

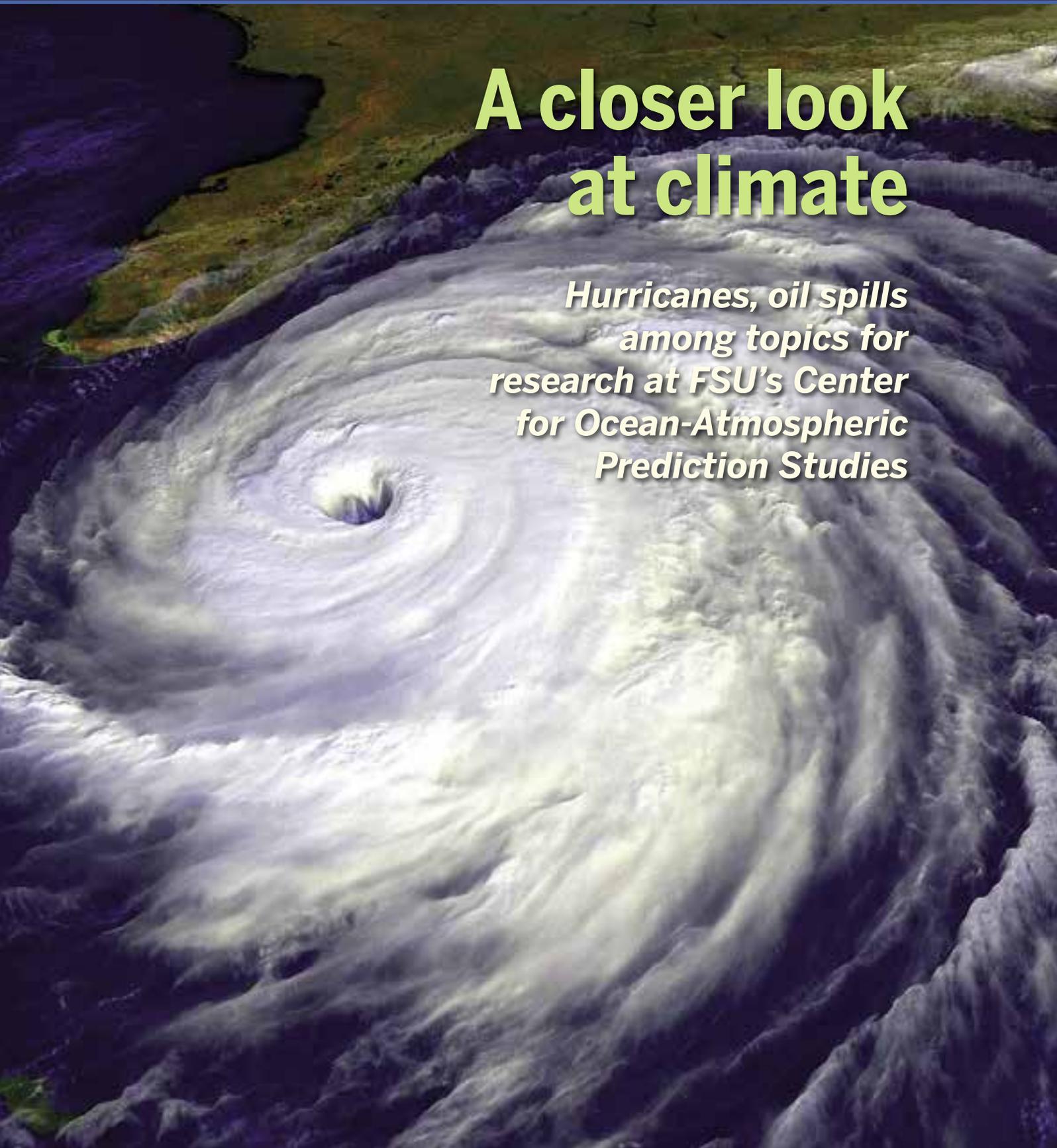


SPRING  
2018

*Across the*  
**Spectrum**  
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

# A closer look at climate

*Hurricanes, oil spills  
among topics for  
research at FSU's Center  
for Ocean-Atmospheric  
Prediction Studies*





# Letter from the dean

**W**elcome to the spring 2018 edition of *Across the Spectrum*, the primary alumni publication of the College of Arts and Sciences. The college, home to 18 departments and 15 programs and institutes, is in the midst of recruiting dozens of new faculty members. A surge in hiring has been made possible by legislative funding in response to the hard work of the university's senior leadership. We are grateful to both.

Our cover story about the Center for Ocean-Atmospheric Prediction Studies (COAPS) illustrates the type of interdisciplinary activity taking place every day across our units. Atmosphere-ocean interaction is of primary importance as we seek to understand all we can about climate science. Another article highlighting collaboration focuses on the remarkable scientific achievements that are possible when a generous philanthropic gift links together a private marine laboratory (the Mote Marine Lab) with a thriving academic department (the Department of Biological Science). FSU will be forever grateful to William and Lenore Mote for establishing the Mote family endowment.

This issue also showcases FSU's innovative E-series courses, a majority of them designed and taught by faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences. These courses share a focus on critical analysis, written communication, and the fostering of curiosity about our world. We have chosen to highlight just a few of the many now being taught. Composition and communication are also highlighted in our article on Tarez Samra Graban of the Department of English. Tarez's contemporary scholarship contributes great value to FSU's esteemed program in Rhetoric and Composition.

Career pathways are on the minds of all college students as they navigate their academic careers. Two articles display examples of paths taken by students over the years. One describes the 50-year relationship between our Department of Anthropology and the Southeast Archeological Center, which has helped a number of graduates obtain professional positions. The other explores the range of possibilities and the excellent track record for Department of Philosophy graduates.

Caribbean and Latin American studies is an area of recent growth across humanities-area departments, reflecting an expanding interest in those regions. We share in another article the activities of some of our faculty members, both new and veteran, who are making important scholarly contributions to the field.

Joe Schlenoff, last year's recipient of the Robert O. Lawton Distinguished Professor award, the highest honor bestowed by the FSU faculty on one of its own, has been and remains incredibly productive. As a polymer scientist, his work is not only crucial to our understanding of materials but has important practical applications. His success with mentoring students is a splendid bonus.

A new building, visibly prominent along West Tennessee Street and located just across from the President's House, will be an important addition to the science side of campus. We are excited that the new Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Science Building is progressing so well and very grateful to the Legislature for its support. You can read about the building and some of its features in this edition.

As we prepare to shift gears towards the end of the spring semester, it is a pleasure for me to thank you for maintaining connections with the College of Arts and Sciences. Best wishes, and please stay in touch. 🌱

## Chanton speaks to graduates at Fall 2017 Commencement

Speaking at the first of two fall Commencement ceremonies on Dec. 15, Florida State University Professor of Oceanography Jeff Chanton urged new FSU graduates to be good stewards of the Earth. "Today, we are crowding other species off the planet," warned Chanton, who has taught at FSU for 29 years and was recently selected as the university's Robert O. Lawton Distinguished Professor for 2017-2018. Watch his Commencement address at <https://goo.gl/FLrWJK>.

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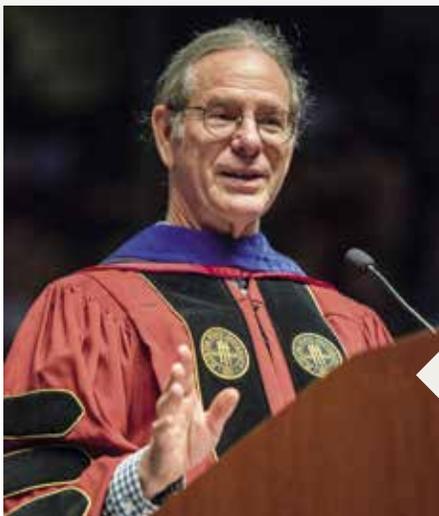
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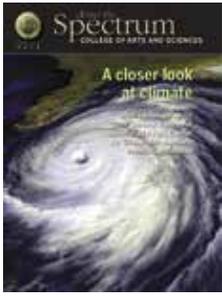
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**On the cover**

Florida State University's Center for Ocean-Atmospheric Prediction Studies performs interdisciplinary research in ocean-atmosphere-land-ice interactions to increase our understanding of the physical, social and economic consequences of climate variability. In recent years, the center's scientists have studied everything from hurricanes to climate forecasting to oil pollution. See page 18.

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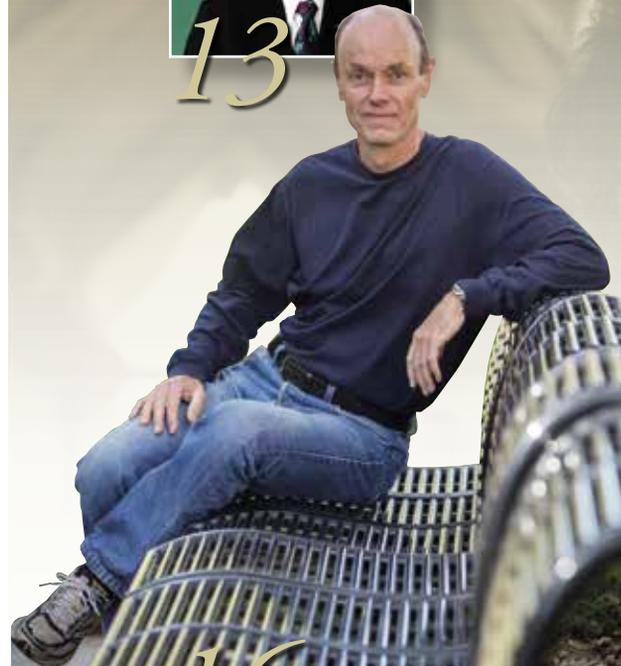
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# Courses you (probably) never took

**Terrorism, poverty among topics covered in modern 'E-Series' classes**

**By Barbara Ash**

**Y**ou can sympathize with lovers of lifelong learning who envy today's students enrolled in one of a broad array of relatively new E-Series liberal arts courses offered across Florida State University's colleges and disciplines. These courses, developed to tackle current and wide-reaching societal issues, were not available to students until recently.

Taken in a student's first years at Florida State, E-Series courses are created and taught by faculty members who are experts in their fields. With titles like "Broken Clocks and Disrupted Sleep"; "Need and Greed (Is Money the Root of All Evil?); "Terrorism in Historical Perspective"; and "Fantasy Girls: Philosophical Examinations of Women and Girls in Fantasy and Science Fiction," the courses provide a foundation for higher-order thinking that propels students to success through their college and professional careers. E-Series courses derive their name from the fact that they focus on significant questions pertaining to society and the natural world that can be *engaged*, *explored*, *examined* and *evaluated* using multiple perspectives.

Considered a cornerstone of FSU's Liberal Studies curriculum, these broad-ranging courses are designed to engage students in thinking about big ideas and broad questions relevant to society and the natural world. They paved the way for success in a changing labor

market and for effective citizenship in a global world, said Annette Schwabe, an associate dean in the Division of Undergraduate Studies who directs Liberal Studies.

"E-Series courses provide students with habits of thinking and experience for the 21st century, including the ability to communicate well, think critically, innovate and collaborate to solve complex problems," said Schwabe, who is also a Distinguished Teaching Professor in FSU's College of Social Sciences and Public Policy. "The content and delivery of these courses are intended to excite students about learning, pique curiosity, engage them intellectually and foster their ability to bring multiple perspectives to problems."

