The Innovators

Kent State students are coming together to find creative solutions to real-world problems. SEE PAGE 12
On the cover: Case.MD team Samuel Graska, BS ’17, MBA ’18, Arvital Yager, BBA ’17, and Justin Glasson, BS ’16, March ’18, MBA ’18, are creating smartphone cases to dispense various medications. See page 16.

COVER PHOTO: BOB CHRISTY, BS ’95

FEATURES

12 Design Innovation for the 21st Century
Kent State’s new Design Innovation Initiative is promoting interdisciplinary collaboration to prepare the next generation of problem solvers.

18 Beyond Borders
Pakistani-born artist and 2017 Guggenheim Fellow Mahwish Chishty connects across cultures to call attention to the human cost of border conflicts.

22 Listening to the Deaf Community
What deaf and hard-of-hearing students want the hearing world to know about who they are and what they’re capable of—and how Kent State is helping them succeed.

28 Change Maker
“Change isn’t easy, it takes time” says Michael Chanak Jr., BS ’71. It took him five years to get an EEO policy changed to protect the rights of gay people against discrimination at his workplace. Then 25 years later, the company made an award-winning short film that chronicled his persistence.

DEPARTMENTS

02 Feedback
03 Presidential Perspectives
04 Flash Forward
30 Alumni Life
36 Flashback
37 Giving Voice

EDITOR
Jan Senn
magazine@kent.edu

DESIGN
UCM Creative Team

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHERS
Bob Chvasty, BS ’85
Jeff Goldsan, BS ’87

STAFF CONTRIBUTORS
Lisa Abraham
April McClellan-Copeland
Susan Merckus
Bethany Savi, BS ’10
Ashley Whaley, BS ’06, MEd ’12

WEBSITE
www.kent.edu/magazine

CORRESPONDENCE
Kent State Magazine, 160 AAB
P.O. Box 5190, Kent, Ohio 44242
magazine@kent.edu
330-672-2727

Kent State Magazine is published by Kent State University Communications and Marketing. It is mailed free to faculty, staff, alumni, donors and friends of the university. Two issues a year (fall/winter, spring/summer).

Printed by Angstrom Graphics, Cleveland, Ohio

CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Ralph Della Ratta

PRESIDENT
Beverly J. Warren, EdD, PhD

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND PROVOST
Todd A. Diacon, PhD

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION
Mark M. Polatajko, PhD

Take Note
At Kent State, diversity and inclusion are not words used to sound politically correct—they are ways of being, fundamental values the university strives to embody in every educational encounter.

It’s no wonder that so many Kent State students, faculty, staff and alumni encompass those values in their lives and careers, and are known for standing up for equal rights, being a voice for the voiceless and speaking truth to power.

We highlight several in this issue—including deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals, many of whom are part of a growing Deaf community, an LGBTQ+ activist who changed a global company’s equal employment policy, an artist who is connecting across cultures and calling attention to the cost of border conflicts, plus innovative entrepreneurs, researchers and educators—all of whom are purpose-driven people making a difference on Kent State campuses and in the world at large.

Squirrel Search
Those tricky black squirrels are at it again! In each issue, we hide an image of a black squirrel on three pages (not counting the Table of Contents). If you find all three, you qualify for a drawing to win a squirrel-themed prize. Each squirrel will appear like this: (shown actual size and will not be distorted or rotated).

When you find them, send us an email at magazine@kent.edu, listing the three page numbers and places they appear, plus your name and mailing address. For rules and eligibility requirements see www.kent.edu/magazine/rules. Good luck!
Enduring Community

In my final State of the University Address, I talked about how I am filled with great optimism for Kent State’s future, because this community—and its powerful and uplifting sense of heart and home—will endure far beyond any presidency. We see Kent State’s strength in its thriving Deaf community, including recent graduates Elexis Blake, BA ’18, and Nebeyat Mamay, BA ’18, who created the Deaf Power Organization in 2016 to bring together deaf and hard-of-hearing students and friends to engage, advocate and raise awareness. Their passion and commitment, and that of other students, faculty and staff featured in this issue, serve as an inspiring example of how the power for positive change comes from within.

We see Kent State’s inner drive in the problems solvers leading our design innovation revolution. They bring together diverse talents and perspectives to solve real-world issues, such as the team behind CaseMD, who create smartphone cases that dispense medication. Their efforts show the vast potential waiting to be fulfilled through collaborations within our wide-ranging community of students, faculty, staff and alumni.

