

# CLAS News

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## Dean Hixson Sets Priorities for Promoting Student Success in CLAS



Dr. Kim Hixson began serving as Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences in January. He has spent his first semester at FSU learning about the university, the college, and all of the different CLAS departments.

"My first semester here, I have been spending lots of time meeting people," said Hixson. "I have gone to meetings in 12 out of 19 of the CLAS departments so far in order to better understand how each operates."

Dr. Hixson's goals for CLAS fall under the umbrella of better promoting student success. "In conjunction with the EAA initiative taking place on campus, one of my goals is to look at ways we can improve advising in the college," said Hixson. "Helping students to stay on progress to degree is extremely important, and we want to eliminate any unnecessary barriers to their success." He added that the General Education Program plays a huge part in introducing students to the various disciplines, and he is looking forward to the implementation of the GEP Review Committee's work.

Another priority for Dr. Hixson is promoting more collaboration between and among departments. "I want to get faculty together more so that discussions can happen," said Hixson.

Offering programs that are responsive to the future needs of students is another priority for the new CLAS Dean. "We need to not only offer programs that students need to start their careers, but also prepare them for ten years out," said Hixson. He plans to continue to emphasize experiential and applied learning in CLAS and wants to ensure that faculty have the resources to do what they need to do.

"I have really enjoyed my first few months in Frostburg," said Hixson. "It has been such a wonderful and welcoming atmosphere here that has really made me feel a part of the community." Dr. Hixson has been attending many events on campus and said it is "fun to get out and see the many talents of our students."



### Pack Your Bags, FSU!

**Study Abroad in Spring Break 2020: Spain, France, & Italy!**

9-day trip in March 2020 led by Dr. Greg Wood & Dr. Heather Cisneros

Supported by EF Tours

Visit Barcelona, the French Riviera, Nice, Cinque Terre, Pisa, and Florence

Study Abroad scholarships and sources of funding available...

Non-honors students & honors students may participate in this experience

Visit Dr. Wood at Fuller House, or send an email to [gwood@frostburg.edu](mailto:gwood@frostburg.edu)

Please share with your students. Study abroad scholarships and FSU Foundation funding available to help offset costs.

## Four CLAS Faculty Members to Retire in May

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences will be losing four of its faculty this spring, with the retirements of Paul Charney (History), Mary Anne Lutz (English and Foreign Languages), Kevin Peterson (Psychology), and Kathy Powell (Social Work).



Throughout his twenty years at Frostburg State University, **Paul Charney** consistently demonstrated his commitment to teaching, service, and professional development. In addition to teaching existing History courses, Dr. Charney developed new History courses in his areas of specialization: Latin American Revolutions (HIST 455), Native Peoples of the Americas (HIST 418), and African Slavery in the Americas, which he taught as a Special Topics History course (HIST 489/490) and Honors Seminar (IDIS 491). In addition to teaching, Dr. Charney maintained an active record of publications and conference papers during his time at FSU. He also has an extensive record of service to the department, college, and the university. He served as chair of the department from 2008 to 2014 and as interim chair in fall 2015. He served on the CLAS Curriculum Committee in 2002-05 and again in 2007-09. His university service includes membership on the Faculty Handbook Subcommittee, Faculty Senate, Faculty Concerns Committee, and chair of the Faculty Development and Sabbatical Subcommittee.



**Mary Anne Lutz** joined the English Department faculty in 1988. In her long-time role as chair of the English Curriculum, she shepherded through governance the innovations that made the literature curriculum a trans-Atlantic one that unites the literatures of two continents. She is the long-time advisor for the English Honorary, Sigma Tau Delta, and has given 18 years of service to this international organization. Through her mentorship in Sigma Tau Delta, she helped students with projects like the annual Banned Books reading and for years has organized the Career Expo. She served on the Women's Studies Steering Committee since its inception in 1990 and as one of the first trained members of the National Coalition Building Institute, on campus since 1994. Her research has been a vital part of her life as a professor. She has remained current in her field, exploring the picturesque in literature and the works of Washington Irving and of Sir Walter Scott, including recent scholarship on Washington Irving and the treatment of Muslim characters and content.



