



BIOLOGY FACULTY AND STUDENTS DURING SUMMER TRIP TO BELIZE

PAGE 2

# Lamar University College of Arts & Sciences

## Newsletter Fall 2013

IN THIS ISSUE

## Welcome to the Future

by Dr. Brenda S. Nichols, Dean



Welcome to the inaugural College of Arts and Sciences Newsletter for 2013-2014. In the spirit of sharing, the Newsletter is designed to highlight the unfolding news and events that will shape our collective future, events such as the November 7 investiture of Dr. Kenneth Evans as the 15<sup>th</sup> President of Lamar University.

This is an exciting time to be a member of the Lamar community. Students arriving on campus are better prepared than ever before to meet the academic challenges they will face. As a consequence, it is both our privilege and our challenge to provide them with a contemporary education at the highest level.

You will find unique success stories embedded in all twelve of our academic departments and our combined forty-two undergraduate and graduate degree programs. As you will read, our faculty inspire students to dream big and to guide their passion for learning wherever it might take them: from the Maya ruins of Belize to the Texas Legislative Internship Program in Austin; from the creation of sign language avatars to unmistakably wild flights in Zero-Gravity conditions; from dragging a Geiger counter into the Smithsonian Museum in search of "hot" Megalodon teeth dating back to 30 million years to adopting the guises and personae of famous American presidents.

Another promising initiative this year is the College of Arts & Sciences Student Council. Two years ago the Dean's Office helped establish the group. After developing a set of by-laws this year, the group has asked for a number of specific programs. One thing students are particularly interested in is talking to alumni about potential careers.

As we continue to grow and improve, we want to keep you informed but we also want to hear what is happening in your life. So, please contact us at [coas@lamar.edu](mailto:coas@lamar.edu) and the next edition will contain more of your happenings!



### New Faces at Lamar

In addition to welcoming a new president to Lamar, Dr. Kenneth Evans, the College of Arts & Sciences has many new faculty and staff this year including many new administrators.

Page 3



### New Facilities Enhance Programs

The College of Arts & Sciences has many new facilities, many of which highlight technology.

Page 4

# Biology Students Explore Central America

Dr. Matt Hoch and Dr. Ana Christensen served as faculty sponsors during the 4<sup>th</sup> Study Abroad trip to Belize in summer 2013. Eleven Lamar Biology students went on the two-week trip to the central-American country. The students, all of whom had enrolled in two senior level biology courses, began preparing academically in mid-May before leaving the country. The course featured a dual focus in Tropical Watershed Ecology and Marine Biology.



*Lamar students explore the coral reefs of Belize as part of the student of the marine biology of the region.*

During the trip, students had an opportunity to experience Mayan culture and food. A day trip took the group to the location of a Mayan ruin. Some of the other activities during the visit included six days in the tropical rain forest of the Cockscomb Basin Jaguar Preserve. Students also studied freshwater stream ecology, water chemistry, flow rates, and stream organisms over three days on the neo-tropical savanna. During that part of the trip the group paddled down the Sibun River.

The Marine Biology aspect of the trip included six days exploring coral reefs and mangrove lagoons. While there, the group

studied the effects of climate change on brittle stars, coral reef, and mangrove ecology.

## SUMMER SCHOOL IN BELIZE

Students sign up for the combination summer lecture and Belize trip prior to the Summer I semester. Study abroad grants are available to Lamar students.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT  
Dr. Matt Hoch ([matt.hoch@lamar.edu](mailto:matt.hoch@lamar.edu))

# Study Abroad Program Inspires Lamar Students

Dr. Joe Nordgren, Associate Dean in the College of Arts & Sciences, directs Lamar's Study Abroad Program. Dr. Nordgren is assisted by Ms. Norma Zarzosa, who serves as Study Abroad Coordinator. The program aspires to prepare students for leadership and lifelong learning in a multicultural world. Financial assistance is available. For more information contact Ms. Zarzosa ([norma.zarzosa@lamar.edu](mailto:norma.zarzosa@lamar.edu)).



## **Marielva Guerrero** **Spanish Major**

"LU study abroad gave me the opportunity to see the history, literature and culture of Spain come alive, by visiting the archives from the Spanish Civil War, castles, convents, cathedrals, museums, cultural events, even a Bull fight!"

## **Will Robbins** **History and Political Science**

"Studying abroad is the best thing I did in my college career, and it has made me a better person, student, and friend, and has better prepared me to help reshape the world after graduation."





# UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT



**Dr. Kenneth Evans, University President.**

Ph.D. Marketing, University of Colorado.

Became the 15th president of Lamar in July, 2013. Previously served as Dean of the Michael F. Price College of Business at the University of Oklahoma. His research is in sales management, services marketing, and marketing management and theory.



**Dr. Paul Nicoletto, Interim Chair, Department of Biology.**

Ph.D. Biology, University of New Mexico.

Became interim chair in 2012 succeeding Dr. Matthew Hoch. 32 years' experience in academia, including 17 years at Lamar. His research is in animal behavior.



**Dr. Paul Bernazzani, Chair, Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry.**

Ph.D. Biophysics, University of Quebec du Trois-Rivieres, Canada.

Became chair in 2010 succeeding Dr. Keith Hansen. 10 years' experience in academia at Lamar. His research is in molecular behavior of macromolecules (biological as well as synthetic plastics).



**Dr. Stefan Andrei, Chair, Department of Computer Science.**

Ph.D. Computer Science, Hamburg University, Germany.

Became chair in 2013 succeeding Dr. Lawrence Osborne. 18 years' experience in academia, including 6 years at Lamar. His research is in software engineering, program analysis, real-time embedded systems, and foundations of computer science.



**Dr. Jim Sanderson, Chair, Department of English, Modern Languages and Philosophy.**

Ph.D. English, Oklahoma State University.

Became chair in 2012 succeeding Dr. Steve Zani. 32 years' experience in academia, including 25 years at Lamar. His research is in creative writing. Award-winning writing includes short stories and novels. Currently working on a mystery novel set in Beaumont.



**Dr. Cristian Bahrim, Interim Chair, Department of Physics.**

Ph.D. Physics, University of Paris, France.

Became chair in 2013 upon formation of new department. 15 years' experience in academia, including 12 at Lamar. His research is in quantum optics, quantum mechanics, electron diffraction on crystals and optical response of dielectrics to light.



**Dr. Jeremy Shelton, Interim Chair, Department of Psychology.**

Ph.D. Social Psychology, University of Georgia.

Became chair in 2013 succeeding Dr. Randolph Smith. 12 years' experience in academia, including 10 at Lamar. His research is in consumer behavior and unconscious thought processes. Currently conducting research into change blindness.



**Dr. Stuart Wright, Interim Chair, Department of Sociology, Social Work & Criminal Justice.**

Ph.D. Sociology, University of Connecticut.

Became chair in 2012 succeeding Dr. Kevin Smith. 29 years' experience in academia, including 28 years at Lamar. Served as Lamar Director of Research for 4 years. His research is in the intersection of religion and violence.

# New Facilities Highlight **Technology**

The College of Arts & Sciences is leading the way in new programs featuring innovative new technologies from chemistry to nursing. Below are examples of some of the newest program facilities



## NUCLEAR MAGNETIC RESONANCE INSTRUMENT LABORATORY

The Department of Chemistry/Biochemistry purchased a new Bruker 400 MHz NMR instrument. This Nuclear Magnetic Resonance instrument is used for elucidating the molecular structure of chemicals and is an essential tool for synthetic chemistry scientists. The instrument is an asset for research at both undergraduate and graduate levels providing students with important hands-on experience.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT  
Dr. Paul Bernazzani ([paul.bernazzani@lamar.edu](mailto:paul.bernazzani@lamar.edu))



## GAME DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT LABORATORY

This fall the Department of Computer Science will open the Game Design & Development Laboratory in the Maes building. The lab will be used for teaching and research in the area of entertainment software development. Along with establishing the new lab, the department will begin offering four new courses in computer game development that are designed to enable a student to land a job in the computer game industry.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT  
Dr. Timothy Roden ([troden@lamar.edu](mailto:troden@lamar.edu))



## VACUUM LABORATORY

The Lamar Department of Earth & Space Sciences has added, with support from NASA and other sources, a state-of-the-art ultrahigh vacuum facility to support research on lunar and meteorite samples, and on testing and development of instruments for space flight.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT  
Dr. Jim Jordan ([jim.jordan@lamar.edu](mailto:jim.jordan@lamar.edu))



## NURSING SIMULATION LABORATORY

Opened in January 2012, the Nursing Simulation Center represents the peak of nursing educational technology. Students today enjoy professional instruction in the facility covering all aspects of primary, surgical, emergency and geriatric healthcare.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT  
Dr. Eileen Curl ([eileen.curl@lamar.edu](mailto:eileen.curl@lamar.edu))

# News from **Biology**



**Elisabeth Maxwell**

**E**lisabeth Maxwell, Beaumont Biology major and Lamar Ambassador, received the Marian Beane/Charles Gliozzo Domestic Student Award for International Achievement. This is an award given by the Phi Beta Delta International Scholars Honors Society to one student member at the national level. Maxwell accepted the award at the society's national convention in North Carolina April 11-13.

