As the spring 2016 semester draws to a close, I am delighted to share with you some recent accomplishments of our students and faculty. As always, it is impossible to capture all the many activities that occur just within one semester. The articles in this newsletter reflect some of the highlights.

We are proud of our students’ many accomplishments in the area of scholarly engagement outside the classroom. Our History and English majors received awards for their presentations at regional conferences. The students on the newly formed debate team successfully competed in a national championship. High-achieving Theology students were inducted into a newly formed honors society. At the end of the spring semester, undergraduate students from different disciplines presented their research at various on-campus venues. Our students’ successes are a direct result of the mentorship and guidance provided by our faculty who are dedicated to undergraduate research. Indeed, our faculty continuously look for new undergraduate research opportunities, as shown in the example of a new Bioinformatics research partnership.

Our students have demonstrated excellence in musical performances during their spring concerts. They gained valuable experiences by curating and installing exhibitions. One of our faculty received recognition for her work with a community partner. Faculty from different divisions engaged the greater community in scholarly and artistic projects and by hosting conferences and science days.

I hope that you will enjoy reading about the many accomplishments of our students and faculty in this fourth edition of our newsletter.

Sincerely,
Ute S. Lahaie, Ph.D.
Dean, School of Arts and Sciences

A Message from
DEAN LAHAIE:

Strong Showing for Debate Team in First National Championship

The Walsh University Debate Team made its mark at the United States Universities Debating Championship held at Morehouse College in Atlanta. The team competed from April 8-11 in seven rounds, bringing home three first places and one second place.

“This is truly exceptional particularly considering that this was Walsh’s first time competing at the United States Universities Debating Championship. Our team went up against schools such as Harvard, Yale, Stanford and Duke and were not only competitive but won numerous rounds,” said Assistant Professor of Theology and Debate Club Coach Dr. Andrew Kim. The Debate Club was founded in 2015.

Two teams were sent to compete at the tournament. The first team consisted of Theology major Jared Topp and Museum Studies major Jill Decker, who is also minoring in Business Management. The second team was comprised of Honors students Madison Wobser, a Biology/Pre-Vet major, and Nicholas Beaver, an English major. Psychology and International Relations major Maitre Valdivia Elcarte and Honors student Joseph Moeglin, an Environmental Science major, also attended the tournament as trained adjudicators.

“I have a lot of social anxieties, but being in debate helps me push past those and learn to speak on a professional level and back up my beliefs with factual evidence,” said Wobser. “It’s helping me now in my classes because I’m sharpening my ability to look at things in different ways and see other sides of arguments and how to answer those questions posed by the opposing side of these arguments.”

The competition gave students the opportunity to sharpen their public speaking and persuasive speech skills while gaining knowledge of current events in order to become better informed for the debates.

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New Bioinformatics Research Partnership to Launch this Summer

“We are only the second institution in the country to collaborate with Hudson Alpha. This collaboration will provide our students with information and an experience that just isn’t available anywhere else."

Professor of Biology Dr. Adam Underwood

A new partnership with HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology that will begin this summer will provide a rare research opportunity for undergraduate students in Walsh’s Bioinformatics, Biology and Chemistry majors.

With each human carrying thousands to millions of unique DNA changes, medicine is transitioning into a personalized healthcare approach, a fact that has been recognized by the U.S. Government’s Precision Medicine Initiative. However, with millions of variants, the classical research methods and medicine development will need to rely more on computers to interpret the changes in biology that result in disease. There is a growing sense of urgency to find people who are adequately trained to study and analyze the information available. Working with HudsonAlpha, Walsh will begin to train students to fill this need for understanding and interpreting the outcome of genetic variants.

“HudsonAlpha is a leader in sequencing and utilizing genomics to understand disease. One of the problems with research on this scale is having enough people available who are trained to interpret genetic variance,” said HudsonAlpha Senior Scientist Jeremy Prokop.

Eight student members of Alpha Nu Sigma, the Walsh Honor Society of History, attended the Ohio Regional Phi Alpha Theta conference at the University of Dayton on March 12. For the second year in a row, a Walsh student was honored with the Best Undergraduate Paper Award. Isabelle Lahm won Best Undergraduate Paper at the Phi Alpha Theta conference and she also won Best Early Modern Europe Paper at the Southeast Michigan Phi Alpha Theta Conference at Oakland University in Michigan.

“Events such as this are a valuable experience for students to hone their presentation skills in front of a mixed audience of students and professional historians,” said Associate Professor of Education and History Kelly Mezurek, Ph.D., who serves as the advisor of Alpha Nu Sigma. “Each of our students represented Walsh University in a professional manner.”

