

CAROLINA

ARTS & SCIENCES

SPRING • 2023

A Campaign for
the People



ALSO INSIDE: • Southern voices • Starworks • Teens and tech

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

A work always in progress

As you can see from the cover of this issue, we're celebrating the many successes of our *Campaign for Carolina*, the



University's \$5.1 billion fundraising campaign that wrapped up on Dec. 31. In all, the College of Arts and Sciences raised more than \$764 million, comfortably surpassing its \$750 million goal. These funds will benefit generations of students, faculty and programs, and they represent the hope, faith and confidence that more than 9,300 alumni, parents and friends demonstrated that they have in us by making a gift to the College.

I note in the Campaign Q&A that begins on p. 3 that now is the time for us to start planning for the College of Arts and Sciences that we want to be 10 years from now. Foremost, I want to ensure that our students are getting the best possible education — one that prepares them for the careers of tomorrow and to be engaged and informed citizens who participate in this great democracy. We want to ensure that our faculty have the resources they need both to teach and to conduct their scholarly and creative activities. And we have a responsibility as a public research university to serve the state and the larger world.

Because we are always seeking ways to enhance what we do, our work is never done. Private philanthropy provides that margin of excellence that helps us achieve our ambitious goals. My deepest gratitude to all who contributed to the campaign.

Sincerely, Jim White

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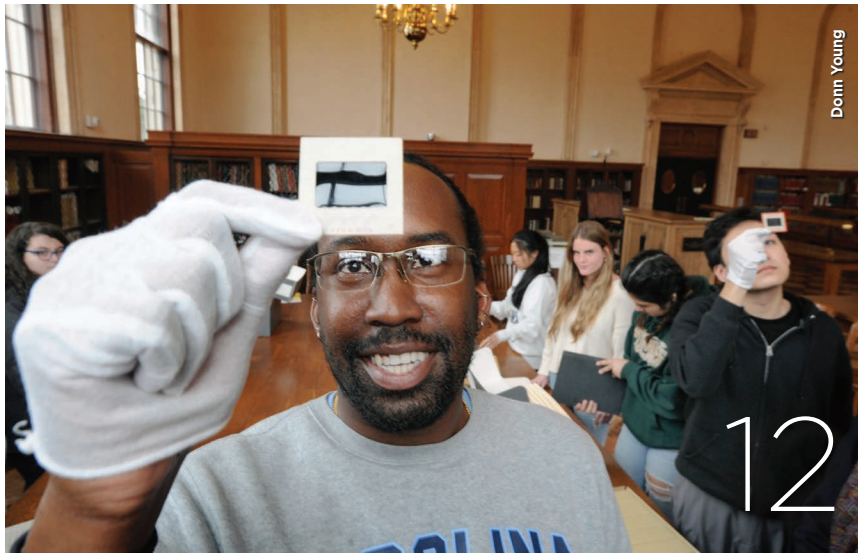
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TABLE OF CONTENTS



2 Investing in people

The *Campaign for Carolina* wrapped up in December having raised over \$764 million for the College of Arts and Sciences. In our cover package, read how campaign gifts benefited students, faculty and programs across the College.

More features:

12 Southern voices, future leaders

18 Setting Star on fire

Plus:

The benefits of gratitude and shared laughter, showcasing Native diversity, tackling the crisis of teens and screens, Southern history revisited and our social media crossover, College Up Close.

Cover Photo:

The *Campaign for Carolina* benefited multitudes; our cover models represent just a few of the success stories. Page numbers in parentheses indicate where you can read more about them.

Front row, from left: Marissa Carmi (p. 27), Fitzhugh Brundage (p. 36), Kim Abels (p. 10). *Middle row:* Ayana Monroe (*inside back cover*), Patricia Rosenmeyer (p. 5), Tony Royle (p. 12). *Back row:* Agustin Orozco (p. 16), Dan Asanov (*inside back cover*), Sarah Treul Roberts (p. 25).

(PHOTO BY DONN YOUNG)



Departments:

24-27	STUDENT, FACULTY AND ALUMNI UP CLOSE
28-35	THE SCOOP
36	CHAPTER & VERSE
INSIDE BACK COVER	FINALE



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For caption info on our celebratory Tar Heels, see p. 1.

Campaign for CAROLINA

Investing in people

Q: How was the Campaign for Carolina different from the University's last campaign?

Collins: This campaign was about investing in the people and programs that make the College of Arts and Sciences the heart of the University. The *Carolina First* campaign included more building projects, from the Physical Science Complex in Chapel Hill to Winston House in London.

White: Investing in our students, both undergraduate and graduate, through scholarships, fellowships and other support. Investing in our faculty through endowed professorships, supporting their research pursuits. Probing the boundaries of human knowledge doesn't happen without financial support. The ROI on all of this is huge.

Q: What were some surprises?

White: One surprise for me was the benefit of investing in undergraduate research. We know well that having research experiences are extremely beneficial for our students; we even wrote it into our new IDEAs in Action curriculum as a requirement. But we are seeing how much faculty benefit from having undergraduate students on their research teams. It is both heartwarming and jaw-dropping to see what students are achieving in research at the undergraduate level. They are getting published in scientific journals. They are presenting at conferences.

Q: What new priorities emerged after the campaign's public launch in 2017? How did the pandemic shape the campaign?

Collins: The Dean's Signature Initiatives developed over the course of the campaign and included the Chancellor's Science Scholars Program, the Institute for Convergent Science, the Program for Public Discourse and Southern Futures.

The Campaign for Carolina wrapped up in December having raised \$5.1 billion for the University, including over \$764 million for the College of Arts and Sciences. Carolina Arts & Sciences magazine sat down with Dean Jim White and Anne Collins, executive director of the Arts and Sciences Foundation, to discuss how this investment will shape the College's future. In the pages that follow, read more stories about how campaign gifts benefit students, faculty and programs.

White: One project that I have made a priority since joining the College in July is moving our Center for Student Success to the center of campus in the Undergraduate Library, where its range of support services will be more accessible to students [see p. 9]. This includes our very popular Writing and Learning Center, the Summer Bridge Program and Peer Mentoring. Dean Terry Rhodes, my predecessor, began that, but the pandemic paused it.

Collins: In terms of how the pandemic shaped the campaign, it was inspiring to see how our alumni, parents and friends rallied to support us. Remember, there were big questions over the direction of the economy, but our alumni continued to give and recognized the value of investing in Carolina. I also want to recognize the Arts and Sciences Foundation team, which went above and beyond to continue to raise and steward funds for the College.

Q: When we think of raising such a large sum of money, we often focus on the largest gifts. Can you provide a few examples of small gifts that made an impact?

White: The Arts and Sciences fund is made up of mostly small gifts, and those unrestricted dollars are among the most impactful because they allow me to respond to immediate and unexpected needs [see p. 11].

I also think of gifts to programs like Study Abroad.

continued

These were not mega-gifts, but they have tremendous impact. Sometimes a few hundred dollars is all it takes to allow a student to travel to another country, study or conduct research, and have this transformative experience they will remember for the rest of their lives.

Collins: The median gift to the College was \$200. Gifts of any amount truly make an impact. It was inspiring to see young alumni and current students giving to the campaign and gifts from members of the community who aren't alumni but see the value the University adds to the region.

Q: Fundraising campaigns are not just about paying for current needs; they are for funding what's next. What are your short- and long-term priorities for the College?

White: I've already talked about one immediate priority — moving the Center for Student Success into the Undergraduate Library in the heart of campus.

We will continue to look for ways that support our students and our faculty. We are in the process right now of enhancing our academic advising program, changing it to a more holistic model of “thrive advisors” who will assist students throughout their entire four years here. Not just advising on courses and majors but career preparation and much more. We will want to see that grow and continue.

We also need to be thinking of the skill sets our students will need to be successful in their careers and how to teach them. Civil discourse is one example. Data literacy is another.

Another area is faculty. We are a premier university and should be paying premier university salaries — for both our faculty and staff. Since 2016, the number of tenured/tenure-track faculty we have in the College has been declining. Is that the direction we want to be going in? I'd love for us to have a conversation about reengagement of our core research mission.

As the chancellor likes to note, we are an overtly public university, and that should always be top of mind — how can



TOP: Anne Collins and Jim White discuss the successful Campaign for Carolina and future priorities for the College of Arts and Sciences. **BOTTOM:** Dalal Azzam '22 was a Chancellor's Science Scholar — the CSS program was a fundraising priority in the campaign.

we serve our state and country, how can we best educate the students who are entrusted to us?

Big public universities are not nimble speedboats. We are more like an ocean liner, and it takes time to set or correct a course. We should be planning now for the College of Arts and Sciences that we want to be 10 years from now.

All the things I've just talked about are — either directly or indirectly — people-focused. I can't think of a better investment than to invest in our people.

► [Read more campaign highlights at college.unc.edu/campaign.](https://college.unc.edu/campaign)

New director brings love of classics to her role

Patricia Rosenmeyer takes the helm as the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies celebrates 20 years.

By Claire Cusick (M.A. '21)

It's a good thing that Patricia Rosenmeyer loves to learn new things. Rosenmeyer was named the Seymour and Carol Levin Distinguished Term Professor in Jewish Studies and director of the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies last fall. Although her Ph.D. from Princeton University is in comparative literature, her new position is helping her to explore a deeper understanding of Jewish history, culture and thought.

Rosenmeyer's professorship was established in 2010 by Seymour Levin '48 and Carol Levin, providing her with support for directing the center.

Recent events at the center have included topics as wide-ranging as Yiddish culture in Ukraine, Southern Jews and the Lost Cause, and Jewish perceptions of justice during and after the Holocaust. The center has hosted more than 200 events since its founding in 2003.

Rosenmeyer came to UNC-Chapel Hill's department of classics in 2017. She has found Carolina students to be "amazing, diverse and engaged" learners, she said. This

semester, she is teaching a first-year seminar, "Helen of Troy: From Homer to Hollywood," and only one of the students enrolled is an intended humanities major.

"That's what I love," she said. "They're not necessarily going to be classics majors or Jewish studies majors, but for a brief time, when we're together during the semester, I can enlighten them about classics and Jewish studies, and I learn from them, too. Everyone brings something different to the classroom."

As an example, one of Rosenmeyer's students recently alerted her to the author Madeline Miller, whose contemporary fictional retellings of the stories of Achilles and Circe have hit bestseller lists.

Rosenmeyer said her interest in Jewish studies comes from her refugee parents, while her love of classics was sparked by her high school Latin teacher, with whom she maintains contact, even though her teacher is now in her 90s.

