

Great Happenings in Academics

November 2016



A Word from our Provost



Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the November edition of Great Happenings in Academics. This month you can read about the UCA BearBones Trombone Choir led by Dr. Justin Cook. The group has held several concerts in Arkansas in November and will be traveling to Texas in February to perform at several locations as part of their recruiting efforts.

This month we also feature Becky Rasnick, UCA Registrar, who serves as an encouraging voice for our students. You can read about her large bear collection and her long history at UCA.

I am very pleased to share information about the Dr. Edmond E. Griffin Planetarium. I worked closely with Dr. Griffin when he served as chair of the UCA Biology department. We are fortunate to have the continued support from Dr. Sue Griffin, his wife and a world-class neuroscientist at UAMS. Her dedication to UCA is very much appreciated and will significantly contribute to learning opportunities for our students and the community while providing a lasting legacy to her late husband.

We know that this newsletter contains only a sampling of the impressive accomplishments of our academic community, and we want to continue to spread the word about our activities. Please keep sending noteworthy items to Suzanne Massey at 450-3126 or SMassey@uca.edu.

Sincerely,

Steven W. Runge
Executive Vice President and Provost



BearBones On the Road

The UCA BearBones Trombone Choir will be giving several performances throughout the course of the year. First, in partnership with the Oxford American Magazine, the group will present a concert at South on Main in downtown Little Rock on November 1, 2016, at 7:00pm. They will also present a featured concert at the Arkansas Music Educators Association Conference held in the Hot Springs on November 3, 2016, at 1:30 pm. As invited guests of the conference, they will play for hundreds of music educators convening at the Convention Center. Lastly, in February, the BearBones will travel to Texas to present concerts at Hebron High School, Tarleton State University, and Texas State University. The trip will serve to recruit musicians from the North Texas area as well as feature the BearBones as part of the Texas State Trombone Symposium in San Marcos, Texas.

The BearBones Trombone Choir is made up of majors from all across campus and features music of all genres and styles. Dr. Justin Cook, visiting assistant professor of trombone, said the BearBones was originally formed years ago by retired professor Denis Winter. Under Cook's leadership the group has expanded from 8 members to 26 and has grown in national and international reputation.



Pictured in front of Old Main Hall, the UCA BearBones Trombone Choir are: Tanner Betts, Noah Bandy, Joseph Berry, Hannah Brown, Caleb Capps, Steven Flores, Zac Fulmer, Naftaly Gonzalez, Kody Hartman, Katie Hayes, Cory Huffman, Jeremy Landry, Gavin Mattox, Ashley McNich, Justin McMiller, Steffin Medina, Graham Mynatt, Renae Ringwald, Brendan Roth, Daniel Severs, Paden Sharp, Austin Storm, Caleb Taylor, Tyler Walters, Tye Weaver and Ronny Wilhite.

Planetarium is Cosmic

The Dr. Edmond E. Griffin Planetarium is an entire universe inside the new Conway Corporation Center for the Sciences (CCCS). The community of central Arkansas will begin to experience this new digital universe in January of 2017. The new digital planetarium consists of 95 seats under a forty-foot diameter dome onto which an Evans & Sutherland dual projector Digistar 5 system creates a virtual universe.

From 1987 to 2015, the old UCA planetarium, located in Lewis Science Center, used an electromechanical planetarium projector and a thirty-foot dome to simulate the sky as seen from the surface of the Earth. The capabilities of the new digital projection system exceed those of the old analog system. The universe can now be seen from other locations in the universe, such as in orbit around Saturn, near a binary star system in our galaxy, or from a galaxy several million light years from the Earth.

The building of a new planetarium was supported by Dr. Sue Griffin, a world-class neuroscientist at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, and named in memory of her husband Dr. Ed Griffin, a long-time faculty member, chair of the UCA Biology department, and astronomy enthusiast.

Planetarium director, Dr. Scott Austin, of the Department of Physics and Astronomy, starting in the spring semester, will be taking audiences on exciting and educational trips to the planets, dwarf planets, asteroids, and comets of our solar system, distant stars and nebulae in our Milky Way galaxy, and galaxies and quasars in the universe. UCA students taking astronomy and physical science classes will have the opportunity to experience full dome demonstrations of concepts and phenomena covered in their classes. Awe inspiring shows will be scheduled for the general public and school groups. Stay tuned to <http://uca.edu/physics/planetarium/> for the spring 2017 schedule of public shows. School groups can call the Department of Physics and Astronomy at 501-450-5900 to arrange field trips to the Griffin Planetarium.