As a result of her presentation, senior Stephanie Grable has been asked to submit her paper, “World War II Timken Company: Controversy, Innovation and Compassion,” for publication in the Northwest Ohio History Journal.

“We’ve been working with several institutions, including Walsh, to kick-start educational initiatives in the classroom to train students.”

Using computers, research projects will be developed by the information supplied from HudsonAlpha to predict how proteins are changed, how these changes alter cellular biology and then connect these variants to altered physiology, disease and possibly the development of personalized therapies.

“This sort of collaboration on the undergraduate level is uncommon,” said Associate Professor of Biology Dr. Adam Underwood. “We are only the second institution in the country to collaborate with HudsonAlpha to use protein models of genetic variants to interpret how these variants can result in disease. This collaboration will provide our students with an experience that just isn’t available anywhere else.” Research will begin this summer 2016.

History Students Hone Presentation Skills at Phi Alpha Theta Ohio Conference

The Birk Center for the Arts has been bustling with music, art, and exhibits this spring semester. Within the last four months, the band and choir have had multiple performances, new exhibitions have been installed, and the art collection has grown.

The Chamber Singers joined the Canton Symphony Chorus in their accompaniment to the symphony’s performance of Morton Louisandon’s “Last Ancient and Alexander Borodin’s “Polovizian Dances.” The ensemble is also preparing for their tour to Washington, D.C., in May. White there, the group will sing at national landmarks including the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

Students in the Museum Studies’ Exhibit Design class curated and installed two exhibitions this semester including “50 Years Before Tomorrow: The Story of VISTA and AmeriCorps” and the 56th annual student art exhibit “Along These Lines.”

The Canton Museum of Art also gifted Walsh with several pieces of art from their collection. The first donated piece is an oil painting, titled Zevo (1967), by Ohio artist Fred Wise (1888-1968). The painting was previously on loan to Walsh, but was confirmed as a gift in February.

The Canton Museum of Art also donated 34 framed lithographs by Amos Nattini depicting scenes from Dante’s Inferno along with the accompanying labels and original book.

British War Children

75th Anniversary Commemorative Series

The British War Children series was honored as the Best Community Partnership in the State by the Ohio Museums Association. The series was organized by Megan Pellegrino, Hoover Historical Center Curator and Museum Studies Academic Coordinator. This year’s honorees were recognized at the Annual Awards Dinner, held in conjunction with the OMA Annual Conference, April 17-18 in Columbus.

Honored by Ohio Museums Association

Stephanie Grable, Rachel Vangie, Trina Blau, Isabelle Lahm, Nicholas Torres, Dr. Donna Mark, Dr. Kelly Mezurek, and Associate Professor of History Rachel Constance, Ph.D.
This year’s graduating class of 20 is the largest senior class in the history of the Walsh University Honors Program. Our seniors presented their thesis research with professionalism and intellectual acuity, and fielded questions about that research with patience and poise.

Walsh University became home to another honor society, Theta Alpha Kappa, this spring. With the creation of the Division of Philosophy and Theology, Division Chair Bradley Beach, Ph.D., expressed interest in implementing an honor society for theology majors. Assistant Professor of Theology Andrew Kim, Ph.D., offered to lead the effort and gathered and submitted information about Walsh to the society’s board of directors. At the annual gathering for the American Academy of Religion (AAR), the board met and determined that Walsh met Theta Alpha Kappa’s criteria and the University was offered admission.

“The establishment of an Honors Theology Society at Walsh both reflects and furthers our mission to foster the spiritual and intellectual growth of our students in order to equip them to become leaders in service to others,” said Dr. Kim.

The following juniors and seniors will be the first members of Walsh’s chapter of Theta Alpha Kappa: A.J. Hoy, Jared Topp, Rachel Murphy, Nancy Shumar, GeorgeAnn Richards and Vicki Percez.

A member of the Association of College Honor Societies and a related scholarly organization of the AAR, Theta Alpha Kappa has more than two hundred national chapters at four-year academic institutions. The society is devoted to recognizing the academic achievements of religion and theology students as well as maintaining a vigorous national program of scholarship awards and fellowship competitions. Theta Alpha Kappa offers an annual prize and publication of outstanding student work in its Journal of Theta Alpha Kappa. Eligible students must have a 3.5 GPA in Religious Studies’ Theology and a 3.0 GPA overall.

The induction ceremony was held Friday, April 1, with introductory remarks from Walsh President Richard Jusseaume.

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Assistant Professor of Theology Andrew Kim, Ph.D.

Interactive Science Day
Promotes Hands-On Learning, Science Careers

More than 50 high school junior and senior students enjoyed the opportunity to experiment with the fields of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) during Walsh’s Science Day on April 16.

