

## College of Arts and Sciences

### Spring Address – 2018

Good afternoon, and welcome to the College of Arts and Sciences spring address and awards ceremony. We come together each year at this time for an update on College activities, but especially to honor a number of students, staff, and faculty in the College, and to recognize their many contributions to the College and the University.

This time last year, I began by informing people that the State of Illinois didn't have a budget, and discussing the difficulties that the impasse had presented us. We may not feel much wealthier this year, but we have been able to plan better, which has been a relief.

So once again, I can say that the College has had a very successful year. We have over 6,200 students, which is about 100 more than at this time last year, and we generated half of all the credit hours in the University. We have had a successful year in faculty recruiting, although we did have two of our searches fail, which I believe is partly due to concern that prospective faculty may have over the future of the Illinois budget. Nevertheless, most departments were successful in landing their top candidates, so we can look forward to another excellent class of new faculty.

Our faculty continue to be honored at the University level for their teaching, scholarship, and service, including two new Distinguished Professors, Dave Malone and Ali Riaz; University Professor Eric Peterson; the Outstanding University Research Award, Tom Critchfield in Psychology and Issam Nassar in History; University Research Initiative Award, Ben Saad in Biology, L.J. Zigerell in Politics and Government, and Logan Miller in Sociology and Anthropology; Outstanding University Creative Activity Award, Kass Fleisher in English; Outstanding University Teaching Award, Richard Hughes in History; University Teaching Initiative Award, Lisa Vinney in Communication Sciences and Disorders; and the Outstanding University Service Award, Leandra Parris in Psychology. These are the University Awards, which were recognized on Founders Day. The College Award recipients will be recognized later in this program. Our Distinguished Lecturers this year were Maria Smith in the Fall, and Laura Vogel in the Spring.

It should come as no surprise, then, when I claim that we have a remarkably productive faculty. This year we published 19 books and monographs (two more than last year) and 430 articles (52 more than last year). Most of you have heard me brag before that a large number of our publications have student co-authors. As was the case last year, about 40% of the articles published by our faculty have at least one student co-author. Again this year, College scholars received nearly \$5M in external funding, so we continue to be successful in an increasingly challenging funding environment.

Our students were very successful as well. Six of this year's Bone Scholars are Arts and Sciences students. The Fisher Thesis Award this year was won by Zachary Lawton of Chemistry, and the recipient of the Sorensen Dissertation Award was Biology Ph.D.

student Amanda Wilson Carter. In addition, in ISU's second year entering the Three Minute Thesis (3MT) competition, both the winner (Kristin Duffield from Biology) and the runner-up (Tharini Viswanath from English) are from Arts and Sciences. Kristin represented ISU at the 3MT competition held by the Midwest Association of Graduate Schools.

We continue to try to strengthen our outreach efforts, and to take the excellent work that is done in the College to the larger community. This is the fifth year of Main Street College, a series of lectures given by scholars in the College to present their research to an interested community audience. Last Fall, Bill Perry from Biology and Joan Brehm from Sociology presented "Water water everywhere: Will there be a drop to drink in Bloomington-Normal in 20 years?" And next Monday, Aimee Miller-Ott from the School of Communication will present "So close and yet so far: Staying close when your cell phone pulls you away."

In addition to Main Street College, our individual departments are involved in the community as well. The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders continues to operate their satellite audiology clinic in the Activity and Recreation Center. The Speech and Hearing Clinic here on campus also provides services to the community, including accent modification for non-native speakers. This year, they also began offering voice-modification services to transgender individuals who might desire them. Our clinic is the only one in the area providing these services.

A second outreach activity that I mentioned briefly in the fall is the Art Station. This has been made possible by a series of very generous gifts from Laura Berk, Distinguished Professor Emerita of Psychology, who believes in the power of art to influence social and cognitive development. The Art Station will provide opportunities for youth and families to learn about art, and to engage in interactive activities to foster social interaction and a love for the arts. Late last fall, Isra El-Beshir joined the College as Director of the Art Station, and she began immediately to fulfill its mission. She has hired a Curator of Education, and advertised for positions to be filled in time for summer activities. We are seeking permanent space for the Art Station, but in the meantime, a van has been purchased so that we can be in the community this summer, including participation in a Public Mural Community Project, and activities at the Bloomington and Normal Public Libraries, the Western Avenue Community Center, and the Shakespeare Festival.

