Liberal Arts Welcomes New Associate Dean

Jan Leone (History) has been named interim associate dean of the College of Liberal Arts for academic year 2010–11. Leone has served in the History Department for 21 years and has an excellent record of teaching, research, and service. The responsibilities of the associate dean are handling student requests and complaints, curriculum and program developments, and special projects. We welcome Professor Leone to the dean’s staff.

Byrnes Named Interim Dean

Provost Brad Bartel announced on July 26 that Professor Mark Byrnes (Political Science) has been named interim dean of the College of Liberal Arts and approved by the Tennessee Board of Regents. This will be a one-year appointment for Professor Byrnes while a committee is formed for a national search to fill the position permanently. Professor Byrnes has served the college as associate dean since 2006 and acting dean since spring 2010.

Dean’s Notes

Welcome to the fall 2010 issue of Stay Current. As did the dean before me, I will use this avenue to disseminate information to you and also brag about our many accomplishments in Liberal Arts. The start of a new academic year always brings a sense of excitement to campus. The opportunity for a fresh start and the endless possibilities of a new school year are so appealing that they make the increased traffic around campus almost tolerable.

This year has brought major changes to the College of Liberal Arts. John McDaniel, who served as our dean for a quarter century, passed away in May after a valiant fight with cancer. Although we remain saddened by his loss, we take pleasure in remembering the innumerable ways he shaped the college and influenced the lives of its faculty, staff, and students. And, of course, we remember him personally for his quick wit, kindness, and wisdom.

I am happy to report that the College of Liberal Arts survived the recent University reorganization. One version of the “Repositioning the University for the Future” plan would have dismantled the college, splitting its departments among other existing colleges and a new college of arts and sciences. Fortunately, President Sidney McPhee did not accept that sweeping recommendation, instead opting for a more limited reorganization. Liberal Arts did lose the Department of Social Work and the Communications Disorders program within the Department of Speech and Theatre to the new College of Behavioral and Health Sciences. We are sad to lose those programs and their faculty but relieved that the rest of the college remained unscathed.

As the college goes through these transitions, we remain committed to providing a first-rate education to our students. Continue reading to see some of the ways we are working toward that goal.

Mark Byrnes, Interim Dean
Welcome to New Faculty

ART
Shawna Harris (dissertation fellow)

ENGLISH
Kevin Brown
Matthew Brown
Ethan Castelo
Frances Henderson
Amy Kaufman
Christopher Mitchell
Jason Payton
Aaron Shapiro
Laura White
Aneeka Henderson (dissertation fellow)

FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES
Andrew Demil

GEOSCIENCES
Sarah Krentz
Christopher Schaney

GLOBAL STUDIES
Justin Phalichanh

MUSIC
Arunesh Nadgir
Jennifer Vannatta-Hall

SPEECH AND THEATRE
Debra Boyd
Madia Cooper
Perry Cotham
Stephen Decker
Bethany Hoppe
Kyle Kennedy
Beverly Norcross
Marsha Plemons
Kristi Shamberger
Ziaowei Shi
Lori Stephens

Debra Boyd  Madia Cooper  Stephen Decker
Andrew Demil  Bethany Hoppe  Kyle Kennedy
Arunesh Nadgir  Beverly Norcross  Christopher Schaney
Kristi Shamberger  Aaron Shapiro  Ziaowei Shi
Lori Stephens  Jennifer Vannatta-Hall
Tanya Peres and Shannon Hodge (Sociology and Anthropology), along with Aaron Deter-Wolf (Tennessee Division of Archaeology) are working on an emergency shoreline assessment of archaeological sites along the Cumberland River. Peres is lead investigator on the National Science Foundation Rapid Response Research (RAPID) grant. With recent flooding in the Nashville area, many sites have been disturbed; this team will assess the damage through tracking and mapping. After the fieldwork, all recovered materials and project documentation will be returned to MTSU for processing and analysis.