Schwabe cited a recent Association of American Colleges and Universities survey of more than 300 companies that found that employers across all sectors seek employees who have developed the abilities that E-Series courses are designed to foster: analysis, reasoning, critical thinking, written communication and collaboration. In this way, E-Series courses provide students with the academic toolkit for success in all aspects of life.

Professor Aline Kalbjan is chair of the Department of Religion. She teaches the E-Series course "Need and Greed (Is Money the Root of All Evil?)."

Ray Stanyard



Faculty members responded enthusiastically to the call for development of novel and relevant courses that not only enhance students' education but also capitalize on the diversity, creativity and depth of faculty expertise.

"When the concept of the E-Series course was introduced, I knew I wanted to create one," said Tracie Mahaffey, an associate teaching faculty member and director of undergraduate studies in the College of Arts and Sciences' Department of Philosophy. "From the very beginning, I was thrilled to have an opportunity to take non-traditional materials, like comics, film, and short stories, and bring them together with primary-source readings in philosophy to create something new.



Ray Stanyard

Tracie Mahaffey is a teaching faculty member in the Department of Philosophy. She teaches "Fantasy Girls: Philosophical Examinations of Women and Girls in Fantasy and Science Fiction."



Ray Stanyard

Annette Schwabe is an associate dean in the Division of Undergraduate Studies who directs Liberal Studies.

"One of the challenges I face in the classroom is finding ways to bridge the theoretical and conceptual with the everyday experiences of my students," said Mahaffey, who teaches "Fantasy Girls: Philosophical Examinations of Women and Girls in Fantasy and Science Fiction." "I think students assume, unreflectively, that the questions of philosophy are not really relevant to their lives. I wanted to turn that assumption on its head. Philosophical treatments of pop culture and philosophy in literature classes are not novel, but I wanted to find a way to take these stories (that I am such a fan of) and use them to challenge our ideas about human nature and what it means to be a girl or a woman in the world today."

The course "Broken Clocks and Disrupted Sleep: Impacts of Technology" takes advantage of research by Lisa Lyons, an associate professor in the Department of Biological Science and Program in Neuroscience, who created and teaches the course. The course's practical implications are a real draw for students, many of whom are referred by peers who completed it.

"Rapid advances in technology have contributed to sleep and circadian disorders, and teenagers and young adults can be most susceptible to

this occurrence," Lyons said. "I developed this course because I want students to be more conscientious about their sleep habits and nighttime use of smartphones and electronics. Small changes in lifestyle and habits can have a tremendous impact on health, well-being and even grades. I want to provide them with an understanding of the biology behind these processes and the diseases that can arise when the circadian clock or sleep are perturbed."

In her course "Need and Greed (Is Money the Root of All Evil?)," Aline Kalbian, chair of the Department of Religion, asks students to consider the ethics of money, wealth, and poverty in a religious context. She has them examine questions such as whether money can become an impediment to overall flourishing, whether there are moral guidelines for its proper pursuit, how much money we need to live well, and when the pursuit of money becomes greed. In addition, students spend a significant part of the course studying society's responsibility to the poor by looking at questions of justice and evaluating private and public philanthropy. Kalbian says this topic has taken on an urgent tone as some attain unprecedented levels of wealth while many others fall deeper into poverty.



Lisa Lyons is an associate professor in the Department of Biological Science and Program in Neuroscience. She teaches "Broken Clocks and Disrupted Sleep: Impacts of Technology."

At the same time, the fears and realities of terrorism have left a deep mark on every aspect of life in the United States, Europe, and the rest of the world. Associate Professor of History George Williamson developed his course, "Terrorism in Historical Perspective," to help students understand modern terrorism by examining its deeper history and prehistory, which reach back to antiquity. Williamson said student interest in the topic is strong for good reason.

"It's not hard to demonstrate the contemporary relevance of this topic, because unfortunately terrorism seems to be almost omnipresent in the modern world," Williamson said. "Students

may not initially understand why the course has such a broad chronological sweep, but my sense is that the relevance of the earlier history becomes clearer as we begin to discuss more recent incidences of terrorism from groups like Al Qaeda and ISIS.

"I want students to become aware that what we now call terrorism is not a recent phenomenon, that its historical origins go back at least as far as the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and much further if one links modern terrorism to ancient and early modern practices of tyrannicide. I ask them to consider that, like the historical events, terrorist acts cannot be understood if viewed in isolation,

that they typically need to be located within a wider dynamic of political conflict and escalating violence between oppositional or insurgent groups and the agents of a state, even if in many cases the victims of that violence are third parties with no direct role in these conflicts."

Like the other faculty members, Mahaffey has a number of goals for her E-Series students.

"My biggest hope is that they will continue to find the philosophical in the everyday long after they leave FSU," she said. "I don't want them to think that questioning and reflection happen only in the classroom. I want them to continue to question and grow as individuals and never, ever stop questioning or learning. I also want them to see that it is possible to be fans of something and still critically evaluate it. We don't let authors and illustrators off the hook, just because we are a fan of their work. We can recognize the flaws and still love the work."

Visit <http://fla.st/2jLWzNi> and click the "E-Series" box to view a complete listing of these courses available at FSU. 🌟

George Williamson is an associate professor in the Department of History. He teaches "Terrorism in Historical Perspective."



# Construction advances on state-of-the-art Earth, Ocean and Atmospheric Science building

By Barbara Ash



Bohlin Cywinski Jackson

Artist's renderings, above and below, show how the Earth, Ocean and Atmospheric building will appear upon completion. Tallahassee's West Tennessee Street is depicted in the foreground above.



Bohlin Cywinski Jackson

**W**ith an anticipated completion date set for summer 2019, excitement is mounting over the new multimillion-dollar, state-of-the-art home for Florida State University's Department of Earth, Ocean and Atmospheric Science (EOAS). The state Legislature has provided more than 80 percent of the funding for the building in previous sessions, and FSU's leadership is lobbying to receive the remainder this year, in order to stay on schedule.

The department is now spread across campus in several outdated buildings, so it's no wonder its 43 faculty members, 30 staff members, 450 undergraduate majors, 140 graduate students, and the several thousand students taking

Liberal Studies classes from the department can't wait to move in. FSU's programs in environmental science, geology, meteorology and oceanography merged about eight years ago to create the current EOAS department.

"Our faculty and students concentrate their efforts on improving our understanding of how our planet works and are very excited to be given the opportunity to perform our teaching and research missions under one roof in a new, state-of-the-art science complex," said department chair James Tull.

The university celebrated the groundbreaking in October 2016, and Tull is pleased that construction for the six-story, 130,536-square-foot-building is ahead of schedule. The building

will be located at the southwest corner of West Tennessee Street and Woodward Avenue and will serve as an imposing new landmark at the university's north gate.

The new EOAS building will contain 18 general research labs, 10 specialized research labs and 10 computer labs. There also will be equipment shops and storage space, plus a TV studio for meteorology students. In addition, there will be a lecture hall that seats 280 people, an assembly room that seats 100, and six departmental conference rooms. The space includes 120 offices for faculty, graduate students and postdoctoral researchers.

"We are at a unique time in history with respect to the need for critical geoscience information, and EOAS is well positioned to contribute highly trained geoscience graduates and research results and solutions to deal with the immense problems facing our state, nation and the world's population," Tull said. "The people in our department are thoroughly prepared to contribute to, if not frame and initiate, those solutions."

Among the issues faculty and students are addressing: the quality and quantity of water, food, and air available to us; the need for a variety of energy and other resources; global climate and sea-level change; sources of industrial raw materials; understanding of and better reacting to natural hazards such as hurricanes and other severe storms, earthquakes, volcanoes, landslides, tsunamis; and gaseous, liquid, and solid waste management.

Over the five-year period ending in summer 2017, the EOAS department produced 761 STEM graduates, and its faculty generated more than \$64 million in external research funding. Tull predicts that the new building will allow faculty even more opportunities to enhance multidisciplinary research opportunities and will significantly increase the department's ability to attract external research funding.

In addition to legislative and university funds earmarked for the new building, Jack Winchester, EOAS professor emeritus, has committed more than \$600,000 to graduate

student research, conference travel and other department initiatives that would not have been possible without his philanthropic investments. "We are honored that one of our own former faculty members feels so strongly about the future of our department that he has become one of our most generous benefactors," Tull said.

Also cause for celebration are two recent gifts of equipment made to the department: a cutting-edge SmartFlower solar panel disk and a real-time seismometer, the latter of which will be part of the Global Seismographic Network.

Winchester, a longtime proponent of renewable energy and conservation, purchased the SmartFlower. The system, which will be displayed prominently on the first-floor roof of the large classroom extending outward from the south side of the new building, is a collapsible disk of solar panels that move along with the sun so as to grant the maximum amount of access to sunshine. Fully opened, the "flower" is almost 16 feet tall and 16 feet in diameter, and



Ray Stanyard

James Tull, chair of the Department of Earth, Ocean and Atmospheric Science, stands in front of the construction site for the new facility in November 2017.



A SmartFlower solar device like the one shown here was donated to the department by John Winchester, an FSU professor emeritus of oceanography (pictured at bottom of page).

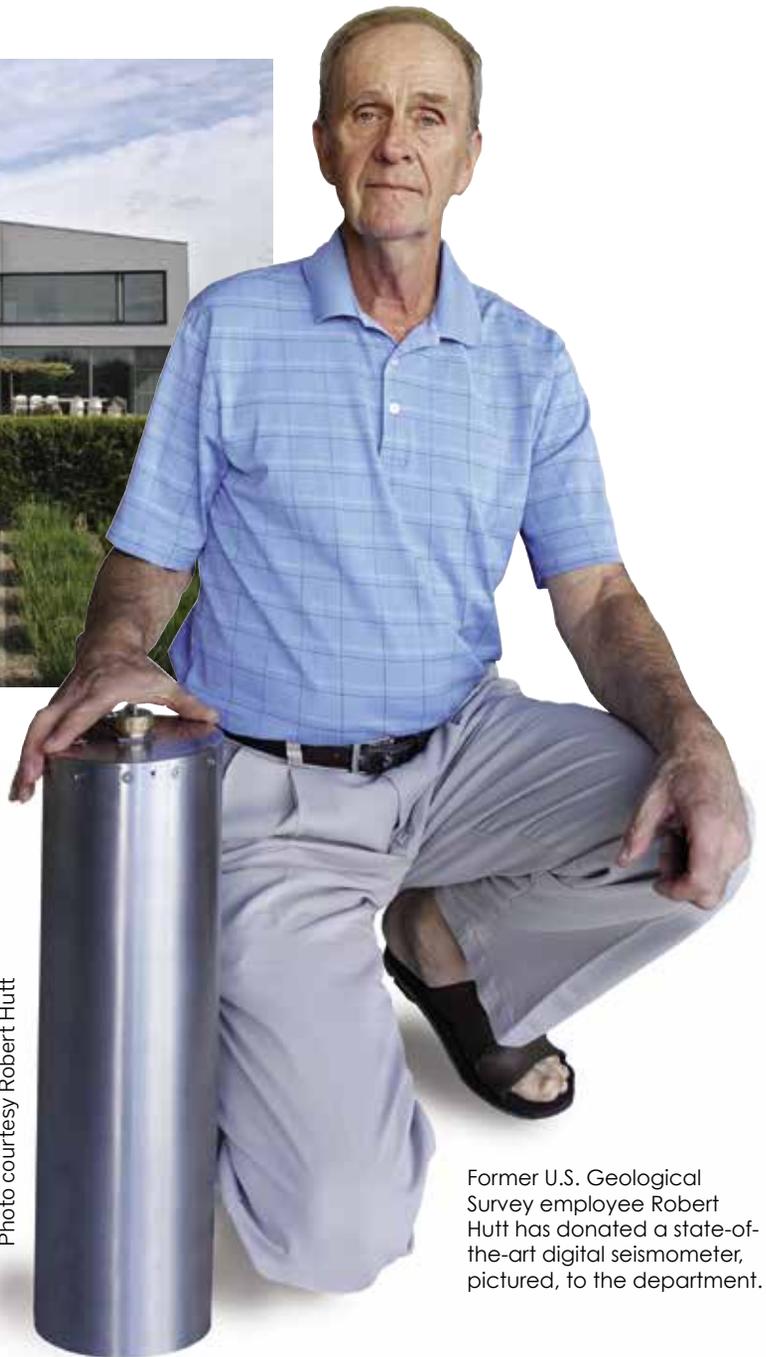
needs an 8-foot clearance on all sides. It weighs 1,600 pounds and delivers, on an average, approximately 4,000 kilowatt hours of electricity per year — about the amount of annual energy consumed by an average-sized house, or enough to power two electric cars.