"Almost all of us in the field of classics had a really good high school Latin teacher," Rosenmeyer said. "My real love is poetry. I would have been happy to study in any language — Greek, French, German, whatever. But I got hooked and just kept going with Greek and Latin. And it all goes back to having a wonderful teacher."

Rosenmeyer's current research focuses on Sappho and translation as cultural strategy in early 20th-century western Europe. She hopes to turn next to a consideration of Hebrew and Yiddish translations of Homer's *Iliad*.

The Carolina Center for Jewish Studies celebrates its 20th anniversary this year. Rosenmeyer was quick to credit her predecessors, the late Jonathan M. Hess and Ruth von Bernuth, for creating such a solid foundation.

The College is currently hiring three new faculty members in Jewish studies, which will allow the center to continue to expand course offerings and programming for students. "This year we're doing a search for an expert in medieval

Jewish history, whose work will be half in the history department and half in Jewish studies; and another whose expertise is in 20th-century Hispanic Jewish culture, which is quite unusual," she said. Next year's focus is to hire a professor of Yiddish. The College also recently added a faculty member in Jewish studies and women's and gender studies.

Rosenmeyer is particularly grateful for the fellowships and research grants for students that have been made possible through private support, including gifts made during the *Campaign for Carolina*.

"We really are keen on supporting the next generation of scholars, and they don't have to be academic scholars," she said. "They can find a career that they love, and it doesn't have to be teaching at the university level. But we want to give them the foundation and experience in Jewish studies that they can combine with whatever other interests they have."



Center director Patricia Rosenmeyer says her interest in Jewish studies comes from her refugee parents, while her love of classics was sparked by her high school Latin teacher.

“This experience was the highlight of my college career”

Thanks to private support for scholarships and fellowships throughout the campaign, Honors Carolina enhanced its ability to provide students with world-class learning opportunities.

By Patty Courtright (B.A. '75, M.A. '83)

For years, Bryanna Ledbetter wondered how much of what she learned about the Salem witch trials in elementary school was true. The summer before her senior year at Carolina, she had a unique opportunity to explore that history.

As a recipient of the Anne L. Robinson and S. Epes Robinson Honors Fellowship, Ledbetter spent a week in Salem, Massachusetts, and a month in London examining how witch trials are held in collective memory. “I wanted to see how the epicenters of persecution view the witch trials today and reckon with that history,” she explained.

The Salem trip established a baseline, and in London Ledbetter combed through references in the British Library, British Museum and Museum of London. She also traveled to Bury St. Edmunds in Suffolk, England, where witch trials dating back to 1599 served as a blueprint for those in Salem in the 1690s.

That research experience was life-changing, Ledbetter said. The first-generation college student from Hudson, North Carolina, had never been out of the country before, and the trip to Salem was only her second time on an airplane. On top of that, it was the summer of 2021 in the midst of the COVID pandemic.

“I would be lying if I said I wasn’t terrified at the beginning, but this experience was honestly the highlight of my college career,” Ledbetter said. “I never thought I could live in London for a month and conduct my dream research, and it



TOP: Bryanna Ledbetter at the British Museum, the starting point for her London-based research. **BOTTOM:** Honors Carolina Associate Dean James Leloudis teaches a class in Wilson Library.

solidified that history is what I am meant to pursue.”

Ledbetter, who graduated in 2022 with a double major in history and management and society, now works with the Carolina College Advising Corps on the Outer Banks helping high school students prepare for college. She sees graduate school in her future, likely focusing on the impact of historical events on people’s everyday lives.



Courtesy of Fareeda Akewusola



Donn Young

TOP: From left, Kate Golson and Fareeda Akewusola at a Carolina basketball game. **BOTTOM:** The lounge in Graham Memorial, Honors Carolina's campus home, is a favorite study spot for students.

Igniting that passion is exactly what the Robinsons had in mind with the fellowship.

The liberal arts education the late Epes Robinson pursued during his first two years at UNC inspired a lifelong interest that informed and enriched his life, said Anne Robinson.

“He felt that a knowledge of history, literature and philosophy was an essential part of being a well-educated individual. This fellowship is enabling students to study their areas of interest more deeply,” she said.

COME HERE, GO ANYWHERE

One of the oldest honors programs in the country, Honors Carolina began in 1954 to bring top undergraduates to Carolina and provide them with world-class learning opportunities.

“We do it in a way that ultimately enhances the academic experience for every undergraduate on this campus. We are an honors program, not a college, and that distinction matters because Honors Carolina isn’t cut off from UNC’s larger undergraduate population,” said James Leloudis, Peter T. Grauer Associate Dean for Honors Carolina.

The aim is to enroll about 10 percent of each entering class in Honors Carolina, Leloudis said, but anyone can apply at the end of their first semester and at the end of their first year. In addition, more than 200 small discussion-based Honors seminars are taught by distinguished faculty across disciplines and are open, as space allows, to all undergraduates with an overall average of a B or better.

During the *Campaign for Carolina*, the College raised more than \$44 million to support a variety of Honors Carolina initiatives.

For instance, the Go Anywhere initiative provides career and professional development coaches to help students plan intentional paths through the University — and beyond. And hundreds of internships connect what students do in the classroom with what they aspire to do after graduation.

For the first time, money was also raised specifically for Honors Carolina scholarships, Leloudis said. The scholarships support four years of tuition, fees, room and board, including a study abroad experience.

In addition to the funding, “every student recipient also has a faculty mentor and a connection with the people who made the investments in

continued

their education, delivering on our promise to help prepare our students for successful careers and purposeful lives,” Leloudis said.

Private support also closes the financial gap for the 200 students who study abroad every year, which is especially important for UNC’s first-generation college students, he added. “Honors Carolina has a broader global footprint than any other honors program or college in the country.”

ATTRACTING EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS

Honors Carolina advisory board co-chair Brian Golson and his wife, Alisa, endowed the Golson Family Honors Carolina Scholarship as a recruiting tool for extraordinary students.

The inaugural recipient is Fareeda Akewusola, a first-year student from Houston, Texas, who had a choice of more than a dozen prestigious universities. She had narrowed the field to Carolina and the University of Chicago, both of which offered full-ride scholarships.

After visiting both, she said yes to Carolina on the spot. “People were genuinely kind here,” she remembered. “And they didn’t have to be because I hadn’t committed to come here yet.”

She knew study abroad was a must. She plans to declare neuroscience as her major and is applying for a neuropharmacology study abroad program in Australia this summer.

Outside the classroom, Akewusola can rattle off a diverse list of activities she’s involved in—including the campus jiu-jitsu and wrestling clubs, the pre-health fraternity Alpha Epsilon Delta and the One Africa student organization.

She and the Golsons regularly stay in touch, and she has become friends with their daughter Kate, who is a sophomore at Carolina. “Most scholarships don’t come with relationships with donors and senior faculty,” she said. “It’s significant that I have an extended family here who I can talk with about anything.”

The Golsons were thrilled that their gift was instrumental in attracting Akewusola to Carolina.

Having a hand in enticing exceptional students to attend Carolina is incredibly rewarding, “And selfishly, we want them at UNC,” Alisa Golson said.

Brian Golson added, “Fareeda is an amazing student, and we have truly enjoyed getting to know her as well as her mother. Alisa and I are confident that UNC and Honors Carolina will support Fareeda’s every step along her collegiate journey.”

The built-in community of people who can offer encouragement to try something new is a tremendous asset, Akewusola said.

“It’s good to push yourself out of your comfort zone. There’s always a chance it won’t work out, but giving yourself that chance makes the rewards so much greater.”



Courtesy of Bryanna Ledbetter



Courtesy of Bryanna Ledbetter

TOP: On her research trip, Bryanna Ledbetter found this inscription honoring Bridget Bishop, the first person to be executed during the Salem witch trials. **BOTTOM:** She also visited the Salem Witch Museum, one of the largest attractions in Salem, Massachusetts.

Brian Golson describes the Honors Carolina Scholarship program as an “outstanding opportunity for donors who want to have a relationship with the recipient of their philanthropy and build a deeper relationship with the University.”

As co-chair of the Honors Carolina advisory board, he offered an open invitation: “We welcome any donor who is interested in endowing a full or half scholarship in this young program.”

Gifts support expansion of Writing and Learning Center



Courtesy of Writing and Learning Center

The center provides personalized academic coaching and resources to help students from all backgrounds and abilities succeed in and out of the classroom.

**By Claire Cusick
(M.A. '21)**

Private support for the Writing and Learning Center during the *Campaign for Carolina* has the potential to impact every student. Donors during the campaign have laid the groundwork to relocate the center to the heart of the UNC-Chapel Hill campus in the Robert B. House Undergraduate Library.

The Writing and Learning Center provides personalized academic coaching and resources to help students succeed. Programs include both writing and academic coaching, peer tutoring, study groups, test prep, online resources, English language support and more. On its oft-visited website, the center offers handouts on common writing and studying challenges, such as thesis statements, the use of passive voice and how to deal with procrastination.

The center, part of the Center for Student Success in the Office of Undergraduate Education, is currently located near several residence halls on the southern end of the UNC campus. The College is committed to moving the center to the Undergraduate Library, with additional philanthropic support as the cornerstone of this effort.

continued



Courtesy of Writing and Learning Center

“With the move [to the Undergraduate Library], students will find services that support their academic success in one friendly, convenient spot,” says Director Kim Abels.

Kim Abels, Writing and Learning Center director, said the move to a more central location on campus enhances the ability of the Center for Student Success to reach more students, and that the collaboration with University Libraries adds value. (In addition to housing the Writing and Learning Center, the Center for Student Success offers other student support services, such as Summer Bridge, Carolina Firsts and peer mentoring services.)

“The Writing and Learning Center provides personalized academic support that matches the rigor of UNC, and we seek to meet students where they are,” Abels said. “We are grateful to the library for this partnership, which will give students access to services in one convenient spot.”

Mike and Laura Grace gave the first gift to set up a relocation fund in 2018. The Graces became acquainted with the center during their son Patrick’s first-year orientation. Patrick graduated in 2019, but Laura Grace continues to serve on the center’s advisory board.

“A large population of UNC students, no matter their major or level of academic performance, uses these services,” she said in 2019. “We’re in a diverse learning and cultural environment, and there’s nothing more important than improving how we communicate, being open to others and appreciating our strengths and weaknesses.”

Jennifer and Stephen Rich also contributed to the relocation fund. Their daughter, Caroline, is a Carolina junior. Jennifer Rich, a member of the Arts and Sciences Foundation board of directors, said she is excited to imagine the impact the center could have when it moves to the library.

She said the center and its work are “near and dear to my heart” because she grew up with dyslexia. “I had a really hard time in school,” Rich said. “Resources like the Writing and Learning Center were really important to me all throughout high school. Then I went to the University of Pennsylvania, and they had a learning resource center, which was very helpful to me.”

