



## Academic Affairs

# Acmes & Accolades

GENESEO | April 2019

The Division of Academic Affairs at SUNY Geneseo is organized into 2 schools and 18 academic departments which provide a variety of majors, minors, and concentrations for our students. The division also includes several support units that complement our academic programs, enhance programmatic study, and ensure the development and completion of degree programs.

### Ivers Receives Chancellor's Excellence in Adjunct Teaching Award

Amy Scherer Ivers, part-time lecturer in the Department of Sociology, was selected as a recipient of the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Adjunct Teaching for the academic year 2018-19.

This award's rigorous selection criteria includes consistently demonstrated superb skill in teaching. "Candidates must have demonstrated mastery of teaching, dedication to students, adherence to the highest academic standards, and continued professional achievements," said SUNY Chancellor Kristina Johnson.



An active and beloved 7-12 Social Studies teacher with permanent New York Certification as of 2003, Ivers is a skilled college classroom leader. She has refined her presentation of the course, SOCL 100: Introduction to Sociology, to an unparalleled level since joining the Sociology Department in 2013.

Ivers is credited by Department Chair Kurt Cylke with "bringing in more majors than any other member of our faculty." The positive, dynamic atmosphere which she maintains in her classroom entices students who hadn't thought much about sociology to decide to major in the discipline.

Ivers is active on campus in other ways, as well, including providing indispensable support for reinvigorating Safe Zone training on campus and collaborating with a Geneseo faculty member in a grant-driven venture to create a service learning opportunity for English majors seeking Adolescence Education Certification.

Ivers joins 11 Geneseo adjunct lecturers who have received the Chancellor's excellence in adjunct teaching award since its introduction in 2014. She will be formally presented with a medallion and certificate at Geneseo's Opening Convocation August 23, 2019.

### Academics Page Undergoes Major Revision

Months in the making, the Office of the Provost unveiled its new, vibrant, and engaging Academics web page ([www.geneseo.edu/academics](http://www.geneseo.edu/academics)) March 15th. The new web page is designed for optimization on a variety of devices including computers, tablets, and mobile phones.

The new site includes a slide show enticing students to engage in study abroad, the arts, integrative learning, and undergraduate research, and provides information about Geneseo's National Fellowships and Scholarships.

With the click of a mouse, current and prospective students and faculty, as well as parents and friends, may navigate to various links to learn about Geneseo's programs, academic resources, and opportunities, or to view a video introducing them to a particular program of study.

Newsworthy academics-related items provide information on past and future events and also Geneseo's accolades.

Project members include Kathy McIntyre and Tony Hoppa in the Provost's Office, Ravi Lamontagne in Computing and Information Technology, and Kristy Barkan, director of digital communications in the office of Communications and Marketing, whose expertise and web communications savviness were vital to the site redesign.

### O'Donnell Awarded COPLAC's Dunn Award



The Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC) has awarded its 2019 Charles Dunn Award to SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor of Biology and Chair Robert O'Donnell. The \$500 award recognizes a faculty member whose commitment to student success goes "above and beyond" the classroom and office, and the traditional roles

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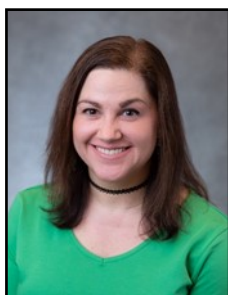
## Smith and Katz Win Research Awards

Bringing Theory to Practice has awarded Lytton Smith, associate professor of English and creative writing and director of the Center for Integrative Learning, a \$6,997 Multi-Institutional Innovation Projects grant award. Smith's proposed project, "Making Rochester a City of Asylum," will bring together five partners — Monroe Community College; Pittsburgh-based City of Asylum; the newly formed Rochester City of Asylum; Silver Lake, NY-based Shake on the Lake Shakespeare festival; and SUNY Geneseo.



The partners will "explore the adaptation of City of Asylum's arts-centered urban renewal project for Rochester and the wider Genesee Valley region, creating sustainable ties to educational opportunities, ongoing community building, and rehabilitation of vacant urban lots as part of a social justice mission to protect writers in peril." The primary project goal is develop an action plan to launch a Rochester version of City of Asylum in September of 2020. Grant funds will be used to host a Summer Institute and a Writing Asylum literary festival to develop relationships between the collaborating institutions and various other community partners.

Professor of Psychology Jennifer Katz was issued a sub-award for a collaboration with Dr. Jennifer Read, University at Buffalo Professor and director of clinical training in the Department of Psychology, on a National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism planning grant award. The study, "Harnessing the Power of Friends to Reduce Sexual Assault Risk," seeks to develop an innovative, friend-based motivational intervention (FMI) that encourages and prepares friends to reduce sexual assault risk. The FMI also will focus on how intoxication may serve as a barrier to friend intervention, and strategies for overcoming this barrier.