Without these passionate, forward-thinking individuals, the Design Innovation Hub is just a building. Our creative community provides the internal spark that ignites innovation and learning across our eight-campus system. This deep, personal engagement of our entire university community elevates the trajectory of Kent State ever higher. Programs such as Summer Advantage and the Summer Undergraduate Research Experience motivate students to finish their college degrees and channel their creativity to make a difference in the world.

From our student success initiative to the Gateway Master Plan and planning for the 50th Commemoration of May 4, Kent State demonstrates how our transformative rise is always the result of the grassroots engagement of our people. The strength of this university community transcends any program, initiative or administration and is rooted in the values and ideals that define Kent State.

We want to hear from you!
Respond to magazine content or comment on topics related to Kent State by writing:
Kent State Magazine
P.O. Box 5190,
Kent, Ohio 44242-0001
or magazine@kent.edu
Responses may be edited for style, length, clarity and civility.
Visit us online
www.kent.edu/magazine

Beverly J. Warren
President

Email: president@kent.edu, Twitter: @PresBWarrren
For ourselves and the world, we are called to assume the role of the wounded healer.”

—President Beverly J. Warren,
“Kent State Beyond the Shootings: Journey of the Wounded Healer,” Chautauqua Institution in New York, August 11, 2016

Kent State Partners with Chautauqua

Visitors this year to the Chautauqua Institution in southwestern New York—a historic community that offers nine weeks of programs, classes and community events each summer to advance understanding—were able to experience firsthand the contemplative and creative engagement of Kent State University.

To Remember, Reflect and Renew

On August 15, President Beverly J. Warren was a featured lecturer at the institution’s weeklong investigation on the theme of “The Forgotten: History and Memory in the 21st Century.”

In a moving speech about Kent State’s campus shootings on May 4, 1970—to an estimated crowd of 8,000, including KSU alumni, witnesses, and victims of the shootings—President Warren recounted the events and aftermath of that tragic day. She spoke of the university’s desire to serve as the facilitator of national conversations that can broker more civil and productive social discourse: “For ourselves and the world, we are called to assume the role of the wounded healer.”

She also discussed the university’s plans for a year-long commemoration for the upcoming 50th anniversary of this watershed moment in American history, which will include teaching materials for middle and high schools, a teaching workshop and forum at the Kent Campus, and the bestowing of Voices of Change awards to honor some exceptional individuals who affect positive and peaceful change in the world.

“Kent State will not merely remember May 4, 1970, in an endless loop that never satisfies, the wound rubbed raw over and over again. We choose to remember, reflect and renew. We will remember vividly, but not live in the past; we will honor the emotions that forever resound around us, but be consumed no more by anger or grief, and we will raise our voices—using the lessons of 50 years to convince people, heal conflict and create a more inclusive, more peaceful future. If we do that, we and Kent State are transformed.”

President Warren’s address, “Kent State Beyond the Shootings: Journey of the Wounded Healer,” gained a national audience when Vital Speeches, a magazine launched in 1934 to publish the best speeches by top business, political and intellectual leaders in the world, selected it as its Speech of the Week.

Rising Together

Together, we made a big difference. Kent State had record-setting fundraising during fiscal year 2018. The university received support from more than 20,000 alumni and friends for scholarships, programs and capital projects that totaled a record of $14.9 million in philanthropic gifts.

Supporters helped us prioritize student success as we offer ways to help students stay on track to graduation, propelling them into their future as engaged world citizens. Life-changing scholarships were funded with $4.27 million in generous private support last year.

And for the second year in a row, philanthropic momentum continues to build in Kent State’s Giving Tuesday campaign. In November, giving again surpassed 2017’s record million-dollar mark and exceeded last year’s grand total—setting an inspiring trend of broad and growing community support.

The month-long campaign featured more than 40 giving options across the Kent State system, each with a matching gift in place, in addition to the KSU Foundation’s boosts and matches. Nearly $300,000 was available in matching funds for gifts made throughout the month of November. Plus students, faculty, staff and supporters created individual peer-to-peer fundraising pages for the cause of their choice.