Maxwell spent three months on the coast of South Africa working with a shark conservancy in 2011 and spent the summer in Mozambique working with a Marine Mega Fauna field research station in 2012 as part of her research for the Beck Fellowship, Lamar's most prestigious undergraduate honor.

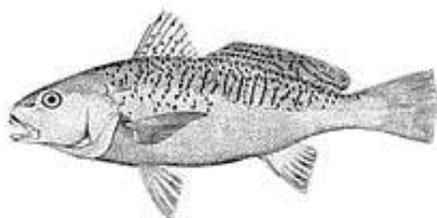


**Dr. Jim Armacost**

**L**amar University has created a new office of sustainability with the goal of making the university as efficient and environmentally friendly as possible. Steve Doblin, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, named Jim Armacost, Associate Professor of Biology, the university's first Director of Sustainability.

Armacost received his Ph.D. from Illinois State and M.S. from Mississippi State, both in biology, and his B.S. in zoology from Louisiana State University. He has been at Lamar University since 2007 teaching courses in ornithology, conservation biology, tropical forest ecology, avian ecology, bird conservation, and invasion ecology, and he has served as a member of the Faculty Learning Committee on Sustainability.

The creation of the new office and position is part of Lamar's strategic plan to promote sustainability in all aspects of university life, following Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) principles in renovation and construction projects whenever feasible, and establishing a recharging station on campus.



**Atlantic Croaker**

**D**r. Paul Nicoletto, Professor of Biology, became interim chair of the department in 2012. He has been at Lamar 17 years. He is currently working with a McNair student scholar researching sound production in Atlantic Croaker. The research involves recording sounds the fish make and analyzing those sounds to detect patterns of communication.

**D**r. Ian Lian joins the department in 2013 as Assistant Professor specializing in cell biology. His research is in stem cells and looking for new ways to change non-stem cells into stem cells. He will teach courses in cell biology and anatomy and physiology.

**D**r. Ashwini Kucknoor joined the department in 2011 as Assistant Professor specializing in microbiology. She teaches microbiology, immunology and molecular biology.



**Dr. Ashwini Kucknoor**

**A**manda Posey joined the department in 2012 as Instructor. She received both her undergraduate and master's degree from Lamar. She is also the coordinator of the Anatomy and Physiology laboratories.

**D**r. Mike Warren, Professor of Biology and former chair of the department, retired in 2011. He holds the distinction of being the longest serving department chair at Lamar.



**New computer lab**

**A** new computer laboratory with 10 PCs was established on the second floor of the Biology building in 2012. This followed the remodeling of the department office suite in 2012. Other additions to facilities include smart desks in classrooms, wireless networking in the building and projectors in all classrooms.

# News from **Chemistry and Biochemistry**



**Dr. Paul Bernazzani with the Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Instrument**

The department took delivery of a \$400K Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) machine in 2010 funded via university HEAF funds. The device is used in analyzing materials and is being used in both undergraduate and graduate research. Another device added in 2013 is the Gas Chromatography Mass Spectrometer (GCMS).

Both the NMR and GCMS are used by faculty and students in a new undergraduate research-based course the department added in 2012. The new course is required for majors and features one-on-one collaboration with a faculty member supervising the student's individual research project.

The Scott and Patricia Groben Scholarship in Chemistry was established in 2013 to assist students seeking a degree in chemistry.

"We are very excited to hear about the establishment of this new endowed scholarship," said Paul Bernazzani, Chair of the Department of Chemistry. "Many promising students at Lamar need financial relief for our rigorous science programs. I predict that the Groben Scholarship will help educate a new generation of students and lead them to fruitful careers in the sciences."

Scott and Patricia Groben are both practitioners in the field of chemistry. Patricia Groben graduated in 1969 with a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry from Lamar. Her husband, Scott, graduated from Oregon State University in 1980 with a B.S. degree in chemical engineering.

**D**r. Paul Bernazzani, Associate Professor of Chemistry, became chair of the department in 2010. He has been at Lamar 10 years. His research is in molecular behavior of macromolecules (biological as well as synthetic plastics).



**Dr. P. Chandrasekaran**

**D**r. Perumalreddy Chandrasekaran joined the department in 2012 as Assistant Professor of Chemistry specializing in organic chemistry.



**Dr. Ozge Gunaydin-Sen**

**D**r. Ozge Gunaydin-Sen joined the department in 2013 as Assistant Professor of Chemistry specializing in physical chemistry. She received her Ph.D. from Florida State

University. Her husband will also be joining Lamar in 2013 as an adjunct in the Physics department.



**Dr. Thi Thuy Minh Nguyen**

**D**r. Thi Thuy Minh Nguyen was promoted from Instructor to Assistant Professor of Biochemistry in 2012.

**D**r. Jose Andino joined the department in 2012 as Instructor of Chemistry specializing in organic chemistry. He received his Ph.D. from Indiana University.

**M**s. Paula Scrougham joined the department as Senior Administrative Associate in March 2013. She previously worked as an administrative assistant at Texas Tech graduate school.

**D**r. Keith Hansen, Professor of Chemistry and former department chair for 21 years, retired in 2011.

**D**r. Dale Ortego, Professor of Chemistry, retired in 2011.

**D**r. John Whittle, Professor of Chemistry and former director of Risk Management, retired in 2011.

**M**s. Sherry Li, Instructor of Chemistry, retired in 2012.

# News from **Computer Science**

**D**r. Stefan Andrei, Associate Professor of Computer Science, became chair of the department in 2013. His research is in software engineering, program analysis, real-time embedded systems, and foundations of computer science. After earning his bachelor's and master's degrees from Cuza University of Iasi in Romania and his doctoral degree from Hamburg University in Germany, Dr. Andrei began his professional career at Lamar University in 2007.

**D**r. Andrei was recently recognized by the Senior Member Committee of the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM). The world's largest educational and scientific computing society, ACM delivers resources that advance computing as a science and a profession. Its senior member program, an international recognition initiated in 2006, includes members with at least 10 years of professional experience who have demonstrated performance that sets them apart from their peers through technical leadership, and technical or professional contributions.



**Sign language system created by Dr. Stefan Andrei**

**D**r. Andrei, along with Lamar faculty co-authors Dr. Larry Osborne (Computer Science) and Dr. Zanthia Smith (Deaf Studies), published a paper entitled "Designing an American Sign Language Avatar for Learning Computer Science Concepts for Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing Students and Deaf Interpreters" in the Journal of Educational Multimedia and Hypermedia in July. The paper describes research in creating a 3D animated sign language avatar. The research was jointly funded by Lamar University and Academic Partnerships.



**Dr. Timothy Roden**

**D**r. Timothy Roden, Associate Professor in Computer Science, joined the department in 2012. His Ph.D. is from University of North Texas. Before coming to Lamar he served for 5 years at Angelo State University (ASU) as director and chair of the ASU Computer Science Department. Dr. Roden's research is in computer games and graphics. While at ASU, he established a nationally recognized program in computer game development.

Dr. Roden's goals coming to Lamar are to build the preeminent game development program in Texas. Lamar has approved four new undergraduate courses in computer game development and has established the new Entertainment Computing Laboratory in the Maes building on the second floor. The new lab will be used in teaching and research.

"With its location so close to a major metropolitan center, Lamar is positioned to become the leading school in Texas to train computer game developers," said Roden. "I'm excited to be a part of something as big as I know this is going to be for Lamar and for Beaumont."

Texas is the second largest state in the U.S. in terms of the number of computer game development companies. With big names such as Electronic Arts and Sony Entertainment, among others, Texas has established itself as a premiere locale for the entertainment software industry.