Robert Hutt, who recently retired from the U.S. Geological Survey's Albuquerque, New Mexico, Seismological Laboratory and relocated to Tallahassee, has donated a state-of-the-art digital seismometer to the EOAS program. Tull said the seismometer will be installed in a 100-foot borehole drilled into the limestone bedrock beside the southeast entrance of the new building. This seismic station, which will be part of the Global Seismographic Network (only the second in Florida), will be able to detect earthquake waves from all over the world.

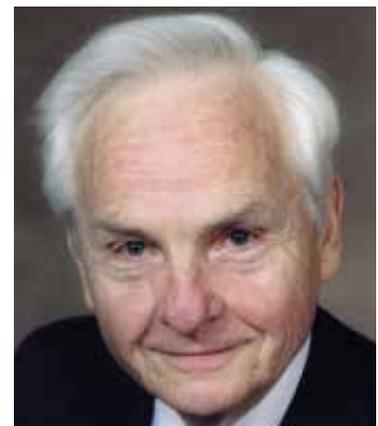
Both the SmartFlower and seismic station will provide a solid basis for the public outreach efforts planned for the new building in the fields of environmental science, geology, meteorology and oceanography.

“Since the merger that created the department, EOAS has been expanding its reach across the earth sciences,” said Sam Huckaba, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. “The degree programs are thriving and the faculty have been tremendously productive. The future building, though, will energize the department in ways not yet seen, allowing it to reach new levels of excellence. There is a decisive level of excitement in the air as this building project moves toward completion.” 🌱

Photo courtesy Robert Hutt



Former U.S. Geological Survey employee Robert Hutt has donated a state-of-the-art digital seismometer, pictured, to the department.



# Department of Anthropology and National Park Service 'dig' their relationship

By Doug Blackburn

**T**he past continues to literally come to life for Alexandra Parsons. An archaeologist with the National Park Service's office in Tallahassee, Parsons has been analyzing artifacts that were recently uncovered near Miami that shed light on the interactions between Spanish missionaries and the Tequesta tribe in the early 1500s.

"The work I get to do is amazing," Parsons said. "I work with really incredible archaeological collections."

Parsons earned a doctorate in anthropology at Florida State University in 2012. She started out

as an intern at the Southeast Archeological Center (SEAC) in 2005, soon after she arrived in Tallahassee and began working on her master's degree in anthropology. She became a full-time employee of the National Park Service in 2011.

FSU and SEAC have a rich, productive history. Parsons is one of dozens of FSU graduates and current students who are based at SEAC's offices in Innovation Park in Tallahassee. The relationship, formally documented in a

Memorandum of Agreement signed this past summer, dates back to 1972 when SEAC relocated from Macon, Georgia, to the Bellamy Building on FSU's campus.

Pictured, are, from left, Heather Young (Southeast Archeological Center and an FSU anthropology alumna), Megan Merrick and Haley Messer (current anthropology graduate students), Alexandra Parsons (SEAC and an FSU anthropology alumna), and Associate Professor of Anthropology Tanya M. Peres.



Ray Stanyard

The National Park Service wanted its operation to be affiliated with an anthropology department at a Tier 1 university, said David Morgan, SEAC's director. FSU was a perfect fit for SEAC and its broad region, which stretches west to Louisiana, into the Caribbean and as far north as North Carolina.

"We offer a lot of benefit to anthropology students, and in return, they provide a lot of benefit in terms of helping us with our projects," Morgan said. "I would describe it as an ideal partnership."

Heather Young would agree. Young, who earned her bachelor's in anthropology in 2015, is a museum technician at SEAC, where she did an internship as an undergraduate. During her final semester at FSU, she accompanied archaeologists who were doing a survey in the St. Marks Wildlife Refuge in Wakulla County. Their work focused on the Weeden Island native culture that dates from 300 to 1000 A.D.



Ray Stanyard

Peres was employed by SEAC in the 1990s when she was an undergraduate at FSU.



David Morgan is director of the Southeast Archeological Center.

The work so enthralled Young that she returned to SEAC after graduating and served as a volunteer as often as three times a week for six months before she was eventually hired.

"I thought it was a wonderful opportunity," she said. "FSU is building such a great relationship with the park service. In school, it's more about the theory, but the park service gives you the field experience."

Not every anthropology student at FSU is interested in becoming an archaeologist. The department, based in the College of Arts and Sciences, also prepares students in other subfields, such as cultural anthropology. But no subfield is better suited to give students hands-on experience — and oftentimes employment — than archaeology.

Tanya Peres, an associate professor and graduate program director in FSU's anthropology department, was employed by SEAC in the 1990s when she was an undergraduate at FSU. She was delighted to have the Memorandum of Agreement secured earlier this year.

"This codifies the relationship. It also gives us a way to work on projects with the park service that have mutual benefits," Peres said. "It streamlines the process for doing this. For instance, if we have activities or research or public outreach components of projects that are of mutual interest, this gives us a way of jointly working on them."

At SEAC, FSU students are exposed to the real world of uncovering the past. They get a front-row seat to the permitting process as it pertains to federal land. The students also have an

opportunity to learn to use equipment that FSU and other universities are unlikely to own.

Morgan estimates that 60 percent of FSU's anthropology students have received paid training with the National Park Service. The relationship goes both ways, too. A number of full-time employees at the park service are working on graduate degrees in the College of Arts and Sciences, Morgan noted, while SEAC work often turns into a thesis project for a student at FSU. And, as Parsons, Young and many others demonstrate, FSU students often become National Park Service employees.

"We have the benefit of having their tenure as a student to see what sort of employee they're going to be," Morgan said. "That helps us to recruit and retain some of the best employees we have. It's a rare thing."

"We also benefit from being in an environment with other professionals, and this lets us stay in touch with the academic side of the profession while their students get exposure to the more practical side," he added. "It's a win-win partnership." ❖❖

# Rhetorical flourish: A conversation with Tarez Samra Graban

By Kati Schardl

In the beginning, there was the word . . . then another word, and another. Words were strung together into sentences and sentences expanded into conversations, dialogues and arguments. When humans realized words and symbols could be used to persuade other humans to think or act in certain ways, rhetoric was realized as a discipline.

In everyday parlance, the word “rhetoric” can sometimes have a derogatory connotation — as when an argument is downplayed as “mere rhetoric,” which is a fancy way of saying “yada yada yada.” In reality, rhetoric is a complex and fascinating field of study. Just ask the graduate students in Florida State University’s Rhetoric and Composition program and the undergraduates in the Editing, Writing and Media track — they are taught by professors doing research that defines what makes rhetoric relevant and, indeed, essential in today’s world.

Tarez Samra Graban is one of those professors. With a double A.B. in English and religious studies from Brown University and a Ph.D. in English from Purdue University, she brings her own multicultural background and a fascination with how class, language and ethnicity intersect in modern discourse to the courses she teaches.

Graban’s bio on the English department website lists her areas of specialty as “histories of rhetoric, histories and theories of composition, digital humanities, feminist theory, archival studies and



Ray Stanyard

Tarez Samra Graban is an associate professor in the Department of English.

multilingualism.” In 2015, the associate professor published “Women’s Irony: Rewriting Feminist Rhetorical Histories,” a book that considers how applying irony to the examination of women’s historical narratives changes how they can be read, interpreted and applied to contemporary problems. She has a fascination with metadata mindsets and how itinerant technologies influence histories of rhetoric and composition, and her latest research delves into the problems of decolonizing the transnational archive.

*Across the Spectrum* sat down with Graban to explore how her research and pedagogical approach is shaping a new generation of rhetoricians.

**ATS:** How did you first become interested in rhetoric as an area of study?

**TSG:** I had a career in publishing before going into higher education, and I enjoyed that career but it was a bit of a silent process for me. After completing a master’s thesis on how students compose in hypertext environments, I realized I had many more questions about the knowledge process than an empirical study could answer. It was various histories of rhetoric that lured me in — the idea that our ideas about knowledge are often influenced by our approaches to history — and I never wanted to do anything else after that.

My training was mainly in Western theories of rhetoric, but I have more recently been studying global rhetorical traditions reflected in some countries in southern and western Africa, and I hope to expand that study to the MENA (Middle East-North Africa) region and to India. Some ancient traditions are more multicultural than we realize.

My own upbringing is partly eastern, partly western. My father is Arabic and my mother is American. I spent my first 15 years living in another country. As a result, I was taught to value different cultural groups and communication systems, and to observe.

**ATS:** Has that multicultural outlook influenced your research and your teaching?

**TSG:** I am interested in different notions of “culture” and how they operate in text and influence our textual perceptions. Our cultural ideologies often influence our ideas about what



it means to be an ethical citizen in the world, and these ideologies are to some extent historical. In some periods of rhetorical history, access to communication meant access to literacy, the right to vote, the right to participate in government, the right to learn, the right to live productively in society.

There are commonalities (between cultures), but oftentimes there are more subtle and rich distinctions, and it's easy for us to undervalue the distinctions. It's an interesting thing to realize that you can put the same gadget in the hands of similar users and still witness different outcomes. We witnessed the Arab Spring (a wave of revolutionary activity in the Middle East and North Africa that was fomented and documented on social media) to some extent because we had the cell phone. On the one hand, yes, this is awesome, but then we should notice that there are different ways that movement played out.

**ATS:** How do the courses offered at FSU make rhetoric relevant in the digital age?

**TSG:** I think we teach the digital and analog together. I teach a course in textuality called "What Is a Text?" It's a regular offering for students in our Editing, Writing and Media track. We consider different ideas about what makes a text — not only what combinations of symbols and genres, but what beliefs or ideas about value and circulation make us recognize something as "text" — and we examine a number of textual forms. One way my own research agenda influences this course is my emphasis on human rights texts and cross-cultural events, and on applying transnational ways of thinking about these texts and events. These will range from the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights to graphic novels illuminating what journalists do in other parts of the world. We have to be willing to notice the institutional factors that contribute to why we do or don't value these texts in certain ways.

Another area where my own research agenda helps me teach is my interest in text technologies. We have an introductory course called “History of Text Technologies” that goes from clay tablets to the computer. We give students a broad sweep.

I also have an interest in hypertext technologies, the idea underlying what we know as the World Wide Web. Even before the World Wide Web Consortium in 1994, scientists and humanists were working together to model what it could mean to make openly linked information accessible to other information. What gaps get created in the process, and how does this influence our understanding of what information is available? I am interested in having students recognize linkages between text technologies and question whether new technologies often re-image old desires or emulate familiar forms. For example, even our Kindles read like books.

