‘Triple I’ courses teach the power of interdisciplinary thinking

Before high school track star Colin Thompson was set to begin his college career at Carolina, he was in a car accident that left him with a severe traumatic brain injury. He had to relearn how to walk, talk and eat.

Thompson’s positive attitude and determination in the face of serious life obstacles made him the perfect guest speaker for a new interdisciplinary course in the College of Arts & Sciences called Health and Happiness.

On a February afternoon in Fetzer Hall, Thompson, who’s now a senior exercise and sport science major, shared this Aristotle quote with his peers: “Happiness is a state of activity.”

“Happiness is the path you are on,” said Thompson, who was invited to speak by professor Claudio Battaglini. “Don’t focus on the negatives, and don’t take anything for granted. Capitalize on the opportunities you have in front of you.”

Earlier that morning, across campus in Hanes Art Center, students had gathered in a similar big ideas class with a heavier topic – Death and Dying. Teaching professor Jeannie Loeb invited students to respond to a question via Poll Everywhere software, which encourages interactive class participation in real time. She asked: “What are your favorite ways of distracting yourself from a distressing situation when you get extremely upset?”

Students responded with Netflix, exercise, music, dogs and cats surfaced on a big screen in front of the room as among the top stress-reliever activities suggested by students. Instructors discuss serious topics like suicide prevention, funeral customs and euthanasia, but try to end each class on a lighter note.

IDEAS, INFORMATION AND INQUIRY

Health and Happiness and Death and Dying are two of five Ideas, Information and Inquiry courses, also called “Triple I” or “III” for short, that are being piloted in spring 2019. The large classes are organized around a broad theme and are team-taught by faculty members in three disciplines. They are designed to introduce students to new ideas, new modes of inquiry and essential skills, and they emphasize key capacities of data literacy, global orientation, principles of evidence and collaboration.

Triple I courses are core offerings in the proposed new General Education curriculum – called IDEAs in Action. The courses would be required for first-year students and encouraged for transfer students.

See TRIPLE I page 11

Guskiewicz promotes return of Tar Heel Bus Tour at BOT meeting

At his first Board of Trustees meeting as interim chancellor, Kevin Guskiewicz was greeted by an old friend sitting in the audience.

“I’m glad that I could come while we’re undefeated,” returning head football coach Mack Brown joked after being recognized by Chair Haywood Cochrane at the April 4 meeting. During Brown’s previous stint as Carolina’s coach (1988–97), he and his staff cooperated with Guskiewicz in his research on football head injuries, “I thought, ‘You know, I’m going to be back in Chapel Hill coaching in 2018 and he’s going to be the chancellor.’”

Continuing the #ThrowbackThursday theme, Guskiewicz announced his plan to bring back something else from a previous era, the annual Tar Heel Bus Tour (1997–2008). On the tour, about three dozen new faculty members spent the week after Spring Commencement crisscrossing the state, learning about its history and people and visiting Carolina research and service projects outside Chapel Hill.

“We’re going to restart the engine on the bus,” said Guskiewicz, who has proposed a bus trip over the next fall break, Oct. 16–19. “This will help us build trust and accountability with the people of our state and allow us to demonstrate exactly how and why Carolina is passionately public.”

Other highlights from the meeting included:

• The student government office suite in the Student Union will be named for Crisp, Putnam announced in her final remarks to the board before being succeeded by new Student Body President Ashton Martin.
• Claudio Battaglini, professor of exercise physiology, presented information on Get REAL & HEEL, his exercise program for cancer survivors. He also spoke about his participation in Health and Happiness, one of the new Triple I courses being piloted this spring as part of the proposed new general education curriculum.
• Trustees approved the Aug. 15 implementation of campus paid parking on weeknights, part of transportation and parking’s five-year plan.
• Trustees postponed to the May meeting a vote on the Campus Master Plan, which was approved by the University Affairs committee April 3.

Kenan-Flagler Professor Ed Mayhew talks taxes.

SOG program helps communities respond to opioid crisis.

PlayMakers Repertory Company announces its new season.
Unsung Founders monument vandalized, suspects banned from campus

At approximately 1:30 a.m. March 31, two individuals defaced the Unsung Founders Memorial on McCorkle Place with urine and racist language written in permanent marker, according to UNC Police. The police contacted the facilities department, and workers cleaned the memorial. An installation outside Hanes Art Center was also vandalized with racist slurs.

The suspects have since been identified by police and trespassed from the Carolina campus, Interim Chancellor Kevin Guskiewicz said at a news conference April 4. One of the individuals is known to be affiliated with the Heins of the Confederacy, a group that has protested the removal of the Confederate Monument known as Silent Sam.

“These events challenge not only our most fundamental community values, but also the safety of our campus,” Guskiewicz wrote in a campus email the day of the incident. “Lawless behavior will not be tolerated, and those found responsible will be held accountable for their actions.”

Alexander steps down as diversity officer, resumes faculty appointment

G. Rumay Alexander will step down from her position as chief diversity officer and associate vice chancellor at the end of this academic year. Alexander will resume her faculty appointment in the School of Nursing and continue her role as president of the National League for Nursing, the premier and oldest organization for nurse educators, representing 40,000 individual and 1,200 institutional members.