The three-year project began August 1, 2018 and will be funded through July 31, 2021. Read's award totals approximately \$649,000; the total sub-award to Katz is expected to be \$11,554 to support her summer efforts collaborating with Read and other team members during all stages of the research project. Katz has researched interpersonal violence for more than two decades. In recent years, she has developed a focus on the social and psychological variables that promote or inhibit the willingness of bystanders to intervene in violent situations, particularly in cases related to alcohol use.

## Geneseo Named a Peace Corps Top-Producing College Five Consecutive Years

For the fifth year in a row, SUNY Geneseo has been ranked a leading Peace Corps-producing college, coming in No. 13 among the top 25 medium-sized schools having an enrollment of 5,000–15,000 undergraduate students on the Peace Corps' 2019 list. Currently, 22 Geneseo alumni are volunteering with the worldwide program, joining hundreds of Geneseo alumni who have served since the agency's founding in 1961.

"We have seen time and again that the colleges and universities that produce the most Peace Corps volunteers focus on cultivating global citizens in addition to promoting scholarship," said Peace Corps Director Jody Olsen. "I am proud that so many graduates of these esteemed institutions leverage their educations to make the world a better place. They bring critical skills to communities around the world and gain hands-on, life-changing experience along the way."

The Peace Corps sends Americans with a passion for service abroad on behalf of the United States to work with communities and create lasting change. In developing sustainable solutions to address challenges in education, health, community economic development, agriculture, environment, and youth development, volunteers gain a unique cultural understanding and a lifelong commitment to service that positions them to succeed in today's global economy.

The only other school in the SUNY system to make the 2019 list in any category was SUNY Binghamton, ranked No.19.



*Cladia Plantin '12 (left) served in St. Lucia as a literacy volunteer.*



Join us for our college-wide symposium celebrating the creative and scholarly endeavors of our students — GREAT Day (Geneseo Recognizing Excellence, Achievement & Talent Day) April 17.

## Leah Christman '19 to Serve as a Fulbright in India



Growing up in Wellsville, N.Y., English literature major and Honors Program student Leah Christman '19 knew little of Southeastern Asian cultures – but recognized and related to many of the cultural threads she found watching classic Bollywood epics. Her first introduction to India was in her 9th-grade history class through Richard Attenborough's film *Gandhi*.

"I was intrigued by the beautiful and innovative people and excited to learn about the country's intricate culture," she said. "Ground-breaking cinematic classics like *Mother India* and *Mulk* demonstrate the artistic genius of Bollywood filmmakers ... but films are ultimately an illusion. I want desperately to experience India firsthand, traverse its streets, absorb its beauty, and listen attentively to what it has to tell me."

Christman will have that chance to experience the reality of India now that she's won a 2019–20 U.S. Student Fulbright award. She will serve as a Fulbright-Nehru English Teaching Assistant (ETA) in either a middle or secondary school in a community to be determined by the United States-India Educational Foundation.

According to the U.S. State Department, India Fulbrighters are considered "cultural ambassadors of U.S. society, culture, and history and help to expand the world view of their students." The Fulbright-Nehru ETA Program allows American citizens to become "a part of the community" to help it "grow with whatever skills and knowledge an ETA can impart all while learning about Indian culture and society."

During the July orientation period in India, Christman will undergo intensive language training in Hindi, Bangla, Tamil, and Odiya. She plans to pursue a doctoral degree in speech-language pathology when she returns from India in 2020.

For the 2019–20 application cycle, 12 of the 19 applications the College submitted reached semifinalist status, outpacing the previous record of eight. Christman's award brings the College's total award recipients to 27; notification of awards for semifinalists will continue by country through April.

Last month, for the second time in the College's history and in consecutive years, SUNY Geneseo was named a Top Producer of U.S. Student Fulbright awards.

## Catherine Shields '19 Earns State Dept. Critical Language Scholarship

Catherine (Cate) Shields '19 first developed an interest in Turkish folk music, lyrical poems, and mystical writings during her sophomore year of college after reading Amin Maalouf's *Samarkand*, a novel about 11th-century Persian poet Omar Khayyám and the creation of his poetry collection *The Rubáiyát*.



That experience led to Cate majoring in history and communication as a way to pursue her newfound academic interest in the history of the Near East as well as the greater Islamic World. "Maalouf's book showed me a way to link the poetry, philosophy, and passion of the mystic past with the modern world," she said. "I found a part of myself in that novel and vowed to continue nurturing those connections."

Shields will now have an opportunity to further explore the Turkish language and culture as a recipient of a U.S. State Department Critical Language Scholarship. The Grandview Heights, N.Y. native will be placed in Baku, Azerbaijan, this summer at the Azerbaijani University of Languages to learn approximately one academic year's worth of university-level Turkish during an eight-week period while living with a host family.

The intensive language and cultural immersion will help prepare Shields for a master's degree program in Middle Eastern studies. She also is a U.S. Student Fulbright semifinalist for Turkey and awaiting notification of her final status for that award.

