

# Great Happenings in Academics

January 2017



## *A Word from our Provost*



*Dear Colleagues,*

*Please join me in appreciating and celebrating the many accomplishments and activities of our faculty and students noted in this issue of “Great Happenings in Academics.”*

*You can also read about our new Director of Assessment, Dr. Brandon Combs, who joins us from the University of Kentucky in Lexington. Brandon hit the ground running on November 1<sup>st</sup> to help us build and sustain our culture of continuous improvement.*

*I hope you enjoy the photograph taken in the Bear Tooth Mountains of Montana in 2011. It is a beautiful place.*

*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](mailto:smassey@uca.edu).*

*Sincerely,*

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve".

Steven W. Runge  
*Executive Vice President and Provost*





## Rowell Offers Refugees Faith, Hope, and Love



*Dr. Kevin Rowell "gives back" by serving those in crisis situations.*

Associate Professor of Psychology Kevin Rowell returned on November 9, 2016, from his trip to a Muslim refugee camp where he provided psychological evaluations to victims of trauma caused by the war in the Middle East.

The three and a half acre camp, located in Oinofyta, Greece, is home to more than 800 refugees. Rowell said the majority of refugees are from Afghanistan and live in tents and warehouse cubicles, roughly a space of about 12'x14' for a family of five or more. Although the gated camps provide water and electricity and some level of privacy, the residents still have to share communal kitchens, showers, and port-a-potties. "Over there trauma is the norm, not the exception," Rowell said. "We don't understand the displacement and the feelings of a person who gives up everything." He estimates that about 45% of the refugees suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as a result of witnessing horrific events of killing and torture. Many of them have also been physically injured during their migration from Afghanistan.

A member of the Headwaters Relief Organization in Minnesota, who said they needed a male psychologist to work directly with the male refugees, chose Rowell. Rowell said it is important to work specifically with the males because it allows access to the rest of the family. Rowell worked in the camp for five days with

a group of 12 people including doctors and nurses. The group also worked with children and encouraged them to engage and have fun. Rowell said this influenced the mothers to become more involved and open to sharing their stories.

Rowell said a few of the refugee's stories stood out to him. For example, one man and his wife were forced to leave their country after being accused by the Taliban of being American sympathizers. They lost everything – a home, careers, and cars. Their son, a civil engineer and his pregnant wife, left at the same time and eventually had their child born in the camp. Before the family came to the camp, one of the wives was a biology teacher at a high school. Rowell said she was confronted by the Taliban and forced to leave because of her gender. When she refused, the Taliban threatened to kill her. Rowell said the family continues to wait and hope that they are not sent back home to find nothing – or worse to be killed by the Taliban.

"These stories of trauma and lack of hope are why we go," Rowell said. "We want to provide some measure of healing." Rowell said that although members of the medical crisis team sometime suffer from their own PTSD, all in all, they find it to be a very rewarding experience.

Rowell is a nationally known expert in disaster mental health relief work, having provided mental health services in New York after the attacks on 9/11 and many other disasters in the U.S. He is currently working with the Red Cross to provide disaster interventions and to train disaster-interventionists.



*A family poses for the camera at the Oinofyta Refugee camp in Greece.*

## Who's New & Who Knew

Dr. Brandon Combs is the new Director of Assessment at the University of Central Arkansas as of November 1, 2016.



Dr. Combs leads UCA's efforts to build a continuous improvement assessment culture across all academic and non-academic units. His charge is to implement the vision to expand assessment beyond Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) Assessment to encompass the Co-Curricular and Support Units at UCA.

Dr. Combs was the Assistant Director of Assessment at the University of Kentucky in Lexington, Kentucky where he was responsible for overseeing the assessment activities of nearly 400 programs, including academic programs, co-curricular units, and libraries. In this position, he worked closely with those programs that carried specialized or regional accreditation assessment needs. Dr. Combs also worked on the Multi-State Collaborative efforts and was a conference volunteer for the Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education (AALHE).

Dr. Combs earned his Doctor of Educational Technology Leadership with emphasis in Instructional Design from Morehead State University in Morehead, Kentucky. He also holds a Master of Art in Education Technology, and Master of Science in Safety, Security, and Emergency Management. Dr. Combs earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Communication from the

## Achievements & Recognition

Dr. Charles Harvey, Chair and Professor of Philosophy and Religion, received publication of his essay, "Sex Robots and Solipism: Towards a Culture of Empty Contact" in the journal *Philosophy in the Contemporary World*. The essay will also be anthologized in the forthcoming book, *The Cultural Power of Personal Objects* (SUNY Press).