G. Rumay Alexander

Gretchen Bellamy, senior director for education and outreach, will serve as the primary contact for the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, and Vice Chancellor Felicia Washington will oversee the office as part of her overall responsibilities.

“We are grateful for Rumay’s work in leading the University Office for Diversity and Inclusion and wish her the best in these nursing-related endeavors,” wrote Robert A. Blouin, executive vice chancellor and provost, and Felicia A. Washington, vice chancellor for Workforce Strategy, Equity and Engagement, in an April 4 campus email. “As we celebrate Rumay’s accomplishments and wish her well in her transition, we will also take the time to evaluate our diversity and inclusion efforts on campus and engage our community in assessing how to best position the University and D&I to meet future needs. Fostering a diverse and inclusive community is paramount to ensuring that all members of our community are able to do their best work in support of our core mission of teaching, learning and research.”

Since 2015, Alexander has served as special assistant to the chancellor, interim chief diversity officer and, most recently, chief diversity officer and associate vice chancellor.

The University will conduct a national search to fill this position.

Carolina ranked one of Peace Corps’ largest sources of volunteers

Carolina ranks fifth among large-size schools (more than 15,000 undergraduates) on the Peace Corps’ 2019 Top Volunteer-Producing Colleges and Universities list, tied with Ohio State University and the University of Washington. This is the 10th year Carolina has ranked among the top 20 large-size schools.

Sixty-two Carolina students are currently volunteering in countries around the world. More than 1,340 Tar Heel alumni have served with Peace Corps since the organization’s founding in 1961.

“The Peace Corps provides an outstanding opportunity for Carolina graduates to enlarge their commitment to public service and to work in partnership with others around the world,” said Raymond Farrow, associate provost for global affairs and interim chief global officer. “Peace Corps volunteers help the communities they serve address important and serious challenges and often build on these formative international experiences in their future personal and professional endeavors. As a leading global public research university, UNC-Chapel Hill is proud of its distinguished record of producing Peace Corps volunteers.”

The Peace Corps ranks its top volunteer-producing colleges and universities annually according to the size of the student body. For more information about Peace Corps, visit https://www.peacecorps.gov.
LEADERSHIP IN TRANSITION

LESLIE PARISE STEPS DOWN AS FACULTY CHAIR

Leslie Parise announced March 25 that she will step down as faculty chair by the end of this semester. Parise, who is also chair of the biochemistry and biophysics department in the School of Medicine, served as chair of the faculty for the past two years.

“In balancing the demands of this position with those of chairing my home department and running a research lab, it has become apparent that I will not be able to do justice to all these efforts in the coming year,” Parise said in a letter to the faculty. “This decision was not easy because of my desire to continue working on the faculty’s behalf, particularly given the recent transitions in senior leadership.”

Interim Chancellor Kevin M. Guskiewicz thanked Parise for her outstanding service to Carolina over the past two years. “I’m grateful for all the time and effort she put in to this tremendous responsibility, especially as we worked to address several challenging issues,” he said in a tweet March 26.

A new chair can’t be elected this year because ballots for the faculty election have already gone out, said Vin Steponaitis, faculty secretary. Instead, the faculty Advisory Committee will appoint an interim chair of the faculty to serve through June 2020, when a new faculty chair will be elected.

ANDREW PERRIN NAMED NEXT DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTE FOR THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES

Andrew J. Perrin has been named the next director of the Institute for the Arts and Humanities, effective July 1. He will succeed Mark Katz, who completes his IAH term at the end of the spring 2019 semester.

Perrin is a professor of sociology and special assistant to the provost and dean for accreditation and curricular innovation. He has been a member of the Carolina faculty since 2001. Perrin is also an accomplished and interdisciplinary scholar, with research focused on the cultural sociology of democracy and health messages in children’s movies, among other work.

Perrin has deep experience with the IAH. He was a faculty fellow in 2007 and 2016 and completed the academic leadership program in 2010. He was a member of the IAH faculty advisory board and external review committee and served on the Weil Lecture and the Johnston Prize selection committees.

As a professor of sociology specializing in research on the value of humanities scholarship and education for democratic citizenship, he brings a unique set of skills to support arts and humanities faculty across a spectrum of departments in the College of Arts & Sciences. He also chairs the committee overseeing the general education curriculum revision.

In addition to his curriculum work, Perrin has served as director of the Carolina Seminars since 2014, increasing both the number and scope of these interdisciplinary seminars, and he revived the Douglass Hunt lecture series. He has served on Faculty Council, the educational policy committee and the faculty athletics committee, among other duties in service to Carolina.

Katz has led the IAH since 2014. His many accomplishments helped enhance the institute’s reputation as a place of innovation and productivity. He oversaw the reorganization of the IAH leadership team and staff, furthered diversity, equity and inclusion and created new initiatives such as the Academic Excellence Award and the retired faculty program.

CHRIS CLEMENS NAMED NEW SENIOR ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Chris Clemens, senior associate dean for natural sciences, has been named the College of Arts & Sciences’ new senior associate dean for research and innovation.

The new position was created to drive strategic planning and provide guidance across the College’s academic divisions and research programs, fostering new models of innovation, new initiatives and new collaborations.