The Art Station is a collaborative effort involving Arts and Sciences and faculty/staff from the School of Art, the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, The School of Teaching and Learning, and University Galleries. I want to thank Isra for her leadership in fulfilling Laura's vision, and also Associate Dean Marla Reese-Weber, who led the efforts to bring Isra on board, and really served as the director for the first several months of the Station's life and continues to be very active in its development. And, of course we're very grateful to Laura for both her vision and her generosity.

Last Saturday we inducted four people into the College Hall of Fame. Melissa Barnhart is a judge in Kendall County, with ISU degrees in French and Political Science. Victoria

Harris is both an alumna and professor emerita from our English Department. Doug Spilatro is a graduate of the School of Communication and serves as vice president of visual effects at Technicolor in Hollywood. And Dan Wagner, a graduate in Political Science, is senior vice president of government relations for the Inland Real Estate Group and president-elect of Illinois Realtors.

We had very successful year in fundraising. Stephanie Sellers continues to travel the country visiting alumni and friends, and so far this year, she has brought in nearly \$3M, close to three times last year's total. The Redbirds Rising Campaign became public last September, and we are about 2/3 of the way to the end of the campaign, but the College is 85% of the way to our goal of \$20M. The Foundation also gives Stephanie an annual goal that they want her to meet, and she has met that goal and surpassed it by 21%, with three months remaining in the fiscal year.

Last year, I spoke about two interrelated goals for this year. One concerned increasing diversity and inclusion at both the faculty/staff and student levels, and the other was to facilitate interdisciplinary activities. I believe we have made strides in both of these areas. For the first time, we have provided a modest operating budget to the African-American Studies minor, which is led by co-directors Touré Reed and Doris Houston. They have held two public events in just the last few weeks, and have updated the minor's curriculum. Women's and Gender Studies has partnered with Sociology and Anthropology on the successful recruitment of a faculty member to teach in the department and also take a leadership role in the Queer Studies concentration in Women's and Gender Studies. This next year, we are proposing three joint recruitments, involving Communication and African-American Studies; Psychology and Latin American, Latino/Latina Studies; and Philosophy and Women's and Gender Studies.

The Department of Geography, Geology, and the Environment has begun a new program in Environmental Systems Science. This promises to be a very interdisciplinary program, with the potential to involve faculty not only from that department, but Biology, Sociology, History, and Philosophy.

We were able again this year to provide money for seed grants to support additional interdisciplinary initiatives. Again, we funded 10 proposals for up to \$6,000 each to facilitate the development of programs or activities, in either teaching or research, that straddle at least two of our disciplines. This program has already been successful. Just weeks ago, the Laboratory for Environmental Analysis was opened. Part of the funding for the lab, which does real-time analysis of water quality, came from the first round of these interdisciplinary grants in 2017.

The College is facing some change next year, with a number of new faces. First, of course, is Diane Zosky, who will serve as Acting Dean for two years, beginning in July. In addition, there will be acting chairs and directors in some units. Doris Houston will assume the position of Acting Director of Social Work while Diane is Dean. We also have several chairs who will be on sabbatical next year, so Juliet Lynd will chair Languages, Literatures, and Cultures; Kyle Ciani will be the Director of Women's and

Gender Studies; and Rachel Bowden, from Biology, will chair the Department of Economics. Joan Brehm will chair Sociology and Anthropology as Jim Skibo retires; and Chris Horvath will become the permanent chair of Philosophy. I respect all of these colleagues very much, and have every confidence that they will lead effectively. I have been meeting with Diane regularly, and we have begun the transition to her leadership. I believe the College has much to look forward to. Thank you for your support of the mission of the College of Arts and Sciences.