The beauty of this Carolina resource is that it is open to all students, just like the library, she said.



Writing and Learning Center programs include writing and academic coaching, peer tutoring, study groups, test prep, online resources, English language support and more.

“Everybody, at some point in college, needs some help with something — whether it’s writing, learning how to take a test or learning how to do something new,” she said. “I want to make sure that students who need extra help can just walk in and get that help. I think there’s nothing more valuable than that.”

Michael Stutts ’02, a donor and member of the center’s advisory board, has also supported the relocation fund and is dedicated to building awareness of the center’s comprehensive services.

“I want every student who goes to UNC to get the same enriching experience that I did,” he said. “I’m passionate about creating that boost for people who need it.”



Dawn Young

Why I Give

Donors share why they gave to the Arts and Sciences Fund during the Campaign for Carolina. It serves as the dean's unrestricted discretionary fund and plays a crucial role in funding the College's highest priorities.

"Carolina was the most wonderful gift my parents Clara and Larry could give to me. I made life-changing friendships and had amazing experiences as a history major in the College of Arts and Sciences and a member of St. Anthony Hall. I hope this gift will help other students enjoy wonderful experiences like the ones I had."

— DENISE JEAN DOLAN '90

"UNC-Chapel Hill made available an exceptional education in the arts, sciences and medicine, which has given me a fulfilling career and the ability to provide service to those in need."

— WELLS REYNOLDS '97, M.D. '02

"As a career high-school science teacher, I fully support education. UNC-Chapel Hill was a wonderful start to my adult life."

— PHYLLIS ROBINSON '83

"I am a proud alumnus and the father of a current Tar Heel. I have loved my University and tried to embody what it taught me in terms of making an impact and leaving the world (or your community) a better place than when you found it. Go Heels!"

— BHAVIN MEHTA '95 AND CLASS OF 2025 PARENT

"I give in gratitude for how well UNC prepared me for my life and career."

— EDDIE BASS '58, M.MUS. '59, PH.D. '64

"UNC's College of Arts and Sciences was a great academic and learning environment. The knowledge and techniques I learned there have served me well my entire life. My son went to UNC, graduated in December 2012, and he was likewise very well prepared for life after UNC."

— COLONEL STEVEN PENNINGTON '77
AND CLASS OF 2012 PARENT

THE ARTS AND SCIENCES FUND HAS PROVIDED SUPPORT FOR:

- Travel for faculty to attend and present at conferences, where they receive valuable feedback on their research projects and gain emerging knowledge to bring back to their departments.
- Strategic program priorities for the global area studies centers.
- Creation of a postdoctoral program in the department of mathematics.
- Diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives that foster unity and belonging for the College community.

ARTS AND SCIENCES FUND — CAMPAIGN FOR CAROLINA

- Total Revenue = \$19,690,310.80
- Total Donors = 12,244 donors

SOUTHERN VOICES, FUTURE LEADERS

By Jess Abel '19
Photos by Donn Young

*The inaugural cohort
of Southern Futures
Undergraduate Fellows
is paving the way for
generations of Tar Heels
interested in deeply engaging
with the South through
student-led research and
community-driven activism.*



Southern Futures Fellow Colin O'Hagerty (right) examines a slide with Tony Royle, an American studies Ph.D. student. Fellows visited Wilson Library as part of the course "Research with the American South."



Like the South itself, the 20 students who make up the first cohort of Southern Futures Undergraduate Fellows represent identities that span communities and traditions, regions and cultures.

The fellows come from 17 counties across North Carolina. Their intended majors range from art history to exercise and sport science, public policy to biology and beyond. But through their varied backgrounds and interests, there is a common thread: a commitment to deeply engaging with the Southern communities they call home.

This commitment is shared by UNC's Southern Futures initiative itself, which is home to the fellowship. Created in 2018, the initiative is a cross-campus collaboration that works toward equity, justice and possibility in the American South. And, like the initiative, the fellowship is a collaborative network of students and mentors, scholars and community leaders.

"We are engaging in a kind of two-way dialogue," said Elizabeth Engelhardt, senior associate dean for fine arts and humanities in the College and co-director of Southern Futures. Even in the early planning of the fellowship, she imagined asking the students questions like, *What's important to you? What are you trying to create? and How can we help?*

"Undergraduate students are walking onto our campus with a voice, with ideas, with a set of commitments to their communities," Engelhardt said. "During the time that they're here, our job is to help them focus their voice and figure out what they need to become that person in the world, to become that future leader in the South."



TOP: Peyton Brooks is photographed at Isabel Lu's mural at UNC's Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention.

BOTTOM: Chaitra Powell, curator of the Southern Historical Collection, welcomes fellows to Wilson Library.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN NATIVE COMMUNITIES

"Growing up, I had little exposure to my culture and ethnicity," said Peyton Brooks, a first-year fellow from Lumberton.

Brooks is a Lumbee citizen and a member of the largest Native American community in North Carolina. She grew up in a "Tar Heel household" — her mom earned her bachelor's degree from UNC, and her dad attended graduate school at the Eshelman School of Pharmacy. Because of her family ties and the University's Native community, Brooks said Carolina felt like home.

“There was something about visiting for my official tour of campus,” she remembered. “I was like, ‘This is where I want to be. This is where I see myself growing for the next four years.’”

Brooks is one of over 6,500 students — about 11 percent of all UNC applicants for fall 2022 admission — who expressed interest in the new undergraduate fellowship. In partnership with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, Southern Futures leaders read nearly 400 applications for the inaugural 20 fellowships.

“Reading the stories of these students — who are absolutely the future — gave me so much hope and optimism and excitement,” said Corban Davis, director of operations for Southern Futures.

As fellows, students receive support from Southern Futures throughout their undergraduate careers. They remain together from their first weeks at Carolina until they walk across the stage at Commencement and are awarded \$5,000 each to design and conduct research, create an artistic project or partner with a community over a summer of their choosing.

For her project, Brooks is hoping to combine her love for her Native community with her passion for increasing access to preventive health care.

“I’m very passionate about athletics, nutrition and healthy

lifestyles,” said Brooks, an exercise and sport science major who played three varsity sports at Lumberton Senior High School. She’s considering a service-oriented project, like holding a sports camp for kids in Robeson County, where she grew up.

Brooks is hoping that working with kids will help create an environment of healthy living that reaches far beyond her initial project. “I know I want to focus on kids because if we start with young people, they’ll be able to share these beneficial life skills with future generations of Native people and anyone else in our local community.”

The fellowship’s emphasis on connecting students’ academic passions with their home communities is not something she takes for granted.

“I think it’s very special that I get to represent my people in my tribe. Hopefully, this project will be the way that I can give back to my part of the South.”

Brooks said she is proud to be part of the first undergraduate fellows cohort.

“We’re starting this legacy of students who are motivated and excited about making change in the South — and in our world in general. I think that’s really, really special.”

GIVING VOICE TO UNTOLD STORIES

Hallie Brew, a first-year student from Apex, shared her view of the South and her place in it in her application essay.

“I deconstructed the song ‘Strange Fruit,’ sung by Billie Holiday,” said Brew. The song was first sung by the jazz singer in 1939 as a protest to the lynching of Black Americans in the South.

Brew went line-by-line through the lyrics, weaving in insights about her identity as a biracial woman and her passion for activism that was ignited by one of her Middle Creek High School teachers.

Through classes in African American literature and civic engagement, Brew first learned of the attempted lynching of Lynn Council, a Black man, in Apex in 1952. Brew and her class spoke with Council, who shared his experiences. Brew said that conversation was integral to her desire to be a Southern Futures Fellow.

For her research project, she is hoping to create opportunities to talk with more community members who have witnessed lynchings in North Carolina so that she can help contextualize and share this underreported history.

To do that, she knows listening and learning will be the first steps. “That’s something that Southern Futures has really emphasized: just listening,” she said. “I think that’s such an important thing in our world right now.”

continued

TOP: From left, Anna Krome-Lukens and Hallie Brew look through documents in the Fearington Reading Room during Krome-Lukens’ class. **BOTTOM:** Experiential learning — including opportunities with Southern Futures’ strategic partners University Libraries and Carolina Performing Arts — is integral to the fellowship.



Brew is currently a political science major and plans to pursue a career in law.

“The reason why I want to go into law, the reason I’m so interested in social justice topics and race relationships, is because of how I grew up: being one of the only people of color in my classes and wanting to learn more about the history that no one ever taught me,” she said.

Brew is enjoying the conversations she has with other fellows. She is as grateful for the in-depth discussions about their research topics as she is for discussions about life as a college student. “Everyone has so much passion for what they want to learn and do at UNC,” she said, adding that the cohort “gives an intimate family feel” to her student experience.

Fellows are also paired with graduate and professional mentors who support their work.

Tony Royle, a Ph.D. student in American studies, is the coordinator of student programming for Southern Futures. He is also the graduate research consultant for the fellows’ required course, “Research with the American South,” taught by Anna Krome-Lukens, teaching associate professor of public policy.

In the class, fellows are given a guided introduction to conducting original research through an arts and humanities lens. They also experience immersive learning opportunities through Southern Futures’ strategic partners, University

Libraries and Carolina Performing Arts. These opportunities include access to the Southern Historical Collection at Wilson Library and the chance to attend the North Carolina premiere of the opera “Omar” by Rhiannon Giddens, Southern Futures artist-in-residence at CPA.

“We’re trying to create these collaborators who feel ready to work with each other, with their local communities and with the South in general,” said Royle, who has one-on-one monthly meetings with each fellow to discuss their personal and academic goals.

LIFELONG BONDS ACROSS THE MILES

To Agustin Orozco, community is everything.

“Specifically in Latin America, ‘family’ is viewed as more than just ‘nuclear family,’” said Orozco, who was born in Medellín, Colombia, but attended middle and high school in Greensboro.

Carolina’s Latinx and first-generation student communities were a defining reason the sophomore chose to transfer to UNC from Appalachian State University. The community he has experienced as a Southern Futures Fellow has helped make the transition easier.

“Honestly, I haven’t been exposed to a space like this before,” he said of the fellowship program. The fellows first met

BELOW: Hallie Brew is pictured with Artie Barksdale’s mural in downtown Chapel Hill. It reads, “The South Got Something to Say.”





ABOVE: Agustin Orozco stands in front of Scott Nurkin's "Greetings from Chapel Hill" mural. **LEFT:** Fellows in the inaugural cohort come from 17 counties across North Carolina.



one another at a cookout at Love House, home to UNC's Center for the Study of the American South, during the first week of school. Their common interests made conversation a breeze.