Some of the oversight areas that Clemens will have arose from his responsibilities in his previous position, in which he co-led the Science Complex Working Group and its feasibility study for the Institute for Convergent Science building. One of his primary responsibilities will be to help the College and the campus build an Innovation Framework that will help guide teams of researchers through the process of translating basic research into innovations with commercial or social impact. The Innovation Framework is being developed in close collaboration with Innovate Carolina and UNC Research and will be launched next year.

Clemens will also work closely with Terry Magnuson, vice chancellor for research. He will provide executive management advice to the interdisciplinary research and scholarship enterprises within the College, in coordination with Judith Cone, vice chancellor for innovation, entrepreneurship and economic development, as well as Innovate Carolina and the Office of Technology Commercialization to more seamlessly integrate research and innovation enterprises.

As senior associate dean for natural sciences, Clemens’ accomplishments included drafting a plan and funding proposal for the pilot of the Institute for Convergent Science; working with Jaye Cable to launch the new Environment, Ecology and Energy program; collaborating with chairs to build the research enterprise and developing the curriculum in the College’s newest departments (applied physical sciences and biomedical engineering); assisting in the search for a new director of the Institute for the Environment; and leading the College’s distinguished professor selection committee.

Clemens, who also continued his physics and astronomy research, co-taught a new interdisciplinary first-year seminar, Time and the Medieval Cosmos, last semester with history professor Brett Whalen and a new Burch Honors Field Seminar in London last summer.
As assistant professor of chemistry in the College of Arts & Sciences, Bo Li and the scientists in her lab are trying to unlock the hidden chemistry of bacteria for use in new antibiotics. Her research uses genomic-guided techniques to identify possibly therapeutic properties of bacteria, which could lead to new treatments for infectious diseases such as staph infections and respiratory infections.

FOCUS ON
ED MAYDEW

Ed Maydew’s research and teaching at Kenan-Flagler Business School center on corporate tax planning and accounting and their roles in economic decisions. He is David E. Hoffman Distinguished Professor of Accounting. Maydew also directs the UNC Tax Center, which helps tax scholars, policymakers and practitioners better understand tax research and how it affects real world issues.

We’ve done a lot of work to try to understand why rates vary across companies and over a long period of time because we know in any given year taxes can bounce around quite a bit because of various things. Maydew found that influences on corporate tax planning include the CEO’s attitude on tax avoidance and the influence of members of the CEO’s business circle. He tries to find how predictable executive influence is on companies.

We built this huge database of executives and followed them across companies. We found that some executives seemed to exert a big influence on their firm’s tax planning. We gathered lots of biographical information on the executives – where they went to school, if they are paid based on stock compensation or straight salary.

Part of Maydew’s research is properly applying tax code to personal or corporate returns and the difference between legal and illegal tax avoidance. With central banks tracking investments between countries, he wanted to find out how much money was being hidden.

We found a way to estimate how much was due to tax evasion and how much was from information-exchange agreements. In 2000, several developed countries enacted information-sharing arrangements with each other to try to combat people hiding money offshore.

Maydew says one can think about corporate taxation like business partners negotiating how to divide the company’s income. The nation’s tax code is a complicated agreement between government, citizens and companies on how to split up income from production.

The tax code is not negotiated with the government. Usually it’s imposed upon the company or the citizen. We could argue that, through the political process, you can lobby and have some influence, but it’s largely imposed. That seems to give the power to the government. Still, government must create one set of tax laws that covers so many different tax patterns and tax payers. Then, private parties have the power to execute their tax planning.
Weeknight parking, direct deposit option among topics at Employee Forum

Employee Forum delegates learned about the weeknight parking plan set to begin this summer, a new direct deposit self-service function from payroll, pending improvements to ConnectCarolina and opportunities for University employees to buy affordable homes close to campus.

Presenters shared these updates and items of interest at the April 3 meeting:

**WEEKNIGHT PARKING**

Cheryl Stout, director of transportation and parking, reviewed how various members of the campus community will be affected by a longstanding plan for weeknight parking that will take effect Aug. 15. To learn more, visit https://move.unc.edu/about/five-year-plan.

**NORTHSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVE**

Hudson Vaughan, senior director at the Marian Cheek Jackson Center, and Kathy Atwater, the center’s community advocacy coordinator, discussed opportunities for University employees to buy affordable homes in Northside Neighborhood, a close-knit African-American community with long ties to the University that is within walking distance of campus. The Northside Neighborhood Initiative aims to maintain and strengthen a vibrant, diverse, family-friendly neighborhood that honors the history of Northside. The effort is a collaboration between Northside residents, the Jackson Center, Self-Help Credit Union, Carolina, the towns of Chapel Hill and Carrboro and all area affordable housing providers. Learn more at https://jacksoncenter.info

**WHAT’S A TYPICAL DAY LIKE IN YOUR JOB?**

My typical day consists of meetings with team members, conference calls with different committees and a lot of emails. I currently work on the Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities study, which looks at risk factors for heart disease. We’ve been following this cohort of 16,000 people for over 30 years. I have a team of about 18 people who all work to meet the deliverables of our project, which is funded by the National Institutes of Health.

**HOW DOES YOUR WORK SUPPORT CAROLINA’S MISSION?**

I think that what we do goes hand in hand with the University’s mission of helping people. Our mission here is about improving the health of the public. Projects like these impact federal-level policy and help with understanding the risk factors of heart disease. I feel fortunate to work in this type of environment.

**WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT YOUR WORK?**

People that work with me will tell you I love matrices, to-do lists, pro and con lists and brainstorming in a group. I enjoy the process of coming up with potential solutions and then ultimately putting a solution into play. This job has taught me to delegate, and having trust in my team definitely makes my job easier. I also love the investigators on the ARIC project at the different field centers. Their dedication and passion for this project rubs off on me and our team, helping us provide a better service.

**HOW HAS YOUR JOB CHANGED SINCE YOU’VE BEEN WORKING AT CAROLINA?**

I started working in here in 1996 as a graduate research assistant. After receiving my master’s degree in public health, I applied to work as a statistician. I first worked on a school-based intervention project aiming to reduce obesity in Native American children. From there, I’ve worked on a variety of projects and clinical trials. The biggest way my role has changed has been from doing statistical work to doing managerial work.

**HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR JOB CHANGING OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS?**

My role as a project director will need to adapt with the changing times. There are a few things that I can foresee on the horizon. One is that, as a center, we will likely enter the realm of cloud computing and providing a secure workspace on the cloud. I also see our studies shifting to a single Institutional Review Board, instead of having one at each field center. I think we will also see even more teleconferencing meetings rather than in-person meetings. I might even adapt to using Trello in the office.

Carolina People is a regular feature in each issue of the Gazette that asks one of your fascinating colleagues five questions about the work they do for the University. Do you know someone with an interesting or unique job at Carolina? Please email your suggestions to gazette@unc.edu and put Carolina People in the subject line.

**SELF-SERVICE DIRECT DEPOSIT**

Walter Miller, director of payroll, reported that employees will be able to make all direct deposit account changes using the secure Self-Service option in ConnectCarolina, including the ability to split direct deposits into multiple accounts. Employees can enroll in direct deposit by using 2-Step Verification (Duo) and ConnectCarolina’s Self-Service menu. For details, go to https://go.unc.edu/directdeposit.

**CONNECTCAROLINA IMPROVEMENTS**

Anita Collins, change management manager for ConnectCarolina, said the website will be getting a makeover to improve its functionality and give it a more modern look. Based on a recent survey, students said the website looks old and employees said they had to make too many clicks to perform basic functions. The new design will seek to remedy both issues, Collins said. No timeline for completion has been set.

**IN OTHER ACTION**

A resolution supporting medical coverage in the State Health Plan for transgender care (including hormone replacement, psychological counseling and assessment and surgical procedures) passed. To read the full resolution, go to https://employeeforum.unc.edu/resolutions/resolution-19-03-v2.
One 26-year-old Cabarrus County woman had an opioid addiction so bad that she risked exposure to HIV/AIDS and other diseases by shooting up with a used needle that she had bleached and sharpened. Now, because she turned in her needle at a publicly sponsored syringe exchange and enrolled in a methadone treatment program in the county, she is no longer using illegal drugs and is running her own repair business.

In a state where nearly 2,000 people die each year from an unintentional opioid overdose, this is the kind of success story that communities are sharing and learning from through a new project from the School of Government.

The Opioid Response Project, directed by the School of Government’s ncIMPACT Initiative, has Carolina faculty experts on law, social services, nonprofits, child welfare and more partnering with local governments to find some common solutions for the opioid problem. The goal of the project is that the first responders, law enforcement, health care professionals, treatment and recovery providers, judicial workers, local government officials and others from these communities learn from each other and distill these experiences into action plans for their communities.

Ten community teams from 16 counties across the state are participating in the project. One team covers five counties (Beaufort, Hyde, Martin, Tyrell and Washington) and another covers three (Greene, Lenoir and Wayne). The other counties are Cabarrus, Cumberland, Durham, Forsyth, Mecklenburg, Onslow, Transylvania and Wilkes.

“Each of these communities faces its own variation of the opioid crisis,” said Anita Brown-Graham, the professor of public law and government who leads ncIMPACT. “The challenges that these communities have expressed to us won’t surprise you, but it might surprise you how diverse they are.”

Across the state, social workers have seen the number of children in foster care double annually. In Lenoir County, so many parents with addiction have lost custody of their children that the county set up a drug court program that helped with employment and housing to help reunite families. Municipalities that want to add a drug treatment center have to consider how close it would be to a school. The schools have to figure out how to educate the children who live in households made unstable because of parental drug addiction.

‘CROSS-POLLINATION’ OF EXPERTISE

The project is co-led by Kimberly L. Nelson, Albert and Gladys Hall Coates distinguished term associate professor of public administration and government, and Adam Lovelady, associate professor of public law and government.

The two approached ncIMPACT about the project, which was funded by a $390,000 gift from BlueCross BlueShield of North Carolina. The gift included $10,000 for each team to hire a community project manager and $10,000 for implementation.
Other faculty members with roles in the project include Willow Jacobson, Albert and Gladys Hall Coates distinguished term professor for teaching excellence; Jill D. Moore, associate professor of public law and government; Amy Wade, director of MPA Faculty Network; Mark Botts, associate professor of public law and government; and Sara DePasquale, an assistant professor of public law and government. Other School of Government team members include Emily Williamson Gangi, engagement director of the ncIMPACT Initiative, and Patrice Roessler, manager of elected official programming.

“We’ve tried to figure out how to bring that expertise together in a way that not only trains the communities but positions them to train each other. It’s cross-pollination,” said Gangi.

