscar-nominated films and actors. He can talk about actors and movies who didn't get nominated and should have (Jake Gyllenhaal for "Nightcrawler") and why others richly deserved the nomination (Marion Cotillard for "Two Days, One Night").

He also has a more personal story to tell about the Oscars this year; Adam Stockhausen, a friend and classmate from the Yale School of Drama, received his second Oscar nomination for Art Direction, this one for "The Grand Budapest Hotel." Nolen called Stockhausen "the artist to beat."

Assistant professor Paul Reinsch has been studying film for more than 20 years, including his latest writings on early "rock" films and Tyler Perry. He teaches the Introduction to Film course as well as a course on adapted films such as "The Hunger Games" and "Cabaret," as well as the radio presentation of "War of the Worlds."

Texas Tech's pop culture expert, Rob Weiner, is available to discuss what films have created the most buzz in the last year and compare Oscar winners of the past to the current Hollywood pool as well as what viewers should expect from the winners this year.

Experts

Dean Nolen, assistant professor of acting, (917) 687-4493

Paul Reinsch, assistant professor of practice, (806) 834-6087 office, (425) 999-9135 (mobile)

Rob Weiner, associate librarian and pop culture expert, (806) 742-2238 ext. 282 office, (806) 780-8775 (mobile)

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 16, 2015

CONTACT: George Watson, george.watson@ttu.edu
(806) 742-2136

Texas Tech Researcher Discovers New Salmonella Serotype

Salmonella Lubbock will provide new avenues for research into the bacteria's prevention.

Lubbock is known for many things. Some of them are reasons to celebrate, like being the home of Buddy Holly. Some portray the city in negative ways, like dust storms.

The latest honor to come Lubbock's way may not sound good at first, but when realizing it's a breakthrough in biological sciences, it will become something to brag about.

Marie Bugarel, a research assistant professor at Texas Tech University's [Department of Animal and Food Sciences](#) in the [College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources](#), has discovered a new serotype of the salmonella bacteria. The new serotype was confirmed by the [Pasteur Institute](#) in Paris, the international reference center for salmonella.

Because convention calls for a new serotype to be named after the city in which it is discovered, this one will be called *Salmonella* Lubbock (officially *Salmonella enterica* subsp. *enterica* Lubbock).

"More important than the name, however, is that this discovery illustrates there is more that needs to be discovered about salmonella and how it interacts with cattle populations," said Guy Loneragan, a professor of food safety and public health who, along with Kendra Nightingale, are Bugarel's mentors at Texas Tech. "With this understanding will come awareness of how to intervene to break the ecological cycle and reduce salmonella in animals and in beef, pork and chicken products."

Bugarel, who came to Texas Tech with an extensive background in salmonella research, has worked on developing new tools to detect salmonella, new approaches to distinguish serotypes and ways to understand salmonella's biology.

Her work has led to a patent application that has been licensed to a high-tech biosciences research company. Her invention means it is now possible to simultaneously detect and distinguish specific strains of salmonella by targeting a specific combination of DNA. That will allow for early detection in food while also identifying whether or belongs to a highly pathogenic strain.

In her research for *Salmonella* Lubbock, the impetus was to reduce salmonella in food and improve public health. She focused on providing solutions to control salmonella in cattle population, which led to a better understanding of the biological makeup of salmonella itself, including its genetic makeup. Through this approach, Bugarel discovered the new strain never before described.

The long-held standard way of distinguishing one strain of salmonella from another is called serotyping and is based on the molecules on the surface of the bacterium. Each serotype has its own pattern of molecules, called antigens, and the collection of molecules provides a unique molecular appearance. These antigens interact with certain antibodies found in specifically prepared serum, thus providing the serotype. It is similar to how blood typing is performed.

“This discovery reinforces my feeling that the microbiological flora present in cattle in the United States harbors a singularity, which is an additional justification of the research we are doing in the [International Center for Food Industry Excellence \(ICFIE\)](#) laboratories at Texas Tech,” Bugarel said. “Additional research will be performed to better describe the characteristics of this atypical bacterial flora and, more specifically, of the Lubbock serotype.”

With this discovery, Loneragan believes between 20 and 30 percent of two current strains, *Salmonella* Montevideo and *Salmonella* Mbandaka, will be reclassified as *Salmonella* Lubbock. The algorithm used in serotyping has some stopping points, but Bugarel discovered a need to go a step further to get the correct strain name. Therefore some of those strains called Montevideo and Mbandaka are now *Salmonella* Lubbock.

Some of the strains of *Salmonella* Lubbock fall into the category of serotype patterns that are more broadly resistant to many families of antibiotics, furthering the need for more research on the subject. Human susceptibility to the Lubbock strains remains unknown.

“We will continue to develop methods to detect, identify and control the presence of pathogenic microorganisms in food products in order to improve food safety and public health,” Bugarel said.

“Kendra and I have been honored to serve as Marie’s mentors,” Loneragan said. “But now, the growth in Marie’s expertise means that she is becoming the mentor to us. Many students, and the citizens of the United States in general and Texas in particular, are benefitting from her commitment to research excellence at Texas Tech. We are very lucky to have her.”

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TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 20, 2015

CONTACT: Zoe Bell, zoe.bell@ttu.edu
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ABC News and NPR Commentator to Visit Texas Tech

Cokie Roberts' visit is part of the Texas Tech Presidential Lecture & Performance Series.

The Texas Tech University Presidential Lecture & Performance Series continues this semester with political reporter Cokie Roberts presenting an insider's view of Washington, D.C. at 7 p.m. Tuesday (Feb. 10) in the Allen Theatre.

"It is a privilege to welcome Cokie Roberts to Texas Tech as part of the Presidential Lecture & Performance Series," Texas Tech President M. Duane Nellis said. "Her extensive background in covering the news offers a unique insight into political, national and global affairs. We are fortunate to have a person of her caliber featured in this series."

Roberts is a political commentator for ABC News and NPR. From 1996-2002, Roberts and Sam Donaldson co-anchored the weekly ABC program "This Week." She has won countless awards, including three Emmys, and was inducted into the Broadcasting and Cable Hall of Fame. She also was cited by the American Women in Radio and Television as one of the greatest women in the history of broadcasting.

Students can receive a free ticket from the ticket booth at the Student Union Building with a valid Texas Tech ID.

General admission is \$18 and can be purchased from Select-A-Seat at (806) 770-2000. A book signing will follow the presentation.

For more information contact [Jo Moore](#) or visit the presidential series [website](#) or [Facebook page](#).

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CONTACT: Chris Cook, managing director, Office of Communications & Marketing, Texas Tech University, (806) 742-2136 or chris.cook@ttu.edu.



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Advisory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 21, 2014

CONTACT: George Watson, george.watson@ttu.edu
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IFS Opens Spring Season With Viewing of Fellini Drama *La Strada*

Peter Bondanella will give a lecture on Fellini prior to the screening.

- WHAT: International Film Series Screening of “*La Strada*”
- WHEN: 7 p.m. Tuesday (Jan. 27)
- WHERE: Alamo Drafthouse Cinema, 120 W. Loop 289
- WHO: The Texas Tech [International Film Series](#) opens its Spring 2015 screening season with the 1954 Italian drama “*La Strada*,” directed by Federico Fellini. The film will also kickstart a season-long retrospective by the acclaimed director.

Prior to the screening, the IFS will host a lecture by Peter Bondanella, a professor of Italian, comparative literature and film studies at Indiana University. Bondanella will present his lecture “Fellini and Fantasy: The making of an Auteur” at 4 p.m. in the Qualia Room of the Foreign Languages Building. The lecture is free and open to the public.

“*La Strada*” will be the first of several Fellini films to be screened throughout the spring. “*Nights of Cabiria*” is scheduled for a Feb. 25 screening (7 p.m.) while Fellini’s 1963 film “*8½*” is set for a March 24 screening (7 p.m.). The series will wind up on April 21 with a 9 p.m. showing of “*La Dolce Vita*,” which follows a paparazzo journalist in Rome.

Reserved seats for all Fellini screenings are available through Alamo Drafthouse for \$5 and can be exchanged for \$5 worth of food/beverage vouchers for use inside the theatre.

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CONTACT: Robert Peaslee, coordinator, International Film Studies program, Texas Tech University, (806) 834-2562 or robert.peaslee@ttu.edu.

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TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 22, 2015

CONTACT: John Davis, john.w.davis@ttu.edu
(806) 742-2136

Texas Tech Environmental Scientists Find Antibiotics, Bacteria, Resistance Genes in Dust from Feedlots

Researchers beginning to understand how antibiotic-resistant bacteria travel aerially.

After testing dust in the air near cattle feedlots in the Southern High Plains, researchers at [The Institute of Environmental and Human Health](#) at Texas Tech University found evidence of antibiotics, feedlot-derived bacteria and DNA sequences that encode for antibiotic resistance.

The study was published online today in the National Institutes of Environmental Science's peer-reviewed journal, *Environmental Health Perspectives*. The research was funded through a grant from Texas Tech's [College of Arts and Sciences](#). It is the first study documenting aerial transmission of antibiotic resistance from an open-air farm setting.

Phil Smith, an associate professor of terrestrial ecotoxicology at the institute, said that while scientists couldn't assess if the amounts of these materials were dangerous to human health, it helped explain a previously uncharacterized pathway by which antibiotic-resistant bacteria could travel long distances into places inhabited by humans.

The findings come weeks after a report commissioned by British Prime Minister David Cameron concluded that failure to battle drug-resistant infections and their causes could result in 10 million extra deaths a year by 2050 at a cost of \$100 trillion to the global economy.

"You can look in the news, and people are raising red flags about antibiotic resistance all the time," Smith said. "Microbes are pretty promiscuous with their genetic information, and they share it across species fairly easily. We know it's there. We know what causes it, but we don't have a really good handle on how it's transmitted and how it moves in the environment. This is an attempt to provide better clarity on that issue.

"Everyone is fairly certain antibiotic resistance comes from extensive use of antibiotics in animal-based agriculture. About 70 percent of all antibiotics used are for animal agricultural purposes. Overuse contributes to antibiotic resistance. But how does it

happen? How does it get from where the drugs are used into the human environment and natural environment?”

Smith said scientists collected air samples upwind and downwind of each feedlot. After analysis, they found greater amounts of bacteria, antibiotics and DNA sequences responsible for antibiotic resistance downwind of the feedlots compared to upwind, which helped scientists determine the source of the materials they found.

Because the antibiotics are present on the particulate matter with bacteria, the selective pressure for bacteria to retain their resistance remains during their flight, said Greg Mayer, an associate professor of molecular toxicology at the institute.

With wind blowing regularly on the Southern High Plains, the antibiotics and bacteria can travel on the dust and particulate matter far from the original starting point at the feedlot. Add the infamous West Texas dust storms into the picture, and these materials have the potential to travel hundreds of miles into cities and towns and possibly around the globe.

“I think implications for the spread of some feedlot-derived, antibiotic-resistant bacteria into urban areas is paramount to the research,” Mayer said. “Now, we haven’t yet taken samples from an urban area to determine whether bacteria from that particulate matter originated from feedlots or whether it still has antibiotic resistant bacteria on it. However, this study is proof of the principle that antibiotic-resistant bacteria could plausibly travel through the air.

“Further studies are now needed to show where the particulate matter is traveling and what is happening to its passengers when it gets there.”

For a copy of the report, visit <http://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/1408555>.

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TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 23, 2015

CONTACT: George Watson, george.watson@ttu.edu
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Texas Tech Judging Teams Open Spring With Strong Showing

The meat and wool judging teams took home the crowns while the livestock team finished fourth at National Western Stock Show and Rodeo in Denver.

The Texas Tech University meat, wool and livestock judging teams opened the 2015 spring season with strong results last weekend at the National Western Stock Show.

All three teams from the [Department of Animal and Food Sciences](#) in the [College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources](#) got off to good starts. The meat and wool judging teams won their respective events, while the livestock team finished fourth.

“I am once again proud of the performances of our judging teams at the first contest of the season,” said livestock coach Ryan Rathmann, the Jones Professor in the Department of Animal and Food Sciences. “Our belief is that when one team succeeds, we all succeed.”

No team had a better weekend than the meat judging team, which dominated a field that includes fellow perennial powers Oklahoma State University, Colorado State University and Kansas State University. The meat judging team romped to a 114-point victory and posted 4,252 points, the second-highest cumulative point total by a team at any contest in the history of meat judging. The team swept the beef grading, beef judging, overall beef, pork judging, specifications and reasons divisions.

Texas Tech also had the top four individual finishers. Darby Gonzales, a sophomore from Hondo, took the top honors and tied for first with teammate Clay Bendele, also a sophomore from Hondo. Sean Morrow, a sophomore from Nolan, took fourth and Erin Beyer, a sophomore from Brookshire, finished eighth.

Other members of the meat judging team are:

Melani Howell, a sophomore from Seymour (first place, alternate division); Cody Shannon, a junior from Royse City (second place, alternate division); Landon French, a junior from Burleson (third place, alternate division); Morgan Boyer, a junior from Wallisville (fourth place, alternate division); Michaela Pinder, a sophomore from League City (fifth place, alternate division); Elizabeth Burges, a junior from Graham (sixth place, alternate division); Kyle Lambert, a sophomore from Sweetwater (ninth place, alternate

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division); Annalisa Clark, a sophomore from Las Cruces, New Mexico; Zena Doty, a junior from La Plata, New Mexico; Scotta Faulkenberry, a junior from Stephenville; Hallie Hutto, a sophomore from Hondo; Erin Klein, a sophomore from Littlefield; Madison Langemeier, a sophomore from Marion.

The wool judging team outdistanced in-state rival Texas A&M by 11 points to capture the crown, winning both the placing and reasons divisions.

Keeley Sears, a freshman from Peaster, led the way for Texas Tech by taking top honors in individual scoring followed by teammate Courtney Jasik, a freshman from Mertzon.

Other members of the wool judging team are:

Sydney Buckley, a freshman from Castle Rock, Colorado; Breanne Burner, a freshman from Grape Creek; Bradly Duvall, a freshman from Perryton; Rachel Everheart, a freshman from Bronte; Tommy Fletcher, a freshman from St. Hedwig; Tate Leatherwood, a freshman from Florence; Shannon O'Quinn, a freshman from League City; Ashleigh Pasqua, a freshman from Fort Davis; Cole Perkins, a freshman from Llano; Cole Rosenbaum, a freshman from Hondo; Lexie Schaefer, a freshman from Garden City; Kirsten Shaw, a freshman from Mason; Blayne Troxell, a freshman from Pampa.

The livestock judging team's fourth-place finish was led by Cory Edge, a junior from Rosedale, Indiana, who ranked seventh. The team finished in the top five in each judging division, including cattle, swine, sheep and reasons.