"We all knew we had an interest in social justice. So it was like building a relationship from top to bottom," he said. "I know that these are going to be lifelong friendships."

Orozco is interested in studying the intersection of racial justice and technology access.

"This is personal to me because when my family first moved to Greensboro, we didn't have a computer at home where I could write essays for school," he said. "I remember my dad getting back home from work, and then him driving me back to his office so I could type up my essays."

With guidance from his mentors, Orozco is exploring how he can add emerging technologies — like artificial intelligence

— to his research, too. He cited the racial bias of some facial recognition software as an inspiration for his fellowship project, after learning of a study on the subject led by the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

"There's really no limit to the research that they could do here," Royle added. Fellows "have complete ownership of what this could look like."

As the program grows into its second year, Orozco, Brew and Brooks are looking forward to meeting the next cohort, which will be expanded to 23 students thanks to generous private funding that has allowed the program to add three additional fellows. These gifts include the establishment of the Southwind Southern Futures Fellows Fund, created by Carolina alumni Ray Owens and Sally Higgins. The fund is the program's first endowment and will fully fund the research project of one fellow in every cohort, a commitment to generations of Tar Heels to come.

"When families and communities entrust the University with their students, it's such a gesture of trust. It's a gesture of meaningful commitment to us," said Engelhardt. "I hope that over time, communities around the state — around the nation — know that Southern Futures is one of the ways that UNC acknowledges that trust. We commit to those communities, to these future leaders, our students. We see you, and we know how serious this is."

Setting Star on FIRE

A Carolina alumna has sparked a successful economic revitalization effort in Star, North Carolina, by transforming an old textile mill into an arts and small business incubator.

BY KIM WEAVER SPURR '88
PHOTOS BY JESS ABEL '19

Nancy Gottovi, surrounded by a kaleidoscope of glasswork in yellows, pinks, purples and greens, tells visitors: “We like to set stuff on fire around here.”

Gottovi is executive director of the Starworks Center for Creative Enterprise, a nonprofit hub for local and global artists working in ceramics, metal and glass, which are sometimes called “the fire arts.” Gottovi has been working on this economic revitalization project in earnest for the past 18 years in Star, a town of about 800 people in the exact geographic center of the state. (A sign above the entrance of the small downtown library boasts of this fact, backed by longitudinal and latitudinal data from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.)

Gottovi is standing in the middle of the School House Gallery, the public entrance of Starworks, where the art on display is for sale. In 1910, the building housed the Carolina Collegiate and Agricultural Institute, then later multiple textile manufacturers before the final one closed shop in the early 2000s.

Gottovi has been setting the town on fire, too. A local businessman donated the approximately 200,000-square-foot building to Gottovi’s nonprofit in late 2004 with one request: “If I give it to you, will you do something good for the community?”



“I fell in love with the space the first time I saw it. I thought, ‘Well, with 2.5 staff members, this is a little more than we need, but everybody gets a corner office,’” Gottovi said, chuckling. The Wilmington native is a triple UNC-Chapel Hill degree-holder, receiving a B.A. in English in 1982 and a master’s

and Ph.D. in cultural anthropology in 1992 and 1998, respectively.

After taking her nonprofit board of directors on a tour of the old mill, Gottovi waited for their reaction.

“I thought, ‘They’re going to walk in and take one look at this huge, leaky building with no heat and electricity and



say, ‘Nancy, are you crazy?’” she said. “But every single one of them said, ‘I think we should try it.’”

Current board member Russell Hollers III said Gottovi wears many hats as the leader of this creative enterprise — industrial property manager, fundraiser, grant proposal writer, community-

builder, entrepreneur and problem-solver — illustrating “the power of a liberal arts education.” He is also a Carolina alumnus (B.A. history ’87, J.D. ’92); he grew up in the area and returned home after finishing law school.

“Starworks is the perfect place for realizing that vision of how to keep

small towns vibrant,” said Hollers, who enjoys conversing with community members and artists at the monthly “Hot Glass, Cold Beer” events, where artists showcase their work and attendees can enjoy beverages in the onsite taproom/ coffee shop. “We’re trying to make sure we sustain this.” *continued*

WILD IDEAS AND WILD CLAY

When Gottovi first inherited the building, she thought that a clay manufacturing business would be a good fit. The long-standing Seagrove pottery community is only about 10 miles away, but no one locally was sourcing indigenous clay from North Carolina's rich soils to produce a finished product for sale. Depending on the chemistry of the clay, it can be adapted to make the perfect medium for potters.

Serendipity would lead her to a business partner who could help her do just that.

At an American Anthropological Association meeting in Boston, Gottovi reconnected with ceramic artist Takuro



Shibata, whom she had met briefly when spending time in Shigaraki, Japan, after completing her doctoral dissertation.

“When I read Takuro’s resume, I saw that he was also a ceramics materials engineer and had been working at one of the biggest clay companies in Japan,” she said. “Shortly thereafter, he and his wife, Hitomi, also a ceramic artist, sold all their worldly possessions and arrived in the U.S. with their suitcases, boxes and a cat. I picked them up at the Greensboro airport, gave Takuro 14,000 square feet of space and a laptop, and said, ‘Start up a business.’ And he did.”

The Shibatas recently published a book, *Wild Clay: Creating Ceramics and Glazes from Natural and Found Resources*. “I think years from now when people are writing about American

- **TOP:** Nancy Gottovi walks through the clay manufacturing facility. The indigenous clay sold by Starworks is prized by artisan potters.
- **BOTTOM LEFT:** Gottovi takes a pot from the shelf and describes its unique colors and textures, explaining that the vessel was fired on its side.
- **BOTTOM RIGHT:** The main entrance to Starworks. In 1910, the building housed the Carolina Collegiate and Agricultural Institute.

pottery, they will be writing about Takuro Shibata,” Gottovi said.

She points to clear tubes on the wall that contain samples of North Carolina clay, which is, surprisingly, not just muddy red but purple and black, too.

“It’s a material that is literally underneath our feet. It’s also just amazing clay. Remember the time you tasted really good bread, full of texture and color? That is like Starworks clay,” she said. “We make clay for people who care about clay.”

Gottovi also attracted a manufacturing business, Wet Dog Glass, that makes

high-end glassmaking equipment for artists. Eddie Bernard and his wife, Angela, fled New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina and revived their business at Starworks. It has been so successful that they have outgrown their space in Star and will be moving to a larger facility in Greensboro sometime this year.

How does Gottovi describe Starworks to an outsider? It is a haven for manufacturers as well as makers, holding artists’ residencies and internships in glass and ceramics; metalworking residencies will begin this year.



• **TOP LEFT:** The School House Gallery features work for sale by more than 100 artists — many of whom were participants in Starworks' glass and ceramics residency programs. • **TOP RIGHT:** Artists Megan Lange and Emilia Marcjasz work as a team on a glass project. • **BOTTOM:** From left, artist Emily Tischler, glass director Joe Grant and Lange in the Starworks hot shop.

"I like to use the term 'creative work community,'" she said. "One of the things I want people to realize is that they may see all these artists in here working and listening to rock 'n' roll and making amazing things, but this is work. People are doing this to make a living."

ART AND SCIENCE

In the hot shop, the smell of fire is in the air. Glass director Joe Grant takes a hollow steel pipe and pokes it into a furnace where the temperature is about 2,100 degrees and the molten glass is "the viscosity of honey."

"That's called 'the gather,' when we wind the glass onto the end of the rod," he said. "From that point forward, we're always turning. Turning becomes

like breathing in the hot shop, because once you remove that glass from its heat source, you have a limited amount of time to shape it before it cools down and becomes rigid."

Glassmaking is an art, but it's also a science — physics and chemistry and timing and temperature. Grant, who first came to Starworks as an artist-in-residence in 2013 before becoming glass director in 2014, talked about the relationship of science to art in a new book published by UNC Press, *Art of the State: Celebrating the Visual Art of North Carolina*. "Art has a wider vocabulary with which to interpret nature ... there is room for mysticism, transcendence, intuition, hybridization, feeling and emotion in art," he wrote.

Grant and emerging artist Janey Hollis create an almost balletic dance of twisting steel rods with hot glass, rolling the glowing orbs on a steel table called a marver and then returning them time and again to reheating chambers to keep the glass pliable. Grant stresses that glassblowing is also about teamwork. He blows into the end of the rod to create a glass bubble, to which Hollis adds a chunk of transparent orange. They're working on a sculpture for the Hospice of the Piedmont.

"That's one of the things that drew me to becoming a glassmaker — the camaraderie that happens in the studio, working in tandem with team members who understand the language and can choreograph themselves to be in the exact place at the right time to make magic happen," Grant said.

Grant said his creative energy is also fueled by the visiting artists who come to Starworks. The current artist-in-residence is from Dublin, Ireland. There are interns from Poland and California. Workshops and festivals invite the public into the artists' studios. Teens from Eckerd Connects, a juvenile justice residential academy about seven miles

continued

down the road, are invited to Starworks a couple of times each week to learn about glassblowing and teamwork and communication.

Grant praises Gottovi for being unafraid to try new things, even if she fails.

“That’s a huge part of her leadership, as well as the trust and faith she puts into her staff. She recognizes that having the right people in place allows us to become better all the time,” he said. “Starworks makes me feel like anything is possible.”

CREATIVITY AND COMMUNITY

UNC anthropologist Rudi Colloredo-Mansfeld, former senior associate dean of social sciences and global programs in the College of Arts and Sciences, took a delegation of artists from Ecuador and Mexico to visit Starworks in 2017. Colloredo-Mansfeld, who studies global artisan economies, and a colleague soon invited Gottovi to speak at an international conference in Puebla, Mexico.

Colloredo-Mansfeld asked Gottovi to share her experience in a chapter for a book on economic revitalization in the Americas, written in Spanish, which translated is “Industrial Abandonment, Economic Trauma and the Rise of a New Model of Development of a Creative Economy.”

He said Gottovi may joke about being lucky and in the right place at the right time, but “she’s worked very hard to make that luck stick.”

“Starworks has become a place that learns about the global even as it focuses on the local,” Colloredo-Mansfeld said. “There’s always a new experiment being launched there. It is a strikingly creative space. And they are still inventing.”

In addition to creating art, Starworks creates community.

“Factories brought together people from different backgrounds, working together. It was a community,” Gottovi said. “When these factories leave town, there is nothing left to replace that. The very social fabric is rendered.”

The dog-friendly Starworks Café and Taproom hosts trivia and game nights,



• Glass vases reflect the sun in a window in the School House Gallery. Gottovi calls Starworks a “creative work community [that] focuses on the care and feeding of artists.”

yoga, live music, open mic events, a running club and artist talks. (Gottovi brags that her own trivia team, even though sometimes pitted against a group of schoolteachers, is quite good).

