



KATHLEEN CASSITY, PH.D. DEAN, COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES



Dean's Newsletter

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Winter term can certainly be challenging. Once the holidays and break are behind us, those colder, shorter days that felt so cozy at the beginning of winter start to feel a lot less charming. Hibernating might sound like a good idea to some people, while “snow birding” by going somewhere sunnier might appeal to others. For those of us tied to the academic calendar, neither is an option. Despite the short, often gloomy days, we must keep being productive.

And that, we certainly have been. Here in the LAS Dean's Office, we have been so productive that it wasn't until Week 7 that we were able to finalize this newsletter. As you'll see, a lot of exciting events and accomplishments continue to take place in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, with much more to come. Read on for just a sampling of what's happening right now in LAS, and be sure to check out page 2 to learn about upcoming activities for the remainder of Winter term. Don't forget to check the online WOU calendar periodically as well to learn about what's happening on campus.

Already, the days are longer and brighter. Spring registration—and Daylight Savings Time—will soon be upon us. This is a great moment to take stock of our collective achievements and make plans for the rest of the academic year, the summer, and the year to come. Read on to learn about the recent excellent presentation by Dr. Kim Potowski, an upcoming guest speaker on juvenile justice this coming Monday, and exciting new changes in our Math curriculum and NSM building, along with some impressive faculty honors in Psychology.

The features in this newsletter are only a small sampling of the many activities and achievements taking place in LAS. If you've got news to share, please send it along for inclusion in a future issue. We rely on all of you for our content. Please submit your story using the Google Doc located [here](#). Despite publishing only one issue in Winter 2020, we are optimistically aiming to publish two issues in Spring 2020, so keep your news coming! Best wishes to all as we approach the end of Winter term.

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UPCOMING WOU EVENTS

- ⇒ Th, 02/20, 12:00 p.m., Werner University Center, Columbia Room: Aging in the Right Place: Discuss options and decisions about where we live as we age
- ⇒ Th, 02/20, 3:00 p.m., Natural Science, Room 218 Geology Lab: Yasuyo Makido, "Remote Sensing Applications in Coupled Huan and Natural Systems"
- ⇒ F, 02/21, 4:00 p.m., Doubletree Hotel Portland: What's New at WOU - Alumni & Friends Reception
- ⇒ F, 02/21, 7:00 p.m., Veterans' Memorial Coliseum: WOU Night at the Winterhawks
- ⇒ M-T, 02/24 -02/25, 10:30 a.m., Pacific Room, WUC: Winter Term Blood Drive
- ⇒ M-F, 02/25- 03/20, All Day, Campbell Hall: "An Artful Life " Exhibit
- ⇒ T, 02/25, 3:00 p.m., Natural Sciences, Room 218, Geology Lab: Guest Speaker Fuyuan Lian, "A Multiple-Scale Study of Topological Influences on Vegetation Greenness in Two Cockpit Karst Areas"
- ⇒ T, 02/25, 7:30 p.m., Smith Music Hall: Spirituals Concert
- ⇒ Sun 03/01, 2:00 p.m., Smith Music Hall: Gabriela Monroy's Junior Recital
- ⇒ M, 03/02, 7:30 p.m., Smith Music Hall: Jazz Orchestra & Latin Jazz Ensemble
- ⇒ T, 03/03, All Day, The Cottage: Western Oregon University Giving Day.
- ⇒ W, 03/04, 7:30 p.m., Smith Music Hall: Austin Hart's Senior Recital
- ⇒ W 03/04, Werner Center, All Day: Criminal Justice Career Day
- ⇒ Thu, 03/05, 11:00 a.m., Smith Music Hall: Student Recital
- ⇒ Su, 03/08, 2:00 p.m., Smith Music Hall: String Chamber Ensemble
- ⇒ Th, 03/12, 7:30 p.m., Rice Auditorium: Wind Ensemble
- ⇒ Sat, 03/14, 7:30 p.m., Rice Auditorium: Smith Fine Arts Presents: Seamus Egan Project **(PICTURED BELOW)**
- ⇒ Wed, 03/18, 11:00 a.m., Werner University Center: Kroc Center Info Table; Employment opportunities



Psychology Faculty Member Appointed to Governor's Foster Care Advisory Commission

On November 20th, 2019, WOU's own Tracy Powell was confirmed by the Oregon Senate to an Executive Appointment on the Governor's Child Foster Care Advisory Commission. The Director of Oregon's Citizen Review Board recommended Tracy for this post. Tracy served on the CRB for Polk County and as an Advisory Board Member for the State of Oregon for the past six years, tasked by the Oregon Judicial Department to conduct monthly legal reviews of children in care to ensure that they are receiving court-mandated services and resources. The Department of Human Services is required to obtain court-ordered services for the children and their legal guardians in an effort to reunify families, or seek alternative permanency solutions for children when returning home is not an option. The Board's role is to assess whether or not DHS is fulfilling its legal obligations to these families, to report back to the Court, and to provide recommendations where appropriate for additional services or permanency goals. Tracy feels privileged to be part of this crucial process for ensuring the safety and well-being of the youth in our state, and Polk County in particular.