This semester's event included a presentation by NASA Glenn Research Center Senior Research Engineer Dr. David Ellis. A mental chemist, Dr. Ellis highlighted his work on rockets with a fun interactive presentation that focused on rocket design and the metals used in their construction. Students were able to meet with Dr. Ellis one-on-one to learn more about his career at NASA.

“By offering a fun, interactive, learning environment, we hope to inspire high school students to learn more about, and pursue, a career in the fields of STEM,” said Assistant Professor of Biochemistry Dr. Nureen Nasar, one of the event organizers. “The entire event offers parents and students the opportunity to get to know Walsh’s professors, tour our facilities, interact with current students and experience learning in a real college setting.”

Assistant Professor of Biochemistry Dr. Nureen Nasar

Math and Science Students Donate Time and Talent to Local Schools

Eighteen science students volunteered locally in Stark County and dedicated two days of their spring break to teaching Habitats and Ohio Trees at Hartville Elementary and Uniontown Elementary on March 10 and 11. The students volunteers were recruited from Sigma Zeta Science and Math Honor Society, General Biology Laboratory, Environmental Science Seminar and Science Education.

They included Kristen Bricker, Olivia Basso, Tabana Peinovic, Mihali Ucraniciuc, Katherine Cooper, Billy Cvnmen, Lindsay Ignazio, Meredith Fennel, Marcus Pinza, Katie Mokros, Anina Zaremba, Danielle Buzzacco, Courtney Ross, Mackenzie Fegan, JD Baylo, Alex Mackowicki, David Montgomery, and Mishgan Skyrka.

“By offering a fun, interactive, learning environment, we hope to inspire high school students to learn more about, and pursue, a career in the fields of STEM,” said Assistant Professor of Biochemistry Dr. Nureen Nasar.
Walsh University was proudly represented at this year’s Sigma Tau Delta International Convention in Minneapolis, MN, which took place from March 25. An honor society for English majors and minors, Sigma Tau Delta holds the annual convention as an opportunity for students to present original creative and critical works as well as participate in workshops and roundtable discussions. Junior Kayla Duryea and seniors Rachel Blakely, Mary Frankovich and Grant Gunstano attended the conference. They were accompanied by Professor of English Dr. John Kandl and Assistant Professor of English Dr. Ty Hawkins, who is also the faculty advisor for Walsh’s Sigma chapter, Alpha Omicron Alpha.

Each Sigma conference features a Common Reader, which is a work by a notable author from the region in which the conference is held. Chapters are encouraged to read the Common Reader prior to attending the convention, and submissions about this work are encouraged.

“Af ter six consecutive years of accompanying our students to this conference, I’m happy to report that our Walsh English majors not only hold their own in this national forum, but in their professional demeanor, collegiality, and intellectual/creative rigor—they absolutely shine,” said Dr. Kandl.

After being reviewed by a panel of nine judges, Frankovich was awarded second place in Original Fiction for her short story “In Memoriam” with a prize of $300. Out of hundreds of individual submissions, only 36 awards were given.

“For the fifth consecutive year, I had the chance to travel with English majors to the Sigma Tau Delta International Convention. And for the fifth consecutive year, I came away so proud of our Walsh students,” said Dr. Hawkins.

“In short, our students showcased Walsh with poise, intelligence, and warmth.”

Assistant Professor of English
Dr. Ty Hawkins

English Majors Accepted to Convention, Earn Second Place in Original Fiction

This year’s event was one of the largest in its 13-year history with more than 90 student presenters who represented 22 schools and four states. The April 19 ACES Symposium included approximately 50 research projects from more than 130 students and 20 faculty members.

“Coming to a symposium like ACES shows how much research is being done in our school and it makes you appreciate the differences of other research fields,” said Senior Biology Pre-Dentistry major Morgan McDemert.

“The most rewarding part of presenting is when people approach not knowing anything about your topic or even understanding your title. You can actually teach them a little about what you did.”

Senior Biology Pre-Dentistry major Morgan McDemert

Undergraduate Research Celebrated at ACES Symposium

Topics included “Cell Signaling and Diabetes” by Division of Mathematics and Sciences students Alexandra Berin and Esmeraldo Solozano; “Mixed Military Strategies and their Weapons: A Comparative Analysis of Alexander the Great, The Roman Empire, and Zhou Dynasty” by History student Tony Vest; “Education in Preservation: How Museums Can Raise Awareness of the Rhino Horn Dilemma” by Museum Studies student John P. Hartwick, and “Closing the Inner-City Math Achievement Gap” based on Walsh Division of Mathematics and Sciences after-school programs. The ACES Symposium began in 2013 and is co-coordinated by Associate Professor of Sociology Dr. Laci Fiala and Associate Professor of Biology Dr. Adam Underwood.