Milestones

Three cheers for some of the anniversaries Kent State celebrated in 2018!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>CELEBRANT</th>
<th>EVENTS</th>
<th>THEN/NOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 50  | Kent State University Hotel and Conference Center | Happy Hour on the Terrace, with complimentary appetizers and drink specials | Then: opened doors June 14, 2013
Now: 100,000+ reservations, nearly 146,000 guests, 2,000+ events, 89 weddings booked |
| 50  | Sexual and Relationship Violence Support Services (SRVSS) | Expanded Green Dot movement, continued Kent State Stands Up awareness campaign, started emergency fund for survivors | Now: Became an official center—the Center for Sexual and Relationship Violence Support Services—as of July 1, 2018 |
| 50  | Student Multicultural Center (SMC) | Cultural Cook-Off, African drumming/dance, history of SMC game night, discussion on SMC’s next 50 years, commemorative quilt, raising money for student emergency fund | Office of Minority Affairs (1968)
Office of Cultural Diversity (1991)
Student Multicultural Center (1996) |
| 50  | Black United Students (BUS) | “BUS at 50 Reloaded” photo exhibit at the Umbaji Gallery from 10/5/18 to 11/14/18; commemorative display of photos and video in partnership with Student Multicultural Center | Formed in April 1968 to advocate for black students
Now: Creating platform for black students to excel and thrive |
| 50  | Kent State at Tuscarawas | Alumni reunions, formal dinner, community open house, talk by NPR host Peter Sagal of Wait... Don’t Tell Me, campus history presentation, dramatic performance, recognition at Ohio Statehouse | Then: 1 building; 200 students
Now: 4 buildings; 2000 students |
| 50  | Kent State at Ash tabula | Music, food, games and information booths on first day of fall semester, campus timeline, Deans’ Retrospective | Ash tabula Center of KSU (1958)
Then: 3 faculty, 523 students
Now: 100 faculty, 2,000+ students |
Meet the Class of 2022
The Kent Campus looks a bit more crowded these days. The 4,363 first-year students who arrived on the campus this fall are the largest class in university history, with 100 more students than a year ago and topping the previous record high in 2016.

But that’s not the only thing noteworthy about them—the new class also reached record highs in academic quality, with an average GPA of 3.4 and average ACT score of 23.5. Nearly half of the new freshmen came with more than 16 college credits—the equivalent of a full semester—from courses they completed in high school.

In addition to the growing number of first-year students, the number of out-of-state students rose nearly 10 percent this year. And the number of first-generation students also rose, up nearly 7 percent compared to last year.

The class size for underrepresented freshmen also set records as one of the largest in history, and the success gap between underrepresented and non-underrepresented is closing with the help of improved retention rates, up nearly a percentage point.

This year’s freshman class also saw an increase in international students. Students on the Kent Campus come from 28 countries, with the top four foreign countries being China, Brazil, India and Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile, classes began at the American Academy, a new partnership between Kent State and Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná, a major university in Brazil, for students who want a global experience while earning their degree.

Areas of enrollment growth also include a spike in undergraduate and graduate students in Kent State’s College of Architecture and Environmental Design and the College of Public Health.

Enrollment on the campuses of Kent State University at Ashtabula, Kent State University at Trumbull and Kent State University at Tuscarawas also improved.

—Kristin Anderson

Cool Course
Number: POL 40995/HIST 49295
Study Abroad
Name: Modern Germany: Politics, History, Culture
Term: Three-week Intersession, May 21–June 8 (Next year, May 20–June 7, 2019)
Instructors: Mark Cassell, PhD, professor of political science and Anthony Molina, PhD, assistant professor of political science
Description: Is Germany an exemplar of democratic stability or a country on the cusp of another crisis? How are refugees and immigrants affecting German politics and society today? Where is Germany today and where will it be in the future? Students examine these questions by visiting four locations in Germany: Frankfurt, Erfurt/Weimar, Berlin and Dresden. They have the opportunity to explore immigration and asylum with those who are living it, and to hear the perspectives of lawmakers (including the nationalist right-wing party), public agencies charged with integrating refugees, and nonprofits who work with refugees.
Objectives: Gain an understanding of German society, including a basic knowledge of the political, economic, historical and social issues in Germany; develop an awareness of American cultural values and biases; develop an ability to interact constructively with people of different cultures; demonstrate an increased capacity to analyze issues with appreciation for disparate viewpoints; develop a firsthand understanding of several issues, including the refugee crisis, cities and the role of public transportation, and Europe’s financial system.
Reading: A Concise History of Germany, Mary Fulbrook (Cambridge University Press, 2004)
Assignments: Keep a daily journal throughout the trip, describing daily experiences, impressions and responses to briefings and tours, and an explanation of what was learned that day. Prepare and give an oral presentation on any of the topics covered during the trip, followed with a Q/A session.
Firestone Community Learning Center
Three new college and career academies that will bear Kent State’s name—the Kent State University Academy of Design, the Kent State University Academy of Performing Arts and the Kent State University Academy of Advanced Technology and Comprehensive Engineering—will open at Firestone Community Learning Center in 2019. In May, more than 200 Firestone ninth-grade students came to the Kent Campus for a two-day event, during which they watched brief presentations from colleges and programs, including the College of Aeronautics and Engineering, the College of Communication and Information, the College of the Arts and the College of Architecture and Environmental Design, as well as the Design Innovation program. Approximately 30 students (new sophomores) from the group elected to return to campus in July for a week-long camp—an immersive experience that included staying in residence halls, having meals in the dining halls, sampling various Kent State colleges and schools and exploring potential careers in the above fields. The program—sponsored by the Akron Community Foundation and the Sister McFawn Foundation—also provided college readiness and transition information for students and their parents. “We are excited to provide these students with comprehensive hands-on collegiate experiences focused on design, innovation, technology and the arts,” says Justin Hilton, senior administrator for community outreach for Kent State. During the week, the Firestone students flew drones, learned to operate a television camera and practiced producing a television broadcast. Among other activities, they also built virtual 3D models, handled priceless art artifacts and sat in on a stage rehearsal of Rogers and Hammerstein’s “Oklahoma!” View a video of the Firestone students’ visit to the Kent Campus at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KVyoZy6EA.