Amy Sayward (History) coedited Tennessee’s New Abolitionists: The Fight to End the Death Penalty in the Volunteer State (University of Tennessee Press), along with Margaret Vandiver, UT faculty member.

Professor Emeritus Raymond Bills (Music, 1963–2006) and his wife Jean Bills performed, along with solo handbell artist Nancy Hascall, at St. Mark’s United Methodist Church in Murfreesboro this summer. Many of you will remember Raymond and Jean for their many years of dedicated service to MTSU and the Murfreesboro music community.

Steve Morris (Chair, Political Science) coedited Corruption in Politics in Latin America: National and Regional Dynamics (Lynne Rienner Publishers) with Charles H. Blake from James Madison University.

Gretchen Webber (Sociology and Anthropology) has been selected as a finalist in the annual competition for the Rosabeth Moss Kanter Award for Excellence in Work-Family Research. This award is a joint project between the Center for Families at Purdue University and the Boston College Center for Work and Family.


The U.S. Army’s Center of Military History selected Derek Frisby (History) to write volume 15, Campaigns in Mississippi and Tennessee, 1864, of the 17-volume Civil War Commemorative Campaigns Series.

Felicia Miyakawa (School of Music) was elected to a three-year term on the Council of the American Musicological Society, where she will serve as secretary.

Book reviews for Lynn Rice-See’s (School of Music) The Piano Teaching of Walter Hamzig, with 613 Examples from Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, and Chopin compare the book to attending days at a master class and include the words “inspiring” and “fascinating.” Four main chapters cover twelve Beethoven sonatas, five Schubert sonatas and the “Wanderer” Fantasy, five multi-movement works of Schumann, and nine major works of Chopin.

The Tennessee Governor’s School for the Arts brought Take 6, the renowned Christian vocal jazz group to campus for a workshop/concert. MTSU’s Cedric Dent (Music) is a member of the Grammy-winning group, and he toured with the ensemble during summer break. Take 6 took time from its touring schedule to stop at MTSU to work with Governor’s School students and perform for a community crowd.

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The Philip Roth Society has announced the establishment of the annual Siegel/ McDaniel Award for Graduate Student Research in honor of Ben Siegel and our own John N. McDaniel. The award recognizes high-quality work presented by graduate students on Roth Society panels in a given academic year. The award is given in honor of both Siegel and McDaniel for their many years of dedicated scholarship on the work of the novelist Philip Roth.

Congratulations to Nancy Rupprecht (History) and the Holocaust Studies Committee for a contract to create a second book based on papers from the MTSU International Holocaust Studies Conference. The title will be The Holocaust and World War II in History and in Memory. The MTSU Holocaust Conference became the International Holocaust Conference in 2009 after attracting paper proposals from first-class scholars from Canada, Germany, Great Britain, Ukraine, Poland, Israel, Italy, and Slovenia to participate in the ninth biennial conference.

A new archivist has been appointed to the Albert Gore Research Center. James T. Havron Jr. began his work in August, replacing Matthew Brown, who left the University in May. Havron comes to MTSU from the special collections area of the Nashville Public Library. He has also worked at the Grand Ole Opry Museum and the Tennessee State Library and Archives. In 2009, he finished an M.A. in history with a concentration in archives management at MTSU. He is also a certified archivist.

The MTSU Art Department has received a generous donation of $10,000 from an anonymous donor to fund the purchase of books/DVDs to support the teaching of Mesoamerican and medieval works of art. Nancy Kelker (Art) has been the primary contact for the gift that comes from a private foundation in Texas. They rarely make grants outside of Texas, but this time they have gone out of the state to support Middle Tennessee State University. This gift is greatly appreciated, as are all gifts to the College and University.

Symposium to Host Garbage Archaeologist

William Rathje will present some of his work on modern garbage to MTSU November 2 as part of the Undergraduate Social Science Symposium. Rathje led some of the most interesting investigations in the twentieth century on garbage dumps. His popular book, RABBIISH: The Archaeology of Garbage, written with Cullen Murphy, has been called “an in-depth examination of how garbage reflects the society that tosses it” (School Library Journal) and “a lucid and provocative book” (New York Times Book Review). Chair of the conference Brian Hinote (Sociology and Anthropology) said that this is a very timely topic with the problems experienced by Murfreesboro and the landfill on the outskirts of the city. The lecture is free and open to the public. For more information on the symposium, contact Connie Huddleston at 494-7628.