Other members of the livestock team are:

Syann Foster, a junior from Lockney ; Colton Fritz, a junior from Fredericksburg; Lane Hale, a junior from Ozona; Reggie Halfmann, a junior from Garden City; DeShae Hanagan, a junior from Artesia, New Mexico; Laramie Priest, a junior from Lorena; Colby Redifer, a junior from Blacksburg, Virginia.; Linay Runnels, a junior from Hondo; Taylor Shackelford, a junior from Prosper; Chase Vineyard, a junior from Stephenville; Tylee Williams, a junior from Rio Vista; Bryson Williams, a junior from Earth; Luke Ziegler, a junior from New Windsor, Maryland.

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TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Web Only

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 23, 2015

CONTACT: John Davis, john.w.davis@ttu.edu
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Texas Tech's Department of Psychology Becomes Department of Psychological Sciences

The Department of Psychology at Texas Tech University recently has changed its name to the Department of Psychological Sciences.

Lee Cohen, chairman of the department, said the name change is part of a current trend in the United States to more accurately describe the field.

"Psychology has become a highly interdisciplinary and collaborative field," Cohen said. "As research questions become more and more complex, no single discipline is equipped to handle them alone. Take, for example, the field of neuroscience. Psychology is involved, along with biology, physics, chemistry, applied mathematics and engineering. I also think it highlights the fact that our faculty are more research-based than other disciplines may give us credit. Many of our faculty are gifted in statistics, research methodology, and some have worked with various biological markers in their research including genetic data."

Other universities that have made similar changes to their name include Vanderbilt, the University of Missouri, Purdue University, Kansas State University, and the University of Arkansas.

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TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY™

Advisory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 26, 2015

CONTACT: Emily Gardner, emily.e.gardner@ttu.edu
(806) 742-2136

Texas Tech Hosts Whirling Dervishes of Rumi The performance will take place in the Allen Theatre.

- WHAT:** Texas Tech University's Intercultural Dialog Association hosts the Whirling Dervishes of Rumi in a rare U.S. performance.
- WHEN:** 6:30 p.m. Tuesday (Jan. 27)
- WHERE:** Allen Theatre, Student Union Building, 15th Street & Akron Avenue
- EVENT:** The Whirling Dervishes of Rumi is an 800-year tradition and a highly spiritual performance. It showcases the celebration of human existence and is performed by members of a branch of the Sufi order, which was founded during the 13th century in the Turkish city of Konya.

Tickets cost \$20 for the general public and \$15 for students. To reserve a seat contact Select-A-Seat Lubbock at (806) 770-2000 or visit http://www.ticketsage.com/_lubbock/.

Event sponsors include Latino Lubbock Magazine, Osem Enterprises, Inc. and the Intercultural Dialog Association.

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TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 26, 2015

CONTACT: Heidi Toth, heidi.toth@ttu.edu
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Trumpet Ensemble, Soloist Qualify for National Competition

The musicians will compete against students from dozens of different colleges at the annual competition at Messiah College in Pennsylvania.

Six Texas Tech University trumpeters are headed to a national contest to blow away the competition.

An ensemble of five students from the [School of Music](#) is going to Messiah College March 19-21 for the National Trumpet Competition. Junior Andrew Pacheco, junior Benjamin Post, freshman Pierce Ellison, junior Joshua Dolney and sophomore Elisabeth Wiseman will travel to Messiah, Pennsylvania, for the competition. A soloist, senior Lucas Meade, also qualified.

“The thing that amazes me most about these students is their efforts to enter this competition were entirely volunteer,” said assistant professor Andrew Stetson, who coached the ensemble. “They found time to contribute outside of their demanding degree work. The students were always full of energy and united by their excitement for the art and desire to improve.”

The group submitted a video performance in December, which was rated by at least three judges. Thirty ensembles in the 4-6 member category will compete in the semifinals on March 19, then judges will rank the top ensembles, who will perform again in the finals on March 21.

A Texas Tech ensemble auditioned last year but didn’t qualify, so this year’s results were even more exciting.

“I was clicking the refresh button every five seconds waiting for results,” Dolney said.

Once he saw they were in, a group text followed.

“We all posted on Facebook too,” Ellison said.

Stetson got the text while performing with an old professor – the same professor who helped him the first time Stetson was invited to the National Trumpet Competition as a student.

“It was a really special moment for a close mentor to see the excitement I had as a student evolve to excitement for my own students as a teacher,” he said.

Other Big 12 schools that qualified are Baylor and Oklahoma State; additional Texas schools include Texas A&M-Kingsville, Southern Methodist University, Texas State and the University of Texas-Pan American.

Getting into the competition was the result of many hours of group practice from mid-November to mid-December, plus 14 hours of recording to produce their 8-minute audition recording. That doesn’t include the individual hours each trumpeter put in and time spent in one-on-one lessons with trumpet professors Stetson and Will Strieder.

The work isn’t over now that Texas Tech is in the competition: the six musicians need to raise at least \$5,000 to pay for the trip. Stetson said he planned to apply for a grant from Texas Tech’s [Center for Active Learning and Undergraduate Engagement](#). They will also look to the School of Music and student organizations for any financial help, but Stetson said they won’t shy away from traditional fundraisers.

“The students set up bake sales better than anybody,” he said.

In addition to the competition, which includes four categories for soloists, small and large group ensembles and jazz performances, a number of musical groups will perform, including the Army Herald Trumpets and Marine Band and the Airmen of Note. Musicians like Scott Wendholt and Rick Baptist will teach master classes, and exhibitors will attend to show off the latest trends in instruments, recording and music.

“It’s an exciting national stage for the university and the School of Music,” Stetson said. “It’s our sporting event, our conference presentation.”

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 26, 2015

CONTACT: Heidi Toth, heidi.toth@ttu.edu
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Well-Known Physicist Brings Multimedia Performance to Texas Tech

Texas Tech is sponsoring “Icarus at the Edge of Time” for thousands of area students.

An internationally renowned physicist is coming to Lubbock to introduce thousands of area students to the theory of relativity, classical music and art at the “Icarus at the Edge of Time” performances on the Texas Tech University campus.

“Icarus,” based on the book by theoretical physicist Brian Greene, tells the story of a young boy who leaves his family’s space shuttle to explore a black hole, in the process discovering that time slowed down as he approached the black hole and what to him seemed like an hour was actually many decades. The multimedia performance includes a full orchestra composed of Texas Tech faculty and other professional musicians, with a musical score by Philip Glass and a state-of-the-art digital film. Greene will do the narration. About 3,500 area students will attend.

“This is the beauty of the event,” said Keith Dye, associate dean for undergraduate and curricular issues in the College of Visual & Performing Arts. “In approximately 45 minutes, they will simultaneously hear a great piece of literature introduced and narrated by the author, a world-famous physicist, hear a live performance of a professional symphony orchestra performing music composed by one of America’s greatest composers and see a video created by two of the most innovative visual artists working in the world today, all while learning about the theory of relativity and the properties of a black hole.”

The [College of Visual & Performing Arts](#), [Edward E. Whitacre College of Engineering](#) and [College of Education](#) are jointly sponsoring the event, which is open to middle and high school students from Lubbock and a number of outlying school districts. Organizers reached out to school administrators in the fall to invite them to this event.

For more information on “Icarus,” watch the [trailer](#), read a [review](#) or go to Brian Greene’s [website](#).

Covering the performance

The performances will be at 9:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Feb. 4 in the City Bank Auditorium. Because of the number of area students who are attending, these performances are not

open to the public. However, interested media can attend either of the shows; photography is allowed, but no flash. To attend, email Zaida.gracia@ttu.edu.

Interviews with Brian Greene

Greene also will be available for interviews. To reserve a seat or set up an interview with Greene, contact Zaida Gracia, assistant academic dean and director of special projects in the College of Engineering, at (806) 834-6184 or Zaida.gracia@ttu.edu.

About Brian Greene

Brian Greene is a world-famous theoretical physicist who teaches at Columbia University. He is the co-founder of the [World Science Festival](#) in New York City and has written numerous nationally best-selling books, including “The Fabric of the Cosmos” and “The Elegant Universe.” He has been interviewed on “[The Colbert Report](#)” and the “[Late Show With David Letterman](#)” and discussed his book “The Hidden Reality” during a cameo on “[The Big Bang Theory](#).” He earned his undergraduate degree from Harvard and his doctorate from Oxford University, where he was a Rhodes Scholar.

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TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Advisory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 27, 2015

CONTACT: George Watson, george.watson@ttu.edu
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Finnish Comedy Subject of Second International Film Series Screening

Directed by Ruben Ostlund, “Force Majeure” follows a family’s vacation escapades.

WHAT: International Film Series Screening of “Force Majeure”

WHEN: 7:30 p.m. Thursday (Jan. 29)

WHERE: Alamo Drafthouse Cinema, 120 W. Loop 289

The International Film Series hosts its second screening of the spring season with the showing of Finnish comedy “Force Majeure.” Directed by Ruben Ostlund, “Force Majeure” follows a family vacationing in the French Alps who witnesses an avalanche, which forces them to question their family relationships.

“We are excited to partner with Alamo Drafthouse on this screening,” said Robert Peaslee, International Film Series coordinator. “Alamo’s Tim League felt strongly enough about this film to make it a free screening for all students and educators, and we’re happy to include it in our schedule.”

Reserved seats are available through Alamo Drafthouse for \$5 and can be exchanged for \$5 worth of food/beverage vouchers for use inside the theatre.

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CONTACT: Robert Peaslee, coordinator, International Film Studies program, Texas Tech University, (806) 834-2562 or robert.peaslee@ttu.edu.



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 27, 2015

CONTACT: Emily Gardner, emily.e.gardner@ttu.edu
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Texas Tech Hosts African-American History Month Lecture Series

The third annual event hosts speakers Tavis Smiley and Angela Davis.

To celebrate African-American History Month, Texas Tech University presents two lectures and a film screening throughout February as part of the African-American History Month Lecture Series.

“Texas Tech continues to serve as a national model for inclusive excellence,” said Juan Muñoz, senior vice president for [Institutional Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement](#) and vice provost for [Undergraduate Education and Student Affairs](#). “The caliber of speakers who will be part of our African-American Lecture Series further affirms our commitment to diversity and the profound contributions of African-Americans to our campus, state and country.”

Tavis Smiley, a New York Times best-selling author and broadcaster, will discuss his book “Death of a King” at 7 p.m. Feb. 5 in the Helen DeVitt Jones Auditorium at the [Museum of Texas Tech](#).

“Tavis is going to talk about a King that is not familiar to most people,” said Karlos Hill, assistant professor of history and coordinator of the lecture series. “That’s why, I think, it’s going to be a great talk because we have the film ‘Selma’ that captures King at his height. Some people will have seen that and they’ll come to this lecture and learn another layer of King they haven’t been familiar with.”

The lecture series, in partnership with the [International Film Series](#), will host a viewing of the documentary “Free Angela and All Political Prisoners” at 6 p.m. Feb. 10 at Alamo Drafthouse Cinema. Shola Lynch, the filmmaker, will attend and answer questions after the viewing.

Angela Davis, a social activist and professor emerita at the University of California-Santa Cruz, will discuss mass incarceration in the United States at 7 p.m. Feb. 12. That lecture also will be held in the Helen DeVitt Jones Auditorium.

All events are free and open to the public.

Office of Communications and Marketing

An EEO/Affirmative Action Institution

The African-American History Month Lecture Series is sponsored by the [Office of the President](#), the [Office of the Provost](#) and the [Division of Institutional Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement](#). Since its inaugural event in February 2013, the series has brought five distinguished speakers to Texas Tech, including Henry Louis Gates, James McBride and Tricia Rose.

About Tavis Smiley

Smiley hosts the late-night talk show “Tavis Smiley” on PBS, “The Tavis Smiley Show” for Public Radio International and “Tavis Talks,” the daily online radio program on the Tavis Smiley Network on BlogTalk Radio. He has written 16 books, his most recent being “Death of a King,” which was released in September.

About Angela Davis

Davis most recently taught at the University of California-Santa Cruz where she now is distinguished professor emerita of history of consciousness and feminist studies. She has written nine books, including “Abolition Democracy” and “Are Prisons Obsolete?” During the 1970s, she spent 18 months in jail and on trial after being placed on the FBI’s “10 Most Wanted List.” She is a founding member of Critical Resistance, a national organization dedicated to dismantling the prison industrial complex.

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Advisory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 28, 2015

CONTACT: Heidi Toth, heidi.toth@ttu.edu
(806) 742-2136

Fiddler Brings Traditional Irish Sound to School of Music

Randal Bays, who plays both fiddle and guitar, is considered one of the best of his trade.

WHAT: An evening of traditional Irish music on fiddle and guitar with well-known musician Randal Bays. Admission is free.

WHEN: 8 p.m. Saturday (Jan. 31)

WHERE: Hemmle Recital Hall (Room 101), School of Music, Texas Tech University

WHO: Randal Bays is a self-taught, U.S.-born musician who has played the Irish fiddle for more than 30 years. He is widely recognized as a master, in particular the traditional styles of County Clare and County Galway on the west coast of Ireland. Fiddler Magazine said Bays is “among the best Irish-style fiddlers of his generation.” He has toured with multiple Irish musicians and recorded a number of songs, both independently and with other musicians.

Bays also is a well-known fingerstyle guitarist, having recorded two albums with Irish fiddler Martin Hayes. He recently released his first album of solo guitar work, called “Oyster Light.” He has performed all over the United States, Europe and Canada and also teaches the Irish fiddle. He co-founded and for 10 years served as artistic director of the Friday Harbor Irish Music Week. He is now the program director of the Cascadia Irish Music Week on Whidey Island, Washington.

Find Texas Tech news, experts and story ideas at [Texas Tech Today Media Resources](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 28, 2015

CONTACT: George Watson, george.watson@ttu.edu
(806) 742-2136

Research Shows Early Parent-Child Discussions on Pornography Effective

Texas Tech University researchers discover talking with adolescents prior to college can curtail pornography viewing in later years and affect college students' self-esteem.

As the internet expands, so do the opportunities for viewing pornography. No longer is it limited to the dirty magazine under the mattress or the secret VHS tape.

Nude pictures circulate with ease through email and text messages on smartphones. Videos are easily attainable from an array of websites, and attitudes on pornography's moral implications are as varied as ever.

Nowadays, it has never been more important for parents to discuss pornography with their middle school- and high school-aged children, and Texas Tech University researchers discovered delivering this message during teenage can help curtail how much pornography is viewed during college years.

[College of Media & Communication](#) assistant professors Eric Rasmussen and Rebecca Ortiz and doctoral student Shawna White recently completed research published online and soon to be included in the *Journal of Children and Media*. They discovered the more parents talked with kids about pornography as teenagers, the less those kids viewed pornography after leaving home for college.

"What we're finding is that parents aren't necessarily talking with their kids about pornography a lot," Rasmussen said. "But when parents do talk to their kids about it in middle school and high school, their kids tend to view pornography less. It's not necessarily a direct effect, but talking to them changes attitudes about pornography and encourages them not to look at pornography."