A current focus for Gottovi is finding lodging for guest artists to stay, a challenge in a small town. Plans are underway to renovate the adjacent former boiler building into artist housing, featuring 10 guest rooms, five ensuite bathrooms and a shared living space and community kitchen.

“After a few years, I realized we were basically taking this building back to what it was before. It was a school. I learned there used to be dormitories in the back of the building, then they were torn down. Here we are essentially building ‘dormitories’ again,” she said.

Education is a thread that runs throughout the enterprise. Every year, local elementary school kids are invited to create an original design on paper and write a few sentences about it. Their drawings are displayed on one wall of a large exhibition space on the other side of the café. A winner is chosen from the submissions, and the Starworks glass artists bring the child’s vision to life, where it is showcased at a spring festival

called Firefest. Gottovi points to one young artist who wrote: “There is just so much hate in the world. We need more love.”

Gottovi said people often ask how she uses an anthropology lens in her work. Anthropology, she says, is the study of human change across time and space. Communities like Star have gone through massive change.

“What was once a farming community became a railroad town, then a factory town. And it’s none of those things anymore. So, for a town like Star, what is its reason for being?” she asked.

“One thing I’ve learned more than anything is that economic development looks very different in small communities,” she said. It may not be an official part of the nonprofit’s mission statement, but Gottovi is indeed fulfilling the elementary school artist’s young wish — spreading a little love in her own backyard.

“Today, Starworks has become a place where people can come together and be in an environment that promotes creativity and discussion and possibility. ... Everybody who works here is so creative and smart and committed. That’s what brings me joy.”

► [Learn more at www.starworksn.org](http://www.starworksn.org).

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Music mosaic

Saxophonist Rahsaan Barber has played with some of the greats. At Carolina, he's sharing his passion for jazz and other musical genres with students.

BY PAMELA BABCOCK

Music was a family affair for saxophonist, composer and music educator Rahsaan Barber.

His grandmother was a talented pianist who played classical music as well as gospel and ragtime. His older brother played saxophone and Barber's twin brother chose trombone.

But money was tight growing up in Nashville. When it came time to decide what instrument to play, Barber settled on saxophone since there was already one in the house and his mother wouldn't have to buy another instrument.

"It felt very natural to go into music," said Barber, an assistant professor of jazz studies and saxophone in UNC-Chapel Hill's department of music. "When you understand the power of music, it brings out a passion."

Barber has been an in-demand saxophonist because of his mastery of a range of styles, including jazz, blues, funk, classical, fusion, soul, Latin and world music.

In the jazz world, he has performed with Branford Marsalis, Christian McBride and Brian Blade. In other genres, he has accompanied an eclectic assemblage that includes the Spanish Harlem Orchestra, Gregg Allman, The Four Tops, the Temptations, funk master Bernie Worrell and pop stars Kelly Clarkson and Meghan Trainor.

His depth is due in large part to his extensive studio work in Nashville.

"You have to develop a really flexible set of skills," Barber said. "On Monday, I might get a call to play on a Lionel Richie recording. And on Tuesday, I might get a call to play on a Kid Rock record."

Barber has five albums, including his



• Assistant professor Rahsaan Barber stands in front of a portrait of N.C. native and iconic jazz saxophonist John Coltrane that hangs in Hill Hall.

most recent, "Mosaic," a double-disc of original works released with trumpeter Nathan Warner and trombonist Roland Barber, his twin brother.

Inspiration for his music often comes from things happening in the world.

The song "Breonna Taylor (How Many More)" seeks to acknowledge the grief, sadness and injustice surrounding the death of the Black medical worker killed in 2020 during a police raid in Louisville, Kentucky.

Barber has an undergraduate degree in music from Indiana University, a master's in jazz performance from the Manhattan School of Music and expects to finish his doctorate from the University of Memphis in May. He has taught extensively at the college level for more than a decade.

At Carolina, Barber teaches jazz saxophone and oversees the Jazz Band. Many of his students are pursuing double majors. "They're really great students who often are learning to commit the sort of investment to music that they've already demonstrated in academics," Barber said.

Jazz as an art form has a complicated cultural history. As an educator, Barber said he works to shine a light on the genre's narratives that aren't well

understood as well as what it takes to become a professional jazz artist.

"The ability for me to truly share this in an authentic way has made this place feel much more like a home than I've ever experienced within the walls of academia," said Barber, who joined the Carolina faculty in 2020.

Barber has wowed audiences at many well-known venues, including Nashville's Ryman Auditorium, Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center and the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture.

He'll never forget the 2019 Smithsonian performance of a suite by composer Darrell Grant celebrating the life of civil rights activist Ruby Bridges, recalling that "the weight and enormity of musically telling that tale in that space was just a tremendously powerful experience."

On a lighter note, it was game, set, match when Barber, a lifelong tennis player, joined Kelly Clarkson's band to kick off the 2018 U.S. Open Tennis Championships in New York. After the gig, Barber was escorted to the press box and a front-row seat to watch sisters Venus and Serena Williams, as well as Rafael Nadal, play.

"I couldn't talk," Barber said. "I was so excited."

Constructive campus conversations

In her work, political scientist Sarah Treul Roberts is teaching students to engage with one another across their differences.

BY DEB SAINE '87

Civil discourse on divisive topics can sometimes seem like a utopian concept, but to Sarah Treul Roberts it can exist quite comfortably within a UNC-Chapel Hill classroom.

"I take it as my personal responsibility to help students learn the value of their voices and that their opinions do matter," said Treul Roberts, Bowman and Gordon Gray Distinguished Term Professor in Political Science.

For Treul Roberts, Carolina's undergraduate and graduate student diversity — "in the broadest sense of the word" — provides abundant opportunities to communicate, listen charitably and discuss tough questions with respect.

She sees this in her political science course "Legislative Procedure," for which she designed an interactive model Congress. The first half of the semester focuses on learning congressional procedures. Then Treul Roberts assigns each student a member of the U.S. House of Representatives; the student creates and introduces a bill from the representative's perspective and then shepherds that bill through numerous decisive steps to floor debate.

Feedback from students emphasizes how much they enjoy their classroom deliberation, specifically "having the opportunity to engage with one another across differences. I really do think they recognize there is nothing more important now."

On academic leave this year, Treul Roberts is working on a book project about the increased success of inexperienced candidates running for Congress.

The project focuses on members of the U.S. House of Representatives who enter Congress never having previously held elective office — a trend on the rise, she said. Treul Roberts uses data from 1980 to 2022 to demonstrate, she said, that "the rise of the inexperienced candidate and legislator can be attributed to voters' affinity for anti-establishment rhetoric, social media, a focus on identity politics and laws governing campaign donations."

She is also faculty director for the Program for Public Discourse, based in the College of Arts and Sciences and serving the entire campus.

The program makes strong contributions toward supporting civil debate. Faculty workshops, public events and student-led discussions encourage constructive campus conversations featuring multiple views. The Abbey Speaker



• Sarah Treul Roberts is working on a book about the increased success of inexperienced candidates running for Congress.

Series, made possible through the generosity of Nancy '74 and Doug Abbey, has covered topics including science and democracy and bridging the rural-urban divide. The undergraduate Agora Fellows meet throughout the semester to share their perspectives on a variety of issues, including the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the consequences of social media.

Treul Roberts serves as a faculty affiliate with the Center for Effective Lawmaking, an initiative of Vanderbilt University and the University of Virginia. She is the author of *Agenda Crossover: The Influence of State Delegations in Congress* (Cambridge University Press) and a co-editor of *Legislative Studies Quarterly*.

She received her bachelor's degree in political science and psychology from Wellesley College, and her master's and doctoral degrees in political science from the University of Minnesota.

For all her research and outreach centered on governance and civic engagement, Treul Roberts said teaching is the most important facet of her work at Carolina. A UNC faculty member since 2009, she has received numerous honors for her teaching, including the University's Tanner Award for Teaching Excellence and Chapman Family Teaching Award, the political science department's Robson Award for Excellence in Graduate Instruction and Honors Carolina's Manekin Award for Teaching Excellence.

Her Bowman and Gordon Gray professorship, awarded through the College, also recognizes undergraduate teaching excellence.

Practicing respectful communication within a classroom setting promotes engagement that will serve students well in all aspects of their lives now and after they leave Carolina, she said.

"We preserve, enhance and protect civic virtue by engagement," said Treul Roberts. "I tell my students regularly that I have no personal preference what your ideology or partisanship is, but I do want you to be engaged members of our society."

Gratitude and shared laughter are like probiotics for your relationship

UNC psychologist Sara Algoe and her team are taking a deep dive into what makes couples love, bond and stay happy — together.

BY DELENE BEELAND

Untangling the factors that make relationships work is at the heart of Sara Algoe's research.

Having high-quality relationships with people we care about predicts mental and physical health — even how long we may live.

"Close relationships are linked to longevity to the same degree that smoking is linked to mortality," said Algoe, a professor of psychology and neuroscience. "We spend billions of dollars trying to get people to stop smoking for better health. We need to also focus on the science behind healthy relationships and how we can help them thrive."

Algoe directs the **Emotions and Social Interactions in Relationships Laboratory**. She and her team use relationship science methods to study the effects of interactions between people in real relationships. She cites Jane Goodall's pioneering work in documenting chimpanzee social behaviors as an inspiration for doing similar work in humans.

"Is it weird to say I'm a people-watcher at heart?" Algoe asked. "I am fascinated by getting into the nuts and bolts of how we find and cultivate our best relationships."

Her lab analyzes video recordings of couples interacting and having conversations and conducts surveys to gather data on what makes healthy relationships tick. They have evaluated how expressing and receiving gratitude, affectionate touch and sharing laughter function sort of like social probiotics to promote healthy relationships.

"In the past, researchers viewed this as frivolous or superficial. A lot of researchers have focused instead on looking at how to mitigate deficits in relationships," Algoe said. "But all our data shows that these are the essential elements of a good relationship. For the past 10 years, we have been looking at the social behaviors of everyday life that really help us connect with other people."

Algoe's work is rooted in her decade old "find-remind-bind"



- "We have found that people who shared laughter felt more connected than those who did not," says psychologist Sara Algoe, who studies what makes healthy relationships tick.

theory of relationships, which posits that gratitude is the glue that holds responsive, interactive couples together over time.

"We and others have now collected an extraordinary amount of data on expressing and receiving gratitude," Algoe said. "And the thing that always strikes me is how simple it can be. It does not take much to have a big effect on the person who hears it."

Observing and studying couples has also led to new discoveries. For example, her team noticed that couples waiting to enter her lab often touched. Some even kissed or made out on the couch. That led to research on the role of affectionate touch. Her team also noticed in video recordings that a lot of couples laughed together.