As a member of the Governor's Child Foster Care Advisory Commission, Tracy hopes to assist the Governor and Director of DHS by studying legal and policy changes that could improve current practices in the foster care system. The needs for increased funding, social services, mental health care providers, and caseworkers are only a few of the systemic issues plaguing our current system. Mental health is of particular interest to Tracy as a



professor of psychology with a specialty in forensic psychology. Often, underlying unresolved mental health issues can seriously compromise the ability to parent safely. This has repercussions for society and needs to be addressed through additional residential and individual treatment providers for those needing care.

Western Oregon University also plays an important role in Oregon's Foster Care System through its "Fostering Success" program here on campus. Navigating university life is a challenge for every student, but this process is magnified for students in the foster care system, who often lack resources or family support to assist them in understanding and successfully charting their way through the process. Tracy hopes to be instrumental in seeking additional support for these students, to help them be as successful as they can in achieving their life goals.

For information regarding the Governor's Child Foster Care Advisory Commission, please visit the following link:

<https://www.oregon.gov/gov/policy/Pages/CFCAC.aspx>

For more information regarding the CRB, please visit the following link:

<https://www.courts.oregon.gov/programs/crb/Pages/default.aspx>

For more information regarding WOU's Fostering Success program, please visit the following link:

<https://wou.edu/foster/>

Brooke Nott, Faculty Advisor of the Year!

Submitted by **Niki Weight**

Let's give a shout out to Brooke Nott in the Behavioral Sciences Division! Niki Weight, our Director of Student Success & Advising, nominated WOU's Faculty Advisor of the Year, Brooke Nott, for the Region 8 NACADA Annual Advisor Awards. Nott was selected as Faculty Advisor of the Year - Certificate of Merit award winner. This award is well-deserved, given her efforts and support for our WOU students. Congratulations, Brooke Nott!



Dr. Kim Potowski's January Visit to WOU:

"No Child Left Monolingual"

Submitted by **Patricia Gimenez-Eguibar**

On January 9, 2020, Dr. Kim Potowski of the University of Illinois-Chicago delivered a thought-provoking and engaging talk at Western Oregon University regarding monolingualism in the United States, with the joint sponsorship of WOU's College of LAS and College of Education. Dr. Potowski's talk covered a wide range of issues, including busting myths about languages in the U.S.; presenting arguments and strategies for promoting multilingualism in our communities; and promoting awareness about dual language schools and how they enrich literacy in both first and second languages. Research demonstrates that dual immersion programs in fact result in the highest levels of English language learning, and academic skills and knowledge will transfer between languages. Dr. Potowski provided data from Houston and California's



school districts, along with a good dose of humor and relatable anecdotes, to demonstrate her claims. She also discussed the negative consequences to individuals and society as a whole when language conservation is lost through the generations; the numerous economic, cultural, cognitive, and psychosocial advantages of developing fluent bilingualism; and the importance of eliminating negative language attitudes and behaviors in the United States. Audience response to Dr. Potowski's presentation was overwhelmingly positive. If you weren't able to attend, you can catch her TED talk [here](#).

Upcoming Guest Speaker on Juvenile Justice: Catherine Jones, February 24, 2020

Submitted by [Miyuki Arimoto](#)

On Monday, February 24, 2020 from 10:00 a.m. to noon in the Willamette Room (Werner Center), Catherine Jones will discuss juvenile justice reform from her distinctive perspective.

Catherine Jones joined the Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth (CFSY) team in January of 2020 and serves as the Incarcerated Children's Advocacy Network (ICAN) Leadership Development and Support Coordinator. In this role, she works closely with the ICAN Coordinator to support members of the network—particularly women. Catherine acts as a mentor and first responder to ICAN members as they transition into their new lives. She is also a spokesperson for the CFSY and ICAN in the media, and she speaks to groups throughout the country in support of our public education and advocacy efforts.

Catherine herself is a formerly incarcerated youth. Incarcerated at the age of 13 for murder, she was not released until the age of 30. She spent her time while incarcerated pursuing her education, earning a degree and several certifications, including Certified Law Clerk. Under the supervision of Fresh Start Ministries, she designed and taught a curriculum for abused women, focused on emotional healing and building self-confidence. Catherine's experiences with the penal system as a child sparked a passion inside of her to be a voice for those she left behind and for the ones who will come after her.