For purposes of the study, pornography was defined as pictures, video, written and audio material, both in print and online, of naked people portrayed sexually.

Research showed not only do students who discuss pornography with their parents view pornography less, but the self-esteem of those whose sexual partners regularly views pornography differs greatly than those who did not discuss it with their parents.

Rasmussen said research has shown women whose sexual partners view pornography have lower self-esteem than those whose partners view pornography less. In this study, Rasmussen found early and consistent parent-child conversations regarding the negative effects of viewing pornography – also known as negative active mediation – during adolescence can actually prevent lower self-esteem of college students whose sexual partner regularly looks at pornography.

“We suspect those conversations are instilling some kind of value in boys and girls that their worth is not based on what their sexual partner does,” Rasmussen said. “Viewing pornography is related to the degradation of women, to the devaluation of women and to risky sexual behavior like not using condoms, having multiple partners or engaging in recreational sex. So, not only are there health risks with it, it can alter attitudes about women.”

Rasmussen’s study speculates that early and consistent negative active mediation regarding pornography may help college students believe those negative effects are a result of viewing pornography and not due to the undesirability of the non-viewing partner, and therefore will limit the amount of pornography viewed.

The key in all this is the parent’s willingness to discuss pornography with children. There are several factors involved in whether parents discuss the topic with their children and the extent to which discussions are held.

The predominance of pornography has some effect, Rasmussen said. Because pornography is readily accessible, parents may be unaware just how much their children are viewing it or the extent to which they view it online. He also said there’s no research to show discussions have different effects on boys and girls.

“If parents want to prevent their kids from looking at pornography and if they want to prevent them from having self-esteem issues, the recommendation is to start talking with them early and often,” Rasmussen said. “Whether or not you want your kids to watch it or be more educated when they do watch it, talking to them helps.”

Rasmussen is hopeful this research will help parents understand the need to be more involved in what their kids are viewing online and in the media. He hopes it encourages parents to talk with their kids more about pornography and other things in the media.

“We want to understand why parents aren’t talking to their kids about this,” Rasmussen said. “We don’t know why. Are they uncomfortable approaching the topic? Do parents not feel like kids will listen to them because everyone looks at pornography? This will help us better create messages to help convince them to talk with their kids about it.”

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TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY™

Advisory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 28, 2015

CONTACT: Emily Gardner, emily.e.gardner@ttu.edu
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Texas Tech Hosts Journalist and Best-Selling Author

Rawls College of Business presents a lecture by George Anders.

- WHAT:** Texas Tech University's [Rawls College of Business](#) hosts George Anders, a journalist and New York Times best-selling author.
- WHEN:** 5:30-7 p.m. Wednesday (Feb. 4)
- WHERE:** Rawls College of Business atrium, 703 Flint Ave.
- WHO:** Anders will speak to students about his experiences and steps to success in the professional world.

Anders has 30 years experience writing for national publications, including the Wall Street Journal where he started his career. He was part of the team that won a Pulitzer Prize in 1997 for national reporting. He also was published in publications that include The New York Times and the Harvard Business Review. He has been a contributing writer for Forbes since 2012 and has written four books, most recently "The Rare Find: Spotting Exceptional Talent Before Anyone Else."

The event is free and open to the public.

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TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Advisory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 28, 2015

CONTACT: K'Leigh Sims, kleigh.sims@ttu.edu
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Texas Tech's Top Culinaricians to Compete at the Super Bowl of Chili

Chefs and cooks from Hospitality Services will compete for the best recipe on campus.

WHAT: The Super Bowl of Chili Cook-Off

WHEN: 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Friday (Jan. 30)

WHERE: Red Raider Lounge, Student Union Building
15th Street and Akron Avenue

Texas Tech University's top culinarians will go head-to-head at Hospitality Services' second annual chili cook-off to compete for the best chili recipe on campus.

Tickets are \$6.47 and includes one tasting sample of each entry, a voting ticket and a bowl of chili with cornbread and all the toppings. Tickets can be purchased at the door with a Texas Tech dining plan, Raider Card, cash, check or credit card.

For more information about Hospitality Services, please visit their [website](#) or follow them on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Find Texas Tech news, experts and story ideas at [Texas Tech Today Media Resources](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#).

CONTACT: Alan Cushman, manager of business development, Hospitality Services, Texas Tech University, (806) 742-1360 or alan.cushman@ttu.edu.



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY™

Advisory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 29, 2015

CONTACT: Emily Gardner, emily.e.gardner@ttu.edu
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Area High School Students Compete in Robot Challenge

Whitacre College of Engineering sponsors the event.

WHAT: Texas Tech University's [Whitacre College of Engineering](#) sponsors the FIRST® Tech Challenge (FTC) Lubbock Qualifier Tournament.

WHEN: Saturday (Jan. 31) **8 a.m.** Practice matches begin
 1:05 p.m. Opening ceremony
 1:15 p.m. Qualifying matches begin
 3:45 p.m. Elimination matches begin
 5:30 p.m. Awards and closing ceremony

WHERE: Frenship High School gym, 902 N. Dowden Road, Wolfforth

EVENT: Teams of 9th-12th graders from Lubbock and surrounding cities will participate in the qualifier tournament for an opportunity to win area recognition for design excellence, sportsmanship and teamwork. Teams also have the opportunity to advance to the FTC Panhandle-Plains Regional Championship on Feb. 21.

FTC is a challenging mid-level robotics competition designed for high school students who want a hands-on learning experience to develop and hone their skills and abilities in science, technology, engineering and math.

Teams of up to 10 students are responsible for designing, building and programming robots to compete in an alliance format against other teams. The robot kit is reusable from year-to-year and is programmed using a variety of languages. Teams, including coaches, mentors and volunteers, are required to develop strategies and build robots based on sound engineering principles.

For more information, visit the [FIRST® Tech Challenge website](#).

Find Texas Tech news, experts and story ideas at [Texas Tech Today Media Resources](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#).

Office of Communications and Marketing

An EEO/Affirmative Action Institution

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alan.barhorst@ttu.edu.**



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY™

Advisory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For more information, visit the [FIRST® Tech Challenge website](#).

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Office of Communications and Marketing

An EEO/Affirmative Action Institution

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 29, 2015

CONTACT: Heidi Toth, heidi.toth@ttu.edu
(806) 742-2136

Education Dean Part of New Group Focused on Reform

Scott Ridley pioneered Texas Tech's teacher preparation program, which has garnered national attention.

Scott Ridley, dean of the [College of Education](#) at Texas Tech University, is one of the early members behind Deans for Impact, a newly launched organization dedicated to reforming teacher preparation programs in the United States.

Ridley, who is the only dean from a Big 12 university in the organization and one of three from Texas, said now is the time for such a movement, given recent statistics from the U.S. Department of Education showing two-thirds of new teachers don't feel like their institution adequately prepared them to be in the classroom and about half of teachers leave the field within five years.

"The big picture is it's a time when colleges of education are being asked to do a better job, and the reaction from most is whining and giving reasons why that can't happen," Ridley said. "I credit the faculty in our college and the support of central administration for putting our college in a national leadership role. People are working very hard."

Deans for Impact founder Benjamin Riley said the mission is to integrate the "science of learning" into teacher preparation programs, so new teachers enter the classroom with the knowledge they need to be effective teachers. As individual institutions make these reforms they will provide the measurements needed to compare programs.

Texas Tech is already a reform leader. The teacher preparation program, known as TechTeach, gives teacher candidates a year of student teaching and requires they pass certification tests prior to entering the classroom. The university also collects data, including students' test scores and attitudes about their teacher, from its partner schools to measure teacher candidates' effectiveness.

Others have noticed TechTeach's success. Officials from Massachusetts' Department of Education invited Ridley, Department of Teacher Education chairman Doug Hamman and TechTeach's lead professional development facilitator, Katie Button, to work with the colleges of education in their state. Massachusetts has the highest-ranked public education system in the United States.

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“At both the local and the national level, what our teacher education faculty members are doing is attracting attention,” Ridley said.

Deans for Impact is facing some pushback, he said. University teacher education has had little to no accountability in how they prepare their teacher candidates, and these reforms will raise that level of accountability. Additionally, Deans for Impact promotes using K-12 students’ test scores to measure teachers’ effectiveness. This doesn’t mean promoting or firing teachers based only on test scores, Ridley said. Rather, it is one way among many of calculating the teacher’s impact on K-12 student learning.

“It looks at the teacher’s contribution to children’s growth from one year to the next,” Ridley said. “We’re willing to be held accountable to that.”

To read the letter Deans for Impact sent to the Department of Education explaining its goals, click [here](#).

Find Texas Tech news, experts and story ideas at [Texas Tech Today Media Resources](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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Expert Pitch

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 29, 2015

CONTACT: George Watson, george.watson@ttu.edu
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Instant Replay Becomes Staple of Sports Television Viewing Experience

Pitch ☐ ☐

Glenn Cummins, an assistant professor and associate dean for research in the Texas Tech University [College of Media & Communication](#), has performed extensive research on how instant replay has affected the sports television viewing audience. His research is particularly applicable with the Super Bowl on Sunday.

Read more on his research and the [Center for Communication Research here](#).

Expert ☐

Glenn Cummins, assistant professor and associate dean for research, College of Media & Communication, (806) 834-3117 or glenn.cummins@ttu.edu.

Talking Points ☐ ☐

- As Super Bowl XLIX approaches, television executives expect millions to be glued to their television sets watching the big game. In the course of a broadcast, most plays will be shown at least twice, some several times depending on their importance to the game. That illustrates how big of a staple instant replay has become to the sports viewing audience. It's also an area for which Texas Tech professor Glenn Cummins has spent countless hours researching the effects, physiologically and emotionally, instant replay has on the viewing audience.
- Cummins' research has looked mostly at football and how networks and broadcasters fill the 30-40 seconds between plays. He's examined not only the techniques broadcasters use to fill those gaps, but also the emotional responses those techniques elicit and how they affect the viewing audience going forward.
- Cummins said not only does instant replay bring a response to the current play, it also produces a heightened anticipation of the upcoming play more than if there was no instant replay. Essentially, human emotion in watching a play does not have to start over each play because the emotional response from the previous play bleeds into the next.

Quotes

- "What I'm interested in is how the technical embellishments, the production techniques that have been brought to bear in a telecast can be used to craft and influence viewer response. Networks can't control the nature of the matchup.

They can't make both teams be good. What's in their control are the technical resources developed over time to cover a competition."

- "My focus is on how broadcasters strategically use instant replay to achieve some sort of end. The two things I look at in my research are how instant replay is being used to change the perception of events and how instant replay can produce an emotional response to what you're seeing."
- "An exciting play is going to be exciting no matter what. The touchdown, the home run will get the audience going. Dull plays need all the help they can get. In terms of perception, instant replay does a terrific job of changing how people perceive game action."

□ □



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 29, 2015

CONTACT: George Watson, george.watson@ttu.edu
(806) 742-2136

Instant Replay Becomes Staple of Sports Television Viewing Experience

Glenn Cummins and the Center for Communication Research have done extensive experimentation on how instant replay affects broadcasting and viewing sports.

Deep in the basement of the [College of Media & Communication](#) building is a room housing a living room complete with a big-screen television, surround sound audio, nice couches and accent furniture.

It's a nice place to watch a game – exactly what professor Glenn Cummins wants. But this is no ordinary living room. Among the room's accents are cameras along the wall and a web camera mounted to the top of the TV that keep an eye on the viewer as much as the viewer keeps an eye on the TV.

This is one room in the [Center for Communication Research \(CCR\)](#), a laboratory that allows students and professors to test theories, audience responses and consumption of media messages in a controlled, scientific atmosphere without distraction.

Cummins, an associate professor and the college's associate dean for research, has spent countless hours here studying an aspect of sports broadcasting that, today, goes largely unheralded and, essentially, taken for granted: instant replay.

“What I’m interested in is how the technical embellishments, the production techniques that have been brought to bear in a telecast can be used to craft and influence viewer response,” Cummins said. “Networks can’t control the nature of the matchup. They can’t make both teams be good. What’s in their control are the technical resources developed over time to cover a competition.

“My focus is on how broadcasters strategically use instant replay to achieve some sort of end. The two things I look at in my research are how instant replay is being used to change the perception of events. The other thing I’ve looked at is how instant replay can produce an emotional response to what you’re seeing.”

Instant replay has become a staple of any sports broadcast. It has to be, given the lulls in between action that most sports present.

Cummins' research has looked mostly at football and how networks and broadcasters fill the 30-40 seconds between plays. He's examined not only the techniques broadcasters use to fill those gaps, but also the emotional responses those techniques elicit and how they affect the viewing audience going forward.

A great example, Cummins said, is the proverbial "two yards and a cloud of dust" play. Through research, he found such plays can bring an emotional response when viewed from different angles or shown up close because it elicits a physiological arousal response from viewing the struggle of the play.

"An exciting play is going to be exciting no matter what. The touchdown, the home run will get the audience going," Cummins said. "Dull plays need all the help they can get. In terms of perception, instant replay does a terrific job of changing how people perceive game action."

Cummins said not only does instant replay bring a response to the current play, it also produces a heightened anticipation of the upcoming play more than if there was no instant replay. Essentially, viewers' emotional response in watching a play does not have to start over each play because the stimulation from the previous play bleeds into the next.

Networks and industry leaders take notice, and conduct much the same research as what happens in the CCR for their purposes. However, a network like ESPN, Cummins said, conducts its research on a much faster pace in order to determine how to enhance their current broadcasts, whereas academic research looks more at testing theoretical models explaining audience effects. He said networks also conduct research examining how to enhance the viewing experience in terms of using social media.

Of course, instant replay has become somewhat controversial in the last few years since officials, particularly in football, have used instant replay to examine and determine close calls. Some complain it slows down the game too much, and baseball purists still resist the use of instant replay. But instant replay continues to grow.

"Just this week I was looking at some industry research talking about the use of drones in the telecast of sports," Cummins said. "That's something that gives a perspective that hasn't been seen before and can catch a viewer's attention and draw them into a broadcast. The audience always needs something new to stimulate them."

Find Texas Tech news, experts and story ideas at [Texas Tech Today Media Resources](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Advisory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 29, 2015

CONTACT: George Watson, george.watson@ttu.edu
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Iyengar to Discuss Media and Politics for Morris Distinguished Lecture Series The Stanford University professor has authored numerous books on the subject.

WHAT: Shanto Iyengar, Norman Chandler Chair in Communication and professor of political science at Stanford University will speak on the topic of media and politics at the [Texas Tech University College of Media & Communication's](#) William B. Morris III Distinguished Lecture Series.

WHEN: 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Friday (Jan. 30)

WHERE: McKenzie-Merket Alumni Center, 2521 17th St. (corner of 17th Street and University Avenue)

EVENT: Iyengar will discuss the topic, "Fear and Loathing Across Party Lines: New Measures of Polarization," in which he will address the dramatic increase in the polarization of the American electorate in terms of social identity and discrimination toward opposing partisans.