**Kevin Peterson** has long been a favorite of students and is highly respected by his colleagues. His continued part-time practice as a licensed psychologist has not only served the community but has helped to keep his teaching alive with fresh, illustrative examples. As Chair of the Psychology Department from 2003 to 2012, he was able to work with faculty who often did not see eye to eye on issues, kept the department moving forward, oversaw the last significant changes to the major, and always did so with a smile. Dr. Peterson has served as Internship Program Coordinator since 2008, and his passion for guiding our students through their early experiential learning and professional development has been obvious. He has also served as a mentor to new faculty, and his counsel is often sought by fellow department members. He is held in high esteem by his fellow faculty, having served as Grand Marshall since 2013.



**Kathy Powell** is retiring from the Social Work Department after 28 years of service. Under her leadership, the program earned initial accreditation in 1994 and was successfully reaccredited in 1998. A lifelong learner, Kathy earned her Ph.D. in 2013 from University of Maryland, focusing her dissertation on the town-gown relationship between FSU and the city of Frostburg. Over the years, she has served on numerous community committees and boards, including the City of Frostburg's Town Gown Committee (2003-2005), Chairing the Board of Directors of Archway Station (1996-2000) and the Allegany County Human Resources Development Commission (2005-2006), and Chairing the Allegany County Board on Homelessness. She was part of the university committees that established the Leadership Studies and African American Studies minors, and taught for many years in Leadership Studies. She is consistently recognized by students as playing an influential role in their college careers and earns stellar teaching evaluations despite teaching some of the most difficult courses.

## Communication Leadership Lab Hosts Day of Civility and Eat, Learn, Co-op

The annual Day of Civility was held on Thursday, April 11, with two different events organized by the Communication Leadership Lab students at FSU. A panel of local interfaith leaders reflected on connections within and beyond our community and how we can create a safe and inclusive environment for people of all faiths in Allegany County. Panelists included Father Dr. Godswill Agbagwa, Rev. Dr. Marsha Bell, Rabbi Mark Perman, and Dr. Nayano Taylor-Neumann. Dr. Janjua, a Muslim faith leader, widened the circle of leaders-in-residence at the interfaith event.

A second event hosted on the same day was a deliberative discussion featuring the National Issues Forums Institute (NIFI) guide, *A House Divided: What Would We Have to Give Up to Get the Political System We Want?* The leaders of the College Democrats and Republicans as well as students from Allegany College of Maryland were in attendance. These events gave FSU and local community the chance to participate in both dialogue and deliberation.

On Tuesday, April 23, the leadership lab students partnered with Wholesome Harvest Co-op and Western Maryland Food Council to host Eat, Learn, Co-op, a

dialogue about the regional food movement. Discussion focused on how we can support our local food economy and its partnerships, how we can address food security issues on and off campus, and how to address food waste locally.



Pictured from left: Rabbi Mark Perman; Rev. Dr. Marsha Bell; Dr. Nayano Taylor-Neumann; Dr. Riaz Janjua; and Father Dr. Godswill Agbagwa

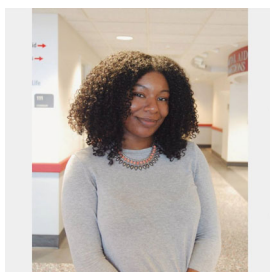


Participants in *A House Divided* using the process of deliberation



Lab assistants Tessa Brewer and Kate Paylor preparing for Eat, Learn, Co-op by attending the Western Maryland Food Council conference at ACM on Fri., April 12.

## Constant Named Commencement Speaker



Congratulations to Sociology major, Andrea Constant, on her selection as the student speaker representing the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences at Frostburg State University's 154th Commencement Ceremony! Andrea is a first-generation student and, at FSU, became the Vice-President of the Latin American Student Organization, as well as the Juvenile Justice Chair and now Vice-President of the campus NAACP chapter. Andrea is also a proud student of TRiO services and a part of the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program. After graduation, Andrea will be headed to upstate New York to complete her Ph.D. in Sociology at Syracuse University. There, she plans to continue to inspire first-generation, underrepresented minorities, and low-income students to achieve their dreams.