**D**r. Lawrence Osborne, returned to the faculty in 2012 after serving as chair of the department and graduate advisor for 20 years. Under Dr. Osborne's leadership the department earned accreditation from the Accrediting Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), starting in 2001. In his new role, Dr. Osborne continues to serve as a program evaluator for ABET, chair of the university IT committee and chair of the department curriculum committee.



**Mrs. Denise Rode**

**M**rs. Denise Rode joined the department in 2012 as a Senior Administrative Associate, transferring from the Lamar Provost's office. Mrs. Rode previously worked for the Texas Youth Commission for 15 years.



**(From left) Reza Shakouri, Matthew Williamson, and Zebulun Barnett**

Three Lamar University Computer Science majors placed in the Top 20 at the Association on Computing Machinery's South Central Regional Programming Contest at Louisiana State University in fall 2012. They were coached by Dr. Stefan Andrei.



**Demetrius Taylor**

Demetrius Taylor, Lamar Computer Science senior from Dayton, earned third place in international competition at the 44<sup>th</sup> ACM Technical Symposium on Computer Science Education March 9 in Denver, Colo. The annual symposium, sponsored by the Association for Computing Machinery's Special Interest Group on Computer Science Education, is the premiere showcase for computing education in the United States.

In addition to being a past McNair Scholar, Taylor is webmaster for the STAIRSTEP program at Lamar University. He is also webmaster of the Association for Computing Machinery and the treasurer of Upsilon Pi Epsilon. A member of the INSPIRED program for four years, he served as coordinator for several summer high school computing academies hosted by the program.



**Dr. Peggy Doerschuk**

Lamar University honored Peggy Doerschuk, Professor of Computer Science, as the 2011 University Professor, with officials applauding her as an innovative and accomplished researcher as well as a teacher and mentor who has deeply touched the lives of her students. The professorship, awarded for life, is the university's most prestigious faculty award and recognizes an outstanding senior professor for academic excellence, according to Stephen Doblin, provost and vice president for academic affairs.

"Dr. Doerschuk has served Lamar extraordinarily well and has done so for more than 17 years," Doblin said. "Her mark of excellence is apparent throughout the university – in the courses she has taught, the leadership she has provided, the scholarship she has conducted, the funding she has secured, the programs she has directed, the relations she has cultivated and, in big ways and small, the students she has educated."



**Dr. Jiangjiang (Jane) Liu**

Dr. Jiangjiang Liu, Associate Professor in Computer Science, was awarded a National Science Foundation (NSF) Career award in 2009. Dr. Liu is the only Lamar faculty member ever to receive the prestigious four-year NSF award. As part of the grant, Dr. Liu has hosted an annual summer workshop for K-12 teachers.

Computer Science faculty member Myers Foreman passed away in 2011 after 33 years of service at Lamar. Myers was the advisor for incoming freshman. His inspiring attitude and presence are missed greatly by faculty and students alike.

Lamar University's Students Advancing through Involvement in Research Student

Talent Expansion Program (STAIRSTEP) is successfully recruiting, retaining and transitioning undergraduates majoring in Chemistry, Computer Science, Geosciences, Mathematics and Physics. The project is funded by a five-year one million dollar grant from the National Science Foundation that started January 1, 2009. This is the final year of the program. Small teams of undergraduates majoring in these disciplines are paid a competitive stipend to participate in research and outreach under the direction of a faculty mentor in their discipline. Teams can include freshmen through seniors. The more advanced students mentor, tutor and train the less experienced students. The undergraduate STAIRSTEP students present their research at professional meetings and conferences. Several have won awards for their research presentations. In their K-14 outreach activities, STAIRSTEP students and faculty mentors have interacted with thousands of students, educators, and others.

The Chemistry STAIRSTEP team performs research in computational chemistry and chemical education under the direction of Associate Professor of Chemistry Christopher Martin. The Computer Science team performs research in artificial intelligence, robotics and computer science education under the direction of University Professor of Computer Science Peggy Doerschuk, who also directs the STAIRSTEP program. The Geosciences team performs research on subsidence and storm surges under the direction of Associate Professor of Geophysics Joseph Kruger. The Math team performs research on properties of the G-graph of a group under the direction of Associate Professor of Mathematics Jennifer Daniel, who also serves as Associate Director of STAIRSTEP. The Physics team performs research in optics and photonics under the direction of Associate Professor of Physics Cristian Bahrim. Judith Mann, Associate Professor of Psychology, directs the assessment of the program.

As of spring 2013, 86 undergraduates participated in the STAIRSTEP program. Over 89% of the participants have been retained in their STEM major. Since STAIRSTEP started, first time in college freshmen enrolling in the five STAIRSTEP disciplines has increased by 97%, and undergraduate majors in the five disciplines have increased 50%. Thirty-three undergraduate participants have graduated thus far, and 88% have been transitioned to careers or advanced study in STEM within 6 months of graduation.

# News from **Earth & Space Sciences**



**Lamar faculty and students at the Smithsonian museum**

**D**r. Jim Westgate, Professor of Earth and Space Sciences and Regents Professor Award nominee, traveled to Washington D.C. during spring break 2013 to participate in testing a novel new approach to dating fossils. Joining Westgate were Dr. George Irwin, Associate Professor of Physics, and Dr. Jim Jordan, Chair of the Department of Earth and Space Sciences. Students participating in the research were Christine Gartner, senior geology major from Beaumont, physics majors Jason Dark, a junior from Beaumont, and Joshua Kamienski, a senior from Houston.

Radiocarbon dating is well established as the go-to method for determining the age of organic material. However, this method only yields results back to about 50,000 years, and therefore isn't used to date older fossils, according to Westgate. Typically, fossils older than 50,000 years are dated based on igneous or metamorphic rocks that are associated with the fossils, or by rare associations of fossils with radiometrically datable materials.

Lamar's physics team spent several weeks doing preliminary analysis of fossil megalodon and mammoth teeth ranging in age from 13,000 to 70 million years old.

"Preliminary results indicate we might be able to extend the direct age dating process to 30- or 40-million years," Westgate said.

With these promising results "we took a Geiger counter into the Smithsonian museum collections to find 'hot' megalodon teeth to borrow for analysis in the Lamar Physics Radiation Lab," Westgate said.

The team was granted access to fossil radioactive megalodon shark teeth in the collection of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History. The museum will loan Lamar about 20 teeth ranging in age from 4 million to 150 million years.



**Teachers at Lamar workshop on the Neches river**

**L**amar University's Department of Earth and Space Sciences 18th annual Teaching Environmental Science summer institute introduced Southeast Texas EC-12 teachers to local environmental issues through first-hand experiences. The participants concluded the two-week course on the Neches River July 19 where they learned about a state program to rehabilitate the Bessie Heights marsh.

The 10-day field institute is offered in conjunction with the Region 5 Science Collaborative, local industries, state and federal agencies, and environmental non-governmental organizations. Using airboats and a Coast Guard vessel, the teachers saw how the marshland elevation is raised and protected from future oil spills and salt water.

During the program, the teachers explored and/or studied environmental habitats in the Golden Triangle, including the Shangri La Botanical Gardens and Nature Center and the Big Thicket National Preserve. Since its inception, more than 150,000 Texas students have taken courses from teachers who have experienced the institute.

**A** Permanent Global Positioning System (GPS) antenna was installed at the Geology building in 2013. The antenna links Lamar University with a global network of ground based antenna. The device enables measurement of ground elevation to within a centimeter, according to department chair Dr. Jim Jordan. The antenna, funded through the university HEAF allocation, will enable students to conduct research into plate tectonics and even measure the rate of sinkage of the Texas coastline.



**Geospatial Center**

**T**he Lamar Geospatial Center, a state-of-the-art computer laboratory located in the Geology building, received a three-quarter of a million dollar grant to upgrade software. The upgrade includes seismic data interpretation software. The Geospatial Center was established as a result of a Department of Defense funding collaboration with Stephen F. Austin University in 2008-2010.



**Byron Dyer (Lamar class of '57)**

**H**ouston Museum of Natural Sciences president Joel Bartsch provided Lamar with an 88-piece mineral exhibit on permanent loan to Lamar from the museum in 2007. A friend of Bartsch's, Lamar Geology alumnus Byron Dyer, was instrumental in helping negotiate the loan. Lamar University greatly appreciates Mr. Dyer and everything he has done to help build Lamar.