**ATS:** You also teach a course in advanced writing and editing that you make relevant to current events.

**TSG:** I teach it as a course in public discourse in which we observe the “rhetorical life” of

scientific and technical information — how it gets translated into public-sphere genres, what underlies the act of composing and what’s ethical and not ethical. We consider a lot of case studies in both public and counter-public spaces.

I like to teach this class during an election year. We had a great time with it last year. I didn’t want to focus explicitly on the election because the campaigns were so emotionally charged, so we focused on science-based consumer discourse. We examined whole debates about climate change, environmental responsibility and public policy, and used those to inform our study of what it means to research and write in the public sphere.

**ATS:** How has your own perception of rhetoric changed since you first began studying it?

**TSG:** I see it now as a way of making knowledge in the world. Others see it as a persuasive tool. Some will still call it an art. Part of the challenge of teaching rhetoric is helping students understand the different approaches to what rhetoric is and what it does. Just because one approach is true doesn’t mean another is false. Rhetoric has some fluidity as a discipline. 🌟



Faculty members in the Rhetoric and Composition program include: top row, Associate Professor Michael Neal, Associate Professor Tarez Samra Graban, Professor Kathleen Blake Yancey and Senior Lecturer Deborah Coxwell-Teague; bottom row, Teaching Faculty member Stephen McElroy, Professor (and program director) Kristie S. Fleckenstein, and Associate Professor Rhea Estelle Lathan.

## FSU’s Rhetoric and Composition program

Florida State University offers an M.A. in rhetoric and composition and a Ph.D. in English with an emphasis in rhetoric and composition. As outlined on the Department of English’s website, each degree offers a deep dive into “rhetorical and social practices and theories of composing and composition,” with a particular focus on how textual forms such as print, audio, visual and the digital intersect as technologies and literacies.

Students and faculty in the graduate programs collaborate on research and jointly publish books and articles, present at conferences together and work on writing grants together. The program also hosts distinguished scholars who share their latest research on rhetoric and composition.

Rhetoric and Composition also figures in FSU’s Editing, Writing and Media major track. EWM is touted as “a new English major for a new century” and “aims to prepare students for leadership roles in 21st-century culture, whether as intellectuals pursuing advanced degrees in book history, rhetoric and critical theory or as tech-savvy professionals equipped with editorial expertise and writing skill.”

*Read more about the Rhetoric and Composition program at [www.english.fsu.edu/programs/rhetoric-and-composition](http://www.english.fsu.edu/programs/rhetoric-and-composition).*

— Kati Schardl



Ray Stanyard

# Mote endowment advancing research in marine science



By Jim Ash



William R. Mote, left, with renowned shark expert Perry Gilbert.



From left, Perry Gilbert with underwater explorer Sylvia Earle, noted ichthyologist Eugenie Clark and William R. Mote.

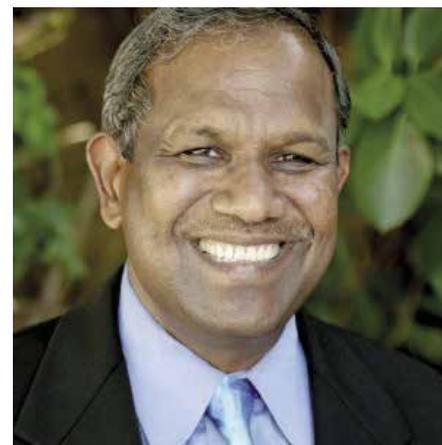
**W**illiam R. Mote's entrepreneurial brilliance is obvious to anybody who's ever passed an 18-wheeler on Interstate 95. The restless boy who spent the dawn of the 20th century crabbing and fishing Tampa Bay eventually headed to New York and developed a container that was easy to load from ship to truck.

But commerce and transportation were never Mote's biggest passion, even though they made him rich. Those who knew Mote, or visit the world-class research center and aquarium in Sarasota that bears his name, or those who benefit from the William R. and Lenore Mote Endowment at Florida State University's Department of Biological Science, know his first love was the sea.

"He was a good friend of mine, a mentor and a father figure. I knew him for 20 years," said Kumar Mahadevan, president emeritus and senior scientist at Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium, and a co-trustee of Mote's estate. "One of his dreams was to build a barge where on one side, scientists would be working, and the other side would be Bill and his buddies fishing. He saw the connection between science and the importance of the resource."

Mahadevan was a budding chemical engineer at Madras University in 1967 in his native India when he came across conservationist Rachel Carson's epic writings and became smitten by oceanography. After earning his master's degree in marine biology in Annamalai University, he came to the United States and earned a Ph.D. in biological oceanography at FSU in 1977.

Mahadevan's academic training and impeccable timing gave him a front-row seat to the development of a nascent discipline as well as working relationships with its pivotal figures, including Mote, undersea explorer Sylvia Earle, and noted ichthyologists Eugenie Clark, Perry Gilbert and Charles Breder.



FSU alumnus Kumar Mahadevan is president emeritus and senior scientist at Mote Marine Laboratory.



Ray Stanyard

Professor Don Levitan is chair of FSU's Department of Biological Science.

Mote died at the age of 93 in 2000, and Mahadevan retired four years ago, but their contributions to the science thrive even as the oceans they sought to protect grow more imperiled every year. It was Mahadevan who urged Mote to forge a relationship between the marine center and FSU, introducing the entrepreneur to former FSU President Sandy D'Alemberte and then-Provost Larry Abele, who was also a marine scientist.

FSU already had a strong artistic presence in Sarasota through the Asolo Theater and the Ringling Museum, Mahadevan said, so why not extend the reach to marine science as well?

"Mr. Mote's interest was primarily in fisheries enhancement, and Mote was already engaged in several fisheries programs," Mahadevan said. "FSU did not have a strong fisheries program, but had one of the nation's best theoretical ecology programs. So we reasoned that by combining

the strengths of the two organizations, we could develop a very strong fisheries program based on a theoretical ecology basis."

Mote's response was a \$1 million donation, matched by the state, and the creation of the William R. and Lenore Mote Endowment, named in honor of Mote and his wife, in 1994. FSU acknowledged Mote's gift and contributions to science with an honorary degree.

FSU faculty and administrators say the endowment has been a boon for the university and marine science ever since.

Felicia Coleman (Ph.D., Biological Science, 1991), director of FSU's Coastal and Marine Laboratory, also counted Mote as a close friend. Coleman remembers a gentleman, an avid fisherman and a marine science junkie whose favorite species was the snook.

Coleman said Mote financial support allows graduate students to conduct summer research unfettered by other responsibilities. One, Chris Malinowski, is focusing on the rare Goliath grouper, a species that can grow to 800 pounds or more. Once plentiful, the Goliath grouper has been nearly wiped out by overfishing, Coleman says.

The Goliath grouper is making a comeback in South Florida, Coleman says, and regulators are under pressure to open the fishery. But there's a problem — Goliath grouper bioaccumulate methyl mercury, posing a significant health hazard to anyone who eats them. Malinowski, who is pursuing his doctorate, is studying their diet to discover the source, Coleman says.

"It's critical that our graduate students recognize when their work has policy implications and have the tools they need to take that information forward into the policy arena," she said. "This is certainly in keeping with Mr. Mote's interest in giving something back to the oceans."

Department of Biological Science Chair Don Levitan says the Mote endowment, like the marine organisms it was designed to study and protect, has evolved.

Initially, FSU and Mote Marine Lab administrators shared responsibility for bringing in an eminent scholar who would spend a year on campus or in Sarasota. But Levitan says it became harder and harder to find a suitable candidate who could dedicate that much time.

“So a couple of years ago, the college split that fund into three components,” he said. “One component goes to the Mote Laboratory, one goes to the College of Arts and Sciences and biology department, and one component goes to the Mote Symposium every three years.”

Now, the endowment supports one of the most innovative programs at FSU, Levitan says, the Mote Working Group.

Mote funds pay for an annual, week-long research symposium in an isolated coastal

location that Levitan says provides a distraction-free opportunity for international scholars, FSU faculty and graduate students to focus on the hottest topics in marine science.

So far, the scientific retreats have taken place on St. George Island and Cape San Blas. Levitan says the working groups generate published research that has been well received and are filling an important niche.

“Usually when scientists attend big conferences, they meet with colleagues and briefly touch on subjects, but don’t have the time or the opportunity to work together to advance the field,” Levitan said. “But having these intensive interactions while living and working together for a week, provides a unique chance to delve deeply into these subjects and make substantial progress. It’s been really remarkable.”

The first working group topic was “metabolic scaling and modular organisms,” which has to do with corals, how they divide and how their metabolisms correlate to their growth.



Ray Stanyard

Assistant Professor Scott Burgess, a member of the Mote Working Group, studies the population biology of coastal marine invertebrates such as bryozoans, corals and mollusks.



Ray Stanyard

Felicia Coleman, director of FSU's Coastal and Marine Laboratory, says Mote funds allow graduate students to conduct summer research unfettered by other responsibilities.

“We reviewed the available data and discovered that larger corals are often more efficient at requiring energy and allocating it to growth and reproduction than smaller corals, and this is important because it influences the way that organisms respond to bleaching and how they recover from other stresses, like hurricanes,” said FSU Assistant Professor of Biological Science Scott Burgess, a member of the Mote Working Group. “The abundance and sizes of corals influences how much energy the population requires to recover.”

It’s an important question, Burgess says, at a time when global warming is amplifying bleaching cycles along the Great Barrier Reef in Burgess’ native Australia.

“I can’t stress enough the importance of this endowment and endowments like it for providing these really unique opportunities for researchers at FSU to be leaders in their field,” Burgess said. 🌿

# What can philosophy grads do with their degree? Just about anything

By Rosanne Dunkelberger and Wendy Parkulo

In today's higher education world where STEM is king and the watchword for graduates is "job-ready," the arts, humanities and even social sciences tend to take a beating when educational priorities are being discussed and programs funded. Art history, anthropology, English and women's studies have all taken their lumps in recent years, but the butt of many a joke and putdown is philosophy.

The impracticality of a philosophy degree is a common theme, but gainfully employed, Florida State University-trained philosophy alumni are ready to argue against that claim.

Because arguing is what they do best.

"One of the things we teach people to do is pick arguments apart and identify their weaknesses," said J. Piers Rawling, professor and chair of FSU's Department of Philosophy. "You do philosophy not to be a better navel-gazer, but to be able to think and write clearly, critically and creatively. There seem to be a lot of employers complaining they get people with a degree who can't write a memo. Well, by the time we've finished with them, at least they can write a clear memo."

To back up his argument, Rawling pointed to statistics from the Educational Testing Service, which showed that prospective graduate students who majored in philosophy in 2011-2012 had the highest average scores on the Verbal Reasoning and Analytical Writing portions of the GRE and ranked a respectable fifth on the Quantitative section.

What's more, a 2015-2016 salary report by PayScale Human Capital showed philosophy graduates holding their own in the workplace. While they tend to start out at a lower pay grade (\$42,200) than many other choices of major, by mid-career, philosophy grads' median earnings jump to \$85,000, ranking them 75th out of 285 majors listed.

In an ever-changing, fast-paced world, college students who are trained in a particular field could find their knowledge obsolete in just a few years. Change is all but assured.