"We theorized that it is the shared laughter that matters — it signals that you see the world in the same way," Algoe said. "We found that people who shared laughter felt more connected than those who did not share laughter. I call it the mind meld."

Algoe believes that if relationships bring us joy and health, then scientists should do more to understand the mechanisms of what makes them work. It's akin to investing in disease prevention rather than focusing solely on a cure.

To this end, Algoe founded **The Love Consortium**, which links international researchers with the goal of sharing data and promoting collaboration on relationships of all types.

"It's like a match-making system for researchers and their data sets," she said. The group met in Durham last September. "It was such an intellectual joy to see so many people presenting innovative work on love and to see them inspired and excited about each other's research. The consortium has truly been my passion project."

► *Inspired to participate? Algoe's lab seeks romantic couples for a new study. Email couplesinteractions@med.unc.edu.*



• “Native people are not homogenous,” says Marissa Carmi. She is standing in front of “The Gift” installation by American Indian artist Senora Lynch near the Frank Porter Graham Student Union.

Showcasing Native diversity

Graduate student Marissa Carmi is contributing to research about Oneida history, identity and sovereignty while supporting the larger narrative of Native diversity that has long been silenced.

BY ANDY LITTLE '24

Through research about Oneida history and sovereignty, Marissa Carmi hopes to document and demonstrate the diversity of thought across Native nations in the United States, deconstructing stereotypes about Native people.

Carmi is a Ph.D. student in American Indian and Indigenous studies and a citizen of the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin. She said her work on studying both her own people as well as the Oneida Indian Nation in New York “is part of a broader effort to demonstrate that Native people are not homogenous ... we are not a monolith. We have a diversity of ideas in Indigenous communities that is vibrant, and I want to show that.”

Before coming to UNC-Chapel Hill, Carmi worked for the Administration for Native Americans, where she assisted members of Native tribes and organizations applying for community development grants. Carmi said she was

inspired by the diversity and creativity in the project proposals. This work prompted her to consider the variety of approaches different Oneida citizens take to define tribal nationhood and the future of their communities.

At UNC, Carmi combines textual analysis, ethnographic work and oral histories to study the visions of Oneida citizens for their future and their contributions to defining Oneida nationhood and sovereignty.

Carmi hopes that her research will be a meaningful resource for other Oneida citizens. She said that a major misconception is that all Native people have a thorough understanding of their respective histories.

“Maybe I will write this history that tribal members from both the Oneida Nation in New York and the Oneida Nation in Wisconsin will read and think ‘Wow, I did not know this about us, about our history.’ That would be exciting.”

Carmi attributes understanding her identity to her mother, who is an

activist and educator. Early on, her mother connected Carmi and her sister to the thriving Native community in Washington, D.C., where Carmi was raised. She also brought them to Oneida, Wisconsin, to visit extended family.

In addition to research, Carmi works as a graduate teaching assistant. This semester, she is leading her own class, “Approaches to American Indian and Indigenous Studies.” She said she enjoys the collaborative nature of the classroom.

“When I’m in the classroom and I’m exchanging ideas with students, it’s just pure fun for me,” she said.

Outside of academics, Carmi is co-president of the First Nations Graduate Circle, a support network for both Native and non-Native graduate students involved in the Native community on campus. She is also a member of the College of Arts and Sciences’ Working Group on Global Indigeneity and American Indian Studies, which was formed last fall to direct the shaping of a reimagined American Indian and Indigenous studies curriculum.

One of the group’s first projects has been working with several academic departments on a cluster hire for the program. A cluster hire is a creative approach toward advancing a curriculum by hiring outstanding and diverse faculty across disciplines who will collaborate with one another. In this instance, the faculty will have departmental homes in American studies, geography, religious studies and women’s and gender studies.

Carmi’s love for collaboration has served her well in the working group as she enjoys the opportunity to think big. She said she feels optimistic about the program’s potential to serve Native communities across North Carolina, which has the second-largest Native population east of the Mississippi River, and beyond.

“I’m really interested in trying to build this program in a way that it becomes a model for how academia can serve tribal communities and how tribal communities can think of universities, specifically UNC-Chapel Hill, as a valuable resource.”

THE SCOOP

Winston Center tackles crisis of teens and screens

With groundbreaking research linking social media habits to brain changes, the center also provides career training and public awareness.

BY SCOTT JARED

“We knew that we had done something amazing scientifically.”

That’s what Eva Telzer, co-director of Carolina’s **Winston National Center on Technology Use, Brain and Psychological Development**, said about the moment in late 2022 when the center’s research team analyzed results from the first-ever study linking teens’ habitual checking of social media to changes in their brains’ development.

Doctoral students Kara Fox and Maria Maza, the study’s primary authors, are part of the center’s team that leads a fairly new research field — the role of technology and social media on adolescent brain development.

The *Journal of American Medical Association Pediatrics* published the findings in January 2023. By then, a \$10 million gift in March 2022 from the Winston Family Foundation had expanded the team’s work by creating the center. Mitch Prinstein, the John Van Seters Distinguished Professor in the department of psychology and neuroscience, and Telzer, associate professor of psychology and neuroscience, have served as co-directors since its inception.

The center not only has multiple potentially life-changing research studies underway, but it also trains students for scientific careers. The multitiered team prioritizes education, outreach, research, public health and teen engagement.

Prinstein’s and Telzer’s work to build the blockbuster research program goes back to 2018. It coincided with the end of a decade of dramatic changes in how adolescents learn — about social interaction, emotions, distinguishing between right and wrong.

Interest grew along with the availability of digital technology.

“We’ve seen a remarkable increase in the amount of time that kids spend using technology and social media platforms,” Prinstein said. “That use has been associated with a concomitant decrease in other activities like sleeping and reading.”

The study in *JAMA Pediatrics* complemented earlier research by Prinstein and Telzer which collected objective measures of teens’ social media and tech use. They asked hundreds of teens to take a screenshot of their phone’s built-in record of use data each day. For 14 consecutive days, the teens sent screenshots to Winston Center researchers, showing daily hours of use, total notifications and how many



- In an undergraduate course created by Winston Center researchers, students are asked to spend 24 hours without using a phone — no texts or social media.

times they handled their phones.

The jaw-dropping results: Teens, on average each day, pick up their phones 100 times and spend 500 minutes, or more than eight hours, on their phones.

Some might say the numbers indicate a crisis, Prinstein said. The teens reported that after using social media they felt increased loneliness and less connected to their peers and craved more social interaction. “The very behavior that they go online for — to seek social connection and relationships with friends — actually causes them to feel more lonely and less connected,” he said.

In addition to research, one of the center’s first goals was to create a course in which undergraduates explore the science of social media, technology and brain development. Psychology 180 is open to all undergraduates and has been a hit. The course has been taught several times, with over 800 students enrolling.

One course assignment is to spend 24 hours without using a phone for anything other than coursework — no texts, no social media. Telzer said that some students could not do it because reaching for their phones was an automatic response, while others were able to connect with peers, sleep better and be in the moment more.

The center has also created videos, a middle-school curriculum and other resources on the website teensandtech.org for people to learn about how digital media can affect children and adolescents.

“We’re just getting started,” Telzer said. “We hope to expand our curriculum to younger ages and continue getting the science out there and helping people to understand why what we study is so important.”

► A longer version of this story appeared in the University publication *The Well*.



#Throwback:

**SOHP
marks a
milestone**

The Southern Oral History Program, part of the Center for the Study of the American South, celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. The founding director of the program is Jacquelyn Dowd Hall (center), the Julia Cherry Spruill

Professor Emerita of History. In this photo, taken in 1974, Hall is interviewing pioneering regional sociologists Guy and Guion Johnson. Hall was awarded a National Humanities Medal in 1999 for her efforts to deepen the nation's engagement with the humanities by "recording history through the lives of ordinary people."

What will be your
legacy?



The 360° Jazz Initiative is an interactive student and faculty ensemble at Carolina.

Tom Steward, longtime friend to the department of music, left a deferred gift to establish the **Thomas F. Steward Fund in Jazz Studies**.

"My students, colleagues and I are very grateful to our dear friend Thomas F. Steward, who attended hundreds of UNC Jazz Studies concerts over the years and was a friend to us all. His kind gift sustains the day-to-day operations of the program. It enabled our students and faculty to travel to the Jazz Education Network Conference in Dallas, Texas, and to record a collaborative faculty and student CD — 360° Jazz Initiative, Please Only Tell Me Good News — on Summit Records that is now heard on national jazz radio stations."

— STEPHEN ANDERSON, professor of composition and jazz studies

Thomas Frost Steward was a structural engineer for JCPenney for 35 years, but his passion was jazz. He played multiple wind instruments; his favorite was the saxophone. A native of Sea Cliff, New York, Steward was an avid sailor who served in the Navy in World War II. He retired to Galloway Ridge at Farrington in Pittsboro, North Carolina.

Contact us today to learn about making a planned gift to the College of Arts and Sciences.

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THE SCOOP

Jane Austen's (Virtual) Desk

A new NEH grant will support UNC scholars' creation of an immersive web environment designed to bring Jane Austen's writing room — and her world — to life.

BY KIM WEAVER SPURR '88

Enter a virtual room modeled after Chawton Cottage, where you'll learn more about beloved author Jane Austen via the place where she did most of her writing. Scroll around and click on various objects — paintings, a portable writing desk, a quill and more — to delve deeper into Austen's writing and her world.

This is the vision of a creative group of scholars, including principal investigator Inger Brodey and project manager Sarah Schaefer Walton, in creating the digital humanities project Jane Austen's Desk. Brodey is an associate professor of English and comparative literature at UNC-Chapel Hill, and Walton is a Ph.D. candidate in that department.

"We loved how you could mouse over and interact with the objects," said Brodey, whose faculty website features her own virtual desk. "It's going to feel like a 360-degree view of the room: you can go left and right, up and down and hover over various objects. For instance, clicking on a painting of a ship will make the ship rock and the waves splash, and it may take you to maps showing the travels of Jane Austen's family members and illustrate how she traveled vicariously through extensive correspondence with them."

Point your mouse to Austen's portable writing desk or "writing slope," and learn about some of the other locations where she did her writing. The time period for Jane Austen's Desk focuses on the spring after the publication of *Pride and Prejudice* in 1813, when Austen was writing *Mansfield Park*, Brodey said.

Project collaborators also hope to create digital editions of those works — and eventually all her novels — and



- Jane Austen's Desk will take readers into a virtual room in Chawton Cottage that highlights the time period when Austen was writing *Mansfield Park*. Inger Brodey is pictured top right.

to collaborate with various groups on annotating them.