# Lamar University Hallway **Mineral Exhibit** from the Houston Museum of Natural Science

88 Specimens  
From 11 states, 17 countries, 38 locations

## Hours

Weekdays 9 am – 5 pm  
Geology Building  
Special tours:  
(409) 880-8236



# News from **English & Modern Languages**

The Texas Institute of Letters has honored Jim Sanderson, Professor and chair with the Kay Cattarulla Award for short-story writing. Sanderson has served as chair since 2012 and has been at Lamar for 25 years. Sanderson's award-winning story, "Bankers," was published in *Descant*, the literary journal of Texas Christian University.

The institute is considered the most prestigious literary organization in Texas. The award was presented Saturday, April 6, at its annual meeting in San Marcos. The award recognizes the best short story written by a Texan or about Texas.

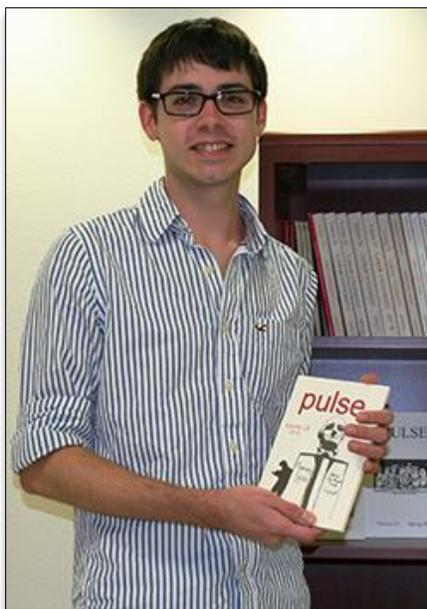


**Dr. Catalina Castillon**

Dr. Catalina Castillon, Associate Professor of English & Modern Languages, has been selected as the Distinguished Faculty Lecturer for 2013. A resident of Beaumont, Castillon has been a member of the Lamar faculty since 1991.

"Hispanic Literary Heritage: An American Experience" is the topic of her lecture, sponsored by ExxonMobil, to be presented this fall in the University Theatre at a date to be announced. The Lamar University Faculty Senate will host the lecture, which is open to the public without charge.

Castillon is the 27th recipient of the honor – one of the highest accorded a Lamar faculty member. A committee of faculty, staff, students and community representatives makes the selection.



**Mr. Garry Richards**

**P**ulse, Lamar University's student-created literary magazine, released its 60th edition in spring 2013. Sponsored by the Department of English and Modern Languages, the magazine contains poetry and prose by students from a variety of disciplines on campus. The magazine is funded by donations from patrons of the arts.

Garry Richards of Port Neches, Pulse editor and English graduate student at Lamar, said Pulse showcases work from students of different disciplines.

"I had the opportunity to see a lot of budding writers from all over campus," Richards said. "It is good to see we have good writers not just in the English department, but all over campus. For students, it is a great opportunity to have an author credit in a

publication. Those sorts of things look great in resumes and curricula vitae."

The department hosted a celebration in the Spindletop Room, on the eighth floor of the Mary and John Gray Library, to celebrate the contributors and winners of the contests that Pulse sponsors for the each edition. "There are a handful of awards for graduate and undergraduates in formal and non-formal poetry, fiction and critical writing," Richards said. "The winners are chosen by the faculty."

Winners for the most recent edition were Quinton Gaines of Beaumont for best undergraduate free verse, Donald Case of Point for best undergraduate formal poem, Kevin King of Vidor for best undergraduate prose, and Tara Tatum of Beaumont for both the free verse and formal graduate poem categories. Alaina Bray of Hamshire won best critical essay. Ashley Cook of Port Arthur, Adam Gorrel of Bridge City and John Jashinski of Silsbee received Lamar-Longman Awards for best freshman critical essay. Jashinski won a second Lamar-Longman Award for an additional essay

**T**he Carolyn J. Keating Scholarship in English was established in March 2013 by an endowment given by Mrs. Carolyn J. Keating, former Lamar English major. The scholarship will be given annually to an upper level or graduate student majoring in English. Recipients will be selected by a university scholarship committee.

**T**wo Lamar University English students won first place awards in the Texas Association of Creative Writing Teachers writing competition in fall 2012. Alaina Bray, Hamshire senior, and Ruth Grace Megnet, graduate student from Switzerland, placed first in student writing categories and will present their work at the annual conference Sept. 28 at University of Texas Pan-American in Edinburg, Texas. Both are students of Dr. Jerry Bradley.



**Dr. Pamela Saur**

**D**r. Pamela Saur, Regents' professor of German, published a landmark book on Czech literary master Ernst Weiss in 2012. The title is "Ernst Weiss: Life, Works and Legacy of a Czech Literary Master and Friend of Franz Kafka, 1882-1940."

Among her scholarly achievements, Saur has produced more than 100 publications. The Texas State University System honored her as a 2010 Regents' Professor, the system's highest faculty award. Lamar has honored her as both university scholar and university professor.

**D**r. Blackwell Starnes joined the department in 2013 as Assistant Professor of

English specializing in composition and rhetoric. His most recent position was at Georgia Southern University.

**D**r. T.J. Giger joined the department in 2013 as Assistant Professor of English specializing in composition and rhetoric. His most recent position was at Syracuse University.

**M**s. Sarah Mattox joined the department in 2013 as Administrative Assistant. She holds a master's degree in English.

**M**r. Garry Richards joined the department in 2013 as Administrative Assistant. He holds a master's degree in English.

# Lamar University College of Arts and Sciences Newsletter Fall 2013

## Dean

**Brenda S. Nichols, Ph.D.**

## Associate Dean

**Joe Nordgren, Ph.D.**

## Contact Information

P.O. Box 10058, Beaumont, TX 77710  
(409) 880-8508

## Texas State University System Board of Regents

**Brian McCall**, Chancellor | Austin

**Donna N. Williams**, Chairman | Arlington

**Ron Mitchell**, Vice Chairman | Horseshow Bay

**Charlie Amato** | San Antonio

**Jaime R. Garza** | San Antonio

**Kevin J. Lilly** | Houston

**David Montagne** | Beaumont

**Vernon Reaser III** | Bellaire

**Rossanna Salazar** | Austin

**William F. Scott** | Nederland

**Matthew Russell** | San Marcos

# News from **History**

Lamar University's Phi Alpha Theta chapter was well represented at the annual Southwestern Historical Association (SWHA) meeting held from March 27-30, 2013, in New Orleans. Graduate students Casey Diaz and Collin Rohrbaugh, and undergraduate student Valerie Key, each presented papers reflecting their latest research.

Diaz and Rohrbaugh appeared on the same panel examining aspects of 19th-century U.S. history. Diaz presented "James K. Polk and the Whig Press during the Mexican War," which examined Polk's attempt to shape public opinion concerning the war with Mexico despite strong Whig press opposition. In "Jeffersonian Visions: Lewis and Clark and Astoria," Rohrbaugh traced the development of and influences on Jefferson's ideology of westward expansion. Key participated in an undergraduate panel and presented her interpretation of "Lyndon Baines Johnson: The Man, the Politician, and a Champion of Civil Rights," arguing that Johnson's powerful and charismatic persona, combined with his passion for social justice, contributed greatly to passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

In November 2012, the History Department and the Texas Gulf Historical Society published volume 48 of the *The Texas Gulf Historical and Biographical Record*. This is the second volume released under the partnership between the department and the society. It features research articles by former History Department chair John Storey, who wrote "Born of Discord: The Origins and Early Years of Central Baptist Church of Port Arthur," and recent M.A. graduate Cassandre Durso, who contributed, "Two States with One Goal: Texas and Louisiana Recruit Italians."

Dr. Maya Irish, Assistant Professor of History at Rice University, served as the guest speaker at the March 2013 annual department banquet and Phi Alpha Theta new membership initiation. Dr. Irish provided a fascinating examination of Jewish-Christian relations in medieval Spain titled, "Convivencia in the Archives: The Jews of Medieval Castile."



**Dr. Rebecca Boone**

Dr. Rebecca Boone, Associate Professor of History, has received a book contract from the British press, Pickering & Chatto, for her manuscript, *Mercurino di Gattinara and the Creation of the Spanish Empire*.



**Dr. Lee Thompson**

Dr. Lee Thompson, Professor of History, continues to keep busy with his work on Theodore Roosevelt. 2013 will see the publication of a paperback edition of his critically acclaimed *Theodore Roosevelt Abroad*, as well as a new study of Roosevelt titled *Never Call Retreat: Theodore Roosevelt and the Great War*. Palgrave Macmillan will publish both books.