"Catherine has long impressed me with her determination to know as much as possible of the world outside upstate New York, and indeed of other worldviews," noted Assistant Professor of History Yvonne Seale. "She collaborates and maintains friendships with students from different cultural backgrounds and political beliefs."

The Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) Program is a fully funded summer overseas language and cultural immersion program in the U.S. State Department, designed to encourage American undergraduate and graduate students to study languages deemed critical to national security and competitiveness. Shields' award is the third CLS Scholarship earned by Geneseo students in Turkish; she joins James Kuras '09 and Robert Viglietta '12. Geneseo students have also won three times for Russian (Mark Simeone '10, Annie Renaud '18, and Alex McGath '18) and once for Arabic (Maria Sigalas '13).



## Geneseo Students Stage Philosophy Takeovers in Local Schools

Innovative. Aggressive. Collaborative. Any one of those adjectives is an apt description for a new effort known as a “philosophy takeover,” in which SUNY Geneseo students introduce philosophical topics to regional high school classes. The collaboration between the College and local schools comes at a time when nationwide, the number of students



majoring in philosophy is declining.

This initiative seeks to emphasize the value of studying philosophy by recreating a college class, setting up thought experiments, and engaging

students in discussions of ethical dilemmas. Seven Geneseo students in the program -- including biology and theatre majors as well as those studying philosophy -- developed the lesson plans.

“There is no exposure to philosophy in the New York State curriculum,” said Associate Professor and Philosophy Department Chair David Levy, who made initial contacts with local school districts including Honeoye Falls-Lima, Geneseo, Avon, Livonia, and Mount Morris.

“We want students to learn about philosophy as a discipline as well as some of its practical applications, such as critical thinking and logical reasoning,” he said. “Short-term, it helps create better students, and ideally, the program will help inspire high school students to consider a philosophy major when they eventually enter college.”

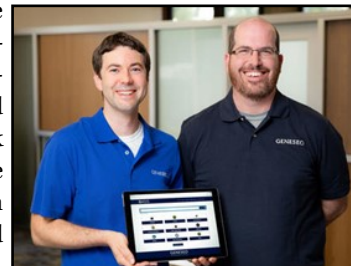
The response thus far has been positive. “Any time you can get young minds fully engaged in a critical thinking exercise is a win for society,” said Geneseo Central School teacher Dave Kozlowski.

## “Who Speaks for Nature?”

The Department of Political Science and International Relations presented a showing March 29 of the documentary, “Who Speaks for Nature?” at the Riviera Theater in Geneseo. The film by Larry Engel, associate professor in American University’s School of Communication, is based on the book by Todd A. Eisenstadt, professor in the Department of Government at American University, and SUNY Geneseo Associate Professor of Political Science and International Relations Karleen West. *Who Speaks for Nature? Indigenous Movements, Public Opinion, and the Petro-State in Ecuador* was published by Oxford University Press earlier this year.

## Milne Library Colleagues Earn Innovation in College Librarianship Award

The Association of College and Research Libraries has honored Milne Library colleagues Ben Rawlins, director, and Bill Jones ’09, ’11, digital resources and systems librarian, with the 2019 College Libraries Section Innovation in College Librarianship Award. The duo earned recognition for their work on the Openly Available Sources Integrated Search (OASIS) project launched this past September.



The annual award honors American Library Association members who have demonstrated a capacity for innovation in their work with undergraduates, instructors, and/or the library community. Rawlins and Jones created OASIS as an open educational resource search tool that makes the discovery of open content easier by (currently) searching 72 sources containing more than 170,000 records. It searches multiple vetted sources for materials, most of which are in the public domain or openly licensed. A \$1,000 award and plaque will be presented at the 2019 ALA Annual Conference in Washington, DC.

## COPLAC’s Dunn Award (continued from Page 1)

of teacher, academic advisor, and mentor. Award recipients demonstrate extraordinary attention to students as individuals who sometimes face unique challenges, both on and off campus, which may compromise their academic performance. According to COPLAC Executive Director Cole Woodcox, the selection committee was impressed with how O’Donnell’s “citizenship in the university demonstrated impact on students and learning.”

O’Donnell joined the SUNY Geneseo faculty in 1987. He was awarded the Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Teaching in 1994 and held the Lockhart Professorship from 1995-1998. The College honored O’Donnell in 2008 with the President’s Award for Excellence in Academic Advising for bearing an advisement load equal to, or greater than, the mean for his department; demonstrating excellence in communicating knowledge of college and program requirements and campus resources; and developing mentoring relationships with advisees.

O’Donnell serves as faculty advisor to the Alpha Omega Pi Sorority; the Pre-Dental Club; Students for the Enhancement of Eyesight; and the Pre-Physician Assistant Club. He also is serving his first term as chair of the Department of Biology while teaching full-time.