The community teams come from urban, suburban and rural areas.

“These communities have what we call a ‘wicked problem,’” said Jacobson, who designs educational content. “It needs integrated solutions at the root-cause level. We want them to pool their efforts to keep the boats rowing in the same direction without bumping into each other.”

After a summer of advance work, teams met on campus in fall 2018 to learn more about the epidemic, talk with peers from other communities and make plans for their communities. They refined plans at a February forum in Goldsboro and are executing those plans this spring.

The teams will meet five times in all, at forums in different regions of the state. At the forums, the teams will learn from experts on opioid-related issues, from faculty experts and from each other.

**FACULTY VALUE**

Nelson sees great value in bringing individual team members together with their peers, which sparked a desire to continue talking online, by phone and in meetings.

“They may have more challenges working together,” Nelson said. “Part of the faculty’s value is helping them through this process with tools and resources to help them overcome roadblocks they might encounter.”

Wade, an expert in collective impact, agreed. “Our role is helping them create stronger internal infrastructure and capacity and achieve efficiency, effectiveness and better alignment of services in their community. It’s taking a step back to think strategically about how to create a roadmap so that your community can make a more meaningful impact.”

After the project’s fifth forum in 2020, faculty will finish work on a public website and a free guide based on lessons learned and other resources gathered over the two-year program.

“We’re setting them up to effectively move into implementation,” Nelson said. “We want every team to have an action plan that they can operationalize in their community and to be clear on the baseline data for each strategy. They will need to communicate regularly as they move forward and use adaptive strategies for changes along the roadmap they’ve created for their work.”

Some teams have already identified best practices for which they need funding. A team of graduate students from the School of Government, the Gillings School of Global Public Health and the city and regional planning department is helping write grant proposals for the funding.

“We recognize that there are 10 different teams with 10 different compositions and 10 different sets of priorities,” Lovelady said. “There will be some evolution over time, but certainly this spring they’ll have clear action steps and will transition to addressing the challenges in their communities.”

— Scott Jared, University Gazette
Innovate Carolina invites you to attend the 2019 Innovation Showcase at 5:30 p.m. at the Friday Center. Don’t miss out on the opportunity to see and hear presentations and exhibits from 50 top startup companies, social ventures and leading-edge research initiatives. For more information and to register for the event, please visit https://innovate.unc.edu.

The Gazette welcomes your story ideas and calendar announcements. To make sure your information reaches us in time for the next issue, please submit it at least 10 days before our publication date. You can find our latest publication schedule online at http://gazette.unc.edu/about.

The next Gazette will be published April 24. To announce events occurring April 25–May 15, please submit your information no later than April 15. Email us at gazette@unc.edu or submit through the Got News? page on our website (https://gazette.unc.edu/got-news).
The late Jonathan M. Hess, former leader of the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies and former Germanic and Slavic languages and literatures department chair, believed one way to encounter misrepresentations and stereotypes – and to understand their meanings – is to study history and culture. To honor him, the center and the department are co-hosting Moments of Enlightenment: German Jewish Interactions from the 18th Century to the Present, a three-day symposium on campus. The event, which brings together colleagues and collaborators, as well as former students, of Jonathan Hess, is free and open to the public, no tickets or registration required. Saturday activities will be held in the rehearsal hall of the Kenan Music building, Sunday at the FedEx Global Education Center and Monday in the Toy Lounge of Dey Hall. For a complete schedule, please visit https://jewishstudies.unc.edu/event.

Trevor Paglen is an artist whose work spans image-making, sculpture, investigative journalism, writing, engineering and numerous other disciplines. Among his chief concerns are learning how to see the historical moment we live in and developing the means to imagine alternative futures, as shown in this piece, “They Watch the Moon,” courtesy of the artist. Paglen’s lecture at 5:30 p.m. in Hanes Art Center room 121, is part of this year’s Hanes Visiting Artist Lecture Series: Political Geographies.

The third annual Arts Everywhere Day has something for everyone throughout the day. For a complete list of activities, visit artseverywhere.unc.edu. Here are a few highlights.

**Jeghetto:** Keep an eye out for pop-up performances by Pittsburgh-born puppeteer Tarish Pipkins.

**UNC Short Story Dispensers:** In seven different locations, dispensers will be spitting out short stories – some written by Carolina faculty and students – based on how long you have to read.

**Annual Edible Book Contest:** Speaking of reading, how about a book you can eat? Tasting begins at 2 p.m. at the SILS Library.

**Steamroller printing:** The Hanes Art Center offers this high-pressure way to make art as well as food trucks, a photo booth and print sale 1–5 p.m.

**Going Beyond Graduate School:** The day gets serious 5–6 p.m. with this professional development panel and workshop on arts and humanities in the professional world, location to be announced.

**Carolina Choir & Chamber Singers and Clef Hangers:** Music lovers have a tough choice to make with these groups performing the same evening. The choir’s concert begins at 7 p.m. in Moeser Auditorium in Hill Hall, and the Clefs take the Memorial Hall stage at 8 p.m.

**Comedy in Color Showcase:** Need a laugh? Support UNC Creatives of Color at their 7 p.m. show in the TOPO Back Bar.

“Julius Caesar” or “Mr. Burns”? An abundance of acting awaits theatergoers. Company Carolina will perform “Julius Caesar” in the Pit at 7:30 p.m.; Kenan Theatre Company presents “Mr. Burns – A Post Electric Play” in the Student Union at 8 p.m.