When not wearing her advocacy cape, Catherine relishes her role as mother to her two beautiful children. Her presentation is sure to be thought-provoking and insightful, and we look forward to welcoming her to WOU.



MATH 105 Redesign

Submitted by [Cheryl Beaver](#)

Math 105, Math in Society, is a popular choice for students to fulfill their mathematics Foundational Knowledge general education requirement. The course covers basic probability, statistics, and modeling as well as mathematics related to personal finance and problem solving, with an emphasis on real-world connections. Over the past year, the Mathematics Department has worked to make Math 105 a more affordable, student-centered class.

An open educational resource was adopted as the textbook, and a team of instructors worked diligently over the

past summer to “flip” the classroom: Cheryl Beaver, Brenda Bradley, Chris Mock, Andrew Nerz, and Kendall Rosales. They created a set of instructional videos so students can study the course content outside of class as homework, then spend their class time working on problems and interactive activities where they have access to their instructor and peers for support. After dropping the prerequisite for the class, the team folded prerequisite content into additional videos that the students can watch as needed. A low-cost online homework system was also adopted along with the text. This, coupled with

the instructional videos, gave Kendall Rosales the opportunity to develop an online version of Math 105 which is being offered for the first time in Winter 2020.

Instructors who have taught the class before and after the redesign have noted that students are more engaged during class, and work well together in groups both during class and electronically. The new class format, online offerings, and eliminated all work together to give students the flexibility and support they need to successfully complete this mathematics Foundational Knowledge general education requirement.

Natural Sciences Makeover

Submitted by **Hamid Behmard**

The Natural Science Building was originally opened in 1969 to house the three science departments of Biology, Chemistry, and Earth & Physical Sciences. As these departments grew bigger, finding teaching space (especially lab space) became a competitive sport. In 2008-2009, University Master Planning and the administration began a discussion of investment to update WOU's science facilities. A catalyst in this discussion was the new OHSU Nursing program. In 2011, a budget of \$9.7 million was approved to be used either to renovate the Natural Science Building or to construct a new science building. The Feasibility Study at that time resulted in construction of the DeVolder Family Science Center (DFSC). In 2013, the construction of the DFSC was completed, housing the Chemistry Department and the Anatomy & Physiology portion of the Biology Department. However, the plumbing, mechanical, and electrical (PME) in the NS Building had deteriorated to a point of no return. In addition, entering the NS Building created a sense of time travel to the 60's era. In 2015, Oregon University System approved a capital request for the renovation of the NS Building. In 2016-2017, the initial phase of the project was completed by selecting the architect and general contractor. Due to the scope of the renovation project, the renovation was split into two phases. Phase I was completed during summer and fall of 2018 and Phase II was completed during summer 2019. The Grand Re-Opening was held in October 2019.

Even though the original budget (via state bond) was just enough to complete

the PME, thanks to the strong support of the administration, the labs and classrooms were also renovated.

NS Building Renovation Highlights:

- Updating the plumbing, mechanical (HVAC), and electrical units in the building, resulting in uniform building temperature
- Renovating the division office and lobby, creating two new student alcoves
- Completing renovations of the labs/classrooms on the first and second floors
- Renovating lab preparation rooms for Biology and Earth Science labs
- Creating a new Biology Research Laboratory for student-faculty collaboration
- Renovating the GIS computer lab
- Renovating the rooftop greenhouse
- Remodeling the bathrooms on the first and second floors to make them ADA compliant
- Creating new bathrooms in the basement
- Other improvements such as new energy efficient lights and ceiling grid throughout the building, asbestos removal, replacement of 80% of the flooring, new roof, fresh paint (interior and exterior), improved landscaping (including a new pond and

water feature, which has water plants used in the biology labs)

The NS Building renovation would have not been possible without the vision and leadership of the administration, and dedication and tireless work of the Facilities crew, UCS team (especially Nathan Sauer, Megan Eichler, Shandelle Pepper and their student crew), NS' lab preparators and APA (Beeb Singson, Piper Mueller-Warrant, Julie Grammer and Cinda DeVoe, along with their student crew), the GBC Construction team, FFA Architect and Design team, and faculty residing in NS building, especially the NS Building Renovation coordinating faculty: Bryan Dutton, Jeff Templeton, and Kristin Latham-Scott.

Finally, this project would have not been completed so successfully without Steve Taylor's leadership and dedication. At every step of the renovation, Steve was coordinating, supervising, bird dogging, and doing everything else necessary to make sure this complex project was moving forward, on time and complete.

Picture 1: Before renovation, Bio lab, NS 125

Picture 2: After renovation, Bio lab, NS 125

Picture 3: Before renovation, classroom, NS 122

Picture 4: After renovation, classroom, NS 122

Picture 5: Newly created Biology Research Laboratory, NS 015