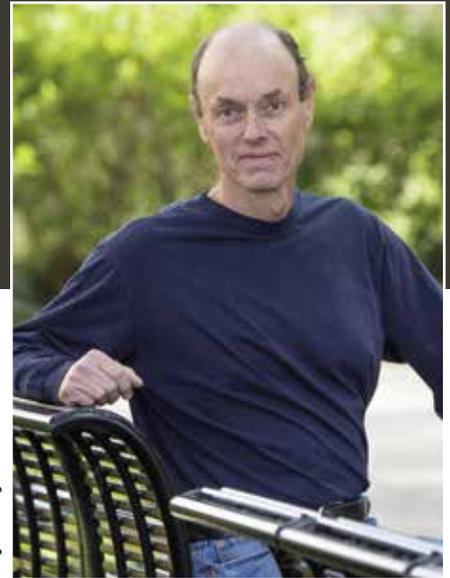
"The world moves so rapidly, you need to be a very flexible thinker and have some basic analytical skills which you can any apply to any problem," Rawling said. "That's what we teach people to do."

Higher education is often the goal of philosophy majors, he says, and those who don't go down the path of academia often choose to attend law school.

Stephanie Angel (B.A., Philosophy and B.S., International Affairs, 2015), a second-year student at the Emory University School of Law



Stephanie Angel is a second-year student at the Emory University School of Law in Atlanta.



Ray Stanyard

Professor J. Piers Rawling is chair of the Department of Philosophy.

in Atlanta, knew she wanted to study law and had a practical reason for picking philosophy as one of her undergraduate majors.

Angel says philosophy's intensive focus on reading and writing has served her well at law school.

"I spent my entire undergrad career writing papers, whereas some of my peers who did other majors spent their time doing more multiple choice-based tests," she said. "I really had to develop writing skills that transferred to law school."

In addition, she said, it "develops the way you present arguments and really challenges you on a personal level. Philosophy is one of those degrees that really requires a lot of internal reflection about what you believe and why you believe what you believe."



Alison Brown is a staff attorney at the Veteran's Legal Clinic at San Diego State University.

Originally from Northern California, Alison Brown (M.A., Philosophy, 2006; Ph.D., Philosophy, 2010) double-majored in philosophy and French at San Diego State University and spent six-plus years in Tallahassee earning graduate degrees in philosophy at Florida State. She would return to California to earn a law degree in 2013 from the University of San Diego and is now a staff attorney there at the Veteran's Legal Clinic. She also occasionally teaches philosophy part time at the university.

Brown also extols the value of critical thinking and writing, but in her line of work says the ethics side of philosophy is a skill she uses daily.

"Philosophers are also ethicists," she said. "You go to any major hospital and you will find someone with some amount of philosophy education on the staff there, because you're trying to figure out things like who gets the organ from the transplant list or if disclosure of certain information is going to be an ethics violation. Most companies and corporations hire ethicists. And the ones that don't end up in Enron situations."

In her job, Brown represents military service members as well as reservists and veterans. Much of her time is spent appealing disability denials from the Veterans Affairs department, but she is also active in fighting abuses by for-profit colleges, some of which target veterans for recruitment because they have easier access to financial aid.

"(Attorneys) hold a lot of power, and a lot of what seem like everyday decisions for us can really affect the course of someone else's life," she said. "Attorneys are covered by lots of ethics rules . . . but being a philosopher and already being trained in that . . . I take those responsibilities to heart."



Vanessa Vidacs is the member services director of a statewide association.

While philosophy is useful when seeking an advanced degree, a bachelor's has served Vanessa Vidacs (B.A., Philosophy, 2007) well in her career. Her original plan was to study philosophy and go on to law school, but that was derailed when she had a baby.

When she graduated from FSU in 2007, "the economy had kind of tanked," she said. Vidacs began selling insurance in Brevard County, Florida, to make ends meet and subsequently moved to take a job in Tallahassee managing the database of a statewide association.

"As soon as I started, I realized how useful my philosophy degree was . . . because of the logic involved with SQL code for the database," she said. "It's 'if, then' statements. When you're in philosophy, one of the required courses is logic. Logic is challenging, but it's all basically word math."

Vidacs has taken on additional duties during her nine years on the job and is now the association's member services director. However, she still calls on skills learned as a philosophy student at FSU.

"As my job has evolved, I've taken on other roles that involve a lot of writing and reading contracts and partnership agreements (and being able to understand that dense language," she said. "It's become incredibly useful there."

J. Michael Barker (M.A., Philosophy, 1997; Ph.D., Philosophy, 1998) is particularly enamored of philosophy, having earned three degrees in the subject. (He received a bachelor's degree at the College of William and Mary before coming to Florida State for graduate school.) He has put his lessons learned to good use in his current job at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he serves as associate vice chancellor and chief technology officer — essentially the second-highest ranking position in IT at the famously tech-savvy institution.



J. Michael Barker serves as associate vice chancellor and chief technology officer at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Although it may seem unorthodox, Barker attests that his studies in philosophy prepared him well for his career.

"The activity is really quite similar, just different subject matter," he said. "A lot of what I do is think about, or try to figure out, and make decisions for things that have to do with a lot of complex issues, whether it is the way a large organization works in a management setting, the way different computer systems interact, or where to spend money for the university to support research and scholarship." He explained that this is not far from what philosophers do, "which is to understand ourselves and our world and think about it critically."

Barker originally started on a track to earn a bachelor's degree in computer science, but a particularly interesting logic course that was a general requirement pulled him into the realm of philosophy. He found that studying something he was truly intrigued by turned out to make all the difference in his life.

He described philosophy as "the kind of thing you can engage in your entire life without the need for complex apparatus: You don't need an electron microscope." He even admitted with pride that he still goes back and reads through philosophical texts, finding it a fun and useful endeavor even though his official studies have concluded.

Angel, Brown, Vidacs and Barker all agree that the philosophical training offered at FSU has helped them develop skills useful in an age of thorny subjects such as hacking, mass murders, "fake news" and sexism, or even just how to allocate university funds when all applicants seem deserving.

"Our society likes answers," said Brown. "In philosophy, we're taught not to be afraid to ask a question you don't know the answer to. We're trained to be comfortable to kind of sit with the question.

"We as philosophers think discomfort is good," she said. Because we're going to figure out where you stand and, more importantly, why you stand there. When I make my students uncomfortable I think, 'Now we're getting somewhere.'" ❖❖

# Hurricanes, climate change get a closer look at FSU's Center for Ocean-Atmospheric Prediction Studies

By Rosanne Dunkelberger





Ray Stanyard

Eric Chassignet is a professor of oceanography at FSU and director of COAPS.

**T**he Earth's climate is determined by the extremely complex interplay of land masses, waters and the atmosphere. Everything matters: water temperature, clouds, mountains, swamps, waves, wind and so much more.

So it only makes sense that when trying to predict where our climate is headed long term — or whether it will rain on your wedding day — the chances of finding answers are much better when scientists who study all of those things work together.

That's the premise of FSU's Center for Ocean-Atmospheric Prediction Studies — COAPS for short — which describes itself as a research center that “performs interdisciplinary research in ocean-atmosphere-land-ice interactions to increase our understanding of the physical, social and economic consequences of climate variability.”

“I think it's a good description of what we're trying to do. I think we're successful at doing it,” said COAPS director Eric Chassignet. “We have a leadership role in interdisciplinary ocean-atmospheric research and are working hard to educate the next generation of earth-systems scientists. And to increase our collaboration with universities, government agencies and members of the private sector.”

COAPS was created by the Florida Board of Governors, and the vast majority of its nearly \$11.6 million in funding is research grants from more than two dozen sponsors, centers and consortia with an alphabet soup of acronyms. The center, located about a mile southwest of FSU's main campus in Innovation Park, has more than 50 people working there, including eight teaching faculty, 20 research scientists and postdoctoral researchers, 16 graduate students, six undergraduate students, and support staff. Also under COAPS' roof is the Florida Climate Center, home to State Climatologist David Zierden.

Part of FSU's College of Arts and Sciences, COAPS is closely aligned with the college's Department of Earth, Ocean and Atmospheric Science (EOAS), and much of the work relates to its fields of study, such as meteorology, aquatic

environmental science and oceanography. But COAPS draws in expertise from other disciplines as well, including computer science, biology, chemistry and engineering.

“In a classic academic setting, you will see teaching faculty working within their own lab and not interacting much with other faculty members,” said Chassignet, himself a professor of oceanography. “Here at COAPS, it's to everybody's advantage to work across disciplines toward common goals, so there's a lot of exchanges of ideas and expertise, and a number of multidisciplinary projects.”

Much of the work done at COAPS is computer-driven, sorting through vast amounts of data — much of it provided by satellites — to develop models analyzing the



Ray Stanyard

Danielle Groenen is a COAPS research assistant working toward her doctorate in meteorology.

interplay between earth, sea and air over time to predict climate patterns in the future. Once computer models are developed, they can then be tested with field observations.

And for the record, climate change is real.

“There’s no question,” Chassignet said. “The scientific evidence is there.”

“There’s so much data from so many different sources,” added COAPS associate director Mark Bourassa, a professor of meteorology who came to FSU two weeks before the center was formed. “It’s totally overwhelming that (the climate is) changing.”

*Why* it is changing is a little trickier question but, Bourassa said, “it’s very clear that many aspects of the climate are being affected by humans” in ways that go beyond just adding carbon dioxide to the atmosphere. As an example: “We used to have a lot more swampland here in Florida, and that acted as a thermal insulator. Swampland can retain so much energy that when a cold front comes over, it can dampen the front’s effects. We are much more affected by cold weather than we used to be.”

One well-funded avenue of research relates to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, which dumped approximately 5 million barrels of oil and gas into the Gulf of Mexico in 2010.

“It was a horrible accident, but a well-observed horrible accident,” said Bourassa, giving researchers a chance to test theories and learn in real time of oil’s effect on the water and biology. “All of a sudden we’re learning how things are coupled in ways we hadn’t expected . . . It’s really exciting to see how all these things come together. And a lot of the funding is going toward understanding what to do if there’s a spill in the future.”

One of COAPS’ graduate students is Danielle Groenen, a research assistant working toward her doctorate in meteorology.

“My project is on Central American rainfall, trying to understand the past patterns of rainfall and link it to the crops that are important in that area, like coffee and bananas and rice and corn,” she explained. “I want to try and understand the past history of the rainfall so

that we can predict the rainfall patterns in the future, especially with climate change.”

Unfortunately, her work hasn’t taken her to the cloud forests of Costa Rica.

“I wish,” Groenen said with a rueful smile. “I do a lot of programming, a lot of taking data and writing the code to analyze it.”

Groenen had never heard of COAPS before she visited the FSU campus when first considering her Ph.D.

“I’ve had a lot of support, and I’ve had a lot of opportunities through COAPS,” she said, including two summer internships at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Her research is dependent on data from NASA satellites, and her work is funded by a NASA Earth and Space Science Fellowship.

When the 32-year-old Groenen, who looked up to female astronauts as a teenager, earns her degree, she said she wants to get out from behind the computer and move into a position that involves “a perfect balance of people and science.” Formerly a high school physics teacher, Groenen said she’d like to reach out to government leaders, but also to young girls.

“I am very vocal about the need for more role models,” she said. “I think it’s really important to get out in the community and show kids you can be anything you want. Science doesn’t have to fit that stereotypical mold of the lab coat and glasses and being a man.”

While most of the scientists have or are working on advanced degrees at COAPS, a small cohort of undergraduate students are also there working on their honors projects.

“It’s really great to work with them,” Bourassa said of the students, most in their senior year. “They’re doing real, original work that’s meaningful.” Students who go through the process of doing research, writing it up, and being able to communicate are “generally” able to get into the field of graduate study they choose, he says.