Iyengar has authored several award-winning books that address the role of the media and mass communication in today's political landscape. In his research, he has discovered political party cues carry with them powerful effects on non-political judgments and behaviors. He will discuss how the degree of discrimination based on partisanship has exceeded the discrimination based on race and how it has been used to encourage confrontation instead of cooperation.

To follow along with the lecture on social media, individuals can use the hashtag #MorrisLecture.

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 29, 2015

CONTACT: John Davis, john.w.davis@ttu.edu
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Texas Tech Researchers Receive Grant to Study Quail Parasite Infections

The Wildlife Toxicology Laboratory will continue to study eyeworms and cecal worms infecting wild bobwhite quail.

[The Wildlife Toxicology Laboratory](#) at Texas Tech University received a \$305,171 award from Park Cities Quail to continue research on the impact of eyeworm infections in wild bobwhite quail in the Rolling Plains of West Texas.

The laboratory already has received more than \$1.6 million from the Rolling Plains Quail Research Foundation, Park Cities Quail and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service to discover what is causing northern bobwhite populations to decline.

Ronald J. Kendall, professor of environmental toxicology at Texas Tech, announced in August that an eyeworm (*Oxyspirura petrowi*), which is a parasitic nematode, was a probable cause of the [quail decline](#) in the Rolling Plains, particularly since 2000. In 2011, his lab joined [Operation Idiopathic Decline](#), which is the largest quail disease research project ever conducted in the United States.

“Without the support of organizations such as Park Cities Quail, we would have not been able to make the progress we have to evaluate the degree of infection of parasites in wild bobwhite quail and what we can do about it in a reasonable, strategic and scientifically based way,” Kendall said. “This new Park Cities Quail grant will dramatically enhance our field research data on wild quail populations that receive a treatment so we can determine their survivability, reproduction and health outcomes.”

The research funding from Park Cities Quail will allow implementation of a bobwhite quail population assessment when the quail receive a treatment for parasite control. This grant provides a database for the ultimate development of a treatment for parasite infections in wild bobwhite quail, including the eyeworm and the cecal worm.

“The Wildlife Toxicology Laboratory has provided us detailed insight into how the money we have raised and contributed for research is being used and applied,” said Joe Bob Shirley, Park Cities Quail board member. “Research being done at the Wildlife Toxicology Laboratory is very promising with respect to what may be the cause of the quail decline. They are fast-tracking their studies on a method that may provide a

solution, and we are hopeful that we will have a strategy to combat quail decline in the Rolling Plains.”

Park Cities Quail board member Matt Perry-Miller said he was satisfied with the work that researchers at [The Institute of Environmental and Human Health](#) at Texas Tech had done.

“The Wildlife Toxicology Laboratory has reaffirmed our commitment to solving the ongoing dilemma of the decline of bobwhite quail through the funding of scientific research, which is coupled with the knowledge and passion of quail enthusiasts,” he said.

To read more about the quail disease study or watch an informational video click [here](#).

Find Texas Tech news, experts and story ideas at [Texas Tech Today Media Resources](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#).

CONTACT: Ronald J. Kendall, professor, environmental toxicology, Wildlife Toxicology Laboratory, (806) 885-0238 or ron.kendall@ttu.edu.



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY™

Advisory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 29, 2015

CONTACT: Kari Abitbol, kari.abitbol@ttu.edu
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Texas Tech University School of Law Hosts 7th Court of Appeals

The court will hear cases brought from appeal from the state's lower courts.

WHAT: The [Texas Tech University School of Law](#) will host the 7th Court of Appeals.

WHEN: 10 a.m. Monday (Feb. 2)

WHERE: Donald M. Hunt Courtroom, School of Law, 1802 Hartford Ave.

Texas Tech Law students and the general public will have an opportunity to view the [7th Court of Appeals](#), which usually presides in Amarillo, in action. The court, which consists of a chief justice and three justices, has immediate appellate jurisdiction in civil and criminal cases appealed from lower courts from 46 Texas counties.

Chief Justice Brian Quinn and Justice Mackey K. Hancock and Patrick A. Pirtle all graduated from the Texas Tech School of Law, while Hancock, Pirtle and Justice James T. Campbell all earned bachelor's degrees from Texas Tech.

Three Texas Tech Law alumni will argue before the court: Anna McKim ('01) from the firm of Field, Manning, Stone, Hawthorne and Aycock; Joel Cook ('05) from the firm of Seymore and Cook; and assistant criminal district attorney Lauren Murphree ('13).

Oral arguments will be heard in four cases starting at 9 a.m.

Find Texas Tech news, experts and story ideas at [Texas Tech Today Media Resources](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 30, 2015

CONTACT: John Davis, john.w.davis@ttu.edu
(806) 742-2136

Texas Tech Professor's Antarctic Expedition Featured in Museum's 'Antarctica – Pioneering American Explorations of the Frozen Continent'

This "Up from the Basement" exhibition runs Jan. 30 – Dec. 20 at the Museum of Texas Tech University

Battling roaring winds, freezing temperatures and deep crevasses, the young lead geologist for the Eastern Sledge Party joined the Second Byrd Expedition to Antarctica in 1933. While there, he endured a 77-day sled journey into the unknown of Marie Byrd Land, the western portion of the continent lying east of the Ross Ice Shelf and Ross Sea.

That was the beginning of a love affair with Antarctica for F. Alton Wade, a Horn Professor, former chairman of the [Department of Geosciences](#) at Texas Tech University and a research associate at the [Museum of Texas Tech University](#).

Starting at Texas Tech in 1954, he led six Texas Tech Antarctic expeditions. His adventures are detailed in "Antarctica – Pioneering American Explorations of the Frozen Continent," a new exhibit running Jan. 30 – Dec. 20 at the Museum of Texas Tech University.

"In 1939, Wade returned to the icy frontier as senior scientist for the United States Antarctic Service to plan and manage the expedition's scientific program as well as command the cutting-edge Snow Cruiser, which was a mobile research lab equipped with an airplane on its roof," said exhibits manager Andy Gedeon. "In 1971, he created the Antarctic Research Center at the Museum of Texas Tech University to further advance the discoveries of the Texas Tech expeditions. Wade was one of the first groups of professors to be awarded a Horn Professorship, which is the highest honor bestowed upon a faculty member. His fascinating research and his rank as a Horn Professor are why we are detailing his work in this year's featured Horn Professor exhibition."

The exhibit highlights nearly 100 objects from the collections of the Museum of Texas Tech University, said Tabitha Schmidt, interim director for the museum. Attendees can learn why it took 200 years before large sections of the Antarctic interior could be explored. Penguins, sled dogs, fossils of ancient animals and a mummified seal tell the story of how this seemingly inhospitable landscape, 98 percent covered in snow and ice, has evolved and always teemed with life.

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“Not only will you be able to trace the steps of Antarctic exploration, you can see how you would measure up to a life-sized cutout of an emperor penguin, interact with games that test your knowledge of Antarctic exploration, learn about the Frozen Continent’s prehistoric tropical past and see what parts of an actual exploration campsite would have looked like,” Schmidt said. “The exhibition also features a large mock glacier in the main gallery that contains a continuous mural depicting Antarctic scenery. These are experiences you will not want to miss.”

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After Tragedy, Fellow Biology Students Step In to Finish Friend's Research

Chris Rodriguez is listed as an author of the biology research he started before his death in 2012. His friends finished and presented the research.

By Heidi Toth

Four names were in the author spot of a Texas Tech University study presented at a biology conference in Sacramento in August.

Senior biology student Tailor Brown's name was at the top; she did most of the field research, which examined how oak tree resprouts respond to drought conditions. Joshua Willms, who is now a joint MD/Ph.D. student at the [Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center](#), is second; he helped coordinate all the research. Associate biology professor Dylan Schwilk, whose name is fourth, guided the undergraduate researchers.

Christopher Rodriguez is third. The project was his brainchild. He learned how to use the equipment and wrote a research proposal. He told his friends about this exciting new research he'd started, and he made plants and droughts sound exciting.

Just a few months into the research, on Oct. 3, 2012, he suffered life-threatening injuries in a motorcycle accident. He died three days later.

After Rodriguez's death, a few of his friends approached Schwilk and said they'd like to continue Rodriguez's research. It would be their friend's legacy. Schwilk allowed himself to be persuaded.

"It's not a story of the work almost being done and students chipping in and finishing it," he said. "That was their idea, but instead some students who would not have otherwise learned about our lab's research became interested in plants and ecology."

Forming a hypothesis

Rodriguez hadn't taken ecology yet when he walked into Schwilk's lab, but as an undergraduate researcher in Texas Tech's [Center for the Integration of STEM Education and Research \(CISER\)](#), he was looking for a research project.

"He was interested in ecology and plants, and that's a bit unusual," Schwilk said. "Students here tend to be self-described pre-health, so it's rare to find those who aren't. He came and talked to me and was clearly really interested. He wasn't just looking to pad his resume."

The summer before his junior year, Rodriguez learned the processes and how to use the equipment. He went on research trips to the Davis Mountains and was developing a proposal that would allow him both to do this research for Texas Tech's Howard Hughes Medical Institute (TTU/HHMI) research program and use it for his honors thesis.

“He was getting so annoyed there were obstacles to his combining an honors thesis with his TTU/HHMI research,” Schwilk remembered. “Fortunately, he was good at pushing stuff through. He was a very charming guy, so he could try to push his point of view and not irritate anyone in the bureaucracy.”

Stepping in

Brown got involved after a fellow research scholar and friend of Rodriguez told her about the research project. Brown was interested in plants, but she didn’t really know Rodriguez.

Others did. After a memorial service on campus for Rodriguez, Willms and others approached Schwilk asking to continue their friend’s research.

“To be honest, I thought this was not a particularly good idea,” Schwilk said. “I think you have to love what you do, and it was wonderful to do something in Chris’ memory, but research whatever you love as a legacy instead. And that’s what I told them.

“It wasn’t like Chris’ project was almost done. He was just starting.”

Willms, however, kept asking. He was working on an honors thesis as well as doing TTU/HHMI research in a marine biology lab, but he believed finishing Rodriguez’s research would help the research group heal. The TTU/HHMI group was small and tight-knit, he said, and they were all affected when Rodriguez died.

“I wanted everybody in TTU/HHMI to at least have a chance to work on it,” Willms said.

He knew everybody couldn’t be trained on all the tasks, so he left the more technical work for himself, Brown and Schwilk. He invited students to do work that could be done fairly easily and in small increments, like data entry or running centrifuge. The training was quick and easy and a steady supply of students rotated through the lab for an hour or two at a time.

He also organized a memorial field trip for any students who wanted to see where the research was happening.

“Everybody got to see where Chris was working and spend some time in the mountains,” Willms said. “I think that was also good to help people heal.”

The finished research project provided healing for more than just the students involved, said Julie Isom, the TTU/HHMI associate program director.

“We have been awed by the compassion and dedication the involved scholars have had for this amazing journey to honor the life of their friend and preserve his legacy through his research,” she said. “It is a testament to the beauty and power of what a small but determined group of individuals can accomplish. There is an inspirational lesson here, one we will all remember.”

Answering the question



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Rodriguez researched how oak trees respond to drought conditions. Schwilk and a graduate student were already researching full-grown trees, so Rodriguez focused his efforts on resprouts – the trees that grew after fire destroyed the parts above ground. These new trees had a full-grown root system but were immature trees.

That research required numerous field trips to sites in the Davis Mountains, southwest of Midland/Odessa. To collect samples, Schwilk and the students brought bags full of water in which to contain the tree stems; each stem was immersed and cut underwater to ensure it was never exposed to air. They collected samples from different types of oak trees in various environments in the mountains and brought them back to Texas Tech for testing.

To simulate a drought, the stems would be run through a centrifuge, which spun the plants around quickly, creating the same tension in the plant that lack of water would create. Plants bring water in through the roots, and it moves up through the plant pulled by tension in the vessels. In a drought (or extreme heat, which to a plant feels about the same), that tension becomes too extreme and the vessels embolize, causing water flow to the leaves to stop.

If drought conditions last long enough, part or all of the tree may die.

This seems obvious – of course plants need water to survive – but the big picture turned out to be much bigger. Brown found that post-fire resprouts were more vulnerable to high tension than were the adults and examined how much danger the oak populations could be in, particularly in already arid areas like West Texas that are just going to get hotter and drier as the Earth heats up.

If the oak populations are in trouble, that also has ramifications for the other life forms that depend on it. The trees are already largely confined to mountaintops, called “sky islands” in the research. They don’t have many other places to go from there.

“Those forests are very important for wildlife,” Schwilk said. “These are unique islands of habitat for many animals. The bears in West Texas all depend on oaks. If you do not have oaks, you do not have bears.

“If the climate warms, perhaps these trees will be pushed off the top of the mountains and be gone.”

The legacy of Chris Rodriguez

Willms remembered a meeting at the Honors College for all the students doing a thesis. A student asked a physics question. Rodriguez jumped in, eager to share his love of science.

“It was really cool to see someone who is so excited about science and so excited about sharing it and trying to get someone to understand it,” Willms said. “You can tell when somebody is excited about what they know, somebody who’s excited about basically how cool the world is, and I think that was Chris.”

Schwilk echoed that sentiment. He remembered being out in the mountains with Rodriguez, talking about science and answering questions.

He also remembered Rodriguez asking questions about everything on their first trip, trying to figure out how to do all of the processes and why they were testing the plants as they were. He was excited to know.

“Once he said something like, ‘I just never knew this was what science was like,’” Schwilk said. “He picked up stuff really fast, and he was good at asking the right questions and not being afraid to ask silly questions. When he asked a question, he remembered your answer and you didn’t have to tell him again.

“It’s great when students are smart, but, more importantly, he was interested in education and introducing other people to science and in doing good things in the world. We didn’t get to see what Chris could do, but I’ve had students like him who are not only smart but really good people. I care about that a lot as well.”

Willms met Rodriguez’s family twice, first at an HHMI memorial service and then at a universitywide memorial for all the students who died that year. He and Rodriguez’s other friends told his family how they had continued doing his research.

“They were really happy,” Willms said. “They were very emotional. I don’t know how to describe it.”

Then he paused.

“I guess they really appreciated it.”



Web Only

Ask the Experts: How To Make And Keep New Year's Resolutions

Professors of addiction recovery discuss avoiding the pitfalls most people encounter in keeping their goals for the year.

By Heidi Toth

Lose weight. Save money. Stop smoking. What habit are you starting or stopping in 2015?

Millions of people will make New Year's resolutions today and, if history is any indication, abandon them by the third week of January. For those who are serious about making changes, however, actually losing weight, saving money or quitting smoking is possible.

George Comiskey, an instructor of addiction disorders and recovery studies, and Cynthia Dsauza, an assistant professor of community, family and addiction services, weighed in on ways to keep New Year's resolutions beyond Jan. 15.