## Serfass Presents at International Otter Conference

Tom Serfass, Department of Biology, traveled to China in April to attend the international conference of the IUCN SSC Otter Specialist group. Serfass presented two papers, moderated a session, and represented North America during a board meeting of the group's management team.



## Biology Student Earns Award for Conference Poster Presentation

Eleven Biology students recently presented their independent research projects at the Tri-Beta Biology Honor Society NE-3 District Conference at UPitt-Greensburg. The students presenting were Alexander deAlmeida, Meghan Barker, Milca Mehari, Torre Montoya, Kristin Ratliff, and Nicholas Williams, Jr.

Kristin Ratliff earned second place in her poster session, qualifying her to present at the National Tri-Beta Conference in Atlanta in 2020. Many congratulations to Kristin and her mentor, Dr. David Puthoff!



## CLAS and College of Education Collaborate on B.S. in Computer Science Teacher Education

A collaborative effort between CLAS and CoE has been awarded a grant to develop a B.S. in Computer Science Teacher Education. Funding in the amount of \$34,848 was awarded from the Maryland Center for Computing Education to principal investigators Mike Flinn (Computer Science and Information Technologies) and Jennifer Bishoff (Educational Professions). Jodi Eirch (Educational Professions) will be a major contributor to the development of the program. The grant program is designed to develop a collaborative framework outlining the essential topics to be taught in a Maryland preservice computer science education program, and then to develop courses and pathways to implement that framework. The Computer Science Education Certificate option will address a state-wide need for Computer Science educators in the middle and high schools.

## CLAS Hosts 18th Annual Dean's Colloquium

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences recently honored 11 students who were nominated by their respective departments for outstanding projects. A dinner was held where the students shared an informal description of their work with each other, as well as Dean Hixson and Associate Deans Fritz and Herzog. The goal of the event is to create potential for cross-fertilization of ideas and to foster interdisciplinary understanding and respect. The students were presented with a certificate of recognition, and their project abstracts were published in a booklet to be shared on the college website.

Those recognized were Katelyn Paylor and Sidney Beeman (Communication); Aaron Burton (History); Torre Montoya (Chemistry); Cody Watkins and Caitlin Woodson (Psychology); Sarah Sandifer

(Theatre and Dance); Chloe Macklin, Amaya Joye, and Gillian Acheampong Gonzalez (recognized for GEP Art Appreciation project); and Hailey Yommer (Visual Arts and History).

In addition, Dean Hixson invited the students who participated in the Alternative Break program, to recognize them for their work serving others. The following students from CLAS were recognized for their service: Abigail Albury (Health Science), Kayla Franklin (Communication), Jordan Froneberger (Computer Science and Information Technologies), Marshe Hill and Jasmine Smiley (Biology), Korey King and Brianna Ralston (Political Science), Demetrick McDonald (Physics and Engineering), and Krista Sawyer (Psychology).

## Five CLAS Faculty Granted Tenure, Several Others Promoted

CLAS is pleased to announce that five faculty were recently approved for tenure and promoted to the rank of Associate Professor, effective for fall 2019: Kevin Knott (English and Foreign Languages), Tianna Bogart (Geography), Haiyun Ma (History), Nazanin Tootoonchi (Mathematics), and Jason Speights (Physics and Engineering).

In addition, the following faculty were promoted to Professor: Kara Rogers Thomas (Sociology); Andy Duncan, Amy Branam Armiento, and Gerry LaFemina (English and Foreign Languages).

Congratulations to all!

## Student-Veteran's Research Impresses at International Conference

The fall semester was an exciting and positive time for U.S. Army veteran Sgt. Brent Patterson, a senior materials engineering student at Frostburg, but it was serious challenges and sacrifice that led him to those peaks.

It started when Patterson presented his capstone research project, "Organic Bullet Resistance: Pushing the Capabilities of Nanocellulose," at the Materials Science & Technology Conference in Ohio last fall. At a conference where even getting accepted is an accomplishment, his presentation drew multiple questions when all the preceding undergraduate presentations generated none.