Dr. Thompson has also been an annual Visiting Fellow at Wolfson College,

Cambridge University, since 2005. This position, which carries with it membership in the university, is attained by recommendation of the current Fellows and President of Wolfson College. While there he will conduct research for his seventh book, *The Proconsuls: Milner, Curzon, and Kitchener in the Age of High Imperialism*.

A new fund for the History Department has been created called the 1960 Fund.

Since the creation of an independent History Department in 1960, the department gift account has supported student travel to conferences and field trips, faculty development, and other departmental activities.

Generous benefactors of the department have funded this gift account because they believe in the core mission of a liberal arts education and the role played by history education.

The newly-created 1960 Fund commemorating the History Department's creation hopes to raise money for the gift account to continue supporting the excellent history majors and the fine work of the department.

Recently, gifts were made to cover the expenses of students to attend the Webb Society fall meeting in Huntsville in November 2012, the East Texas Historical Association meeting in Galveston in February 2013, and the Texas Oral History Association meeting in April 2013, where three history undergraduate students presented their research. The 1960 Fund also covers the meals for the initiates of the Phi Alpha Theta history honorary society and PAT members to attend conferences.

The history department gratefully acknowledges the following contributors to our 1960 Fund. Carol and Richard Atmar, Dr. Yasuko Sato, Carmen Breaux, Patty and Mike Renfro, Dr. Rebecca Boone and Chris Boone, Tim Knight, Dr. Mary L. Scheer, Christina Wilbur, Ken Poston, Jim Seratt, and Robert Robertson. If you would like to support our Lamar history students and become a donor to the 1960 Fund, please contact: Dr. Mary L. Scheer at 409-880-8511.

The Department of History is honored to announce the Preston Williams-Ralph Wooster scholarship given by Dr. Leland Bellot of Placencia, CA. Dr. Bellot, a University teacher and administrator, was a student of both men during his time at Lamar. The scholarship is to be given to an entering graduate student who intends to teach at the secondary or university level.

A native Texan, Dr. Williams served in the US Army during World War II. He attended the University of Texas, graduating with his Ph.D. in 1949. A specialist in French Revolution and Napoleon, he began teaching at Lamar State College of Technology that same year. He became the first head of the Department of History in 1957 and the only

Dean of the College of Liberal Arts in 1966. He retired in 1977.

Dr. Ralph A. Wooster joined the Lamar faculty in 1955. He became chair of the History Department in 1966, Dean of the College of Graduate Studies in 1976, Dean of Faculties in 1977, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs in 1980, and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs in 1985. Although he retired in 1991, he continued to teach until 2008. Dr. Wooster is the author/editor of nine books and over seventy articles in professional journals.

During the fall semester 2012, Dr. Mary Scheer's "American Presidency" class provided students an opportunity to research and portray presidents through first-person

interpretation.

Dr. Scheer's assignment coincided with Bill Barker's visit to Lamar University. Barker is a renowned Thomas Jefferson interpreter who educated and entertained the university community with his uncanny representation of the third president.

Dr. Scheer's assignment represents the spirit of history education at Lamar — professors employing assignments that engage history students and students embracing opportunities to enhance their understanding of the topic.



(From left) Emily Kosh (as Richard Nixon), Glenn Brown (as George Washington), Mary Kelone (as Grover Cleveland)

# News from **Mathematics**

The Lamar University Foundation has announced the establishment of a new endowed scholarship. The Mary Katherine Bell Regents Scholarship will provide funding for all full-time students majoring in mathematics. The scholarship was originally established by Karen and Phillip Drayer in memory of Mary Katherine Bell, who died in June 2012.

Mary Katherine Bell was born in 1909, in Pensacola, Florida. She was a graduate of Florida State College for Women (now Florida State University) and received her master's degree in mathematics from the University of Cincinnati, Ohio. She married Clarence R. Bell in August 1937, before moving to Beaumont.

After teaching in the Beaumont Independent School District, she became an associate professor of mathematics at Lamar University and retired in 1970. She returned for another 10 years to chair the mathematics department.



**Dr. Kumer Das**

The Mathematical Association of America will recognize Lamar University Associate Professor of Mathematics Kumer Das for teaching excellence.

The association tapped Das with its Alder Award for 2013 for distinguished teaching by a beginning college or university mathematics faculty member. Each year no

more than three mathematical science faculty members from the United States and Canada are honored with this national award.

Das joined Lamar's Department of Mathematics in 2005 after completing a Ph.D. at Auburn University, Alabama. He became an Associate Professor in 2011. He is now on faculty development leave at the Statistical and Applied Mathematical Sciences Institute (SAMSI) in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina.

The National Science Foundation has awarded Lamar University a grant of more than \$550,000 to support the ASCENT program which provides scholarships for students majoring in Computer Science and Mathematics who have completed their first two years of work with at least a 3.0 GPA and who are eligible for financial aid.

The Principal Investigator of ASCENT is Dr. Kumer Das in the Department of Mathematics, and the Co-Principal Investigators are Dr. Stefan Andrei (Computer Science), Dr. Dale Daniel (Mathematics), and Dr. Lawrence Osborne (Computer Science). The awarding of these scholarships is complemented by extensive academic support including a Summer Bridge and Enrichment program, undergraduate research, multi-level mentoring, and post-graduation placement.

The Lamar University Department of Mathematics hosted the annual Conference of Texas Statisticians (COTS) March 2-3, 2012 on the LU campus. Anthony Daspit, an LU math major from Nederland, won third prize at the conference poster presentation. The competition is open to all doctoral, master's and undergraduate students. Twenty-two students from Baylor, Rice, Stephen F. Austin, UT-Dallas, Sam Houston State and Texas Christian participated in the competition.

Daspit's poster, titled *The generalized Pareto distribution and threshold analysis of normalized hurricane damage in Gulf coast region* is the result of a year-long research project under the supervision of Dr. Das. Daspit also presented his work at the

Conference of Texas Statisticians (2011) and the Joint Mathematics Meetings in Boston in 2012. He was the only undergraduate student to win an award.

A new scholarship was established in March 2012 at the Lamar University Foundation for the College of Arts and Sciences. The Lin Scroggs Moore Memorial Scholarship in Mathematics provides funds to exceptional students to further their studies at Lamar.

Moore graduated from Lamar with both an undergraduate and master's degree in mathematics and was a member of the Alpha Chi Omega sorority. After graduation from Lamar in 1971, Moore taught mathematics at Nederland High School. Upon receiving her master's degree in 1975, Moore accepted a position with KBR, a global engineering, construction and Service company as a cost engineer where she met her husband George Moore. They were married 34 years and had four children.

After the arrival of her first child, Moore left the business world to stay home until the last of her four children entered grade school. She began teaching again at Jersey Village High School in Houston, where she taught mathematics for 19 years. She was well known for beginning each class with a "Thought for the Day." Moore felt that her students were an extension of her family and held them close to her heart.

Moore and her family attended the Jersey Village Baptist Church where she worked in the youth department teaching a girl's Sunday School Class for many years. She was a sponsor for several youth events and mission trips.

Moore passed away Sept. 9, 2011 after a heroic battle with breast cancer. Her husband, George Moore, created the Lin Scroggs Moore Memorial Scholarship in Mathematics to further the education of students. "We wanted to encourage students to continue their studies in mathematics," he said.

# News from **Nursing**



**Dr. Eileen Curl, Chair of the JoAnne Gay Dishman Department of Nursing**

**U.S.** News & World Report ranked Lamar University's online graduate nursing program as second in the nation out of 101 programs evaluated.

The 2013 ranking is based on four criteria: faculty credentials and training, student services and technology, student engagement, and admissions selectivity.

"We are very proud of our well prepared faculty," said Nancy Blume, director of graduate nursing studies at Lamar. "They are the backbone of our successful program."

"We are proud that the Lamar University's Joanne Gay Dishman Department of Nursing was named at No. 2," said Brenda Nichols, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. "The top score was 75.0 and Lamar scored 74.5. The next Texas school on the list, UT-Tyler, came in at 11."

"Of the four major areas considered in these rankings, we scored highest in Faculty Credentials and Training," Nichols said. "This area considered the number of doctoral-prepared faculty teaching courses, the percentage of tenure/tenured track faculty teaching courses, their preparation for teaching online and commitment to continue professional development."