"We will also share with users what she was reading at the time. We'll link to books and articles so you can read alongside her," Brodey said.

Brodey and a multi-institutional team have received a second grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for the project. The first was a \$30,000 discovery phase grant. This second grant, for \$100,000, was recently announced by the NEH and will support development of the prototype.

According to the grant application, focusing on the time in which Austen wrote *Mansfield Park* will enable the team "to engage with important contemporary issues, particularly issues surrounding female authorship and mobility, the transatlantic slave trade and the Austen family's disputed role in it and the family's involvement in the War of 1812."

The project builds on the successful [Jane Austen Summer Program \(JASP\)](#), first launched in 2013, and also [Jane Austen & Co.](#), which launched in

2019 to extend free public humanities programming about Jane Austen's world. When the pandemic hit, Jane Austen & Co. went virtual, and it continues successfully to this day. There are 30-plus free Zoom episodes in the website's library, and 10 to 12 new virtual events are programmed each year.

JASP has always had a pedagogy component as well; teachers can receive education credits for attending the summer program, and some scholarships are available to cover costs. Through [JASP+](#), a two-day extension of the summer program, teachers can learn more about using digital humanities tools to teach Austen.

Brodey said the prototype phase for Jane Austen's Desk extends through December 2024; the group will apply for implementation grants with the plan of launching major enhancements in 2025. Scholars from the following institutions will be a part of the project: University of Texas at Austin, NC State University, Auburn University, Arizona State University, Delta State University and Marist College.

THE SCOOP

AAAS SELECTS FOUR FACULTY AS FELLOWS

Four Carolina faculty members have been selected as 2022 fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the world's largest general scientific society and publisher of the academic journal *Science*.

The new Carolina fellows are Carol Arnosti, Michael Crimmins and Barbara Fredrickson in the College of Arts and Sciences, and Melinda Beck in the Gillings School of Global Public Health.

Arnosti is a professor in the department of earth, marine and environmental sciences. She joined Carolina's marine sciences faculty in 1995. She and members of her lab investigate microbially driven carbon cycling in the ocean. Arnosti was recognized for discovering new patterns and pathways of microbial degradation of complex carbon in marine environments through the development of methods to measure extracellular enzyme activities involved in carbon cycling.

Crimmins is professor emeritus of chemistry. He was recognized for



CAROL
ARNOSTI



MELINDA
BECK



MICHAEL
CRIMMINS



BARBARA
FREDRICKSON

important contributions to complex natural products synthesis through the development of photocycloadditions, asymmetric aldol reactions and olefin metathesis reactions, as well as for innovation in chemical education. Crimmins, who joined Carolina's faculty in 1981, served as chair of the chemistry department and senior associate dean for natural sciences.

Fredrickson is Kenan Distinguished Professor in the department of psychology and neuroscience. She studies emotions, well-being and positive psychology. Fredrickson was recognized

for her seminal research demonstrating the adaptive value of positive emotions and extraordinary dissemination of this knowledge to general audiences.

Beck is professor and interim chair in Gillings' department of nutrition. She has been a faculty member at Carolina for more than 30 years. She joined the nutrition faculty in 1996. Researchers in her lab study the relationship between host nutrition and the immune response to infectious disease, including an ongoing clinical study of the mechanisms that impair flu vaccine response in obese adults compared with healthy weight adults.



Donni Young

UNC-CHAPEL HILL NAMED TOP PRODUCER OF FULBRIGHTS

The Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs has named UNC-Chapel Hill a top-producing institution of Fulbright U.S. students. This recognition is given to the U.S. colleges and universities with the highest number of applicants selected for the 2022-23 Fulbright U.S. Student Program.

Carolina is a longtime top producer of Fulbright awardees. In the 2022-23 cycle, 16 Tar Heels were selected for the award. Recent graduates and current graduate students are pursuing year-long graduate studies, research or English teaching in more than 160 countries.

Fulbright is the U.S. government's flagship international educational exchange program.

Among the largest and most diverse exchange programs in the world, Fulbright was established over 75 years ago to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries.

Fulbright alumni work to make a positive impact on their communities, sectors and the world and have included 41 heads of state or government, 62 Nobel Laureates, 89 Pulitzer Prize winners and 78 MacArthur Fellows.

MCDONALD NAMED SENIOR ASSOCIATE DEAN

Noreen McDonald was named senior associate dean for social sciences and global programs in the College of Arts and Sciences in January.



She succeeds Rudi Colloredo-Mansfeld, who completed his term in December.

McDonald has been a member of the UNC faculty since 2007. She served as chair of the department of city and regional planning since 2016. She is also the associate director of both the Collaborative Sciences Center for Road Safety and the Southeastern Transportation Research, Innovation, Education and Development Center.

McDonald's scholarship is at the intersection of city planning and public health. Her current projects focus on how transport technology, policy and COVID-19 impact road safety, movement of goods and access to healthcare. She is an internationally recognized expert on the travel behavior of youth and young adults and whose work has demonstrated the road safety and physical activity impacts of transport and school infrastructure. Her recent research explores disruptions associated with shared mobility, e.g., Uber/Lyft and autonomous vehicles.

McDonald received her undergraduate degree in engineering and chemistry from Harvard University and her Ph.D. in city planning from UC Berkeley.

As senior associate dean, McDonald oversees the departments/curricula and other units in the social sciences as well as the global programs of the College that are housed in the FedEx Global Education Center.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Ronit Freeman, Pedro Sáenz and Nicolas Pégard won awards given to rising stars to support their research.

SLOAN, COTTRELL AWARDS GIVEN TO THREE CAROLINA RESEARCHERS

Three Carolina researchers in the College of Arts and Sciences won prestigious awards for early-career scientists this spring.

Nicolas Pégard, an assistant professor in the department of applied physical sciences, and Pedro Sáenz, an assistant professor in the department of mathematics, received Sloan Fellowships.

Ronit Freeman, an associate professor in the department of applied physical sciences, received a Cottrell Scholar Award.

Pégard's research is at the intersection of neuroscience, optical engineering and computer science. His lab tackles neuroscience research questions with custom-designed optical technology. He will use the Sloan fellowship to develop a new technology called biometric ocular photometers in collaboration with the lab of assistant professor Jose Rodríguez-Romaguera in the department of psychiatry in the School of Medicine.

Sáenz's work is also interdisciplinary, lying at the intersection of mathematics and fundamental physics. His research focuses on the mathematical description of nonlinear fluid processes to reveal surprising connections between classical mechanics, which describes the familiar behavior of large objects, and quantum mechanics, which describes the strange behavior of tiny particles such as electrons. His lab combines theory, simulations and experiments to better understand fundamental problems in physics and engineering.

Freeman will develop a chemical framework for the bottom-up assembly of supramolecular systems with lifelike behaviors through the Cottrell Award. As an expert in biomimetic design and self-assembly, she will converge the power of peptide and DNA nanotechnology to create new materials that mimic cellular and tissue functionality. She will also develop an educational framework to better interconnect common chemical and physical concepts taught in undergraduate chemistry, physics and materials programs.

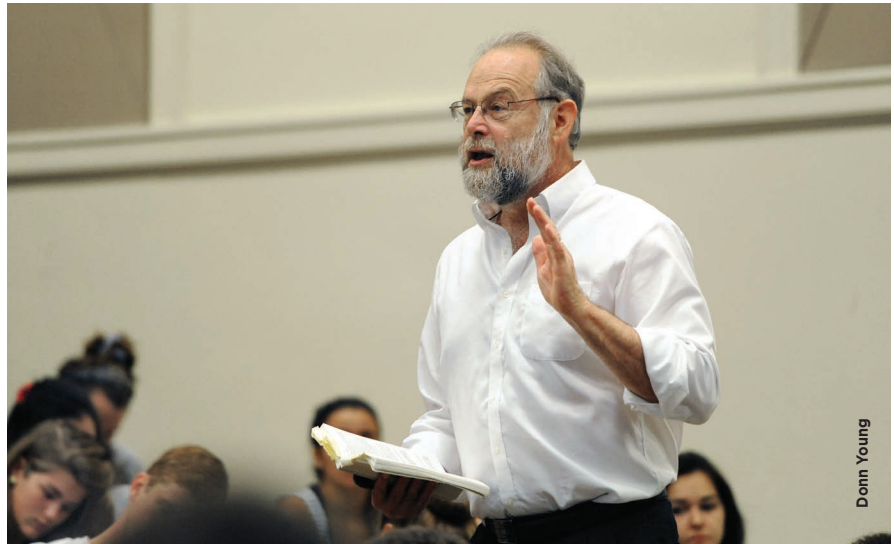
THE SCOOP

SAYRE-MCCORD RECEIVES THOMAS JEFFERSON AWARD

In their end-of-course comments, Geoffrey Sayre-McCord's students describe him as "amazing," "engaging," "academically stimulating," "respectful" and "brilliant" — as well as "a little goofy, as philosophy professors should be."

They make it clear that it's not only the content of an introductory class like "Virtue, Value and Happiness," with its readings of Plato, Aristotle, Kant and Mills, that has helped them explore the nature of value. It's also the enthusiastic way Sayre-McCord teaches that provides them a living example of a man happy in his work and in his life.

"He finds a way to make dusty philosophic diatribes come alive and applies them well to the lives we live today," one student wrote of the Morehead-Cain Alumni Distinguished Professor of Philosophy and the director of the [philosophy, politics and economics program](#).



Donn Young

• Geoffrey Sayre-McCord directs the philosophy, politics and economics program, which has more than 400 minors this year.

Showing philosophy's relevance to everyday life is a driving force behind Sayre-McCord's work at Carolina: his development of the PPE program and the founding of the [Parr Center for Ethics](#) and the [National High School Ethics Bowl](#) is evidence.

The Faculty Council recently honored Sayre-McCord with the 2022-2023 Thomas Jefferson Award,

presented annually to the faculty member who best exemplifies Jefferson's values of democracy, public service and the pursuit of knowledge.

Sayre-McCord's focus in recent years has been the interdisciplinary PPE program, established in 2005. With more than 400 minors this year, the fast-growing program is the largest of its kind in the country.



Rob Holliday

• The "Advanced Arabic" class uses virtual reality to connect students in Chapel Hill with those in Morocco and Algeria.

TAR HEELS BUILD LANGUAGE CONFIDENCE WITH VIRTUAL REALITY

Virtual reality headsets are most closely connected to computer science, but they are a key ingredient in Caroline

Sibley's "Advanced Arabic" class.

Though they were physically half a world apart, Tar Heels in the teaching assistant professor's class used Google Cardboard VR devices to explore a virtual world with students in Morocco and Algeria in real time. The students navigated the virtual environments

together over the course of the fall semester to complete assignments and hone their language skills.