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Dr. David Welky, Professor of History, received notice of publication of his book, *A Wretched and Precarious Situation: In Search of the Last Arctic Frontier* (W. W. Norton & Company 2016).

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Cory Cobb, a third year Counseling Psychology doctoral student, and Dr. Dong Xie, Associate Professor of Psychology, had a paper titled, "Perceptions of Legal Status: Associations with Psychosocial Experiences among Undocumented Latino/a Immigrants," accepted for publication in the *Journal of Counseling Psychology*.

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Dr. Letha Mosley, Associate Professor of Occupational Therapy, was named as 1 of 100 influential people in occupational therapy by the American Occupational Therapy Association in honor of the OT Centennial celebration.

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Savannah Cavender, Senior Psychology major, and Dr. Shawn Charlton, Associate Professor of Psychology, published an article, "Virtual Events: Networking without Traveling," in the Winter 2017 edition of *Eye on Psi Chi*, the newsletter of Psi Chi, the International Honor Society in Psychology.

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University College faculty members Leslie Gomes and Keith Pachhofer will be presenting "Co-Requisite Mathematics: Is Success Possible?" at the National Association of Developmental Educators' 2017 Conference in Oklahoma.



## Ethics Team Scores Success

The newly formed UCA Ethics Bowl team, coached by Dr. Benjamin Rider, Associate Professor of Philosophy and Religion, recently competed at the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Central States Regional Ethics Bowl (CSREB) at Marian University in Indianapolis on November 11-12, 2016. “We did very well considering that it was our first year at the competition,” Rider explained. “We finished eighth out of 32 teams, with a score of 348. The fourth place team had 352 points, so we were not far behind the top teams that qualified for the Nationals. The top five teams qualify.” Prior to the competition, the UCA team was practicing three nights a week and participating in local preparatory debates with the UALR ethics bowl team as well. (The UALR team scored 317 points at the CSREB.)

The Bowls give students a chance to enter an academic competition that combines excitement and fun with an educationally valuable experience in the areas of practical and professional ethics. At the competitions, teams argue and defend their moral assessment of some of the most troubling and complex ethical issues facing society today. Questions address a wide array of topics in business and professional ethics, in personal relationships, and in social and political affairs.

Winning teams from each of the 11 regional bowls will compete in the National Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl in February.



UCA Ethics Bowl Team from left to right: Danielle Erlandson, Leslie Balentine, Zach Orten, Amy Johnson, Dr. Benjamin Rider and Carolyn Casey.

## Achievements & Recognition

Dr. Pamela F. Ashcraft, Associate Professor in the School of Nursing, has been elected to serve on the Board of Directors for the Southern Nursing Research Society (SNRS). She will serve a two-year term as Treasurer. Dr. Ashcraft’s poster abstract, “Curriculum Interventions to Promote Care-of-Self in Undergraduate Nursing Students: Phase II,” was also accepted for presentation at the SNRS conference.

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Charles Hervey, Clinical Instructor in Exercise and Sport Science, was recently elected the President of ARKAHPERD at the Arkansas Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (ARKAHPERD) Conference in Little Rock.

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Dr. Kristin Epps, Assistant Professor of History, received notice of publication of her book, *Slavery on the Periphery: The Kansas-Missouri Border in the Antebellum and Civil War Eras* (University of Georgia Press, 2016).

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*An Insurrectionist Manifesto: Four New Gospels for a Radical Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), by Dr. Clayton Crockett, Professor of Philosophy and Religion, has been named an Outstanding Academic Title of 2016 by CHOICE, the Journal of the American Library Association.

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The Occupational Therapy Doctoral Program has been granted **Candidacy Status** by the American Occupational Therapy Association (ACOTE). As a result of this action, the department may admit students into the doctoral program beginning August 2017 and will proceed to the next step in the accreditation process.

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Dr. Jimmy Ishee, Dean of the College of Health and Behavioral Sciences, was named 2017 Distinguished Administrator by the National Association for Kinesiology in Higher Education.



*Photography by Steve Runge*



*Reflections (2011)*