What are the most common resolutions?

CD: The most common New Year's resolutions can be broken up into four major categories: health, personal finance, relationships and self-growth. Resolutions dealing with health and wellness include losing weight, getting fit, drinking less, quitting smoking and eating healthier. People also look at their finances and make resolutions to save more, spend less, get out of debt or get better jobs.

For many people, working on their personal relationships is another area of attention during this time. People want to make more time for their family and friends, work on broken relationships or foster new ones.

Finally, people are motivated by stress-reducing activities and often want to make more time for personal growth. These could include learning a new skill, reading or listening to music more, engaging in service work or travelling to new places.

What are the most common reasons people abandon their New Year's resolutions?

CD: It comes down to their thinking. Something that negatively affects people is "all-or-none" thinking, where people look at their resolutions in two categories: keeping or breaking them. This level of rigidity is discouraging when someone has a slip-up, which is common when trying to change a long-standing behavior. It leads to the "the snowball effect," where a minor lapse in behavior becomes a major relapse and leads to totally giving up on the resolution.

People need to see the setbacks for what they are – expected bumps in the road – and keep monitoring progress, no matter how small. People do the exact opposite, getting tunnel vision and forgetting to celebrate victories along the way.

If people set realistic goals, their motivation will come from highlighting the triumphs. Further, having a specific plan on how to get there provides a road map to guide the way. Finally, we often make resolutions because we feel “less than,” but if our motivation to change is to make our lives better (not because mom said something about your weight at Christmas dinner or because cousin Brian makes so much more money than you do), we would be less likely to break our resolutions.

GC: People often aren’t able to accomplish their resolutions because of lack of support, their goals are too extreme or they get back into the old routine once the new year starts. Other possibilities include poor time management, financial obstacles to success or giving up too easily.

What steps can people take to change their habits?

CD: It’s important to focus on one resolution and set realistic, specific goals. For example: losing weight is not a specific goal. Losing 10 pounds in 90 days is more specific. Don’t think of your resolution as a temporary change in your life. Think about it as a long term change and do something, no matter how small, every day to work toward it.

Having an accountability buddy is more helpful than you think; find someone who knows you well and will hold you accountable. When we learn how to celebrate the small changes, we motivate ourselves to keep going. A celebration can be anything from taking the time to appreciate how much progress we have made to buying ourselves a small gift as a reward for our efforts.

Becoming more mindful of our physical, mental and emotional states can help us achieve our goals dramatically. Doing this helps us realize when we are being triggered to break our resolutions, and catching our lapse before it happens is winning half the battle.

Finally, it’s important to remember creating long-lasting change in our lives should be a positive experience. If we take ourselves too seriously, we will not have the motivation (or self-esteem) to recover from our setbacks and keep going.

GC: People need to frame their resolutions. If they see them as part of their overall life goals, they will be more realistic. Start with your most realistic resolutions that will give the most immediate success – success brings long-term change. Focus on making one change at a time.

Frame your change in a positive manner – “I’m going to...” rather than “I’m not going to....”

Write down your resolutions and the SMART strategies you will use to reach them.

- S specific
- M measurable
- A attainable
- R realistic
- T timely



What should you do if you break your New Year's resolution?

GC: Don't beat yourself up or shame yourself. Talk with your support system about what took you off course and jump back into the flow.

CD: Setbacks are common. If you feel strongly about your New Year's resolution, don't dwell on the stumbling blocks. Maybe you need to look at your resolution and find out what is not working. Maybe you do not have a realistic goal, it might be that your plan for how to get to your goal isn't realistic. Find out the reason behind why you have lost your motivation and find solutions to work around that. One of the best ways to get back on track is to connect with someone who is working toward the same goal. Knowing you are not alone in your challenge and having someone who understands is a powerful motivator.

What are the biggest pitfalls in making and keeping resolutions?

GC: Making too many resolutions or making resolutions that are too expansive to see results or are unrealistic for the life and circumstances you are living. For instance, it's challenging to give up smoking if you live and/or work with smokers.

CD: One of the biggest reasons people stop keeping their New Year's resolutions is they are not really ready to make a change in their lives, especially when this means letting go of a bad habit. Another reason people don't keep their resolutions is the change they want in their lives is not internally motivated. This means that instead of making a change that reflects who they are on the inside, people make resolutions based on how they think things should be. Not only does this mean people lose their motivation to keep up the change but this can also be damaging to one's self worth.

Time is another area people do not take into account when thinking about long-lasting change. It takes a long time for us to make a behavior a habit; it will take a significant amount of time to train our brains to think differently.

What advice can you give people trying to make real, positive changes in their lives?

GC: Start the process by clarifying your overall goals, purpose and mission of your life. See how the changes you are looking to make fit into your goals, purpose and mission. If the changes fit, you are more likely to stay with the changes until they become new habits. Also, you want people around you who love and who support you in accomplishing the change.

CD: What people need to remember is just because they have a setback on their resolution, it doesn't mean that they should give up. Keeping a resolution is training your brain and body to do something different from what it is used to doing. This will take time, effort and energy that sometimes you feel you are unwilling or unable to give. Don't let that distract you. Your New Year's resolution should be a long-term change, it isn't a goal you will achieve and then be done with it. When we change the way we look at resolutions understand why we want to make those changes, we are more likely to find success.

For more information, check out [this article from Psychology Today](#) and [this article from Happy Publishing](#).

Sidebar:

Most popular New Year's resolutions

- Lose weight
- Volunteer more
- Quit smoking
- Get more (or better) education
- Get a better job
- Save money
- Get fit
- Eat healthier
- Manage stress
- Manage debt
- Take a trip
- Reduce, reuse and recycle
- Drink less alcohol

Source: www.usa.gov



Web Only

Department of Communication Studies Now in College of Media & Communication

The department's move from Arts & Sciences is expected to strengthen collaboration and enhance the student's educational experience.

By George Watson

Beginning with the Spring 2015 semester, the [Department of Communication Studies](#) has a new home at Texas Tech University.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held today (Jan. 12) at Jones AT&T Stadium marking the department's move from the [College of Arts and Sciences](#) to the [College of Media & Communication](#). The move became official as of Jan. 1.

David Perlmutter, dean of the College of Media & Communication, said the move will benefit students by combining efforts and focus in communication in all areas of teaching and research.

"I think it will be better for teaching, for securing research grants and for the vision for the future to have all the scholars, practitioners and educators together in one building but with a joint focus that will help us meet that future with a clear vision," Perlmutter said. "In our workplace, students need to have the whole repertoire of oral, visual and written communication skills."

The Department of Communication Studies now joins the departments of Advertising, Journalism & Electronic Media and Public Relations as the degrees offered within the College of Media & Communication. Provost and senior vice president Lawrence Schovanec echoed the sentiments of many in Media & Communication that it will help increase the college's diversity, inclusiveness and expansiveness.

"Communication studies is one of the original departments at Texas Tech and it is rooted in arts and sciences and the liberal arts," Schovanec said. "But I think the leadership here has been wonderful and it will be for the better. Graduate students now are in a college where they will have access to a doctoral program. (Students) will have the benefit of faculty with a much broader range of research and scholarly expertise."

Perlmutter said the decision to move the Department of Communication Studies has been about three or four years in the making, since a committee began studying the move. He did indicate having communication studies be part of a communications college is a trend, citing Texas State, the University of Texas and UT-Arlington.

As part of the move, adjustments in curriculum are also being made, most notably that a course in interpersonal communication will now be a required class for all Media & Communication students.

The move to Media & Communication also means eight faculty and two staff members will become part of the department, though they are already housed on the 10th floor of the Media & Communication building.

Associate professor Narissra Punyanunt-Carter serves as the department's interim chair, and Perlmutter said a national search is currently underway for a full-time chair for the department, which he hopes to have in place by this summer or the beginning of the Fall 2015 semester. He also said plans are to add three to four professors, including at least two assistant professors.

"The reality today is that students graduating into the workforce are facing changes that occur very rapidly," Perlmutter said. "They have to be versatile and adaptive. The greater the menu ideas and theories they are exposed to, the more prepared they will be for the work environment of the future. As far as research, this will allow for much easier collaboration. We already see a lot of joint research in health communications, grant proposals and community engagement. This is a win-win for all students and for Texas Tech."



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Doctoral Student Connects D.C., Nigeria in Global Science Project

As a Helen DeVitt Jones part-time fellow, Florentia Spires brought together students from two different continents to teach them about precipitation and water scarcity.

By Heidi Toth

Middle school students in a Washington, D.C., classroom built rain gauges out of soda bottles. They constructed a model weather satellite of candies and other snacks. They tracked rainfall and observed how water molecules adhere to each other.

Halfway around the world and in a time zone five hours later, middle school students in Nigeria completed the same assignments. They took part in video chats with the D.C. students to discuss their science projects and blogged about the unique global science project facilitated by a Texas Tech University Global Pragmatic Research in Science Education (PRiSE) graduate student.

Florentia Spires is in her second year of a doctorate degree in curriculum and instruction through Texas Tech's [College of Education](#). Her online degree is part of the global science education program, and she's going as global as possible – hence the combination of classrooms separated by almost 6,000 miles of ocean.

“Most children in D.C. routinely travel no more than 50 miles from where they live in their lifetime,” she said. “By exposing students to something they’ve never imagined, it may impact them to think differently and on a larger scale than they would have ever imagined they would think.”

Spires, who lives in the Maryland suburbs of D.C., returned to school after years of teaching. She was a master educator for NASA, she was a National Science Foundation Albert Einstein Distinguished Educator fellow and former Peace Corps volunteer. Her most recent achievement is a Helen DeVitt Jones part-time graduate fellow through Texas Tech's [graduate fellowship program](#), a fellowship that funds various research projects from multiple disciplines.

“Tech Texas is pleased to support Ms. Spires with a Helen DeVitt Jones Part-Time Graduate Fellowship,” [Graduate School](#) Dean Mark Sheridan said. “Her work will have an immediate and lasting impact on a global scale.”

Spires used that fellowship to teach a group of children the importance of water, how to measure rainfall and that engagement in science can be full of essential knowledge and enjoyable.

“Science can be fun,” Spires said. “It’s just that as an educator, you have to know how to present the material in a way that excites student curiosity.”

Finding Texas Tech

Spires has been in education for most of her adult life, both in the D.C. area and in southern Africa. For 11 years, she taught in Botswana, initially as a Peace Corps volunteer teaching students, then training other Peace Corps volunteers to be teachers. She returned to the classroom for a time before returning to the United States.

When she returned to the U.S., she taught in the same district from which she graduated high school. She earned a master's degree at Loyola University in curriculum and instruction in K-12 science education, then was selected as a NASA fellow and earned certification in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) from Columbia Teachers College.

A stint as a NASA master educator for the Global Precipitation Measurement (GPM) mission followed. She was one of five educators nationwide developing curriculum materials for the GPM mission, which allowed her to participate in the Feb. 27 launch of the GPM satellite. The satellite records precipitation data throughout the globe and gives scientists better insight into the impact water has on the Earth.

Spires enrolled at Texas Tech in August 2013, having found the university because of its global science program. For a global science education project, she settled on the NASA mission as a foundation and selected Hector Telford's Howard University Middle School of Mathematics and Science class as her local classroom. With assistance from the Schlumberger Excellence in Education Development (SEED), she located a school in Nigeria to participate. SEED also helped transport materials between the U.S. and Nigeria.

She prepared a curriculum focused around the GPM satellite and the overarching theme of how water affects society. Spires' goal was to turn 50 middle school students into global science citizens who sought to understand the importance of precipitation and gain perspective beyond the region in which they lived.

"The kids really loved the creative process of learning about the GPM satellite," she said. "None of them have done anything similar to this project in their school experience until now."

Going global

The curriculum for both schools included building rain gauges out of soda bottles as well as designing and building infrastructure for commercial rain gauges, which Spires' fellowship funded. They analyzed how well the homemade rain gauges worked compared to the commercial gauge, then compiled a data analysis to determine what accounted for the difference in efficiency.

Students also constructed their own GPM satellites, but instead of scientifically tested materials, they used marshmallows, graham crackers, wafers, candy and other treats. Besides tasting good when they were finished, constructing the satellites enabled the students to identify and explain the functions of each piece and its importance toward the mission's goal of data collection efficiency.

"They really enjoyed and embraced the NASA assets to learning," Spires said.



Although she wasn't in Nigeria with the other class, she regularly led communication sessions through ooVoo, a video chat service. She sent the same curriculum and activities to both classrooms. When it came time to build an edible satellite, she offered to send money for the building supplies; eliminating the burden of cost helps alleviate the overall challenge of a global project.

"I didn't want to put such a burden of cost on their school," she said.

Her Nigerian global educator, Ubong Udomah, declined the offer, and the Nigerian students created satellites out of U.S. and Nigerian foodstuffs, which provided a unique finished product next to the American-made versions.

It wasn't all measuring precipitation and eating Necco wafer spacecraft, though. Spires' students on two continents learned how a raindrop behaves as it falls and how water molecules stick together. They looked at pictures of molecules taken with high-speed photography so they could observe the behavior of the droplets.

Students also studied the effects of water, including its relationship to drought, flooding and water-borne diseases like malaria, and the importance of water in the ecosystem. D.C. and the Delta region of Nigeria are both wet areas, so many of the students had never thought about the need to conserve and reuse water, Spires said.

"They became more cognizant of the need to recycle water as much as possible and have come to realize they should value water as a natural resource," she said. "They're learning a lot of different facts relevant to their own lives about the importance of water."

Like any project, this one had its kinks. One difficulty was the Nigerian students were delayed when the government closed the school for two weeks to help contain the Ebola outbreak. However, they're basically caught up, Spires said. Both groups remain enthusiastic about video chats and blogging opportunities, sharing their data with each other and discussing the most abundant uses of water in their countries.

Additionally, the two school systems have different schedules for holidays and start and end days. In September, the American students were at the start of their semester, while the Nigerian students were in their ninth month of year-round schooling.

The classroom portion of the project is nearly complete, Spires said, although she'll continue collecting data from the schools. The students took a pre-test and will take a post-test to see how much they learned through her curriculum, and the American students can contribute their data to a national precipitation database known as the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network. The database is not yet available to the Nigerian students, she said.

"They're actually contributing to something much bigger than any one area in the country," Spires said. "The phenomenon of doing 'real science' is just one factor that

encourages students to continue the work that they see affects so many people on the Earth as well as themselves.”

What comes next

Spires is a full-time master educator for the D.C. school district, which means she teaches the teachers. She’s using her research to figure out the best way for teachers to reach students and help them break down traditional barriers in education. She also frequently reminds teachers to collaborate not only with teachers across the hall but also teachers across the globe.

“When you’re doing research projects in two different nations, students see similarities and differences in the materials they have compared to what their partners have,” Spires said. “You still get the same things done in terms of ingenuity, what you have to work with, how you think.

“Students are thinking different, out of the box, not one pathway.”

