



COLLEGE OF  
LIBERAL ARTS

# Newsletter

Spring 2021

## A message from the dean

Happy Spring!

One time long ago, when I was living in New England, we had a warm week during Spring Break. That was unheard-of: there was generally still snow on the ground in March. I took a blanket and a book outside, and lay there quietly, reading. When I looked up, there was a scruffy looking woodchuck on the other side of the yard. It had obviously just woken up from hibernation. It scratched its left ear. It scratched its right ear. It shook its whole still-tubby body. And then—I'll never forget it—it began to frolic. It was a crazy kind of woodchuck spring dance. It continued until I couldn't hold back my laughter anymore, and then the woodchuck disappeared back into its den.



That's what I feel like. Covid hibernation is ending, and we're all beginning to step out of our burrows. I greet every small sign of a return to human contact with great joy. I never really stopped going to restaurants, but it's nice to be able to eat inside when it rains. I was able to attend my first concert in over a year just the other day, and it was lovely to re-experience the magic of live music. As things open up little by little, here are the things I'm most looking forward to:

- A live ArtsGala
- Seeing students on campus when I look out my office window
- New stocks of clothes in stores: I need shopping therapy!
- Travel to Europe. Art museums there have few visitors, and I want to be among them!
- Family reunions
- Face-to-face meetings (yes, I know that looking forward to meetings is strange)
- Casual conversations with colleagues in the hallways
- Celebrating achievements with faculty, students, donors and friends

Students are clamoring for face-to-face classes, and I'm pleased to say that 73% of WSU classes will have an in-person component in the fall if our present plans continue. We've deliberately kept classroom capacity at 50%, so students will have space around them. It's our most flexible option. If the country or the region reaches herd immunity we can move back to regular classroom capacity, but if something goes wrong we can switch to Covid capacity with 6 feet between each student. Whatever happens, we'll figure it out. We can do that: we're liberal arts types, and we thrive on solving problems.

I hope you've begun to enjoy coming out of hibernation.

Linda Caron  
Dean  
College of Liberal Arts



### Planning underway to welcome back Wright State faculty, staff and students to campus this fall

Wright State University plans to welcome back students, faculty and staff to learn, teach and work on its Dayton and Lake Campuses this fall.

In an email sent to the campus community on March 10, President Sue Edwards announced that planning has begun to allow a larger percentage of students to have access to in-person classes and increased residence hall capabilities during Fall Semester, which begins Aug. 23.

[Read more](#)

### The Changemakers

Wright State Alumni and community members are confronting racism and all of its manifestations.

They have made a dedicated responsibility to help their communities move forward—a responsibility not taken lightly.

They are activists and educators, visionaries and advocates, innovators and radicals.

[Read more](#)

### Wright State alumnus Kevin Leichtman highlights struggles, lessons of students in 'The Perfect Ten'

"Thanks to what I learned at Wright State about how to approach school and with creative writing, I have gone on to receive a master's and Ph.D. in education from Florida Atlantic University, became a teacher and education consultant, and have a book coming out with EduMatch Publishing," Leichtman said.

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### QUICK LINKS

[No Small Feat](#)[Students First Fund](#)[Piano Project](#)[Life Support](#)[Camera Angle](#)[WSU Alumni Play Key Roles in Latest Documentary by Julia Reichert and Steven Bognar](#)[Voice Recognition](#)[Modul UN Wins Awards at Dayton Conference](#)[Hitting the High Notes](#)[WSU Art Faculty Win Prestigious Awards](#)

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### COLA Outstanding Seniors 2021

#### Undergraduate



**Karen Knight**

African & African American Studies



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### Acting Alumna Lands Role on New HBO Max Series

Renika Williams, a 2015 acting alumna from Wright State University, has landed a role as a series regular on Mindy Kaling's new television series,

"The Sex Lives of College Girls." Williams will play "Willow," a student at New England Essex College, where the show takes place. The teen comedy-drama is expected to premiere on HBO Max in 2021.

[Read more](#)

### Come Hell or High Water

The student staff of The Guardian Media Group are continuing the tradition of award-winning journalism.

In the fall of 2017, The Guardian followed the example of many student-run publications across the nation and ceased producing a print edition, going completely online.

[Read more](#)

### A Different Kind of Influencer

Mohamed Al-Hamdani '03, '19, immigration lawyer and president of Dayton Public Schools Board, is one of the city's most influential young leaders

Al-Hamdani earned a bachelor's degree in sociology from Wright State in 2003, then an M.B.A. in 2019. In between stints at Wright State, he received his law degree in 2013 from the University of Dayton. But his story began in Dayton much earlier.



**Anna Fox**  
Anthropology



**Emma Smith**  
Art & Art History



**Tionna Clyburn**  
Communication



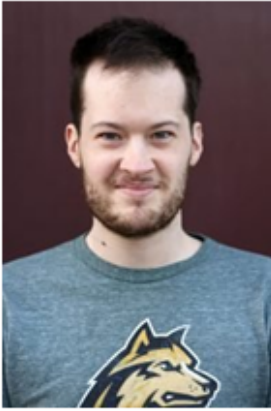
**Kennedy Fitzgerald**  
Crime & Justice Studies



**Alexis Voisard**  
English



**Joseph Connelly**  
History

[Read more](#)

### **Sure Fire**

While he doesn't fight fires himself, English major Erik Madaus has used the power of the pen to help fire departments do it.