A goal of COAPS is to spread the word about climate science, and they do so via an annual open house held in February in conjunction with the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory,



Ray Stanyard

Mark Bourassa is a professor of meteorology at FSU and associate director of COAPS.

visits to politicians and other decision-makers, and presentations to middle- and high-school students in the Tallahassee community.

“We’ve collaborated with people trying to develop better teaching tools for students,” Bourassa said. “We’ve been teaching the teachers how to teach better science — they know how to communicate better than we do, for the most part.”

One tool reaching out to the wider community is the recently published book, “Florida’s Climate.” Chassignet was one of the editors for the 800-page volume, a collaborative effort of climate scientists from all of Florida’s universities. He says it is not totally a technical work.

“It’s for informed people who want to know some of the details, so it’s not purely geared toward scientists,” Chassignet said. “It’s for decision-makers — those who just want to know some of the detail behind Florida’s climate.”

And regarding that wedding-day forecast?

“One of the (questions) that keeps getting asked is, ‘Can you forecast if it will rain on my wedding day, or the day of such-and-such event a year in the future?’ No,” said Bourassa. “But what we can do is give the odds based on the broader conditions that we expect.” ❖

# Looking southward: Arts and Sciences faculty offer expertise in Caribbean, Latin American studies

By Barbara Ash and Barry Ray



Ray Stanyard

**W**hen members of your faculty boast a strong profile in Caribbean and Latin American studies, you play on their strengths to build programs that will earn national and international acclaim. That's exactly what Florida State University's College of Arts and Sciences has done.

Most of the college's faculty members who are focused on the Caribbean and Latin America are housed in the Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics, but others, in the departments of Anthropology, English and History, also offer informed perspectives on various aspects of the region. Working across disciplines and specializations, all of these researchers are focusing a spotlight on the Francophone and Hispanic Caribbean and Latin America from myriad perspectives, including literary and cultural studies, comparative literature, history and linguistics. At the same time, they are advancing the reputation of the college as a recognized center of study on this region, says Modern Languages and Linguistics department chair Mark Pietralunga.

"Florida's proximity and its strong cultural, social and economic ties to the Latin American and Caribbean world have been a motivating force in building programs of strength in

Jeannine Murray-Román is an assistant professor of French and Spanish who specializes in comparative Caribbean literatures and cultures.

these areas,” Pietralunga said. “Our strategy (in Modern Languages and Linguistics) has been not only to create premier programs in Francophone and Hispanic Caribbean and Latin America, but also to seek opportunities for collaboration among these areas of strength.

“We see our department as a conduit to foster interdisciplinary connections and highlight cross-specialty collaborations,” he said. “The added benefit of housing in our department the world-class Winthrop-King Institute for Contemporary French and Francophone Studies allows us to showcase and promote our faculty’s rich and diverse scholarship.”

Faculty in the modern languages department’s French and Spanish programs are fascinated by the dynamics of social, cultural and diverse cultural identities of the island nations that make up a region rich in history and culture, and they are eager to share their knowledge and enthusiasm.

“Caribbean historians often point out that the Caribbean region has served as a site of social experimentation historically, that the modes of production on the plantation, for example, become a template for the division of labor that is central to Britain’s industrial revolution,” said Jeannine Murray-Román, an assistant professor of French and Spanish who specializes in comparative Caribbean literatures and cultures.

“The philosopher Edouard Glissant from Martinique makes an argument about scale that I think is so intriguing: that because many of the islands are so small, the impacts of natural and economic disasters are quickly visible,” she said. “These same effects might escape notice in the larger land masses, but they’re part of the same continuum. So if the Caribbean archipelago experiences global changes both before and to

a more heightened degree than the continents, it’s in our interest to pay close attention to what’s happening there as a forerunner of what will be taking place globally as well.”

FSU’s Department of English recently hired John Ribó, whose research focuses on contemporary Latin literature and popular culture. The assistant professor said that for him, the ties that bind the Caribbean and the United States are personal.

“The Dominican and Cuban branches of my family tree came together in Ybor City, Tampa,” Ribó said. “In Florida — a state with sizable communities with roots in the Caribbean, Central America and Latin America — stories like mine are quite common, but not always accurately represented as fundamental to the fabric of our state and nation. My research is driven by the desire to correct these oversights, and my classes provide students opportunities to learn about the diverse origins of Florida and the U.S.

As a scholar, Ribó added that he is fascinated by how the history of the Caribbean informs contemporary U.S. culture.

“I’m currently completing my first book, ‘Haitian Hauntings,’ which traces the genealogy of Haiti’s spectral presence in contemporary U.S. Latin literature, music and popular culture,” he said. “In it, I argue that the work of contemporary writers such as Edwidge Danticat, Junot Díaz, Achy Obejas and Ana Lydia Vega exhumes Haiti’s revolutionary history to exorcise specters of coloniality that haunt Dominican-American, Cuban-American and Puerto Rican communities.”

Studying Haiti from a different perspective is Vincent Joos, an assistant professor who recently joined the Department of Anthropology.

“I am a cultural anthropologist who studies post-disaster recovery in Haiti and the regime of international aid that is currently transforming this island,” Joos said. “The international efforts to rebuild Haiti after the 2010 earthquake failed spectacularly, showing that nongovernmental organizations cannot handle the work of infrastructure and housing rebuilding. Focusing on Haitian vernacular architecture and local disaster mitigation

practices, I argue that Haiti can only be rebuilt if the Haitian state and its citizens become the main actors of the reconstruction process.”

Also new to Florida State is Assistant Professor of History Anasa Hicks, who is a specialist in labor history in 20th-century Cuba.

“My research focuses on race, gender and labor in the 20th-century Spanish Caribbean,” she said. “My book manuscript is a history of domestic service — that is, the work of maids, cooks, nannies and gardeners, among others — in Cuba from the abolition of slavery to the 1959 Cuban Revolution.”

Associate Professor of Spanish José Gomariz, who has published extensively on Cuban literary and cultural studies and currently is at work on a book on the African diaspora in Cuba and the Caribbean, finds Cuba’s rich cultural and literary production artistically appealing and intellectually engaging.

“Cuba offers an excellent illustration of how diverse cultures from the Caribbean, Europe, Africa and Asia, through times of conflict and difficult coexistence at first, but eventually, out of respect and recognition of their mutual humanity, have been merging over the centuries — a process that Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz called ‘transculturation,’” Gomariz said.

“I’m interested in how peoples of African descent in the Hispanic Caribbean, who endured some of the most unjust conditions in human history, have been able to rise and emancipate themselves socially, economically and culturally, while making major contributions to expand the reach of democracy and to shape American multicultural identity.”

Wishing to bridge the interests of her colleagues and the undergraduate and graduate students working in the area, Murray-Román has organized a number of speaker series and created the Caribbean Studies Working Group, which fosters multidisciplinary conversation on current issues and provides a forum for presentation of research by faculty and advanced graduate students across the college. The group’s Facebook page is [www.facebook.com/FSUCSWG](http://www.facebook.com/FSUCSWG).

Mark Pietralunga is chair of the Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics.



Ray Stanyard

“There are so many faculty and grad students at FSU in art history, education, English, dance, history, nursing, modern languages — and more — and I wanted to create a forum where we would be able to learn from one another’s expertise,” Murray-Román said of the working group. “And down the line, if we find points of strong connections between our areas of interest, some of us might collaborate on projects, share syllabi, and keep each other in mind when we’re all doing our own investigations. It’s just such a pleasure to hear about what our brilliant colleagues are working on, and it gives us a chance to ask for help with our projects and share our contacts and resources.”

Gomariz said there is keen interest in the Caribbean among both graduate and undergraduate students. The Spanish program has produced more than 10 doctoral dissertations on the Hispanic Caribbean in the last 15 years, especially about Cuba. Two doctoral students under his supervision are currently writing their dissertations on modern and contemporary Cuban studies, and some of his doctoral students have conducted research in Cuba, which he says offered them a unique opportunity to carry out a fruitful cultural exchange and to learn firsthand about the country.

“While our students study about Cuba and the Caribbean, they are learning about a region that, directly or indirectly, is also part of their own culture, as Floridians and Americans,” Gomariz said. “Oftentimes, their interest arises due to



Ray Stanyard

the fact that many of our students are of Cuban descent — first-, second- or even third-generation — or from other Caribbean nations, or have lived in places in Florida, where Cuban and Caribbean cultures are also part of urban life.”

As enthusiastic about his own area of expertise on Haiti is Martin Munro, an Eminent Scholar who directs FSU’s Winthrop-King Institute for Contemporary French and Francophone Studies. His research covers French literature and culture in the Caribbean, postcolonial theory and writing about the region’s disasters, including earthquakes and hurricanes. The institute regularly invites leading Caribbean writers, scholars and artists to campus and organizes conferences in the field.

“Haiti’s history is remarkable — from slavery and colonialism through the fight for freedom, independence in 1804, civil war, isolation by the European and North American powers, indebtedness to France, economic troubles and the long Duvalier dictatorships, with all the trials and tribulations they brought,” Munro said. “And still, indomitable, the spirit of the people stands, and a remarkably rich culture continues to express that spirit. What’s not to like!”

As our relationship with our southern neighbors continues to evolve, the region’s primary role in U.S. foreign and economic policy, and the growing numbers of U.S. citizens of Latin and Caribbean descent, underpin the importance of the area for academic study.

“We all live in the Americas,” Hicks said. “Since the birth of the United States, Latin American and Caribbean people have contributed to the formation of our national identity and vice versa. Ideas that we hold dear about democracy, freedom, and equality are grounded in the actions that North American, Latin American, and Caribbean people have taken throughout history to improve the circumstances of their own lives and the lives of others. These connections are perhaps clearer than ever in the 21st century, and impossible to miss in the state of Florida, but the ties that bind North Americans to the rest of the Americas have always existed. As a professor of Caribbean history, I see it as my job to point them out.” 🌿

Martin Munro is an Eminent Professor of French and director of FSU’s Winthrop-King Institute for Contemporary French and Francophone Studies.



John Ribó is an assistant professor in the Department of English.