Fall Honors Lecture Series

The Honors College Fall Lecture Series focuses on China, and President Sidney McPhee opened the series with “China: A Decade through the Eyes of an American University President.” Yuan-ling Chao (History) presented “Confucianism and the Scientific Tradition in China” in September, and Jun Da (Foreign Languages and Literatures) will present “Language Policy and Language Use in China” on November 1. All lectures are held Mondays from 3:00 to 3:55 p.m. in the amphitheater, Room 106, in the Paul W. Martin Sr. Honors Building.
History Prof Wins Fulbright Award

Sean Foley (History) has received the prestigious Fulbright Award for the coming academic year. He will be in Malaysia to continue his research on the influence of the Islamic/Egyptian journal al-Minar and on general Arab Muslim influence in southeast Asia between 1875 and 1935. Foley said, “This grant will allow me to reframe my vision of the Muslim world from one grounded in the Middle East to one that includes a portion of the world no less Islamic and in which hundreds of millions of Muslims live and practice their faith today: Indonesia.” Congratulations to Professor Foley on this award.

New Chair for Speech and Theatre

Jeff Gibson has been approved to serve as the chair of the Speech and Theatre Department. With the reorganization of Speech and Theatre, former chair Rebecca Fischer has moved to the new College of Behavioral and Health Sciences. We thank Professor Fischer for her leadership of the department, and we welcome Professor Gibson.

MTSU Among Top Colleges 2011

Princeton Review has named MTSU one of 133 “Best in the Southeast” institutions of higher learning, based on accessibility of professors, quality of food, and campus life. The quality of academic programs and observations during visits to campus over the years were also part of the selection process.

McCash Pens Almost to Eden

Professor Emerita June Hall McCash has released her first book of fiction—Almost to Eden. The book tells the story of an Irish immigrant who comes to America expecting it to be a new Eden, only to discover that wealth and power often triumph over justice just as it did in the old country. The historical novel is set in Jekyll Island, Georgia, and New York City. You might remember that McCash has written several books about her beloved Jekyll Island: The Jekyll Island Cottage Colony and Jekyll Island's Early Years and, as coauthor, The Jekyll Island Club: Southern Haven for America's Millionaires. Early reviews of the book are quite glowing; her writing is compared to Edith Wharton and Colleen McCullough. This is the third book McCash has written since retiring in 2004, and we hear that two more are in the works.

Writing Center Moves to Library

The Margaret H. Ordoubadian University Writing Center has moved to Walker Library, Room 362. The center provides services to students as well as faculty. Students receive one-on-one tutoring, and the staff conducts short presentations to classes about the benefits of the Writing Center. The center is open Monday–Thursday, 8:00 a.m.–8:00 p.m.; Friday, 8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.; and Saturday, 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
The Geoscience Department is sponsoring a shoe drive for Soles 4 Souls, a charity which collects shoes and gives them to those in need. Collection boxes are located in the KUC, James Union Cafeteria (Raider Zone), McCallie Dining Hall, and in the Dean of Liberal Arts Office. Nine dorms are also participating: Monahan, Lyon, Rutledge, Smith, Corlew, Cummings, Wood/Felder, Womack, and Scarlett Commons.

Karen Wolfe, department secretary, thought Soles 4 Souls would be a good cause for Earth Science Week in September and Geography Awareness Month in October. Nicole Langford ('09 Speech and Theatre major) of donor services with Soles 4 Souls was eager to enlist MTSU’s efforts. The shoe drive is ongoing, but the Middle Tennessee collection will focus on September 15-October 31, 2010. If you have any questions, contact Karen Wolfe at 898-2726, or Nicole Langford at 615-391-5723.