"We've been in a classroom, and we've been in a historical site with ruins," said Hasti Sadri, a sophomore peace, war and defense major. "I will explain

what I understand in Arabic, and then [my partner from Algeria] will go in, and she will explain what she understood in Arabic and what I missed and what I can work on. And then we do the same in English for the English clues."

The experience is funded by the Stevens Initiative and the U.S. State Department to create virtual exchanges between American university students and their counterparts in the Middle East and North Africa. Sibley said the Tabadul Program has been invaluable in building her students' confidence in speaking Arabic and developing their understanding of the region's culture.

Sibley's course in the College's department of Asian and Middle Eastern studies is one of many ways Carolina is preparing Tar Heels to be global leaders through the University's Global Guarantee.

► [Watch a video of the class at go.unc.edu/vr-arabic-class.](https://go.unc.edu/vr-arabic-class)



Approaching AI through an interdisciplinary lens

BY ML PARKER '10

As anticipation and anxiety fuel debates about artificial intelligence, UNC's AI Project brings together scholars from philosophy, computer science and linguistics to explore its implications.

Imagine sitting at home, scrolling through suggestions for what to watch next on Netflix, when your cellphone buzzes. You pick it up — your Face ID unlocks the phone — and you see an alert about suspicious credit card charges. You call the bank and go through a series of automated prompts that lead to the fraud department.

All of these activities are powered by artificial intelligence (AI).

“What’s possible nowadays seemed like magic 10 years ago,” said Thomas Hofweber, a professor of philosophy and director of the AI Project at UNC.

While AI has been around for decades, the rate at which the technology is progressing is unprecedented.

“It’s become more and more urgent,” Hofweber said. “It’s happening now.”

That urgency has prompted a new initiative in the College of Arts and Sciences. Housed in the philosophy department and conducted in collaboration with computer science, linguistics and the Parr Center for Ethics, the AI Project is designed to advance research and collaboration on the philosophical foundations and significance of artificial intelligence and virtual worlds.

The inspiration for the partnership dates to Hofweber’s time as a graduate student at Stanford University, where he began learning about artificial intelligence.

“This was the ’90s and what people were doing with AI was very different from what it is now,” he said.

Through coming together across disciplinary boundaries, Hofweber and his colleagues at UNC hope to generate more open dialogue and ultimately a more comprehensive understanding of artificial intelligence and its implications.

According to Peter Hase, a Ph.D. candidate in computer science, the AI Project will help ensure that people in his department are using the right approaches in their research and sharing their findings accurately.

“Computer scientists are doing impressive things,” Hase said. “But they sometimes use certain terminology loosely or misuse it.”

For example, a computer scientist may unintentionally anthropomorphize a chat bot by giving it a human name or gender. Such an action raises philosophical questions about how autonomy and morality should (or shouldn’t) be applied to AI.

“All these people have different expertise,” Hofweber said. “Computer scientists do the actual training and programming on language models — but they don’t spend years debating precisely how language works. That’s what linguists do.”

Katya Pertsova is an associate professor of linguistics at UNC. For

professionals in her field, she says a big question is: *When are we going to have artificial intelligence that is capable of language to the same extent as humans?*

“I don’t think we are there yet,” Pertsova said. “But we’re definitely closer to it.”

While large language models like ChatGPT are very adept at generating certain kinds of text, they also “fail spectacularly,” according to Pertsova, as recent media coverage has shown.

But it’s only a matter of time until computer scientists correct those failures.

“It’s something that is going to change all of our lives very quickly,” Pertsova said. “Having multiple scholars interacting with this topic could lead to a better understanding of its issues.”

In his course, “AI and the Future of Humanity,” Hofweber and his students regularly discuss some of these big issues, like: *What is the moral status of an AI system? Do you need a biological basis for consciousness? What is the difference between AI and a non-human animal?*

Hofweber is quick to point out that posing these types of questions is not a simple thought experiment.

“There are a lot of philosophical issues that apply to general AI systems, and philosophical reflection can show us a great deal about how our minds work,” he said. “All of these debates are relevant.”



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WILDFIRE STUDY SHIFTS FOCUS TO HELPING POOR COMMUNITIES

Wildfires pose a large and growing threat to communities across California, where fires are becoming more frequent and destructive.

As climate change occurs, the frequency of wildfires is expected to grow. A new study from researchers at UNC-Chapel Hill and Stanford University examines the relationship between fire frequency and community vulnerability.

The findings, published in *PLOS Climate*, indicate that while maps of wildfire hazard suggest that higher-income communities are more at risk, low-income communities across the state tend to experience fires more frequently.

“Using this metric of fire frequency identified a very different pattern of which communities are at risk,” said Miyuki Hino, an assistant professor in the department of city and regional planning and a faculty fellow at the Carolina Population Center. “While we tend to focus on the biggest and most destructive fires, the impacts of small, frequent fires can also add up.”

Hino and Christopher B. Field, director of the Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment, looked at three decades of where fires occurred, government hazard maps used to identify areas at risk of a wildfire, and census and real estate data. The findings suggest that communities with frequent wildfires are substantially different from communities that are at-risk but may experience fewer fires.

“Lower-income communities will have fewer resources to prepare for and recover from fires,” said Hino. “Identifying the most-affected areas can help direct assistance to the places that need it most.”



Alyssa LaFaro

• Diego Riveros-Iregui (left) is the P.I. for a new climate change grant that will support research by students from Ecuador and Chapel Hill.

CAROLINA WINS GRANT FOR CLIMATE CHANGE RESEARCH IN ECUADOR

With a grant from the 100,000 Strong in the Americas Fund, students at UNC-Chapel Hill and Universidad San Francisco de Quito will conduct climate change research over the course of a year. Four Carolina students will travel to Ecuador this summer to conduct field research with their USFQ counterparts in the páramo.

The grant is part of the U.S.-Andean Innovation Fund Competition co-sponsored by the U.S. State Department’s Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs.

Diego Riveros-Iregui, Bowman and Gordon Gray Distinguished Professor of Geography, will be the principal investigator. Found only in the Andes Mountains, the páramo is a cold yet tropical landscape that provides drinking water to millions of people in South America and serves as one of the most carbon-rich locations in the world.

In the fall, UNC-Chapel Hill and USFQ students will analyze their collected data in a Collaborative Online International Learning Plus course. COIL is a pedagogical approach involving shared teaching and learning between faculty and students in two or more countries. When faculty add a travel component to the class, it becomes a COIL Plus course.

Riveros-Iregui will co-teach the course with Esteban Suárez, director of the Biosphere Institute at USFQ and academic content coordinator for the grant.

Next spring, the grant will fund the opportunity for USFQ students to visit Chapel Hill and present their research with their Carolina collaborators at the University’s annual Celebration of Undergraduate Research.

Southern history revisited

BY DEB SAINE '87

A groundbreaking volume weaves a new narrative of the South from its ancient past to the present, drawing on top scholars' work in global and Atlantic world history, histories of the African diaspora and environmental history.

“E xpansive” seems a fitting word to describe *A New History of the American South* (UNC Press, May 2023), and yet it may still not fully capture the scope of a Southern history that begins with the Ice Age.

The book, edited by W. Fitzhugh Brundage, the William B. Umstead Professor of History, begins about 16,000 years ago, when archaeological records suggest that the area was first settled by people who crossed the Bering Strait from Siberia into North America and made their way south. These Native peoples influenced the region’s development for thousands of years afterward.

The book concludes with UNC professor Kenneth R. Janken’s recounting of key developments in the 20th century Black freedom struggle.

In creating a “new” history of the American South, Brundage said the team of scholars had to establish key parameters for the project. What is the region’s geographical reach? Where should the history end? Where should it begin? In all, 16 eminent historians contributed essays to the work, including four from UNC.

“Rather than looking upon this history as leading us to the South that exists today, we stated that this would be a history of a place with no assumptions of how it would appear to us today,” Brundage said.

To provide just one example, the history would *not* begin with Jamestown. The first permanent English community in North America, established in what was then the colony of Virginia, was certainly pivotal. Looking at Jamestown from a contemporary perspective, Brundage said, the early settlement was “the fountainhead of English conquest of what is now the United States.”

Yet in the 1600s, the Spanish and French presence in North America would have seemed just as significant. “In 1650,” he added, “no one would have assumed that the Anglo-American conquest of the North American continent was inevitable.”

The American South has undergone profound



Donn Young

• *History professor Fitzhugh Brundage, at Epilogue Books in Chapel Hill, says in creating a “new” history of the American South, scholars decided “this would be a history of a place with no assumptions of how it would appear to us today.”*

transformation and upheaval throughout its history, Brundage said. “Some of these changes are present throughout the United States, but some are specific to the South. No other region was as dependent upon slavery as the South.”

The book covers three eras of Southern history that Brundage references in the introduction: the ancient era to the American Revolution; the “long 19th century,” covering 1780 to 1890; and the “long 20th century,” covering 1890 to the beginning of the 21st century.

Brundage is the author or editor of numerous books, including *Lynching in the New South: Georgia and Virginia, 1880-1930*; *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory*; and *Civilizing Torture: An American Tradition*, which was a finalist for the 2019 Pulitzer Prize in History.

In addition to Janken, professor of African, African American and diaspora studies, the other UNC contributors are Peter Coclanis, the Albert Ray Newsome Distinguished Professor and director of the Global Research Institute; and Blair L.M. Kelley, the Joel R. Williamson Professor of Southern Studies and new director of the Center for the Study of the American South.

Brundage said he believes the book will provide value for both general readers and historians. “We’ve written this volume to make the history of the South accessible to the largest possible audience and to make that history usable.”

Kirkus Reviews gave it a “starred review,” writing: “To learn of the South’s past as it is viewed today by leading historians, this is the book to read.”

► *Read additional books by College faculty and alumni at magazine.college.unc.edu, and look for our monthly “Bookmark This” feature on college.unc.edu.*



COLLEGE UP CLOSE

Get to know the College of Arts and Sciences like never before in our new social media series, College Up Close.

Follow along as we introduce each of the College's 43 academic departments and curricula through featured students, fun facts and figures. Explore the series on Instagram @unccollege or on Facebook and Twitter.

Not on social media? View the series on the web at go.unc.edu/CollegeUpClose.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Jorren Biggs, senior African, African American and diaspora studies and political science double major; Delaney Thull, Ph.D. student in philosophy; Ayana Monroe, senior computer science and information science double major; Jieni Zhou, Ph.D. student in social psychology; Dan Asanov, junior music major; and Jocelyn Chatman, costume production MFA student. (photos by Jess Abel)

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