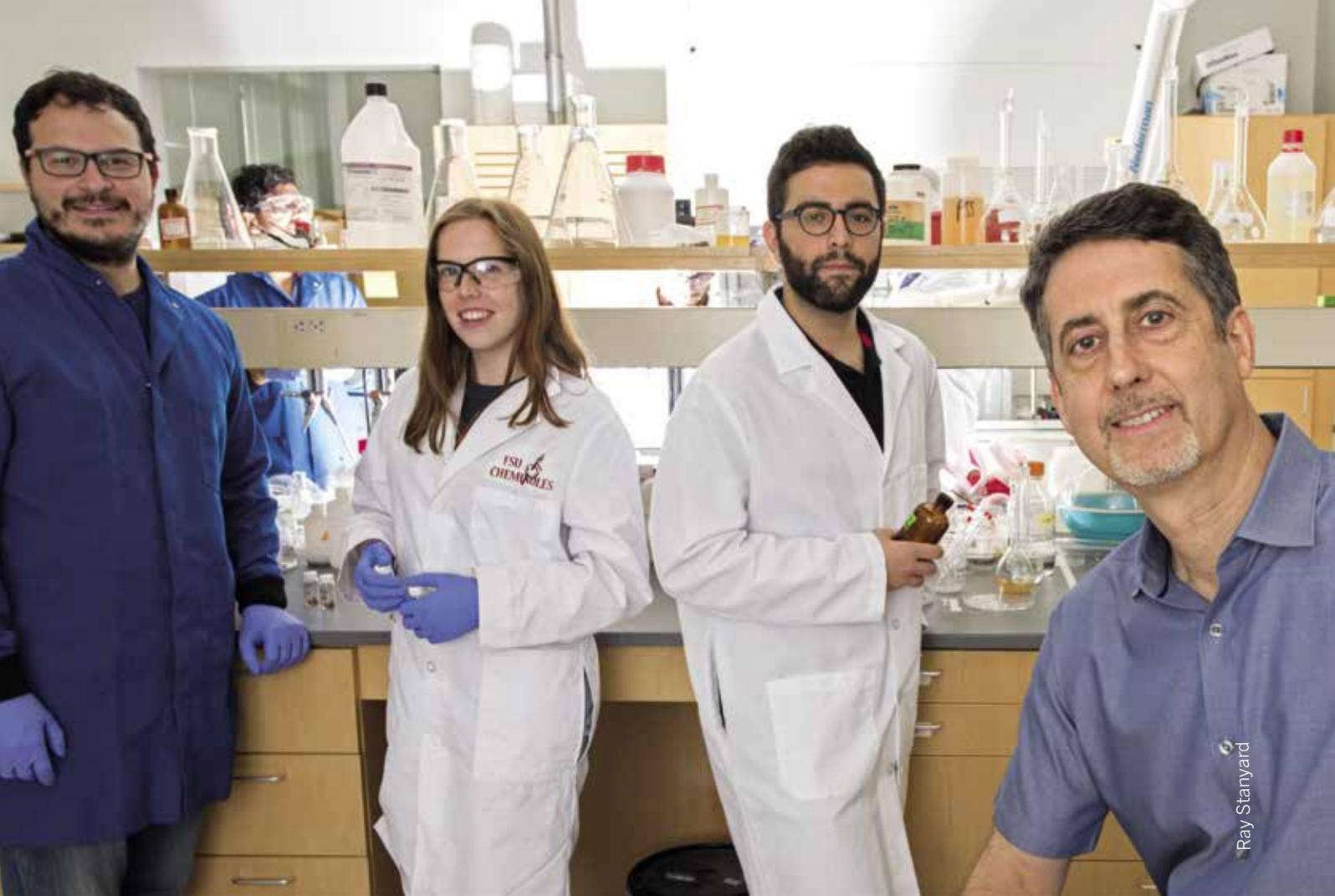
José Gomariz is an associate professor in the Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics.



Anasa Hicks is an assistant professor in the Department of History.



Vincent Joos is an assistant professor in the Department of Anthropology.



Ray Stanyard

Joe Schlenoff, foreground, with graduate students in the Schlenoff Lab.

# Lawton recipient Schlenoff dedicated to students

By Doug Blackburn

**J**oe Schlenoff is a titan in the complex realm of polymer research. The world-renowned veteran of Florida State University's Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry has been a catalyst for a host of discoveries with real-world practical applications, some in medicine.

Schlenoff, who came to FSU in 1988 immediately after earning his doctorate from the University of Massachusetts, recently

received the highest honor that FSU faculty bestow on one of their own — the 2016-2017 Robert O. Lawton Distinguished Professor Award. It is a tribute to his dedication to his department, where he does everything from lecturing hundreds of first-year students to one-on-one mentoring of doctoral candidates.

His prolific research has resulted in more than three dozen patents, an impressive body of work by any measure. But when asked which development he takes the most pride in,

the modest, soft-spoken scientist responded without hesitation: "My students."

"Easy answer," Schlenoff added. "Seeing them struggle in the lab, seeing them conquer their fears and seeing them thrive in industry, there is no better feeling than that. Isn't that why we're here at this fine university?"

Schlenoff takes pride in how prepared his students are for life after FSU. He encourages them to collaborate, to try new approaches

to routine problems and to ask questions; to follow their instincts, to learn that failure often precedes the most impressive results.

“Sometimes your work just isn’t working out,” Schlenoff explained. “You need to know you have the support of everyone in your group — not just your professor. I think that’s what makes my students particularly rugged, and that’s why Intel and other corporations like them: They don’t melt down when things aren’t working. They’ve failed many times. It’s inherent in the work, but you have to get over it and be happy with the few successes.”

Schlenoff has created a veritable pipeline from Tallahassee to Intel, the high-tech chipmaker. FSU graduates, armed with doctoral degrees and steeled to continue their research in industry, are making handsome salaries working in research and development.

Haifa Hariri and her husband, Ali Lehaf, are prime examples of this phenomenon. Both are natives of Lebanon who came to Florida State specifically to study polymers alongside Schlenoff. Now both are working at Intel’s facility near Phoenix. Hariri credits Schlenoff for their realization of the American dream.

“One of the things that stands out for me regarding Dr. Schlenoff is that he was really an adviser,” Hariri said. “A lot of professors dictate what the students have to do. Dr. Schlenoff allowed a lot of freedom for us to explore and come up with our own ideas. He would be in the background directing us in a very non-authoritative way. It allows a lot of room for creativity in his lab. It’s much more rare than you might think.”

Naresh Dalal, Schlenoff’s colleague and also a Robert O. Lawton Distinguished Professor recipient (2012-2013), notes that Schlenoff’s dedication to his students is well known in their department.

“He’s a great mentor of all students,” Dalal said. “The joy comes from transferring your knowledge to the youngster who adds to what you teach them. He is very, very good at teaching both the research part and how to write after you’ve done the research. He’s both big breadth and big depth.”

A native of New York City, Schlenoff spent more than half of his childhood in London, where he started his journey in higher education. His predilection for science experiments emerged at a much younger age, however. Schlenoff as a

child was fascinated by fireworks and decided he could create his own explosives. Looking back, he chuckles and calls it an introduction to chemistry through pyromania.

“That’s the best way to get interested. I only went to the hospital with burns three times,” Schlenoff said wryly. “I took careful notes of each gunpowder mixture that I made.”

He admits he didn’t come to Tallahassee expecting to spend his entire professional career in one place. He had met his wife, Zeina Schlenoff, the director of Middle Eastern Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences’ Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics, while working on his Ph.D. in Amherst, Massachusetts. They didn’t know what to expect when they came to FSU in 1988.

But since arriving here almost three decades ago, he understands why he’s here.

“You see a lot of faculty loyalty at FSU, and you see a lot of staff loyalty too,” Schlenoff said. “I think for many of us, with the opportunities and freedom we’re given, we quickly learn that the grass is pretty green on your side of the fence.” ❖❖



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# Duly Noted

## News and notes from around the College of Arts and Sciences

### Student Achievement



#### Damon charted unconventional course to Rhodes Scholar finalist

Florida State senior Gil Damon called it an honor to participate as a finalist in a November 2017

interview for a prestigious Rhodes Scholarship to the University of Oxford in England.

Damon, 21, prepared for this moment for months and while his name was not listed in the final group of 32 U.S. scholarship recipients, Damon had no regrets over his effort.

"It's a little surreal to get this far, just to be considered," Damon said. "I don't know if I really have a sense of it yet. All of the candidates are extraordinary people."

Damon, a double major in political science and psychology, charted an unconventional path on his journey to becoming Florida State's seventh finalist for a Rhodes Scholarship in the past 11 years.

He studied one year at Tallahassee Community College before transferring to FSU where he has earned a perfect 4.0 GPA. He has interned at NASA, the Florida Capitol, the U.S. Senate and the White House. He spent a summer piloting a 40-passenger tour boat down the Wakulla River through alligator-infested waters, while simultaneously explaining the finer points of "snakebirds" and Suwannee cooter turtles.

Read more at <http://fla.st/2Ai84Hd>.



**Alabugin:** "For the discovery of new ways to understand and control chemical reactivity, particularly for incorporating stereoelectronic concepts in the design of cyclizations, cycloadditions and cycloaromatizations."



**Li:** "For distinguished contributions to the field of RNA structural biology and biophysics, particularly for structural insights into endoribonucleases and RNA-guided enzymes and their applications to biotechnology."



**Sang:** "For distinguished contributions to the field of biochemistry and enzymology, particularly for deciphering structure-function relationship of metalloproteinases and molecular mechanisms of cancer and inflammatory diseases."



**Adams:** "For distinguished contributions to the field of particle physics, particularly for expanding the scope of searches for new physics at hadron colliders."



**Manousakis:** "For distinguished contributions to the field of computational physics, particularly for developing novel computational methods for the quantum simulation of superfluids and electrons in solids."

Read more at <http://fla.st/2mLdNz3>.



#### Classics professor honored for research into ancient Etruscans

Classics Professor Nancy de Grummond,

one of the world's leading authorities on the ancient Etruscan civilization, was recently recognized for her decades of archaeological work and research during a ceremony held at the Palazzo Vecchio, the majestic town hall of Florence, Italy.

De Grummond, the M. Lynette Thompson Professor of Classics and a Distinguished Research Professor at FSU, was one of two recipients of a Tuscan American Award, an honor bestowed each year on those who have significantly contributed to further developing the ties of friendship and exchange between the United States and the Tuscany region of central Italy.

The awards were presented during a Welcome Day ceremony hosted by the Tuscan American Association on Oct. 25, 2017. The ceremony is held every year for hundreds of American students as they initiate their studies in Florence and Italy in general.

De Grummond, an expert in Etruscan, Hellenistic and Roman archaeology, was recognized by the association for "her work as director of archaeological excavations at Cetamura del Chianti, Tuscany, including research and publications that have contributed to knowledge of the ancient Etruscans and Romans and a field school that has brought hundreds of American students to work and study in Tuscany since she became director in 1983."

Read more at <http://fla.st/2jsF6gl>.



#### English professor's literary archive headed for immortality

The lifetime writings of Pulitzer Prize-winner Robert Olen Butler,

an acclaimed author and professor at Florida State University, are moving in with the collections of some of history's greatest writers.

Yale University's prestigious Beinecke Library, which holds one of the largest archives of rare books and manuscripts in the world, has purchased Butler's literary archive. The collection will open to researchers by fall 2018.

Butler has earned many writing awards, including the 1993 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction for his book of short stories "A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain," but this career acknowledgment is especially sweet.

### Faculty Accomplishments

#### Six named fellows of AAAS

Robert O. Lawton Distinguished Professor of Psychology Thomas Joiner, Professors of Chemistry and Biochemistry Igor Alabugin, Hong Li and Qing-Siang "Amy" Sang, and Professors of Physics Todd Adams and Efstratios Manousakis all received one of the top honors in the scientific world as they were named fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in November 2017. Election as a fellow of the AAAS is an honor bestowed upon association members by their peers.

These individuals were among 396 scientists and engineers to have been elevated to the rank of AAAS fellow this year. They were recognized for the following contributions to science:



**Joiner:** "For distinguished contributions to the field of suicide research and prevention, particularly for the development of the leading theoretical account of suicidal behavior."

"If I had to choose between another major book award and my archive finding this particular home, I would choose the Beinecke," Butler said. "The Beinecke is forever."

The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library is home to personal papers and original manuscripts of some of the most gifted writers in history: James Joyce, Langston Hughes, Gertrude Stein, Sinclair Lewis, D.H. Lawrence, Marcel Proust, Joseph Conrad, Ezra Pound and many more.

Read more at <http://fla.st/2jAlJ54>.



### Srivastava named fellow of American Statistical Association

A Florida State researcher who works to improve the visual-recognition capabilities of computers has received one of the top honors in his field.

Anuj Srivastava, a Distinguished Research Professor in FSU's Department of Statistics, has been named a fellow of the American Statistical Association (ASA), the world's largest community of statisticians from the fields of academia, business, government and scientific research. The 18,000-member association selects no more than one-third of 1 percent of its members for the rank of fellow each year; a total of 62 people received the honor this year.