Lamar's nursing program's second highest score was in student engagement, a reflection of its best practices, class size, student retention and graduation rates, Nichols said. The program also scored well in the area of student services and technology.

Other Texas school rankings were UT-Tyler, 11, Texas Christian, 25, Texas Tech, 30, Texas A&M-Corpus Christi, 31, UT-El Paso, 56, San Angelo, 64, and UTMB, 65.

"I believe that this ranking proves that we have made the best choices for ourselves and our students as we have moved to an online graduate program," Nichols said. "We offer students an excellent education, at an affordable cost and have tremendous faculty."

**T**he Good Samaritan Foundation has named Cindy Stinson a 2013 Silver Medalist in education. Stinson was selected over 130 nominees from all of Southeast Texas and Houston in the category of Nursing Education in the Faculty category. Stinson will receive this honor at the ninth annual Excellence in Nursing Awards Luncheon on September 5.

Stinson has worked for Lamar University for 19 years and is currently an associate professor in the department. Stinson received her associate's degree in nursing from Lamar University in 1975 and her Bachelor of Science degree in nursing from Lamar in 1980. She received her master's degree in nursing from the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston in 1994. Finally, Stinson received her doctorate in nursing from Texas Woman's University-Houston in 2006. Stinson is an advanced practice nurse and is certified as a clinical nurse specialist.

**L**amar nursing student Cara Shrontz has been selected by the Mayo Clinic for the Summer III Nursing Externship in Rochester, Minnesota. More than 1,000 students from around the country apply annually for the opportunity to study at the Mayo Clinic, but only 108 are selected. Of those, only three students are from Texas.

Shrontz was assigned to work in the emergency room, a privilege afforded to only two externs. She worked in the emergency department at St. Mary's Hospital for 10 weeks, from June through August, alongside a registered nurse clinical coach to experience nursing care in both inpatient units and operating rooms.

Shrontz received her bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Texas-Dallas. She then did volunteer work in Senegal, West Africa, an experience that led to her decision to become a nurse. In August 2010, she began working toward her degree and is now in her third semester of the bachelor degree in nursing program.

**D**r. Eileen Curl has been inducted into the National League for Nursing's Academy of Nursing Education with the credential of "fellow." She joins the academy's 117 fellows representing nursing schools and programs throughout the United States.

"NLN fellows include nationally recognized leaders in the nursing profession. To be a fellow with these outstanding nurse leaders is an amazing opportunity" said Curl. "Receiving this prestigious honor also brings recognition for Lamar University and the excellent nursing programs we offer. As a fellow, I have a network of leaders in different areas of nursing with which I can collaborate to address important issues or work on special projects related to nursing education."

The NLN established the Academy of Nursing Education in 2007 to foster excellence in nursing education by recognizing and capitalizing on the wisdom of nurse educators who have made sustained and significant contributions to nursing education.

**T**he Lamar University Foundation has announced the establishment of a new endowed scholarship for nursing majors. The Bill and Johnnie Grantham Scholarship in Nursing will provide funding for outstanding students seeking bachelors or master's degrees in nursing.

High school sweethearts who married in 1945, the Granthams are lifelong residents of Beaumont and active supporters of Lamar. The Grantham's elected to endow this scholarship in recognition of Johnnie Grantham's early interest in pursuing a career in nursing.



**Dr. Jennie Godkin**

**D**r. Jennie Godkin received the 2013 DAISY Award. She also retired after 18 years of teaching. Her specialty is surgical nursing. She is the author of several articles related to nurses presence with patients' in renal failure.

**D**r. Elizabeth Long joined the department in spring 2011 as an Instructor specializing in gerontology. She received a doctorate in nursing from University of Alabama in May 2013, and she was also honored for her research while she was there.

**M**ary Ford joined the department as an Instructor in fall 2012 specializing in critical care. Previously, she was at St. Mary's hospital in Port Arthur.

**J**an Alright joined the department as an Instructor in fall 2012 specializing in maternal care.

**K**elli White joined the department as an Instructor in fall 2012 specializing in cardiology.

**T**erry Rhodes joined the department as an Instructor in fall 2013 specializing in pediatrics.

**M**aresha Moore joined the department as an Instructor in fall 2013 specializing in surgical nursing. She had previously been a graduate assistant.

**J**enny Thedford joined the department in fall 2013 as an Instructor specializing in critical care. Previously, she was at St. Mary's hospital in Port Arthur.

**K**athy Roberts retired in May 2013 after 33 years at Lamar. Her specialty was maternal child.

**D**onna Bumpus retired in May 2012 after 25 years at Lamar. Her specialty was surgical nursing.

**A** memorial scholarship was established in 2012 with the Lamar University Foundation honoring Minh-Dang Nguyen, a former Lamar University nursing major. The Minh-Dang Nguyen Memorial Scholarship in Nursing will provide funding for outstanding students seeking bachelors or master's degrees in nursing at Lamar. Nguyen's family and friends established the scholarship in her memory with a gift to the LU Foundation.

Nguyen attended Lamar through her sophomore year as a nursing student until her untimely death in August 2010.

**T**he Lamar University chapter of Texas Nursing Student Association (TNSA) took second and third place in the Brain Bowl competition and earned other honors at the TNSA Annual Convention in 2012. Two Lamar teams competed against 19 teams from chapters across the state in a contest of knowledge where they must quickly and correctly answer questions derived from nursing education curricula.

**S**ix faculty members from the department earned statewide recognition for teaching innovation in 2012. The prestigious Teaching Innovation Award is presented annually by the Texas Organization for Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Education for inventive and outstanding teaching.

"Basically, we used our brand new state-of-the-art simulation lab to simulate the acute care work environment to allow nursing

students to apply concepts learned in their leadership and management course, as well as their client care skills," said Mary Goodwin, nursing instructor. "In a simulation lab, students are given the opportunity to work through complex situations and scenarios in a safe environment that they are not allowed to do in the hospital setting."

The proposal submitted for the competition focused on the newly-renovated Clinical Simulation Center where senior-level nursing majors were assigned to a simulated acute care leadership and management work environment.

The award marks the second consecutive year the Lamar nursing faculty has won the award in competition with 40 collegiate nursing programs across the state. Awardees included Mary Goodwin, Rachel Kilgore, Rose Harding, LeAnn Chisholm, Kelli Peterman and Laura Sweatt. The award comes with a \$1,500 cash prize which is matched by the Dishman Department of Nursing.

**I**n 2012 the Lamar University Foundation announced the establishment of a new endowed scholarship for nursing majors. The Lila and Hunter W. Henry, Jr. Scholarship, honoring the nurses in the Cardiovascular Recovery Unit at St. David's South Austin Medical Center, will provide funds for students to further their studies in nursing. Elaine and Hunter "Ticket" Henry, who reside in Llano, established this scholarship to honor the nursing staff who provided excellent care to Ticket's father, Hunter Henry, Jr. during his final illness.



**Nursing Student Lounge**

**T**he renovated Nursing Student Lounge was opened in fall 2012. It was made possible by funds donated by George and Judy Dishman of Beaumont. The room features movable tables, two microwaves, refrigerator and connections for computers.

# Lamar University

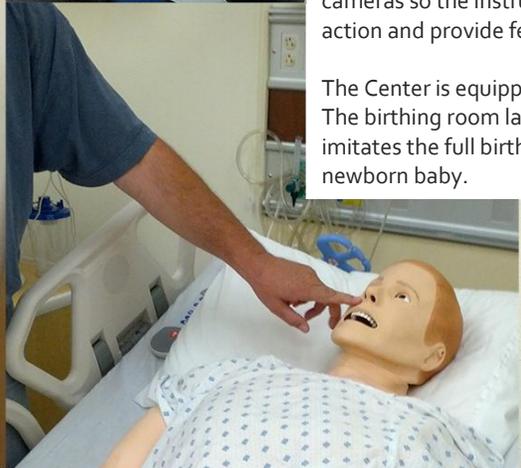
## Nursing Simulation Center



Opened in 2012, the Simulation Center in the McFaddin Ward building is equipped with high-tech equipment and computer-controlled mannequins that provide students the most realistic simulation possible.

The mannequins can interact in real time with the students as they make their assessments and perform their assigned duties. Each mock hospital room is equipped with overhead microphones and cameras so the instructor can monitor each student action and provide feedback.

The Center is equipped with 10 hospital room labs. The birthing room lab features a mannequin that imitates the full birthing process; complete with a newborn baby.