"I literally drew a crowd," said Patterson. That crowd – and their questions – were understandable. Patterson's research is working toward sustainable, next-generation bullet-resistant materials. Having been wounded in action three times, he had a more than casual motivation for his project to succeed.

"This is a highly competitive community," said Dr. Zhen Liu, assistant professor of engineering and Patterson's capstone advisor. "Along with Frostburg State, we presented in the same forum with the University of California, Case Western University, Ohio State, and other high-reputation international institutes. Our students showed a good quality of research and high confidence as senior undergraduates – especially Brent."

"Seeing how important it was for me to represent Frostburg and that I have a really interesting project, it makes me feel good about myself, like I'm accomplishing something with my degree," Patterson said.

First identified around 1980, nanocellulose has remarkable properties. An ultra-fine, nano-structured form of cellulose, which is a material found in every plant

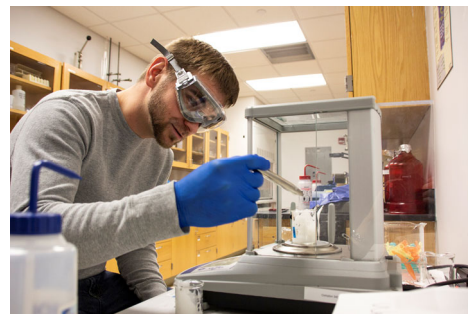
cell, nanocellulose can be isolated from nearly any plant matter – even sawdust. Organic, biodegradable, renewable, and non-toxic, nanocellulose promises an environmentally sustainable replacement for many resource-intensive synthetic materials in popular use. Processed correctly, it is stronger than steel or Kevlar. "This was a really cool project because it was theoretically possible, but nobody had actually demonstrated it," Patterson said.

For decades, nanocellulose has been hailed as a material of the future, with almost limitless theoretical applications ranging from the mundane to the fantastic. Yet since commercial nanocellulose only became available in 2010, so many of those theories are now being tested.

One of the most promising uses is in next-generation, ultralight bullet-resistant materials. Patterson knew firsthand how important that would be for American service members.

"The goal of our capstone is picking a fundamental problem and solving it efficiently. We are shooting for the bullet-proof vest, but in order to do that, we break down the big picture project into very specific mini goals," said Liu. "One of the many goals here was the design and completion of this porous disc."

Patterson's team worked to solve the problem of isolating the nanocellulose from the liquid it comes suspended in. After several unsuccessful attempts, they consulted with the student engineers in FSU's Additive Manufacturing Lab. Jacob Williams, who graduated from FSU last year and is now employed as a mechanical engineer at Northrop Grumman, helped Patterson's team devise the solution: a unique, 3D-printed, heat- and chemical-resistant porous compressor cap that enabled them to reliably dehydrate



*Pictured above: Senior engineering major Brent Patterson processes nanocellulose suspended in liquid as part of the process of studying ways to create new bullet-resistant materials.*

and form nanocellulose "biscuits" in a vacuum oven. Unlike paper, Patterson's resulting material had serious strength to it – though not enough to stop a bullet ... yet.

"There is a lot of room for improvement, honestly," Patterson said. "This was literally just a stepping stone."

Patterson is due to graduate in May, but the next cohort of engineering students is already looking to take the organic bullet resistance project to the next level.

## Math/Political Science Major Civil Citizen Communicator Award Winner

Benjamin Forrest, a double major in Math and Political Science, was selected as 2019 Civil Citizen Communicator. Forrest serves as president of SGA. In the past year, he has addressed FSU's Faculty Senate with concerns about unauthorized recordings of faculty by students in classroom contexts and worked to

propose an Emergency Absence Policy to the Faculty Concerns Committee on students' behalf.

Honorable mentions were awarded to Jon Huzier (triple major in Communication Studies, Political Science, and Law and Society) and Katelyn Paylor (Communication Studies) for their contributions to civil communication lead-

ership.

Serving as judges were Rebecca Chory (Management), Dean Kim Hixson, and Tara Taylor from the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights.