LeBron James Family Foundation
Kent State also has teamed up with the LeBron James Family Foundation (LJFF) to provide students from the foundation’s PROMISE program with resources to help prepare them for college. As an integral part of the collaboration, Kent State will provide specialized programming to help PROMISE students remain on target to graduate from high school so they are eligible for the college scholarships they have been promised by the foundation.

To help with the students’ academic needs, Kent State hosted a three-week Flash P’ACT summer program in June, to help students prepare for the ACT college entrance exam. During the camp, the students lived on the Kent Campus from Monday through Friday, for a true college experience. They received rigorous preparation in math, reading, college readiness and personal development during the day, and afterward took part in university-sanctioned recreation and wellness opportunities, along with on-campus volunteering and hands-on, community-engaged learning. “By immersing these students in the college experience while simultaneously boosting their academic preparation, they will be set up for success to eventually transition from high school to college,” says Melody Tankersley, Kent State’s senior associate provost and dean of graduate studies. “These relationships are key to ensuring that the high school students not only see themselves on a college campus someday, but that they also see themselves succeeding and earning a degree.” The university’s efforts with LJFF students will continue in spring 2019 as KSU students become PROMISE mentors and pair with PROMISE tenth graders for weekly one-on-one mentoring sessions to help the high school students set college and career goals and work toward achieving them.

Flash FORWARD Partners in College Prep
Kent State University continues to advance its partnership with the Akron Public Schools through the following two key programs.

Noteworthy

Rankings
Women Friendly: In a survey of 40,000 U.S. employees—including 8,500 women—Kent State was recognized by Forbes magazine as one of America’s Best Employers for Women in 2018. LGBTQ Friendly: Kent State ranked 4.5 out of 5 in the 2018 Campus Pride Index, the premier national benchmarking tool for creating safer and more LGBTQ-friendly learning environments at colleges and universities.

LEED Recognition: Kent State University’s Center for Architecture and Environmental Design (designed by Weiss/Manfred) received LEED Platinum recognition, the highest ranking for the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) system—and the first LEED Platinum ranking for a public university in Ohio. Earlier this year, Kent State’s Center for the Visual Arts (designed by Payta Architects) received a LEED Silver rating for its design and construction. Kent State now has 13 LEED-certified buildings throughout the Kent State system.

Grants
HHS and NSF Grants: U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan announced that Kent State University was awarded $3.7 million in federal research grants from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the National Science Foundation.

Student Scholar
The National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) has named recent Kent State University graduate Megan Swoger, BA ’18, a 2018 Portz Scholar. She is the ninth Kent State student to receive the honor since the inception of the Portz Scholars competition in 1990, and Kent State is a leader in the number of Portz prizes awarded in this national competition.

The NCHC, an educational organization that supports and promotes undergraduate honors education, invites its more than 900 member institutions to nominate one research paper written by an undergraduate honors college student for the annual Portz Scholars competition. The council selects four winners, who each receive a $350 stipend and the honor of presenting their research at the NCHC annual conference.

Selecting just one undergraduate project to enter in the Portz Scholars competition is challenging, notes Alison Smith, PhD, dean of the Honors College, but she says Ms. Swoger’s paper was “a standout.” Ms. Swoger’s, a native of Center Township near Pittsburgh, graduated magna cum laude from Kent State in May, with a dual degree in international relations and French literature, culture and translation, and a minor in women’s studies. Her winning thesis is titled, “Analysis of the Prevailing Practice of FGM in Ghana: Are domestic laws and international treaties effective in the eradication of FGM within the state?” She says the issue of female genital mutilation (FGM), which is widely practiced in the countries of northern Africa, concerned her and was appropriate to both her major in international relations and her minor in women’s studies.