**RE:COLLECTION:** Meet professor Gesche Würfel and his Arts 515 Advanced Photography students, who produced the photos for this exhibit, at a 6 p.m. reception at the FRANK Community Gallery in University Place.

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With The Blueprint for Next as the guide for Carolina’s next decade, University employees embrace its goals and are eager to propel Carolina forward. The campus community is moving toward a culture of continuous improvement to transform the University’s administrative operations. Employees are the ones to identify challenges, then create solutions and implement them. Rick Wernoski, senior vice provost for business operations, leads Operational Excellence. He shares his thoughts and ideas on this important initiative.

**The Provost’s office is responsible for ensuring University initiatives are aligned with The Blueprint for Next, the University’s strategic framework. It is also responsible for oversight of University operations, including human resources, finance and IT. Why is an effective and efficient administrative operating model critical to supporting The Blueprint’s overarching goals?**

We have ambitious goals as a University, but no easy way to achieve them. We need to maximize our resources. Creating efficient operations will unlock our time and talent to facilitate implementation of the priorities outlined in The Blueprint for Next. The Blueprint’s two pillars – of the public, for the public and innovation made fundamental – guide us in prioritizing our work.

**Operational Excellence recently rolled out new tools and resources for hiring and procurement projects that were tested in two pilot programs and produced positive results in a matter of months. Why was it important to start by solving a few things quickly? What role did faculty and staff play?**

A Once we identified several key administrative challenges through our extensive listening tours, we began to work on solutions. It’s important to know, though, that we didn’t start with the solution in mind. To make sure our employees’ voices were heard, the Operational Excellence team engaged the University community across all levels, especially the staff. We went to employees with what we believed were the right questions and sought their input to create the solutions. And they were eager to share ideas. We knew that if we could quickly solve a few challenges with ideas from our employees, we could build momentum – the opportunity to be a part of the solution is what inspired so many employees to want to be a part of this transformation.

The comment that we keep hearing from people is ‘this just feels different.’ Faculty and staff have come together in a way that I haven’t seen before in my 25 years working in higher education.

**This initiative was called Carolina Innovation and now it’s called Operational Excellence. Why the change?**

A When we began this work, we wanted to differentiate it from other Operational Excellence projects in the provost’s office, like the data analytics project and the new budget model. But we were too quick in renaming our work Carolina Excellence, which is the name of an important initiative in the Office of Student Affairs. We heard from employees that we had created confusion, so we followed our own philosophy of listening to feedback – and we’ve switched to Operational Excellence.

**Part of the new tools in procurement and hiring includes the use of “war rooms,” or online communities, made up of central staff and staff from various schools or units. How does this speed progress and remove obstacles?**

A Open communication is everything to us. As University employees, we are busy and focused, and we often work in silos. So many problems have been solved by simply bringing people together who normally don’t interact and doing it on a regular, predictable schedule. That collective expertise is solving difficult challenges that were believed to be impossible in record time.

The speed of the redesigned hiring process is important, but what is equally important is that we’ve positioned ourselves to attract and develop the best and most diverse workforce. With the changes, we are able to more nimbly respond to changing demands within the University and we’ve created a better hiring experience for our job candidates. For procurement, the team developed a decision tree to help employees select the right method to make small-dollar purchases. With this new process, less time is spent processing small-dollar vouchers allowing employees time to focus on strategic activities.

**You are staggering the rollout of the procurement and hiring processes over the next six months. Why does this approach make sense?**

A We want to make sure that Operational Excellence doesn’t overwhelm the campus and the hundreds of employees who are driving the change. We divided the schools and units across the campus into three cohorts, working closely with their leadership to develop the timeline.

Our training goes beyond handing over a toolkit. To help set the stage for success, we are providing intensive training to each cohort. At every step of the process, we learn to do it better, and we integrate that knowledge into the next round. We also have been thoughtful of the other change efforts occurring across the University. Staggering the roll out ensures that we maintain momentum and avoid change fatigue.

**Operational Excellence is launching two new projects. What can you tell us about them?**

A I’m excited about the two new projects coming online in April. The first is a redesign of the research lifecycle plan process. Evaluating this process from proposal to award to project completion and close out will show us where we see challenges and allow us to correct those, creating a smoother process that will allow for a faster proposal review process and more proposals submitted for consideration. The second project is a cross-cutting initiative that will look at roles and responsibilities across human resources, finance and research administration. We have diligent, hardworking staff and many of them try to do it all by responding whenever something needs to be done. The unfortunate by-product is that lanes of responsibility are not often clear and frustration abounds. Our goal is to fix that by examining role clarity, collaboration and governance across the three functions.

**How will you know Operational Excellence is a success? How long will it take?**

A We’ll see near-term success by achieving our ambitious targets in hiring, procurement and the research lifecycle plan process redesign that we launched in early March. We’ll see medium-term impact in the formal and informal feedback we receive on the experience of faculty, staff and students when they engage with these processes. We’ll see long-term success once we’ve honed a well-defined proven process to quickly solve the pain points as we identify them. The journey never really ends, but the community should notice a difference by this time next year: Our administrative operations should be working better; hiring will happen faster, purchasing will be smoother and roles between departments will be better aligned.