Madaus is a technical writing and proposal support intern for The ONEIL Center at Wright State University. "He has been the perfect fit for working with the fire departments we support in our partnership with Flagler Emergency Services, as he exemplifies the best traits of a technical writer — he's specific, literal, accurate and concise," Brandy Foster said. "His work is making a huge difference to these fire departments and the communities they serve."

[Read more](#)

### **Wright State University's Model UN Team received the top award of Outstanding Delegation at the 2021 National Model United Nations Conference.**

The conference was held online and had a different format than in the past due to COVID-19 restrictions. The Wright State students participated in the online conference from March 28–31 from the Student Success Center on the Dayton Campus.

"The team of 15 students all put in great effort that is required to win the overall delegation award," said Vaughn Shannon, professor of political science and co-advisor to the delegation along with Liam Anderson, professor of political science.

It was the 41st consecutive year of Wright State participation in the conference that the university received a delegation award.

[Read more](#)

### **Alex Bylczyński**

Liberal Studies &  
Sociology



### **Megan McKarns**

Modern Languages



### **Jackson Riffle**

Music



### **Magdalen Meyer**

Religion, Philosophy, &  
Classics



### **Ninad Inamdar**

Geography



### **Hunter Johnson**

Urban Affairs



**Class Action**

The Wright State University double-degree alumna has taught English to university students and professors in China, Indonesia and Turkey, to teens and K-12 teachers in Honduras, and to teachers in Colombia. Se also taught in Slovakia.

"I feel alive when I am abroad," said Troyer.

[Read more](#)



**Taylor Ronnebaum**  
Political Science



**Kaylee Arbogast**  
International Studies



**Hunter Minor**  
Theatre, Dance, & Motion Pictures



**Morgan Laprete**  
Women, Gender, & Sexuality Studies



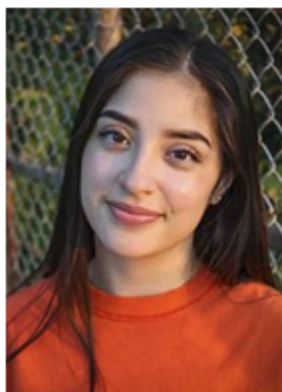
**Photo collection estimated worth over \$4 million from well-known artists donated to Wright State**

Hundreds of photographs estimated in value at over \$4 million taken by well-known photojournalists and fine art and documentary photographers have been donated to Wright State University, a gift that promises to put Robert and Elaine Stein Galleries on the map.

"It's a significant acquisition for the university gallery," said John Dickinson, associate professor of sculpture. "The sheer volume of photographs distinguishes us in the region as a prominent destination for seeing fine art photography."

[Read more](#)





### Living Her Dreams

Gutierrez was only 5 years old when her family relocated to the U.S. With her extroverted personality, she made friends easily and picked up the English language quickly. As a child and adolescent, she began developing a love for the arts and a talent for singing. In high school, she became active in theatre.

"It changed my life forever. I developed a passion for storytelling and being on stage," Gutierrez said. "From the moment I graduated high school, I realized I wanted to be an actress."

[Read more](#)



## COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

### Supporting the College

Take a moment to think about your ties to the College of Liberal Arts. Perhaps you are one of our alumni and can remember well what the campus looked like when you were a student and which COLA faculty or staff made the greatest impact on you. You might serve on an advisory board and help provide feedback on the direction our programs and college are headed. Maybe you are a donor who passionately supports scholarships for students in need.

Perhaps you are an avid patron of our fine and performing arts programs who has attended art exhibitions, dance performances, main stage performances in music or theatre, or our signature arts fundraiser, ArtsGala. You might have hired COLA students as interns or COLA graduates as employees. You could be a faculty, staff, retiree, or current or prospective student of our college. You might be part of our professional mentoring program. Or maybe you are passionate about the liberal arts and about what we do in COLA and are looking for ways to get more involved.

Whatever your connection is, we thank you for your interest in the College of Liberal Arts, and we encourage you to remain involved or get more engaged in the important work we do on behalf of our students.

As you reflect on your ties to COLA, if you would like to make a gift in support of student scholarships, academic research projects, special programs, and other needs, please visit this website to learn more or contact Colleen Lampton-Brill, Director of Development for the College of Liberal Arts, at 937-775-4921 or [colleen.lampton@wright.edu](mailto:colleen.lampton@wright.edu).

### Graduate



**Amie Kiner**  
English



**Zachariah Jett**  
History



**Francisco Marques**  
Humanities



**Joshua Underwood**  
International &  
Comparative Politics



**Matt Weaver**  
Music



**Cortney Ley**  
Public Administration

If you would like to consider additional ways in which your engagement can positively impact the college today and into the future, please contact Nick Warrington, Director of Events and Community Engagement for the College of Liberal Arts, at 937-775-2575 or [nick.warrington@wright.edu](mailto:nick.warrington@wright.edu).



**Jessica Penkal**  
Social Work

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