Funded in part by grants from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Higher Education Assistance Funds, Federal Health Resources and Services Administration grant, and Community and University Partnerships grant, as well as contributions from the JoAnne Gay Dishman Endowment and Lamar University.

# News from **Physics**



**Dr. Cristian Bahrim**

**F**or the first time since being separated from the Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry in 2010, the Department of Physics has a department chair. Dr. Cristian Bahrim, Associate Professor of Physics, assumed that role in fall 2013. Previously, Physics was administered by Dr. George Irwin who served as interim Program Director of Physics.

Dr. Bahrim has been at Lamar since 2001. His publication records cover four different areas of research: (1) quantum optics (with the goal of using polarized light for binary recording), (2) atomic depolarization processes in gaseous mixtures of noble gases (for explaining experiments of plasma polarization spectroscopy conducted at Kyoto University by Professor Masahiro Hasuo), (3) electron diffraction on crystals, and (4) interaction between polarized light and dielectric surfaces.

Dr. Bahrim identified the biggest challenge in the department is to increase student enrollment and graduation rate in Physics.

Dr. Bahrim's wife, Dr. Bogdana Bahrim, is also a faculty member of department. Since her arrival at Lamar in 2001, Bogdana was investigator on two NSF grants in collaboration with Dr. Wayne Rabalais from the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry and the University of Houston for research done in surface physics.

**A**s result of a new university scholarship offered to physics majors and the existence

of the National Science Foundation grant called STAIRSTEP, the Physics Program managed to increase the number of majors by more than double in the last couple of years, from 16 in Y2011 to 40 in Y2013.

**T**hree new members joined the program in the last year: Ms. Hazel Reidy is the new Administrative Associate; Dr. Saimir Barjami, from CalPoly State University – San Luis Obispo joined the department in fall 2012 as Instructor, and Dr. Cenghis Sen, who received a Ph.D. degree from Florida State University, joined the department in fall 2013 as adjunct faculty.

**B**lake Williams, Electrical Engineering/Physics major and Tyler Doiron, Mechanical Engineering/Physics major, are recipients of the Mirabeau Scholarship for fall 2013.

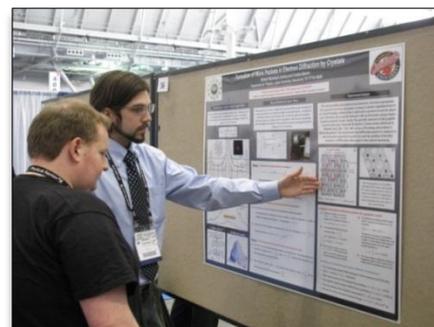
**T**he Society of Physics Students (SPS) has received one of the four Undergraduate Research Awards for the year 2013 and a check of \$2,000, from the Sigma Pi Sigma (Honors Physics Society) of the American Institute of Physics, for the project "*Solar and stellar measurements using accurate spectroscopic techniques*", the proposal as submitted by the physics majors Sara-Jeanne Vogler, Bryan Neal, Jose Castro (see photo), and their SPS Advisor Dr. C. Bahrim.



**Jose Castro, Bryan Neal, and Sara-jeanne Vogler**

**I**n Spring 2013 Sara-jeanne Vogler was selected as the sole representative of the undergraduate research done at Lamar University and invited at the "Texas Undergraduate Research Day at the Capitol" event organized by the Texas Association of

Community Colleges (TACC), the Council of Public University Presidents and Chancellors (CPUPC), and Independent Colleges and Universities of Texas, Inc. (ICUT). Sara presented the paper "*Analysis of Atomic Emission Spectra with Applications in the Study of our Universe*" at the Ground Floor Rotunda of the Capitol in Austin, on April 26, 2013.



**Nick Lanning explains his poster at the 2012 APS March Meeting in Boston, MA**

**N**ick Lanning received one of the four awards for outstanding poster presentation at the 2012 APS March Meeting, in Boston, MA, the largest annual physics conference in the world. His achievement was recognized in the article "*The superposition of brainwaves*" published in the SPS Observer vol. XLVI, issue ½. Nick was accepted in the graduate program at LSU starting in fall 2013.

**B**ryan Neal, Jacob James, and Jose Castro presented a paper titled "*The Analysis of Crystals with Electronic Waves*" at the 2012 Quadrennial Physics Congress, organized in Orlando, Florida in November 2012.

**A**aron Weatherford, a senior Physics and mathematics major from Orange, is a member of Lamar's 14<sup>th</sup> group to fly an experiment in zero-G conditions, and was in the second of two groups of Lamar students to fly in June 2012 from NASA Johnson Space Center's Ellington Field south of Houston. The plane, a modified Boeing 727 operated for NASA by Zero-G Corp., mimics micro-gravity for 25 to 30 seconds at a time by executing a series of parabolas – a steep climb followed by a rapid decent, in designated airspace over the Gulf of Mexico.

# News from **Political Science**



**Will Robbins with Texas Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison**

**W**ill Robbins, B.A., Political Science, 2013, was named the recipient of the 2013 C. Robert Kemble Award. While an undergraduate at Lamar, Will completed a nine-month internship with former U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, R-Texas, traveled to Europe through Lamar's study-abroad program, and served as president pro tem of the Student Senate of Lamar University.



**Dr. James P. Nelson**

**D**r. James P. Nelson joined the department in fall 2013 as Assistant Professor. His Ph.D. is from Florida State University.



**Dr. Bianca Easterly**

**D**r. Bianca Easterly joined the department in fall 2013 as Assistant Professor. Her Ph.D. is from University of Houston.

**S**ix Lamar students served as Texas Legislative Internship Program (TLIP) interns during the recent 2013 Texas Legislative session. Political Science major Garret Brawley was intern for Rep. Sergio Munoz, Jr. Political Science major Kevin "Chase" Engman was intern for Rep. James White. Political Science major Joanna Joseph was intern for Rep. Senfronia Thompson. Political Science major Rashad Roberson was intern for Rep. Hubert Vo. Psychology major Jacqueline Hernandez was intern for Rep. Chris Turner. Psychology major Cecilee Miller was intern for the Office of the Speaker Joe Strauss.

TLIP is sponsored by State Senator Rodney Ellis and administered by the Mickey Leland Center on World Hunger and Peace, with Lamar participation made possible by a generous grant from the Beaumont Foundation.

**D**r. Maria Elena Sandovici, Associate Professor and Texas Legislative Internship Coordinator, was selected by the Southwestern Political Science Association and Pi Sigma Alpha for Best Paper Award at the 2012 SWPSA annual meeting in San Diego, California. The paper was titled "Civic Duty, Correct Voting, and the Quality of Democracy." The paper was co-authored by Dr. Bryan Dettrey.



**Dr. Maria Elena Sandovici**

**S**ara Gubala, Instructor of political science, was honored in fall 2012 with Lamar University's Julie and Ben Rogers Community Service Award.

"Julie and Ben Rogers have done a lot for the community, and to be put in a category with them through this award is really amazing," said Gubala, a resident of Nederland. "The volunteer work that I have done has always been a part of my life, so it was a real honor to be recognized for that."

Gubala and Kennedy are a registered pet therapy team, certified by Intermountain Therapy Animals and Pet Partners, formerly Delta Society. They are also involved with a local volunteer chapter called Paws4Love/hphp. The duo volunteers at Baptist Hospital a few days a week on the pediatrics and rehabilitation floors. Gubala said a therapy animal can often motivate patients to perform better during rehabilitation sessions.



**Sarah Gubala with Kennedy**

# Update on Political Science Graduates



## Pre-Law Mixer with Jefferson County Bar Association, 2011

**Far left:** Trey Young, B. S., 2012, is in his second year at Texas Tech University School of Law.

**Fourth from left:** Ashley Brack, B. S., 2012, is in her second year at Faulkner School of Law.

**Sixth from left:** Madison Davis, B. S., 2012, is in her second year at The University of Alabama School of Law.

**Seventh from left:** Jasmine Banks, B. S., 2012, is beginning her first year at Texas Tech School of Law, Fall 2013.

**Eighth from left:** Matthew Minick, B. S., 2012, is in his third year at Texas Tech School of Law.

**Tenth from left:** Ernesto Alvarez, B. A., 2012, is in his second year at Pace University School of Law, New York.

**Fifth from right:** Andres Cirnigliaro, B. A., 2012, will be pursuing graduate studies in Argentina.

**Fourth from right:** Ashley Smith, Mirabeau Scholar, is completing her LU studies and will graduate in December 2013.

**Third from right:** Garrett Brawley, B.S., 2013, will begin studies at The University of Texas School of Law, Fall 2013.