Srivastava works on "computer vision," an interdisciplinary field in which researchers develop computer algorithms for recognizing objects from their images. The images can originate from anywhere, from YouTube videos and Xbox Kinect data to MRI scans and X-ray crystallography.

Read more at <http://fla.st/2A7J1pT>.



### Saltiel recognized with international chemistry award

A longtime member of Florida State's chemistry faculty is being recognized

for his decades of transformational research in photochemistry as the second-ever recipient of an international award from the American Chemical Society.

Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry Jack Saltiel will receive the Josef Michl ACS Award in Photochemistry in recognition of his groundbreaking work on the mechanisms of photochemical reactions, particularly cis-trans photoisomerization, a key chemical process in vision. The award includes a \$5,000 prize and up to \$2,500 in travel expenses to attend the spring national meeting of the American Chemical Society where the award will be presented.

Saltiel, a 1960 Rice University graduate and a 1964 California Institute of Technology graduate, has taught at Florida State University since 1965. His cis-trans photoisomerization studies are a

universally important area of organic chemistry and photochemistry, influencing disciplines from vision to commercial vitamin D production to optical switches and other new and emerging photochemistry applications in materials science and biology.

Read more at <http://fla.st/2bKt2pV>.



### Blessing named fellow of American Physical Society

Susan Blessing, a professor in FSU's Department of Physics, has been elected a fellow

of the American Physical Society, the nation's most prestigious organization of physicists.

Blessing was named an APS fellow after years of pioneering particle physics research and a distinguished career of service on behalf of students and aspiring researchers.

According to the APS website, Blessing was elected a fellow "for exemplary leadership in developing a model STEM education program for undergraduate women."

Blessing received her doctorate in experimental particle physics from Indiana University in 1989. After conducting postdoctoral research at Northwestern University, she joined the Florida State faculty in 1994. Her current research, which is carried out at the renowned Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory in Batavia, Illinois, seeks out new phenomena in proton-antiproton collisions.

Read more at <http://fla.st/2ke8ebG>.

## Faculty Research



### Scientists net millions in research grants

One indicator of the vitality of research within a college is the awarding of research grants by the National

Science Foundation and other major funding organizations. Here is just a sampling of research grants awarded to faculty within the College of Arts and Sciences in 2017:

- An FSU-based team led by Richard O. Lawton Distinguished Professor of Psychology Richard Wagner received an \$8 million grant from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development to study the best ways to help students with learning disabilities. (Read more at <http://fla.st/2zWnSPq>.)

- A team of FSU physicists won a \$4.5 million grant from the National Science Foundation to probe deeper into the world of nuclear physics and nuclear astrophysics. Physics Professors Ingo Wiedenhover, Paul Cottle, Mark Riley and Samuel Tabor, Assistant Professor Sergio Almaraz-Calderon and research faculty member Anthony Frawley operate the John D. Fox Superconducting Accelerator Laboratory at Florida State. (Read more

at <http://fla.st/2j371zJ>.)

- A consortium of research institutions led by Professor Eric Chassignet, director of FSU's Center for Ocean-Atmospheric Prediction Studies, was awarded a \$2.8 million grant from the Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative to expand our understanding of how the Deepwater Horizon oil spill affected the ecology of the Gulf. (Read more at <http://fla.st/2fNjgbC>.)

- Professor of Biological Science Hengli Tang, who has conducted pioneering research to fight Zika and West Nile virus, is part of a multimillion-dollar project to investigate how quickly the viruses attack human brain cells and how the brain reacts to infection at different stages of development. Tang will receive \$1.8 million of a total \$7.7 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to conduct research in conjunction with colleagues from three other universities. (Read more at <http://fla.st/2zcUu7C>.)

## Honors

### Air Force ROTC program recognized as one of the nation's best

Members of Florida State University's Air Force ROTC program are flying high after being named the best large Air Force ROTC detachment in the southeastern United States.

Air Force ROTC Detachment 145, which is affiliated with FSU's Department of Aerospace Studies, was recently selected to receive an Air Force ROTC Southeast Region High Flight Award based on its performance on a variety of metrics over the preceding year. The award is presented annually to one Southeastern Air Force ROTC detachment in each of three size categories — small, medium and large.

Col. Marc Van Wert — commander of Detachment 145 and a professor and chair of the Department of Aerospace Studies — and his cadets were judged over a year-long period from July 1, 2016, to June 30, 2017, based on various criteria such as training, education, innovation and recruitment. Each of the 38 Air Force detachments in the Southeast created a write-up report that detailed all of their achievements over the past year. 🌟

Read more at <http://fla.st/2zRHLVc>.



# A legacy that lasts beyond a lifetime

## Simple bequests make giving easy

By Barry Ray

**A**s Florida State University enters the final stretch of its largest-ever capital campaign, friends of the College of Arts and Sciences have a golden opportunity to help lift the university to unprecedented heights while also meeting their own philanthropic needs.

Since its official kickoff in 2014, “Raise the Torch: The Campaign for Florida State” has made it possible for FSU to attract outstanding faculty and students who are making a difference worldwide. But still more can be accomplished. By contributing to the campaign by June 30, 2018, you will be helping the university to focus on four key priorities:

- *Inspire, engage and transform the next generation of students* through undergraduate scholarships; academic programs; student research; and athletic scholarships and facilities through the “Champions Campaign,” spearheaded by Seminole Boosters Inc.;
- *Power a great university to new academic heights* by providing faculty support;
- *Encourage innovation, creativity and discovery* through the support of

STEM fields (science, technology, engineering and math); entrepreneurship; technological innovation; and the fine and performing arts; and

- *Improve the public good* by harnessing the energy and talent of a highly productive research university to inform the discussion of and provide solutions to some of society’s most pressing issues.

In the last issue of *Across the Spectrum*, we discussed a mechanism for contributing to “Raise the Torch” that works best for some individuals — the IRA Charitable Rollover. This type of gift involves an asset transfer. If you would like to retain control of your assets in your lifetime, a simple, flexible and versatile way to include the College of Arts and Sciences in your philanthropic plans is a gift in your will or living trust, also known as a charitable bequest.

Whether in the form of money, appreciated securities, real estate, tangible personal property or closely held stock, gifts made via charitable bequest can come in all shapes and sizes. Whether large or small, the most meaningful gifts come from people like you who care about FSU’s success and want to ensure that it continues well into the future.

A bequest to Florida State can be made for a specific amount, for a percentage of your estate, or for all or a portion of what is left after you have made bequests to your family. To make a

gift to FSU from your estate, you must sign a new will or living trust instrument, add a codicil to your present will, or make an amendment to your present trust instrument.

Alternatively, you can designate FSU as a beneficiary of a retirement plan or life insurance policy. To do so, contact the retirement plan administrator or life insurance company and complete the appropriate beneficiary designation form.

There are a number of advantages to providing for a gift via charitable bequest. Among them:

- It won’t cost you a penny during your lifetime, yet gives you the satisfaction of knowing you have provided for FSU in the future.
- You retain complete control of your assets during your lifetime.
- You can modify your bequest if your circumstances change.
- Gifts to FSU from your estate are exempt from federal estate taxes.

If you would like more information, or if you are considering making to make a gift via charitable bequest to the College of Arts and Sciences, contact Nancy Smilowitz, the college’s assistant dean for development, at (850) 294-1034 or [nsmilowitz@fsu.edu](mailto:nsmilowitz@fsu.edu). Learn more about “Raise the Torch: The Campaign for Florida State” at <http://raisethetorch.fsu.edu/>.

*\*The information in this article is not intended as legal or tax advice. For such advice, please consult an attorney or tax adviser. ❁*



# RAISE THE TORCH

for the COLLEGE of ARTS & SCIENCES

# Your Development Team:

**Nancy Smilowitz**



**Assistant Dean**

Cell: (850) 294-1034  
Email: nsmilowitz@fsu.edu

Assistant Dean for Development Nancy Smilowitz loves working with people who have a thirst for knowledge and a desire to enhance higher education. May 2017 marked 19 years that Nancy has been in the Office of Development at Florida State University's College of Arts and Sciences. She began at FSU as an associate director of development, became senior director in 2002 and assistant dean in 2008.

Nancy earned her bachelor's degree in sociology from Penn State University, where she also worked part time raising funds in the phone center. Between her time at Penn State and her arrival at FSU, Nancy served as the assistant director of annual giving at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana.

**Jeff Ereckson**



**Director of Development**

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Jeff Ereckson was born and raised in the Florida Panhandle, growing up in Panama City, and graduated from high school in Pensacola in 1980. He earned his bachelor's degree in finance from FSU in 1985 and enjoyed a 17-year career as a financial consultant in Atlanta before returning to Tallahassee in 2005 to become Director of Planned Giving at the FSU Foundation. He also helped raise funds and gifts-in-kind to build the new President's House, which was completed in 2007. In 2009, Jeff joined the College of Arts and Sciences as Director of Development, became the PA announcer for the FSU baseball team in 2015, and continues to serve FSU in both roles today.

While in college, Jeff was a student senator and member of the Renegade Team, and was Chief Osceola in 1983 and 1984. As an alumnus, he was an active member of the Atlanta Seminole Club and served on the FSU Alumni Board and the College of Arts and Sciences Leadership Council for eight years. He and his wife, Renee, live in Tallahassee and have two grown sons.

**Brett Lee**



**Development Officer**

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Email: bwlee@foundation.fsu.edu

Brett Lee is a native of Crestview, Florida. In 2011, he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in marketing from Florida State. After graduation, he immediately accepted a position in Data Management with the FSU Foundation and worked most recently in the Foundation's Department of Gift Processing before moving over to the College of Arts and Sciences.

For fun, Brett plays on the FSU Foundation flag football team and enjoys hiking and kayaking. In his role as a development officer, he advances the many initiatives of the college and works with faculty staff and students throughout the university to raise interest and awareness among current and prospective donors.

**Johanna Withers**



**Development Coordinator**

Office: (850) 644-1652  
Email: jgwithers@fsu.edu

Johanna Withers, a Tallahassee native, graduated from FSU in 2010 with a bachelor's degree in humanities. After graduation, she enjoyed seeking diverse work opportunities. Her experience includes providing financial counseling to patients at a local medical practice, delivering administrative and marketing support to a Florida engineering firm, and working as an executive assistant at The National WWII Museum in New Orleans.

Johanna joined the College of Arts and Sciences' development team in 2016 and is thrilled to be working for her alma mater.

**Barry Ray**



**Media & Communications Officer**

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Born and raised in Jacksonville, Florida, Barry Ray graduated from FSU in 1988 with a bachelor's degree in English literature. He has held communications positions in state government and with a daily newspaper, and has worked extensively as a freelance writer and editor. In 2005, Barry returned to FSU, working with University Communications to focus national and international media attention on the groundbreaking research and accomplishments of Florida State faculty.

Barry moved to the College of Arts and Sciences in 2013 and is excited about this opportunity to promote the college. He and his wife, Susan (a 1987 FSU grad), have two children.

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Professor Don Levitan, chair of Florida State University's Department of Biological Science, is a member of the Mote Research Working Group, a consortium of marine scientists and graduate students at FSU who are afforded opportunities to develop and explore new, innovative and topical areas in marine biology. The group is funded by the William R. and Lenore Mote Endowment, which also supports eminent and visiting scholar positions, an international symposium on cutting-edge marine ecological issues, and research assistantships for graduate students. Learn more on page 13.