Achievements & Recognition

Dr. Barrett W. M. Petty is the recipient of the Distinguished Dissertation in Teacher Education Award and will be recognized in February at the 2017 Association of Teacher Education Conference in Orlando, Florida. Petty is a recent graduate from the PhD in Leadership Studies.

UCA student Taylor Wentz has been selected as the recipient for the 2016 Arksha Graduate Student Scholarship. Only one scholarship is given each year by the Arkansas Speech Language and Hearing Association to an outstanding and promising graduate student in CSD.

Dr. Charlotte Yates, Associate Professor, was awarded the 2016 ArPTA Outstanding Physical Therapist Award at the Arkansas Physical Therapy Association (ArPTA) annual awards event in Little Rock. Throughout her 20-year professional career, Dr. Yates has demonstrated an exceptional drive for advancing the profession through clinical practice, teaching, research/scholarship, and service. Also recognized at the event was Dr. Leah Lowe, Assistant Professor, who received the 2016 ArPTA Distinguished Service Award for her significant contribution to physical therapy in Arkansas through her extensive work on conference programming for the annual ArPTA OPTimize Conference, her clinical practice at Pediatrics Plus, and her teaching, research, and service activities as a faculty member at UCA.

Dr. Debbie Dailey and Dr. Alicia Cotabish, Assistant Professors in Teaching and Learning, edited a book on behalf of the National Association for Gifted Children, *Engineering Instruction for High-Ability Learners in K-8 Classrooms*. The book is an application-based practitioners' guide to applied engineering that is grounded in practices found in the new Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and the Standards for Engineering Education.



Rasnick Bears All

Tucked away on the second floor of Harrin Hall, in the far northwest corner, is a home for more than 800 bears ... yes, that's 800 bears, of all shapes and sizes that belong to UCA Registrar Becky Rasnick. The ever growing collection of bear knick-knacks, pictures, stuffed animals, and assorted figurines dates back to the days when Rasnick herself was a student majoring in Home Economics and Science. Not only did Rasnick graduate with a BSE, she married a UCA alum and raised two children, who also attended UCA. Although one can clearly see Rasnick's love for UCA from her extraordinary bear collection, it's even more apparent from her 20 years as an employee dedicated to serving the students. She started her career at UCA in 1996 as a part-time advisor to Biology and Pre-med students and then became a full time advisor to students with undecided majors. In 2005 she advanced to the position of Director of Athletic Advising and in 2013 was appointed as the UCA Registrar.

Doing the best you can and owning up to mistakes are words she lives by, and yet Rasnick believes the best advice she can give to students is simply to "go to class and get to know your instructors." Even as an upper administrator, Rasnick never misses an opportunity to encourage students to earn a degree. She says, "it's a proud moment to see them walk across the stage at commencement." Students lovingly refer to Rasnick as their "UCA mom" and often tell her that they would not have graduated without her help, and for Rasnick there is no greater compliment they can give her.



Announcements

All April 2016 BSN graduates from the UCA School of Nursing have passed the NCLEX-RN exam and are employed as Registered Nurses. The average first time NCLEX-RN passing rate for UCA SON is 94%. National first time average is 82.5%, and the Arkansas first time average is 83.5%.

Dr. Adam Bruenger, Associate Professor, and senior student Daniel Heistand in the Department of Exercise and Sport Science were recently recognized at the Central States American College of Sports Medicine (CSACSM) conference in Fayetteville. Bruenger presented a 45-minute symposium titled, "*Bridging the Gap: Easier Said than Done*" and was elected president of the CSACSM for a three year term. Heistand won the CSACSM Undergraduate Student Research Award for his project, "Effects of Intermittent Statis Stretching on Bench Press Muscular Endurance."

Dr. Veronica Rowe, Assistant Professor of Occupational Therapy, conducted an invited webinar on WeChat for over 2,250 health care professionals in China on Constraint Induced Movement Therapy (CIMT) in Stroke Rehabilitation.

Dr. Wendy Lucas, Chair and Associate Professor of History, provided expert testimony at the Arkansas Repertory Theatre's *Behind the Theme: The Crucible* program and was part of a panel at the Clinton School of Public Service that discussed the play by Arthur Miller. Dr. Lucas gave a lecture on the background, context, and chain of events of the Salem Witchcraft outbreaks.

Dr. Jeremy Horpedahl, Assistant Professor of Economics, and Mr. Jacob Bundrick, ACRE Policy Analyst, recently testified before the Arkansas Legislature to inform members about current academic research on tax policy and how it may relate to tax reform in Arkansas.

Photography by Steve Runge



Three flies (2015)