Nationally recognized expert on elections Dr. John Green of the Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics at The University of Akron was the keynote speaker at the 2016 All Politics is Local Conference on April 23. Dr. Green led a timely presentation titled “The Puzzle of the 2016 Presidential Election.”

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“All Politics is Local grew from the idea that we would like to provide students with a professional experience that will help them see the significance of their research and writing,” said event founder and Professor of Government and Foreign Affairs Dr. Koop Berry. “The data tells us that experiences like this are a significant learning opportunity with high impact for students. This is especially true for first generation students. Presenting helps them get out of their comfort zone and see first-hand what the competition will look like for jobs and graduate school.”

Event founder and Professor of Government and Foreign Affairs Dr. Koop Berry

Division of Philosophy and Theology
Events Focus on Community Engagement

Spring offerings of the Division of Philosophy and Theology promoted community engagement with events on topics ranging from the Forgotten Books of the Bible to the Symphony and All That Jazz offered through the Lifelong Learning Academy. The Series culminated with the 41st Annual Philosophy-Theology Symposium in March, which focused on the Judeo-Christian Tradition with Harvard Divinity School visiting scholar Dr. Jon D. Levenson.

The Lifelong Learning Academy also honored Deacon Dennis and Ginny Smith as the first recipients of the President’s Cabinet distinction during a special ceremony on February 8. The couple completed more than 125 hours of study with the Academy, equal to over 80 sessions, which qualifies them for the Academy’s highest honor. In addition, six new members were inducted into the Provost’s Council. This distinction recognizes scholars completing 75 hours of study with the Academy.

Those receiving certificates were Sr. Jeanne Poulton, CDS, Sr. Ann McGovern, CDS, Maryann and William Gaynor, Donna Dwohau and Dr. Joseph Sumritos.

Topics included “Call Signaling and Diabetes” by Division of Mathematics and Sciences students Alexandra Berin and Esmeraldo Solozano; “Mixed Military Strategies and their Weapons: A Comparative Analysis of Alexander the Great, The Roman Empire, and Zhou Dynasty” by History student Tony Vest; “Education in Preservation: How Museums Can Raise Awareness of the Rhino Horn Dilemma” by Museum Studies student John P. Hartwick, and “Closing the Inner-City Math Achievement Gap” based on Walsh Division of Mathematics and Sciences after-school programs. The ACES Symposium began in 2013 and is co-coordinated by Associate Professor of Sociology Dr. Laci Fiala and Associate Professor of Biology Dr. Adam Underwood.

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Sixteen students enrolled in Walsh’s digital photojournalism classes have examined the work of renowned photojournalists from the perspectives of artistic style, technique, history, and ethical issues surrounding photojournalism. Their project culminates in a collaboration with the Massillon Museum to host the 10th annual Image to Image exhibition in the Museum’s Studio M.

Image to Image: A Comparative Study of Past and Present Photojournalists’ Images, Styles, and Shooting Techniques features the work of students in Professor Lee Horrisberger’s digital photography class. It illustrates that the power of the image is not in the camera, but in the hands of the photographer.

“The goal of the project is to demonstrate the impact that style and technique have on artistic content, and also to immerse the students in the historical and social context of the photojournalists’ work,” said Prof. Horrisberger. “Students have learned that news is visual, and that storytelling through images can have an impact on society. By taking part in this project, these students have a better understanding of how photography, specifically photojournalism, works within the larger social tapestry.”

The advanced students examined the ethical issues facing the modern photojournalist including the use of Photoshop to correct or change an image, placing death on the front page of the newspaper, manipulating women’s body images for more appeal, debating whether a photojournalist should get involved in a situation that may endanger a subject’s health or wellbeing, or if it is the photojournalist’s job to stay behind the camera and not be intrusive into the scene.

Students have used cameras, computers, and photograph equipment from Walsh’s Communication Department to imitate the photography style, lighting, and content of photojournalists of their choosing. Students have learned the mechanical side of producing a photograph and now understand that it is equally important that a photograph be composed artistically to make an impact on its audience.

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Professor Lee Horrisberger

Community Art Project Connects with Local High School

On Monday, April 25, the eighth community art project coordinated by Professional Assistant Professor of Art Diane Belfiglio was unveiled in a special ceremony at St. Thomas Aquinas High School. The project, titled “Faith in Learning,” is centered on the concept of faith and education. The mosaic design features crosses and a shield as well as colors of both Walsh and St. Thomas to represent the partnership and shared Catholic values. The final installation will serve as a focal point in the library of St. Thomas Aquinas School. Beginning in February, Belfiglio directed Walsh Art Club students along with St. Thomas Aquinas students, faculty and staff as they worked together painting, gluing, assembling and signing the individual canvases.