A few years ago Spires was at a local farm, surrounded by dozens of students and their parents learning about farming. She noticed a teenage girl staring at her, and Spires’ mother asked her if she recognized the family. Spires didn’t. Before she left, however, the girl’s mother approached her and asked if she had ever taught at an area school. Spires said she had.

“My daughter knew it was you,” Spires remembered the woman telling her. “She was to shy to talk to you, but she’s a senior now. She’s going to college and studying science and it’s because of you.

“It’s really important to expose children to global education. Some of them will take it and will run with it. This is only one important way we as leaders in the educational community can contribute to the increase in students becoming scientists, technologists, engineers and mathematicians. If they can see the big picture up close, they can imagine it for themselves. If students don’t take advantage of the insight gained due to different areas of interest, at least they have been exposed and they know it is an option or they can simply pass on the knowledge in hope to make a global impact.”



Web Only

Doctoral Student Hangs up Dancing Shoes for Financial Planning

Sven Saaretalu, now a first-year graduate student in personal financial planning at Texas Tech, came to the United States with his eye on Hollywood.

By Heidi Toth

Michael Jackson, Justin Timberlake and the stars of “You Got Served” led Sven Saaretalu on a circuitous route to Lubbock.

When Saaretalu, now a doctoral student in personal financial planning at Texas Tech University, was a teenager living on Saaremaa, an island off the coast of Estonia, he was a break dancer. He wasn’t focused on much else but “wiping the floor,” as he called the style of dancing – spinning on his head, back flips, the worm. It was sort of a macho style, he said, designed to show off the dancer’s strength.

“I thought dancing up was for girls,” Saaretalu said. “I didn’t dance up. I didn’t even know how to dance standing up.”

Not until he trained in hip-hop dance– and was terrible at it – did he turn his sights to Hollywood. He spent hours practicing until he wasn’t terrible, he won European championships and he was accepted into California State University-Northridge, conveniently located a few miles from the studio where dancers for Justin Timberlake, the King of Pop and all the popular dance movies train.

Then Saaretalu hurt his back. During his year of recovery, his dance contacts had moved on, all the tours and music videos had full casts and Michael Jackson had died.

“It felt like I missed the train,” Saaretalu said. “It was gone. That was a horrible feeling.

“I put all my eggs in one basket, and then this basket fell and broke all my eggs.”

He moved to Plan B – a finance degree. From there, he applied for the graduate [Personal Financial Planning \(PFP\) program](#) at Texas Tech. Today, he’s traded in the baseball cap for slacks and a tie and the rhythmic dance moves for teaching an undergraduate PFP course. It’s now Plan A, and he is all in.

“I want to be happy in life. I want to be happy with what I do,” he said. “If you want to be happy and be good at what you do, you’ve got to work hard. Right now is the time to focus on this field, to do the best I can and give everything.”

An Estonian teenager

Saaretalu was 15 when his dance group trainer sent him to Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, for a lesson with the choreographer for Aaliyah, an American R&B singer who died in a plane crash in 2001. He didn't want to go, as he was not into that type of hip-hop, but he went so their group would be represented.

He went through the training, which included choreography to two hip-hop songs from the early 2000s. The accomplished break dancer found himself in an unusual position – not being good at it.

“I was awful,” he said. “I didn't hear the music correctly, I was moving to the wrong rhythm. I was horrible.”

Even though Saaretalu went into the training not wanting to try this new style of dancing, he was bothered that he was so bad at it. He set a goal to at least be average and practiced in the dressing room of his mother's clothing store. After a month, he took his practice to the studio where he trained for break dancing.

Once his trainer discovered Saaretalu's newfound passion, he put the teenager to work dancing hip-hop. For his part, Saaretalu spent every night at the studio, sometimes practicing until 2 or 3 a.m., and memorized moves from music videos and TV shows like “The Wade Robson Project” on MTV. While walking home in the early morning, he dreamed about learning from Robson, who choreographed for Britney Spears and ‘N Sync; Marty Kudelka, who choreographs for Justin Timberlake; and Dave Scott, the choreographer from “You Got Served.”

Saaretalu focused on dancing, except for a short stint after he discovered parkour, an exercise in which people try to move across spaces as efficiently as possible.

“That hobby didn't last me for too long because I jumped from my third floor balcony and I broke my leg,” Saaretalu said. “That kind of put a stop to my dancing.”

In the year he spent recuperating, he still spent hours at the studio listening to music and envisioning doing the moves to each rhythm. When his leg healed he was dancing again, this time in competitions. Saaretalu's small group won a world championship in Germany in 2006, and he won a solo competition at a European championship in Austria the next year. He also was a three-time solo champion of an international dance competition in Estonia.

All his dreams were put on hold when he joined the military, a requirement for Estonian men. While the military got him into excellent physical shape, it didn't move him toward his dance goals.

“The problem with that is you can't really practice any of your hobbies while you're there,” Saaretalu said.

After completing his military time, he applied to and was accepted to CSU-Northridge. He moved to southern California, registered for classes and found a place to live.



“My mind was like ‘OK, I’ll study, but that’s going to be my Plan B,’” he said.

Coming to America

Saaretalu didn’t speak much English when he arrived, but he knew enough to find Millennium Dance Complex, a well-known studio where dancers and choreographers of the stars danced.

“When I was at Millennium, I was looking around the dance floor and saw so many people that I saw on TV,” he said. “It was a little bit intimidating at first. I felt like a nobody, but they approached me and invited me to join their practices.”

At the time, Jackson was hiring dancers for his tour, Timberlake was looking for dancers for a music video, and the scene was hot for young, aspiring dancers. At one point Saaretalu was filmed with several of Timberlake’s dancers, a moment he said was the highest point he’d reached in his career. With only a student visa and no agent, however, he couldn’t get auditions and he didn’t have the money to hire a lawyer and change his visa to allow him to work in the arts. He didn’t want to ask his parents for the money, since they thought most his time was spent studying, not dancing.

“All of those things added up and kind of pushed me down a little bit,” he said.

His difficulties didn’t end with legal wrangling. Saaretalu suffered a minor back injury in the military, and between the high physicality of his dancing and weightlifting he did to keep his body in Hollywood dancer shape, he found himself with a herniated disc. He said the doctor told him to stop dancing for at least six months.

“I said, ‘I don’t know if I can do that. I have a career,’” Saaretalu said. “He told me no, you have to take that break if you want to heal. Otherwise you’ll get worse and maybe you won’t be able to dance at all.”

After a year of recovery, he returned to Millennium. He was rusty after not dancing. Gone were the dancers who had embraced his work, the roles he’d prepared for long filled. His years of work felt wasted.

Saaretalu said his darkest moment came when he stopped at a local grocery store for a soda. In his pre-injury days he frequently stopped at a store around the corner from Millennium to get a soda and relax. After a bad day of dancing he decided to get a soda there, thinking it would remind him the old days and motivate him. When he turned the corner, he found a closed sign on the door. The store had moved.

He remembered sitting on the front steps of the now-empty building as reality hit: his dancing career was over before it really got started. He was 24 years old.

Turning Plan B into Plan A

Saaretalu was still enrolled at CSU-Northridge, though he hadn't exactly been diligent in his studies. He turned his efforts to his education, trying to get his GPA up and joining the speech and debate team. He also got a job, after several months of trying, as a building manager.

"I don't even think I had a suit," he said.

The job provided Saaretalu with steady income for the first time in his life, a feeling he enjoyed. His next phase in life continued when a business professor told him about an informational seminar on financial planning. He could keep his major and prepare for the Certified Financial Planning exam. He wasn't sure what financial planning was or how to do it, but he signed up, in part because the professors helped him register early, ensuring he got the classes he needed instead of waiting and hoping with the rest of the students.

Saaretalu found financial planning to have more in common with dancing than he thought. He studied until the work made sense, staying up late and practicing as much as he could.

"Everything was brand new," he said. "I kept taking those classes. I didn't do the best, and I didn't do the worst.

"I knew I liked financial planning, but I wasn't that good at it."

As graduation approached and he considered his options, he got a call from Texas Tech professor and doctoral program co-director Michael Finke. John Gilliam, an associate professor of personal financial planning, had seen Saaretalu compete at a financial competition and was impressed with his performance. Saaretalu and his partner came in second, after Texas Tech. Gilliam said he and the students approached the CSU-Northridge team and talked up Texas Tech to them. Then Gilliam returned to Lubbock and talked up Saaretalu to Texas Tech.

"He recommended Sven to me as a potential doctoral student and I watched a video of the competition online," Finke said. "He was confident, understood financial planning and was a great speaker."

Part of his role in the PFP program is to find and recruit students for the doctoral program, Finke said, so when he realized Saaretalu would be an asset, he recruited him. Saaretalu visited the campus in November 2013 before starting class full-time in the fall.

He's teaching a PFP course, which is much different from teaching a dance class, and is deep into his Plan A. He's studying hard not only for him, he said, but also because he doesn't want to let down his family, the professors who got him here, the other students he worked with and mentors he had throughout his life. His goals include graduation, supporting his family and contributing to his profession, which associate professor Bill Gustafson said he is doing.

"Sven is an amazingly diverse young man with European cultures and sensibilities, always with a warm smile, always with a sharp intellect with exceptional quantitative skills," Gustafson said. "Put that with his unique dancing ability and you have a doctoral student who will be a dynamic and impactful faculty member in personal financial planning."



Saaretalu has taken the lessons he learned from dancing and the military and put them toward his career.

“It doesn’t matter how physically strong you are,” Saaretalu said. “It’s how mentally strong you are that helps you succeed in life. You have to be strong enough not to give up.

“Sometimes in life you may have to figure out your Plan B or C.”

For now, dancing is part of his past – mostly.

“I don’t dance anymore,” he said. “I still have some skills, so if I’m challenged enough I guess I can break some moves.”

But he hasn’t entirely left it behind either.

“Sven also had an online video from his performance at the European dancing championships,” Finke said. “Somehow the word got out and the rumor is that this has contributed to Sven’s popularity as an instructor.”

Sidebar

Getting to know Sven Saaretalu

Why did you choose Texas Tech?

I was blessed and lucky – first to have great mentors in California (Dr. Phillips and Dr. Chong) who introduced me to Texas Tech; then to meet Dr. Gilliam, Dr. Finke, Dr. Gustafson and many other great scholars and industry professionals at Texas Tech who introduced me to the Personal Financial Planning program (which has an outstanding reputation in the nation); and finally after visiting the campus I witnessed the tradition, met so many great students and felt the Red Raider spirit. The rest is history!

What is your favorite memory at Texas Tech so far?

The opening Red Raider football game of this season.

Who is your favorite professor? Why?

There are too many amazing professors; it is impossible to select one.

What is your favorite spot on campus?

It is a spot where I study, where I work, where spend my Friday nights, where I sometimes go to sleep and sometimes wake up. It’s my office in Human Science building, Room 272.

What is your favorite Texas Tech tradition?

Because it is my first semester, I haven’t seen all of the great traditions that Texas Tech has to offer. I’ve heard many amazing stories about the “Carol of Lights,” which I’m definitely planning to experience this year but the one that I got hooked from the day one is the Guns Up.

What do you love most about being a Red Raider?

My wonderful Red Raider family!

Drought

By John Davis

The good news is the drought on the South Plains has started to improve.

However, experts at Texas Tech University say the area known for cotton production has a way to go before soil moisture levels return to normal, despite the wet summer it received in 2014.

This November, nearby Borden, Dawson and Gaines counties were taken off the drought list, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor. However, Lubbock remained on the list as “abnormally dry” in December – a step below normal.

This year’s rains helped the drought, which began in July 2011, but more is needed to come completely out of the dry spell, said Brian Ancell, an assistant professor of [atmospheric science](#) at Texas Tech.

“Droughts are regional events that take place over months or years, and they won’t go away with a brief time of surplus rain,” he said. “Essentially the drought depletes the ground’s water and hurts plant life. The recharging of the ground’s water doesn’t happen with a single heavy rain, no matter how heavy. Much of that becomes runoff and ends up in reservoirs, and the plants won’t ‘green up’ in a single day. They need to re-establish under prolonged, moister conditions.

“So, to remedy a drought, there is really no way to not do it without prolonged above-normal precipitation regionally not just heavy thunderstorms here and there. However, Texas ‘drought area has shrunk due to the above-normal rains we’ve sustained over the past year.”

This year, rain came more frequently, allowing the soil to reabsorb groundwater lost through years of dry weather, said Glen Ritchie, an assistant professor of crop physiology at Texas Tech’s [Department of Plant and Soil Science](#).

“Most of the areas around Lubbock ranged anywhere from approximately 16 inches on up to 25 to 30 inches of rain,” Ritchie said. “That’s depending on whether you’re counting from Jan. 1 or the beginning of the crop year. Most of our fields in Lubbock County during the summer crop season received about 16 inches of rain.”

The extra rain the South Plains received improved 2014’s crop outlook, he said, coming at the right times.

“We had a lot of rainfall in June and July,” Ritchie said. “August was pretty dry, then we had quite a bit of rainfall in September, October and November. So from a standpoint of just getting the crops out of the field, and getting a new crop put in, we’re in pretty good shape. The challenge is that, with any given crop, we have only enough soil storage to take that crop through a certain amount of time. For instance, with cotton, we experienced a substantial yield loss just by having a few dry weeks in August. With wheat right now, we’ve got plenty of soil moisture to

get it up and established. But if we turn up dry for the rest of the winter, we're going to have a lot of problems with it."

Ancell said El Niño conditions continue to be neutral, meaning neither El Niño or La Niña, and these Pacific Ocean weather patterns impact the South Plains the most in terms of moisture received. In terms of prediction, the Climate Prediction Center gives the greatest probability of El Niño returning this winter, he said, and could persist into the spring.

This likely would give the South Plains area below-normal temperatures and above-normal precipitation, further reducing the drought throughout Texas, he said.

"The last time this occurred was winter/spring 2010, when we were well over average precipitation and colder than normal," he said. "The best chance is that drought conditions will probably continue to lessen through the coming spring."

Ritchie also said that having the heavy rainfall in 2014 has certainly helped recharge shrinking reservoirs such as Lake Alan Henry. However, the area still suffers from a deficit of regular rainfall during the past four to five years.

Prior to 2014, the last year with above average rainfall was 2010, he said.

"Last year wasn't bad, but it wasn't nearly enough to get us caught up," he said. "2014 has been more of a typical year with similar-to-normal rainfall and temperatures during the course of the year."

Katharine Hayhoe, director of Texas Tech's [Climate Science Center](#), said the South Plains has always experienced times of drought and downpour naturally, but climate change likely will cause both weather conditions to occur with greater ferocity in the future.

The science behind why is simple, Hayhoe said. Though Lubbock and surrounding areas may have experienced a cooler-feeling summer this year, 2014 was the hottest summer on record overall.