**Is there a secret to success?**

A There is really no secret — we empower our employees to help us solve problems. If we do that, we will continue to unlock the creativity and sense of shared purpose that has always defined Carolina.

**What opportunities will Operational Excellence create for staff?**

A Staff at Carolina are often the hidden heroes of the University, often working late nights to get the job done, and utilizing implicit repositories of institutional knowledge. Operational Excellence has made those hidden heroes a part of the solution. I am grateful for the dynamic leadership and enthusiasm that so many have demonstrated and expect employees at all levels to be a permanent fixture in these ongoing efforts.

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**Editor’s Note: To read a longer version of this story, with additional questions and answers, please visit gazette.unc.edu.**

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— Gary Moss, University Gazette
Meeting biomedical and health challenges of the state

The School of Medicine began 140 years ago with 37 medical students and a two-year curriculum, born in the spirit of service that still guides its faculty, staff and students today. That teaching model has continued to flourish over the generations. The medical school’s diverse student body now includes more than 1,200 graduate and medical students at four campuses in Chapel Hill, Wilmington, Asheville and Charlotte, with robust teaching sites in Greensboro and Raleigh as well. The medical school attracts students from around the country, and about 40% of each graduating class of medical doctors stay in North Carolina for their residencies. The school ranks first in primary care education, and its research endeavor is ranked sixth among peer public universities in the United States.

Dean A. Wesley Burks shares his vision for the School of Medicine.

What is the mission of the School of Medicine?

At the School of Medicine, our mission is to improve the health and well-being of all the people of North Carolina. We accomplish this mission in three ways: clinical care, research and education. We do it through the highest quality of clinical care, so that people in North Carolina don’t have to leave the state to get the care that they need. We do it through life-changing research and innovative education that will train the next generation of physicians serving the people of North Carolina, all built on the twin pillars of empathy and expertise.

What is your vision for the School of Medicine?

When we look to the future, we know our diverse and collaborative environment will allow us to meet the biomedical and health challenges with the same spirit of service and innovation, empathy and expertise that founded our school of medicine and this great university.

What is your goal for faculty?

The health care environment has been rapidly changing, which is why we developed our Translational Education at Carolina curriculum to provide a more student-centric, patient-based way of learning. TEC integrates the use of simulation models, technology and training in collaborative ways similar to the team care found in clinics and hospitals. With TEC, our professors and staff introduce students to clinical work immediately, instead of waiting until year three of medical school.

What is your goal for students?

In 2022, our students will receive much of their training in a new, state-of-the-art medical education building, an eight-floor facility that will include a large active learning theater, flexible labs, learning and study spaces designed to heighten collaboration, and two floors dedicated to developing clinical skills through simulated learning. With this new building, we will be able to expand our class size from 190 to 240 students, helping us meet the increasing demand for physicians across North Carolina.

INTERDISCIPLINARY BENEFITS

Loeb (psychology and neuroscience) teaches Death and Dying with Tim Marr (American studies) and Jocelyn Chua (anthropology). Death and dying are shared experiences, yet there is great cultural variation in the ways people define, understand and treat death, dying and the relations between the living and the dead.

Human problems are inherently interdisciplinary, said Chua, and the Triple I courses highlight that.

“Being able to work with people from different disciplinary backgrounds to create solutions to complex human problems is important, especially in an increasingly global world,” Chua said. “The earlier we can expose students to these kinds of dialogues, and [illustrate] that research shouldn’t be a siloed experience, the better.”

“Thinking about death is a universal way to make meaning out of life,” added Marr. For students, many of whom may not have experienced the loss of someone close to them, “it may create a natural community of experience they can build on.”

Loeb had the idea for the course and searched the UNC.edu website for “death and dying” when looking for potential collaborators. Marr and Chua’s names popped up. It’s been amazing to team up with her new colleagues on this, she said. They meet with their graduate teaching assistants in the Campus Y or for lunch after each class to brainstorm and de-brief.

Battaglini (exercise and sport science) teaches Health and Happiness with Barbara Fredrickson (psychology and neuroscience) and Arne Kalleberg (sociology). Kalleberg and Fredrickson knew each other from first-year seminars they both teach that address aspects of happiness, and Battaglini and Fredrickson had submitted grant proposals together.

In the course, students are exposed to the ideas of happiness and well-being from the disciplines of physiology, positive psychology and sociology. They are also learning important life skills such as cultivating teamwork, developing social connections, being physically active and more.

The three Happiness professors said students are not the only ones who benefit from the interdisciplinary nature of Triple I courses. They said teaching the class together has given them new insights about teaching styles and ways to team up for future research.

“In my area, I need more of their expertise, because the million-dollar question for us in exercise and sport science is, how can you get people to engage and sustain levels of physical activity for a prolonged period of time?” Battaglini said. “You start thinking of psychological and sociological forces behind that.”

Fredrickson echoed the need for experts outside her field as it relates to her own work on positive emotions, particularly as she explores new research directions.

“The most interesting and pressing questions that face us in social and hard sciences require interdisciplinary approaches,” she said. “We need to get students thinking across these lines more fluidly.”

Kalleberg said team-teaching the class has been “pure joy and a natural fit.”

For undergraduates who are not sure what to major in, Triple I courses may spark their interest in different majors and careers, he added.