*Students from THEA 407, Topics in Production Techniques, learning to construct puppets*

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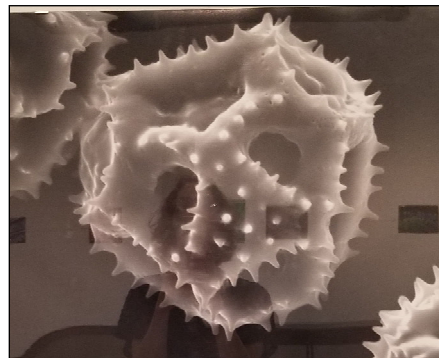
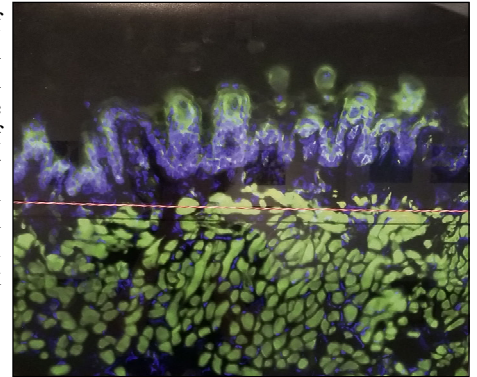
**Have any interesting news  
items about faculty, staff, or  
students in your department?**  
Submit them to Linda Steele  
(lsteale@frostburg.edu)  
for the next issue.

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

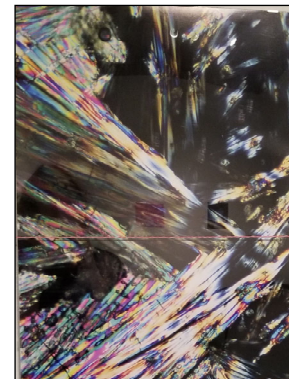


## The Art of Microscopy

The Art of Microscopy,” a collection of images created by students enrolled in Advanced Microscopy, was exhibited in the Stephanie Ann Roper Gallery of the Fine Arts building during the week of April 22. The exhibit was sponsored by the Departments of Biology and Visual Arts, the FSU Faculty Development and Sabbatical Committee, and the Carl Del Signore Foundation. The student work was done under the direction of Dr. Rebekah Taylor.



*Shown above: dandelion pollen*



*Top right: mouse tongue and  
bottom right: caffeine crystals*

## PA Program Earns Provisional Accreditation

FSU has received accreditation-provisional status for its new Physician Assistant (PA) Master's degree program, which is being offered at the University System of Maryland at Hagerstown.

The program, a Master of Medical Science in Physician Assistant Studies, will be enrolling its first class of 25 starting in May. PAs are medical professionals who practice in every medical setting and diagnose illness, develop and manage treatment plans, prescribe medications, and increasingly serve as a patient's principal healthcare provider.

The program is offered at USMH in downtown Hagerstown, thanks to the partnership of Meritus Health System, which has provided the facility for the program; the Appalachian Regional Commission; and local philanthropists who provided funding to assist with the renovation and equipment purchase and create scholarships for local students. The program is being taught at the USMH Agnita Stine Schreiber Health Science Center, 24 Walnut St., third floor.

The Accreditation Review  
Commission on Education for the Physi-

cian Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA) has granted Accreditation-Provisional status to the Frostburg State University Master of Medical Science in Physician Assistant Studies Program sponsored by Frostburg State University.

Accreditation-Provisional is an accreditation status granted when the plans and resource allocation, if fully implemented as planned, of a proposed program that has not yet enrolled students, appear to demonstrate the program's ability to meet the ARC-PA Standards or when a program holding Accreditation-Provisional status appears to demonstrate continued progress in complying with the Standards as it prepares for the graduation of the first class (cohort) of students.

Accreditation-Provisional does not ensure any subsequent accreditation status. It is limited to no more than five years from matriculation of the first class.

For info, visit [www.frostburg.edu/academics/majorminors/graduate/ms-physician-assistant/index.php](http://www.frostburg.edu/academics/majorminors/graduate/ms-physician-assistant/index.php). For the