"When it's warmer – and every season in Texas has been warming since 1950s – more water than normal evaporates from lakes, rivers and streams and the soil," Hayhoe said. "This makes droughts stronger. At the same time, there's more water in the air for a storm to pick up and dump. So with a warmer overall climate, we'll have stronger cycles of drought and flooding."

Every season is getting warmer, but winters are warming the most, she said, and the rainy season in West Texas has shifted out of summer into the spring. The annual rainfall isn't changing on average, but when the rain does come, it comes in large downpours.

"It's not good for us or the crops to have heavy downpours with long dry spells in between," she said. "Also, in West Texas, we've been using the Ogallala Aquifer to cushion the impacts of drought. The aquifer has been a great resource to help us through the drought, but the aquifer is

also going one way, fast. And that's down. In the future, we are going to be more vulnerable to drought because we don't have this reservoir of water underneath us to depend on like we used to."

Switching to sustainable farming practices, investing in drip irrigation and developing drought-resistant crops now can slow the aquifer's water usage, she said. While a certain amount of climate change has and will happen, making changes now to conserve water can avoid the bulk of problems associated with climate change.

"Texas is a big part of the solution," she said. "There are ways forward that can ensure we have a healthy economy, agricultural community and a better quality of life, but we aren't going to make those changes by clinging to the security blanket of the past."



Web Only

Engineering Doctoral Student Recognized by Regional Transportation Center

Wesley Kumfer studied how race, gender, age and ethnicity affect a driver's likelihood of being involved in a fatal accident.

By Heidi Toth

Few people want to spend years digging through accident reports to figure out the similarities and differences in fatal highway accidents.

Wesley Kumfer is one of those people.

Kumfer came to Texas Tech University from Colorado Springs, Colorado, to study civil engineering. He earned bachelor's and master's degrees working under transportation engineering professor Hongchao Liu in the TransTech Laboratory, and is working on a doctoral degree in traffic engineering. For years he has studied fatal highway crashes to determine what role demographic factors like gender, race and age play in such accidents.

Kumfer is one semester away from being hooded, having published and presented numerous papers. To add to his resume, this weekend he was honored as this region's student of the year at a national meeting for university transportation centers.

National recognition

Texas Tech is a member of the Southern Plains Transportation Center (SPTC), which is composed of eight universities in the U.S. Department of Transportation's Region 6, consisting of Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. It is one of 10 regional centers in the country.

Every January, just before the federal Transportation Research Board (TRB) of the National Academies holds its annual meeting in Washington, D.C., these university transportation centers hold the Council of University Transportation Centers awards banquet, in which one student from each center is honored. Those students then attend the TRB conference, the largest transportation conference in the world.

Kumfer was already attending the conference, where he will present two research papers. Sanjaya Senadheera, an associate professor of civil engineering and an associate director of the SPTC, encouraged Kumfer to apply for the center's student of the year recognition.

"It's a tough crowd," Kumfer said. "Other students have published more papers and are further along in their research."

He won, to his surprise, though not Senadheera's.

“Wesley’s record as an outstanding graduate student in our transportation engineering program enabled us to nominate him for this award,” Senadheera said. “What makes Wesley stand out is his strong dedication to all aspects of transportation including research, teaching and service activities.”

Fatal crash research

The research didn’t begin as a way to answer the battle-of-the-sexes, are-men-or-women-better-drivers question. What he found was that women and men don’t have accidents at different rates but get into different kinds of accidents.

Male drivers are more likely to be in single-vehicle accidents, Kumfer’s research showed, while female drivers were more likely to be in multi-vehicle accidents.

“I would guess it has to do with driver behaviors – things like driving while you’re distracted, drinking alcohol and speeding,” he said. “Those tend to be associated with male drivers, especially speeding. They’re also associated with single-vehicle crashes.

“Risky driving behavior tends to be done more when you’re alone and driving at night on empty roads, so those are things that men tend toward more than women.”

The literature he studied indicated women’s weakness in driving had more to do with the way women process information.

“When you come to something like an intersection where there are a lot of different factors at play and different decisions have to be made, women are more prone toward crashes in those situations,” he said.

Whites are in more multi-vehicle crashes than other races, which Kumfer attributed to whites being the majority in most areas and being likely to be driving, particularly commuting. Being on the road more means more accidents.

Kumfer is presenting a paper at the TRB conference called “Investigating the Effects of Demographic and Driver Factors on Single-Vehicle and Multi-Vehicle Fatal Crashes Using Multinomial Logistic Regression.” Only about 25 percent of the thousands of papers submitted from researchers throughout the world are selected for a lectern presentation at this conference, so Kumfer’s selection is notable.

His adviser guessed that selection was at least in part because of the importance of the research.

“Every year we lose 30,000 to 40,000 lives in traffic accidents in the U.S., and a large portion of fatal crashes are attributed to human errors,” Liu said. “Driver behavior varies largely in different driver groups, and the ongoing and future demographic changes present a big challenge to highway safety.”

What to do with it

The results of Kumfer’s research won’t change the way engineers design roads quite so much as they’ll change how people approach driving.



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“I think you need to understand what sort of crashes people are going to be in so you can target particular educational programs,” he said.

Knowing how a driver’s age, sex and ethnicity affect his or her decision-making skills will enable driver’s education programs to be more targeted and will give the road construction officials more information on contributing causes of fatal accidents.

He and Liu also are presenting a software-based driver’s education program to teenagers in rural South Plains schools. Some form of driver’s ed is necessary, Kumfer said, but its effectiveness in the current form is debated. A driver’s education that is more fact-based and addresses certain realities, like the way a teenager thinks, may be more effective.

“I think a lot of it has to do with teenagers and the way they perceive the world,” he said. “They think of themselves as invincible and possessing a lot more skill than they really do.”

“Ideally if we could develop better educational materials that target them where they’re at and help them realize they aren’t invincible and are likely to engage in this sort of behavior, that would be great.”

Kumfer also would like to see this work cause change closer to home. Texas and California have the highest rates of fatal accidents in the United States. The number of cars on the road and the sheer amount of roadways contribute to that statistic, he said, but the two states account for a fifth of U.S. traffic fatalities each year. More is in play here than simply having more people, he said. Two states shouldn’t be responsible for 20 percent of fatal highway accidents.

He’s hoping this research will play a role in future highway safety manuals, which the Federal Highway Administration publishes and is the main documentation on transportation safety. He’d also like to help individual states make more informed decisions on driver’s education.

“With traffic engineering, we’re already working on making roads more efficient,” Kumfer said. “I guess I kind of highly value human life and humanity in general, so this seemed a bit more interesting to me to study particular crash predictions and how to make roads safer.”

Sidebar: Other research

Kumfer’s research to this point has run the gamut on transportation methods. The other paper he’s presenting at the TRB conference deals with autonomous vehicles like the Google car. Through creating basic scenarios, he attempted to determine what decision a driverless car would make when presented with a choice and how it would make that decision, which ultimately comes down to the driver’s ethics.

“Does it value the owner of the vehicle? Does it value someone else’s life more?” Kumfer asked. “Trying to program ethics is a nearly insurmountable task.”

His research shows the vehicle will make the utilitarian choice, which means it will maximize the overall benefit in a situation.

His master's thesis dealt with cycling in the United States. Kumfer compared mid-sized cities from throughout the country and found safety and motorist behaviors to be at the top of every biker's list of concerns.

"What I ended up determining there was that a lot of factors between cities of different sizes tend to be similar," he said. "Bicyclists tend to be concerned with the same thing no matter where they're at."

He has another paper he's trying to get published, which deals with population change and whether predicting the number of fatal crashes based on population variables is possible. Spoiler: it is. While the data is not complete, Kumfer found he could predict, with 95 percent confidence, the number of total fatal crashes in the country based on data from a few states' data.

What that means, he said, is because state and federal transportation agencies will have more information predicting crashes, they can take more effective steps to reduce the number of fatal highway crashes.

Sidebar: What's next

When Kumfer started his graduate programs he'd never taught a class, but now he's three semesters into teaching senior-level transportation engineering, and he loves it.

"At some point working on my thesis I realized I really enjoyed the academic setting and really enjoyed the process of learning and realized maybe I didn't want to go work for a design firm but maybe wanted to stay in academia," he said.

He's also the first doctoral student to teach the transportation engineering class, Senadheera said.

Kumfer anticipates doing a postdoctoral study at Texas Tech after graduating, including possibly carrying on the research project with high school driver's ed.

Questions

Why did you choose Texas Tech?

I first visited Texas Tech University as a senior in high school. I was interested in the engineering program here, and something just felt right on my first visit. I eventually stayed for graduate school because I was already conducting research for my adviser as an undergraduate and wanted to get a more specialized master's degree.

What is your favorite memory at Texas Tech so far?

My favorite memory at Texas Tech would have to be getting married to my beautiful wife at the Kent Hance Chapel on campus.

Who is your favorite professor? Why?



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My favorite professor, though I haven't taken a class from her in years, is probably Audra Morse from civil and environmental engineering. She cares very deeply for all of her students and continually motivates them to learn and succeed, and I have tried my best to model her tireless efforts in my own classroom.

What is your favorite spot on campus?

My favorite spot on campus is the courtyard next to the new Petroleum Engineering building. It's peaceful and a great location to eat a lunch in the fresh air.

What is your favorite Texas Tech tradition?

I enjoy seeing campus decorated for football games.

What do you love most about being a Red Raider?

I love the interaction between professors and students, particularly in the College of Engineering. I feel Texas Tech is striving to provide a community of scholars, and having fantastic educators and researchers open and accessible to students creates a welcome climate.



Web Only

Infectobesity Researcher Becomes First Chair of Nutritional Sciences Department

In September, Nutritional Sciences became an individual department, allowing for greater focus in specific teaching, research and outreach.

By Heidi Toth

As a topic, obesity has been ever-present in Nikhil Dhurandhar's life for as long as he can remember.

His father is considered the father of obesity practice in the Indian medical community, and when he went to medical school, Dhurandhar knew his passion was in obesity treatment.

"I often saw the difficulties that people suffering from obesity face and how quacks take them for a ride," he said. "I pondered about what could be done for them."

Dhurandhar, who recently became the first chairman of the newly created [Department of Nutritional Sciences](#), found career success in treating obesity but was frustrated because his patients were unsuccessful in keeping the weight off. He kept seeing the same patients going through the same cycle of losing and gaining weight. Although there were a few individual success stories, on the whole the results were less than optimal.

That question became his cause célèbre, taking his family from India to North Dakota to Texas Tech studying chickens and investigating viruses as one possible cause of obesity. He continues this research while leading a department with several disparate areas of research.

"There is much more to nutrition than obesity," he said. "Also, there is more to obesity than nutrition. Both are true."

Asking questions about obesity

Dhurandhar took a hiatus from his medical practice to come to the United States in the 1980s for a master's degree in nutrition, then returned to Bombay, India, for a doctorate in biochemistry. While there he heard a lecture from S.M. Ajinkya, a well-known veterinary pathologist, who talked about an avian virus killing thousands of chickens a day. These chickens died fat instead of emaciated.

"I reasoned, if a bird dies of a viral infection it should have no fat, and you're describing plenty of fat," Dhurandhar remembers asking. "Is this virus making those chickens fat?"

"What Dr. Ajinkya said in response changed everything. He said, 'I don't know.' Then he said, 'You're doing a Ph.D. Why don't you find out?'"

He did. Dhurandhar performed three experiments with this adenovirus, the first two with chickens and the third involving humans. He found that, after injecting chickens with the virus, they gained weight in just a few weeks.

While he couldn't inject humans with the virus for ethical reasons, he obtained blood samples from patients who came into his clinic for obesity treatment and discovered that about 20 percent of the patients had antibodies for the virus, which meant they'd been infected at some point. The three experiments indicated this virus did cause obesity in animals and humans infected with it.

The studies showed another, less expected, relationship. Dhurandhar said typically symptoms like high blood sugar, high cholesterol and high triglycerides accompany obesity. However, both the chickens and the humans who'd had the virus were obese but had low cholesterol and low triglycerides, suggesting an association between the virus and a patient's metabolic health.

"When we had three experiments back to back I was sold on this concept," he said.

Pioneering the field of infectobesity

Selling the concept to others turned out to be a much bigger challenge. Although this field, which he called infectobesity – obesity of infectious origin – is well-established now, 20 years ago this research flew in the face of prevailing wisdom.

"People tend to view obesity as, 'just push yourself away from the table,'" he said.

The cause of obesity, according to all the key players, was limited to two things: eating too much and exercising too little. Today, the American Medical Association and other organizations have declared obesity a disease, and the mindset is changing. Twenty years ago scientists weren't looking for theories or viruses; they had calorie counts.

This made finding a U.S. lab to support Dhurandhar's research in viruses and obesity difficult. Dhurandhar sent letters and made phone calls to research labs throughout the United States, looking for someone interested in his research. When no one responded favorably, he took a postdoctoral fellowship in any area, ending up at North Dakota State University in Fargo. For two years he studied the biochemistry of sunflower pectin enzymes and wrote hundreds of letters seeking a lab that would allow him to engage in research related to infections and obesity.

After one year and 11 months, after he and his wife decided to return to India and secured their son's school tuition in Bombay, he got a call from a researcher at the University of Wisconsin inviting Dhurandhar to join his lab.

Once there, he found he couldn't import the Indian adenovirus he'd originally experimented with, so he picked up the catalog to find a different virus. There were 50 different viruses. Going with his gut, he picked No. 36 and replicated his Indian experiments.



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“The very first experiment showed the human adenovirus Ad36 fattened chickens but reduced their cholesterol and triglycerides, just like the Indian virus,” he said. “Ad36 clicked.”

He replicated the experiment in a number of different animal models including rats, mice and monkeys, with the same results. Over time, the scientific and medical communities accepted Dhurandhar’s conclusions, and the field of infectobesity was born. His research also contributed to the realization that obesity is more complicated than overall caloric intake.

“In my opinion the word obesity is sort of misleading,” he said. “The actual word should be obesities because there are so many different types.

“There are multiple contributors to the obesity epidemic. We generally tend to focus on eating too much and not moving enough.”

Significance

Today Dhurandhar’s research is split between obesity and diabetes, both related to this obesity-causing virus. He applied the evidence-based association between the virus and lower blood sugar and cholesterol to diabetes, of which high blood sugar is a symptom. He is working to isolate the protein in the virus that improves metabolic numbers so it can be administered to diabetics to lower their blood sugar.

He hasn’t left the field of obesity research, though. Dhurandhar believes that because some cases of obesity are caused by a virus, researchers can create a vaccine for this virus, which could prevent this type of obesity

“Why all of this is important is because today we have only a blanket treatment of obesity, regardless of the cause,” he said. “We tell people to eat less and move more, in some rare cases use drugs and in rarer cases use surgery. That’s what we’ve got. You mostly don’t consider your various causes of obesity in any of these treatments. That may be why we’re getting limited success.

“If we want to improve success, perhaps we should have cause-specific treatment. And how can you have cause specific treatment if you don’t know what the causes are? Hence, we need a better and clearer understanding of the contributors of obesity.”