ENGAGING STUDENTS

Faculty members are using a variety of techniques to encourage class participation and to make these big classes feel small.

In Health and Happiness, students are divided into “flocks” (group of Rams) and required to do happiness-promoting activities together outside of class throughout the semester. The faculty trio also hosts non-alcoholic “happy hours” where students can chat with them informally after class, and they offer tours of exercise and sport science laboratories. Students are gaining data literacy skills by working with to test different hypotheses by analyzing class data related to the course theme. They will prepare scientific posters showcasing their results.

The Death and Dying team encourages students to answer various questions on index cards, then they gather in small groups to trade cards with a class member they don’t know to discuss their answers. Students are also working together to create a collective WordPress site. They are posting about a specific issue related to cultural, scientific and ethical issues of death and dying.

Raymond Chen, a student in Death and Dying, said he appreciates the variety of topics addressed in the syllabus.

“One day we’ll talk about the history behind stand-your-ground laws; another day we’ll read an article on cryonics. We also learned how suicide takes on many cultural forms,” he said.

After a tough fall semester, Chika Adiele said she enrolled in Health and Happiness with the goal of adding to her “happiness toolbox.”

“My favorite part of the course so far was the day Dr. Battaglini talked about the physiological benefits of exercise in terms of our happiness and health,” she said. “It was mind-blowing.”

— Kim Spurr, College of Arts & Sciences
PlayMakers Repertory Company has announced its 2019–20 season, “Legacy | NOW.” The season will present world premieres, new interpretations and classic plays with the goal of opening hearts and minds to new perspectives. Each show will challenge audiences to explore diverse ways of analyzing and telling history.

The main stage season will welcome one of the Bard’s best tales of political intrigue; a sweeping Tony Award-winning musical; a seminal American novel in a theatrical re-imagining; a comedy about why fences make terrible neighbors; a fresh take on the age-old morality play; and a world-premiere comedy about a farm-to-table food fight. The PRC2 Kenan Stage series, curated by Artistic Director Vivienne Benesch, will engage and collide with some foundational stories and storytellers. This season includes two world premieres by female writers alongside PlayMakers’ first production of “Julius Caesar” in its history. 2019–2020 will be full to the brim with great theatre.

“Legacy | NOW” annoucnces 2019–2020 season

2019/20 PRC2 KENAN STAGE PRODUCTIONS IN THE ELIZABETH PRICE KENAN THEATRE

“No Fear & Blues Long Gone: Nina Simone” AUG. 22–25

The PRC2 series opens with Howard Craft’s tale of storytelling and song that celebrates the music, loves and losses of legendary North Carolina singer Nina Simone.

“The Amish Project” JAN. 8–12, 2020

This timely drama is a fictionalized exploration of an all too real scenario today: a schoolhouse shooting. When an Amish community is shaken by violence, the community finds a path of forgiveness and compassion in its wake.

“Edges of Time” APRIL 29–MAY 3, 2020

PlayMakers’ company member Jacqueline Lawton premieres her dramedy about the life and times of Marvel Cooke, pioneering journalist and activist who was the first African-American female writer to work for a mainstream newspaper. Company favorite Kathryn Hunter Williams takes the starring role.

MAIN STAGE SEASON IN THE PAUL GREEN THEATRE

“Native Son” SEPT. 11–29

The season opens with an American literature classic, adapted by Namib E. Kelly into a theatrical and psychological kaleidoscope for a new generation. The first dramatic adaptation of Richard Wright’s novel “Native Son” was written at Carolina as a collaboration between Wright and Pulitzer Prize-winner Paul Green. In Kelly’s searing new adaptation, Bigger Thomas still struggles to find his place in a world whose prejudice has shut him out. Is Bigger’s slide into violence an inevitable outcome of the racism and poverty that surrounds him?

“Dairyland” OCT. 16–NOV. 3

A world premiere comedy invites audiences to experience an epic farm-to-table food fight. Allie, a food writer in New York City, is raw from a failed office romance, journalistic rivalry and baby shower crafts. When she finds herself on the wrong side of the food scene, will her father’s dairy farm and Patches the cow show her the way home?

“Ragtime” NOV. 20–DEC. 15

Based on the novel of the same name by E.L. Doctorow, the Tony Award-winning musical about the American experience and the volatile “melting pot” in turn of the 20th century New York weaves a tale that is as relevant today as ever. Sweeping melodies tell three distinctly American stories: a determined Jewish immigrant and his motherless daughter; a daring Harlem musician; and a well-off white family from New Rochelle. “Ragtime” paints a powerful picture of the American Dream as “some of the most breathtaking musical theatre writing of the last 25 years” (Los Angeles Times).

“Everybody” JAN. 22–FEB. 9, 2020

This existential comedy updates the medieval morality play “Everyman” to take audiences on a life-affirming journey of love. Hounded by Death, the character of Everybody desperately searches everything and everyone in life with the hope of finding something to take to the grave. Five brave actors will be assigned their roles by lottery each night – 120 possible combinations – as they fight to cheat Death.

“Native Gardens” APRIL 8–26, 2020

This comedy underscores why good fences don’t always make great neighbors. An attorney on the rise and his very pregnant wife could not feel more welcomed by their new neighbors. But a friendly disagreement about the lay of the land quickly spirals into a war of taste, class and entitlement.