**Far right:** Javier Cabanillas, B.A., 2013, was the 2013 recipient of the Dawson Award for Outstanding Political Science Student and Lamar Plummer Award Winner, graduating with a perfect 4.0 grade point average.



Andres Cirnigliaro, B.A., 2012 (**left**), served as an intern with the World Affairs Council, Houston. Andres currently resides in Argentina where he will be pursuing his graduate degree

John "Trey" Young, B. S., 2012 (**center**), is in his second year at Texas Tech School of Law. Trey recently finished in the top ten among almost 100 law students in national Moot Court competition.

Heather Fasulo, B.S. Political Science and Sociology, 2013 (**far right**), will begin her Ph.D. studies in Sociology at The New School for Social Research in New York City in Fall 2013.

# News from **Psychology**



**Dr. Beth Aronson**

**D**r. Beth Aronson joined the department as Associate Professor in summer 2013. She is currently directing the Lamar Psychology Clinic.



**Dr. Ben Smith**

**D**r. Ben Smith joined the department as a Visiting Assistant Professor in spring 2013. He is teaching general psychology, research methods and statistics.

**M**s. Linda Turner joined the department as Administrative Associate Senior in 2013. She previously worked in the Mathematics department.

**T**he Psychology Computer Laboratory, on the first floor of the Social and Behavioral Sciences Building, has been upgraded. The upgrade includes new operating systems and

statistics software. The lab also now features full Internet connectivity.

**I**n 2011 the two distinct graduate programs in Psychology were merged into a single Master's in Applied Psychology degree. Students in the new program can elect one of three tracks: community counseling, industrial organization or the combined track. The combined track results in slightly more hours needed for degree completion.



**Dr. James Esser**

**L**amar honored James Esser, Professor of Psychology, as the Distinguished Faculty Lecturer for 2012.

Esser was the 26th recipient of the honor – one of the highest accorded a Lamar faculty member. A committee of faculty, staff, students and community representatives makes the selection.

A resident of Beaumont, Esser has been a member of the Lamar faculty since 1976, now serving as head of the industrial/organizational psychology master's program. Esser earned the Bachelor of Science in Psychology (with honors) from the University of Iowa in 1971 and a Ph.D. in Social Psychology from Indiana University in 1975.

His honors at Lamar include selection as University Professor in 2000 and Teaching Bonus Awards in 1994, 1996 and 1998. He is a previous Distinguished Faculty Lecturer, having been selected in 1995 for his

presentation, "Groupthink from Pearl Harbor to the Challenger: Failure of Decision-making Groups."



**Dr. Ann Die Hasselmo**

**A**nn Die Hasselmo, Lamar University distinguished alumna and a national leader and innovator in higher education, created and funded the Lamar University Faculty Excellence Endowment in 2012.

A native of Baytown and Silsbee High School graduate, Hasselmo graduated summa cum laude from Lamar State College of Technology in 1966 with a degree in Psychology. She continued her education by earning a master's degree from the University of Houston in 1969 and a Ph.D. from Texas A&M University in 1977. Her graduate degrees are in Counseling Psychology, and she is a licensed psychologist.

Hasselmo was a Lamar faculty member during the 1970s and '80s. She climbed the ranks, earned tenure, received a regents' merit award, was Faculty Senate president, served as assistant to the executive vice president for academic and student affairs, and she helped design a state program known as TASP – the Texas Academic Skills Program – today known as the Texas Success Initiative.

Hasselmo is President of the American Academic Leadership Institute (AALI) in Washington D.C. AALI is focused on leadership identification and development in higher education. From 1992-2001 she served as President of Hendrix College. She also served as Associate Provost of Tulane University from 1988-1992.

# News from **Sociology,** **Social Work and** **Criminal Justice**



**Dr. Sanaz Alasti**

**D**r. Sanaz Alasti joined the department as Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice in 2011. The Iranian-born scholar earned a law degree in the U.S. and did post-doc work at Harvard. Her research specialty is the death penalty. She spent summer 2013 as Scholar-in-Residence with the Library of Congress.

In 2013, Dr. Alasti was named a Fellow of Scholars for Peace in the Middle East. The organization is a not-for-profit, grass-roots community of scholars who have united to promote honest, fact-based, and civil discourse, especially in regard to Middle East issues. The pro-Israeli international community network of academic scholars seeks peace in the Middle East that is consistent both with Israel's right to exist as a sovereign Jewish state within safe and secure borders, and with the rights and legitimate aspirations of her neighbors.

Alasti has attended numerous conferences in the U.S., Middle East and Europe to discuss the arbitrariness of capital punishment. She has recently traveled to Italy as a lecturer to provide instruction to military officers, legal advisors, political and policy advisors on Middle Eastern criminal justice systems at a

seminar hosted by NATO School. Her interviews have been featured in the magazines such as the New Yorker and the Examiner

**D**r. Henda Hsu joined the department in fall 2013 as Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice. He will teach courses in homeland security. His Ph.D. is from University of New York at Albany.

**G**inger Gummelt joined the department in fall 2013 as Instructor of Social Work. She is currently finishing a Ph.D. at the University of Houston.

**D**r. Jesse Garcia joined the department in fall 2013 as Visiting Assistant Professor of Sociology. He was previously at University of Texas Pan Am. He will teach courses in race and ethnicity.

**K**aren Roebuck joined the department in fall 2013 as Instructor. She was a federal probations officer and supervisor for 18 years in the Eastern District of Texas. She will teach courses in corrections and probation.

**D**r. Raymond Shearer joined the department in 2011 as Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice. He teaches courses in law.

**I**n recognition of the 20-year anniversary of the tragedy at the Branch Davidian compound near Waco, Dr. Stuart Wright, interim chair of the department, was one of several scholars invited to speak at the Institute for Studies of Religion at Baylor University.

The event, "Reflecting on an American Tragedy: The Branch Davidians 20 Years

Later," held April 19 at the Truitt Seminary Powell Chapel, was an opportunity for students and scholars, law enforcement, community members and Branch Davidian survivors to discuss the issue and recognize the lives lost in the 1993 tragedy at the Davidian compound, Mount Carmel.

Wright has done extensive research on the Branch Davidians, having published a book, "Armageddon in Waco: Critical Perspectives on the Branch Davidian Conflict" (1995), and at least a dozen articles and essays for various publications.



**Quentin Jiles**

**Q**uentin Jiles, Houston senior and social work major, was elected Student Government Association president for 2012-2013. Jiles is a member of the Alpha Kappa Psi Business fraternity and is a student director of student development in the Office of Student Engagement.



College of Arts and Sciences  
**LAMAR UNIVERSITY**  
 MEMBER THE TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM™

P.O. Box 10058  
 Beaumont, TX 77710

*Address Service Requested*

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
 U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
 PERMIT NO. 54  
 BEAUMONT, TX 77710

The generosity of alumni and friends of Lamar University has been an important part of our success. Private funds are critical to our mission. They enable us to assist students in fulfilling their dreams of a quality education as well as provide funds to take advantage of opportunities of excellence that are simply not able to be provided by traditional funding. Every dollar contributed is valued and needed. We thank you for considering a gift to the College of Arts and Sciences or to the department of your choice.

## Stay in Touch!

Please drop us a line or e-mail [alumni@lamar.edu](mailto:alumni@lamar.edu)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Home address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Year of graduation \_\_\_\_\_

Department/Program Major \_\_\_\_\_

Degree \_\_\_\_\_

Additional education (school, degree) \_\_\_\_\_

Employer \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

### MY NEWS

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

*Send your information to:*  
 Office of Alumni Affairs  
 Box 10011  
 Beaumont, Texas 77710

## Your Gift Makes a Difference

I want to make a gift to the [College of Arts and Sciences](#)

I would like to send a check now to support the COAS with a gift of:

\$25  \$50  \$100  \$ 250  \$500  \$1000

≤ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Home address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

If paying by check, make payable to Lamar University Foundation.

Check  Visa  MasterCard  Discover  AMEX

Expires \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ 3-digit security code \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

*Make a gift online at <http://advancement.lamar.edu>*

*Send your gift to:*

Lamar University Foundation  
 P.O. Box 11500  
 Beaumont, TX 77710

*For more information:*

(409) 880-8422  
[development@lamar.edu](mailto:development@lamar.edu)

*Thank you from the College of Arts and Sciences!*