Departmental direction

For most of his career, Dhurandhar had time to focus on obesity but little else. As his research evolved, he became a diabetes expert. As chairman of the Nutritional Sciences department, he gets to focus on promoting and administering 16 different labs focused on different aspects of nutrition.

Dhurandhar came to Texas Tech from Pennington Biomedical Research Center at Louisiana State University. He wants to continue his research here, but he also wants the opportunity to interact with the community and other researchers outside of his field.

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“It’s attractive to me to work with students, faculty and researchers from our departments and others on issues of nutrition and obesity and collectively advance research, training and understanding in this field,” he said. “That’s what I always wanted to do.

“We are mapping so many areas. What that does is allow us to cover a large territory and collaborate with each other.”

He is the first chairman of this department, which College of Human Sciences Dean Linda Hoover created in September when she separated the Department of Nutrition, Hospitality and Retailing into Nutritional Sciences and the Department of Hospitality and Retail Management.

“Dr. Dhurandhar is uniquely qualified to lead our new department, as he has had significant administrative experience and a strong record of collaboration with colleagues in fields related to nutrition,” Hoover said. “In addition, he has mentored a number of new scientists, so our new faculty will directly benefit from his guidance. I know Dr. Dhurandhar will provide strong leadership to our new Department of Nutritional Sciences and our academic programs. Based on all of these factors, his efforts will enable the department to increase contributions to the field of nutrition.”



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Project Gives Landscape Architecture Students Hands-On Experience

Transforming the CASNR Annex pavilion teaches how design and building go together.

By George Watson

When moving, the natural desire is to make the new home seem like the old as much as possible. Couple that with making it a class project, and you have a unique effort ongoing in the [Department of Plant and Soil Science](#).

The expansion and renovation of the Bayer Plant Science Building has required the [Department of Landscape Architecture](#) to move its computer lab across the street to the [College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources](#) Annex. Landscape architecture interim chairman and associate professor Charles Klein saw this as an opportunity for his materials and details class (LARC 4404) to gain some hands-on experience.

He assigned his fall class to design, plan and renovate the area that sits within the CASNR Annex's U-shaped design just south of the R-9 parking lot. It is the type of project he, with 30 years of experience in design and build, is familiar with but not something normally part of the landscape architecture curriculum.

"This is the first time we've been able to do it, and the smaller class size (12 students) helped make it more manageable," Klein said. "You don't have to be out there with 30 students dodging shovels and picks, and it's also a way to motivate the class by actually being able to create something from a design."

The only problem is the project might have been a little too ambitious to complete in one semester, Klein said. The harsh winter blast that rolled through the South Plains in early November didn't help, freezing the ground shortly after the Texas Tech University grounds maintenance crew removed existing grass and concrete. That limited students to get about a third of the way through the construction process.

"I should have known better," Klein joked. "Every time I try to do something outside with the students, whether it's a field trip or whatever, I get bad weather. We went from 70 (degrees) to 20 and that really put a damper on things because we weren't able to create anything. The weather has been really uncooperative."

The project will extend through the Christmas break and into the spring semester, but only on a voluntary basis for students who were in the class. Most expressed excitement about coming back and seeing the project to fruition.

"Definitely," said Miranda Cochran, a fourth-year landscape architecture student from Riviera. "When you start something, you've got to finish it."

Building from design

The goal of the project, Klein said, is to teach students how to go from planning and design phase to construction documentation. The class started with each student developing a design for the plaza, and all designs were displayed so the class could comment.

Klein said there were three main criteria in designing the annex renovation. First, it had to be able to be taken apart and removed in the event the annex is ever renovated or razed for a newer building. Second, students had to use existing salvage materials from the grounds maintenance yard.

“That was like Christmas shopping,” Klein said. “They’ve got an unbelievable collection of things over there and enough brick to pave that whole thing five feet deep.”

The third condition was the design had to be something the entire class could build regardless of experience. After taking measurements of the annex pavilion, each student submitted a design, and after all comments were reviewed, a single design was developed that incorporated elements from each student’s design.

“This is a materials and details class, so we’re learning the whole process,” said Lara Davis, a second-year graduate student from Cleburne. “If you’re going to design you’ve got to learn how pavers are laid and all the details of how it happens throughout the whole process.”

As soon as the class settled on a design and which materials to use, grounds maintenance crews removed the existing concrete and topsoil, and the students went to work – weather permitting – on preparing the ground. This aspect of the project, which had been experienced by few students, also proved to be the slowest.

“Landscape architecture really is hands-on, but we’ve never done anything like this,” Cochran said. “It’s nice to be out here and doing it yourself. It’s a good experience for them and something that you don’t normally get from your ordinary classes.”

Klein hopes to change that.

Incorporating more

Klein grew up working for his father and never really went by a design. He was told how to do something and figured it out, then later went back and developed the design. In essence, he taught the class to do it backwards from how he learned.

Despite his original intent of building from a master plan, Klein said the class process resembled, somewhat, how he’d worked.

“We planned to do a master plan, make our selections, develop the final plan, do the construction documents and use those documents to build it,” Klein said. “But that was too drawn out. We actually started building from the base plan. It got flip-flopped and we were doing construction, then using that to understand how the documents go together.”



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

But the importance of experiencing both elements – design and construction – in a single class is what he’d like to incorporate more at Texas Tech. Oklahoma State has combined its landscape architecture and horticulture departments, and Klein said he would like for Texas Tech’s landscape architecture students to work more with horticulture to do gain more hands-on experience.

He’s already had discussions with Cynthia McKenney in Plant and Soil Science about collaborating with the Horticultural Gardens and Greenhouse on smaller projects. He also wants to incorporate landscape architecture students with smaller projects in other areas of the campus.

Klein added the students take a great deal of pride in adding their own touch to the campus, wanting to leave it in better shape for future Red Raiders.

This project was a good start.

“It’s been a really good experience,” Cochran said. “It’s really nice to create the design and implement it yourself with your classmates and working together as a team and seeing how things really go together.”



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Study Shows Expression Just as Important as Words in Presidential Debates

Erik Bucy's research through visual analysis and social media gives a good indication that voters pick up on nonverbal communications as much as a candidate's rhetoric.

By George Watson

As the old saying goes, "you never get a second chance to make a first impression."

When it comes to presidential candidates in nationally televised debates, though, a series of studies by a Texas Tech University professor in the [College of Media and Communication](#) are showing the nonverbal repertoires that make up a presidential candidate's communication style are important influencers of voter reaction.

Erik Bucy, a regents professor of strategic communication at Texas Tech, is a popular guest lecturer around the world for his research on nonverbal expressions in political news and presidential debates and how those televised leader displays affect public perceptions of candidates.

Over the past year, Bucy has presented the results to several national associations, spoke at a symposium on nonverbal communication and democracy in Sweden, guest lectured at UCLA and participated in an invited conference sponsored by the C-SPAN Education Foundation and Purdue University.

Some of this work, conducted in collaboration with researchers from the University of Wisconsin (UW), is summarized in a paper entitled "The Power of Television Images in a Social Media Age: Linking Biobehavioral and Computational Approaches via the Second Screen," soon to be published in *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*.

What Bucy and his colleagues discovered is candidates' facial expressions, gestures and voice tone do as much or more to drive public reaction to the debates than what the candidates actually say.

"This frustrates some people who study media and politics because they want the discussion to be all about the issues," Bucy said. "What we're documenting is, in fact, people respond a lot to behavior. Not everybody pays really that close of attention to elections or knows all their party's positions on the issues, but they can get a sense of the candidates' traits by observing competitive political behavior. And traits are reliable predictors of candidate support."

Cueing in on the visual

Bucy focuses on the first televised presidential debates, including the most recent, as the

basis for his research – Barack Obama vs. Mitt Romney in 2012 and John F. Kennedy vs. Richard Nixon in 1960.

The better documented of the two debates in terms of nonverbal expressions and the electorate's reaction came in 2012 due to advances in research and the explosion of social media, which has allowed Bucy and his team, along with graduate student assistants Harrison Gong and Riley Davis, to evaluate the impact of candidate communication on a pass scale, and in real time.

Bucy said his research initially focused on visual analysis of candidate behavior to assess whether coding criteria for nonverbal communication developed in his co-authored book, *Image Bite Politics*, could be gainfully applied to presidential debates. The project started with a detailed content analysis of all four Kennedy-Nixon debates, then moved on to focus groups using footage from 1960 and 2012, to an experiment utilizing eye tracking to discern what facial displays, movements and expressions drew the most attention, or visual fixations.

Using the communications theory of nonverbal expectancy violations, Bucy tracked how sensitive viewers were to what was happening in the debates if there was just a hint of the unexpected in political performance. For example, in the first 2012 debate, voters honed in on President Obama glancing down for lengthy periods, which gave the impression he was either disengaged or dismissive of Romney's viewpoints or arguments.

"When a violation occurs, there is increased visual attention to it as people attempt to figure out what is going on," Bucy said. "As a consequence of all this scrutiny, usually there is a negative evaluation of the person committing the violation."

Other notable nonverbal cues include raised eyebrows (indicating surprise), an angry stare, tilting or moving the head side to side (suggesting evasion) and the difference between reassurance and threat as signaled by the amount of teeth showing (happiness often involves the display of upper teeth, accompanied with a smile, while anger or threat displays usually just reveal the lower teeth with a clenched jaw).

Most of these expressions fit into three distinct display types – anger/threat, happiness/reassurance and fear/evasion. The public responds to leaders who exhibit more happiness/reassurance while challengers, as rivals to power, will typically display more anger/threat, Bucy said. But neither are expected to express fear/evasion and are not looked upon favorably if they do.

While Obama was looking down and evidently avoiding eye contact with Romney (a type of evasion) in the first debate, he was much more engaged in the third debate and performed a kind of nonverbal auditing of Romney's statements. In the process, he was able to show more happiness/reassurance. By doing so, the president put Romney on the defensive, Bucy said. In the end, Romney came off with a negative perception.

"To me, this is where the real payoff is with some of this nonverbal coding," Bucy said. "You can analyze the words all you want to and write all kinds of stuff, but this is what people pick up on, at least in televised debates. That's what we learned from the eye tracking and focus group analysis."



Social media reaction

As luck would have it, Bucy's research took another step when his friend, UW journalism and mass communication professor Dhavan V. Shah, was invited to give a guest lecture at Texas Tech last spring.

While visiting, both discovered their current research could be mutually beneficial, because Shah was working on Twitter reaction to presidential debates.

"It became one of those Reese's Peanut Butter Cups moments," Bucy said. "He looked at me like, 'could your visual analysis go with my tweets?' I was like, 'could your tweets go with my visual analysis?' We followed up quickly and did some really interesting work that kind of completed the story."

What Bucy and Shah's combined research showed was, in the first debate, Obama became much more evasive and less reassuring, and Romney became angrier and less neutral over time. In terms of public reaction on social media, Obama started out with a higher number of mentions than Romney in the first debate, but Romney's mentions grew as the debate continued. Obama also began the debate with more positive sentiment than Romney, but by the time it was over, Romney had closed the bag considerably.

According to the study, Romney's anger/threat expressions and attacks on Obama were linked to a greater volume of name mentions on Twitter. In terms of sentiment, anger/threat displays by Romney helped sentiment for Obama grow while sentiment for Romney fell when Obama displayed reassurance. When either candidate attacked or contrasted their record against the other, sentiment improved for the target of the attack.

"As a candidate, it's important to have an appropriate repertoire of nonverbal displays to consistently deliver your message," Bucy said. "At least in these studies, people appear to respond to facial displays and gestures more than voice tone and rhetorical strategies. Viewers process political communication holistically, and if you look only at the words spoken, you get an incomplete picture of what's going on."

The first televised debate

Much the same could be said about the first televised debate in 1960 between Kennedy and Nixon, though Nixon did as much to hurt his performance going into the debate as he did during his encounter with Kennedy.

Nixon had been in the hospital just days before and insisted on campaigning right up until time for the debate. He'd also banged his knee on the campaign trail and it had become infected, then reportedly banged it again getting out of the car at the debate site. The pain prevented him from crossing his legs while seated. Further compromising his appearance, he also refused to put on any makeup for the camera, using an aftershave-type lotion that showed the scruff in his face.

From visual analysis, Bucy documented Nixon exhibited a much higher rate of blinking than Kennedy and showed a lack of awareness when Kennedy was speaking that the camera might be on him. Nixon displayed more happiness/reassurance overall, but also more aggression and, through blinking and visible perspiration, stress. Though he did much better in the other three debates against Kennedy, Nixon attributed losing the election to his performance in that first debate.

Effect on voting

Bucy said people don't always want to admit it, but voters are influenced by what they observe in debates and televised coverage of politics. Even if some will acknowledge the candidate's nonverbal communication did have an impact on subsequent evaluations, most will deny any direct influence of visual information.

"It's a fundamental irony of American politics," Bucy said. "We exalt the word and the issues while ignoring or denigrating the visuals. Yet we're often more influenced by the verbal factors.

"For the most part, if you're dyed in the wool partisan, you know who you are going to vote for. If you're undecided or persuadable, either through weak partisanship or some kind of beef with the party on an issue, then a lot of voters will get mad at the party and be open to defecting when the party doesn't represent that one issue they care about. Nonverbal influence, particularly in those moments, can give someone a feel for a candidate they might be opposed to but looks on paper like they are for what they stand for."

Bucy said political candidates and their advisers would be smart to realize the importance of communication style to the persuadable segment of the electorate. But there are always traditionalists who will insist that it's the message, not the delivery, that matters most.

"That's what the major, agenda-setting print media still focuses on," Bucy said. "Print journalism, even in the digital era, is not generally set up to emphasize or replay or obsess about the visual. But for citizens who are paying attention, the traits communicated by nonverbal behavior are consequential."



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Texas Tech's Top Culinaricians Compete at the Super Bowl of Chili

Chefs and cooks from Hospitality Services go head-to-head for the best recipe on campus.

By K'Leigh Sims

In celebration of the Super Bowl this weekend, Texas Tech University's top culinarians went head-to-head Friday (Jan. 30) at Hospitality Services' second annual Super Bowl of Chili cookoff.

Students, faculty and staff gathered in the Red Raider Lounge at the Student Union Building to sample and vote for the best chili recipe on campus, ranging in spices and flavors with vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free options.

After a close competition, winning only by one vote, All You Care to Eat from the Hulen/Clement residence hall took the coveted golden ladle trophy for its flavorful "Holy Moly Tamale" chili recipe with pulled pork served with tamales, fresh cream and cilantro.

"It feels really good to win this year's chili cookoff," said Jason Ortega, Hulen/Clement dining hall supervisor. "There's no special or secret ingredient. It's just all about the fresh ingredients."

All You Care to Eat's recipe included fresh chili paste, Cajun and chipotle seasonings, chili powder, garlic and pepper. The recipe was an original from one of the team members, Laura Vasquez.