Ms. Swoger traveled twice to Ghana to conduct her research, and she credits her paper’s success to her thesis advisor, Julie Mazzei, PhD, a professor in the Department of Political Science. “Without the support, time and effort she put into helping me edit and revise the writing in a short time frame, it wouldn’t have been possible.”

After spending five months traveling throughout the Middle East, Ms. Swoger plans to begin graduate school in 2019.

NIMH Grant: A group of researchers at Kent State University, led by Principal Investigator Karen Coffman, PhD, associate professor of psychology, has received a five-year, $2.7 million grant from the National Institute of Mental Health to conduct a comprehensive study to better understand the risk for affective diseases (including depression, anxiety and bipolar disorders) and to develop more efficient treatment approaches.

NIH Grant: John Johnson, PhD, associate professor of biological sciences, received a three-year $450,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health to study the neurological roots of chronic stress and fear—and how to stop them.
Fashion Maven
Sarah Rogers, who joined the Kent State University Museum as its new director in July 2018, says the new position appealed to her for its uniqueness.

“Openings for museum directors are rare, especially at an institution with such an outstanding collection, reputation and connection to a university,” says Ms. Rogers, who succeeds Jean Druesedow, the museum’s director for the past 25 years until her retirement.

“I have an eclectic background in a variety of museums and nonprofits, and in recent years my interests have focused on fashion, design and contemporary culture.”

Ms. Rogers most recently served as executive deputy director of the Columbus Museum of Art and says her role is to make the Kent State University Museum appealing and accessible to all age groups.

“Frankly, people have trouble finding our front door,” she jokes. “We need a banner on the building! We also need to make visitors, especially students, feel welcome once they enter.” She recently was invited to a PR class in the School of Journalism, and says she welcomes their ideas to connect students with the museum through peer-to-peer engagement.

“Everyone has limited resources, but we have a great staff and support system, and I see only wonderful opportunities ahead of us.”

We asked her to reveal a few more facts about herself:

Last place traveled for pleasure: I just returned from NYC for both museum business and then pleasure, since my wonderful daughter lives in Brooklyn. I stayed with her; we ate lots of sushi and hung out in museums.

Secret talent: Besides having elbows that are double-jointed, I can parallel park any vehicle. Street parking is my sport!

Recent read: [Fashion photographer] Bill Cunningham’s memoir, Fashion Climbing: A Memoir with Photographs, which was found after he recently passed away.

Least favorite current fashion trend: Prairie dresses are back. I’m not a fan, unless you are 10 and adorable. Conceptually, there is an argument that they present a radical view of how to dress today; that I find interesting. But I will not be sporting the look.

Most admired celebrity fashion sense: Tilda Swinton is amazing and has worked with some of the great contemporary fashion designers and photographers. She is fearless in how she dresses.

Best part of her job: I started babysitting when I was 11, but at 14 I became a bagger at the local grocery store.

Recent read: I just finished reading the John Grisham novel, The Rooster Bar.

Happy place: Any relatively empty beach with a pool close by.

Advice to my younger self: Never be afraid to fail.

On the radar for the field of aerospace engineering: Designing a modern complex aerospace system—such as what will be required for Mission to Mars and the NextGen air transportation system—on budget, on time and with minimal unintended consequences.

Challenges as dean: Ramping up fast enough to put in place the necessary pieces to grow the college. The College of Aeronautics and Engineering has a wonderful story to tell. A huge challenge is to tell it to prospective students, parents, industry partners, research partners and funding agencies in a way that captures the college’s capabilities and unique potential.

—Susan Menassa

Cutting-Edge Engineer
Christina Bloebaum, PhD, joined Kent State University’s College of Aeronautics and Engineering as its new dean in August, 2018. Dr. Bloebaum comes to Kent State from her previous position as interim department chair of aerospace engineering and the Dennis and Rebecca Muilenburg Professor for Aerospace Engineering at Iowa State University.

What drew her to Kent State, she says, was “the tremendous opportunity to continue the growth path of the college across aeronautics, applied engineering and engineering programs—all of which are important areas for present and future work development in the United States and the world.” That includes growing the college’s graduate and research programs.

Dr. Bloebaum is no stranger to creating and growing programs. While a program director with the National Science Foundation (NSF) from 2009–2012, she and two associates proposed a new idea for an NSF program that funds research on the cutting-edge of science and engineering. Their idea, focused on reducing parts in manufacturing, was to explore the centuries-old tradition of origami—folding two-dimensional paper into three-dimensional shapes—to see if it could be applied to engineering, biology and medicine.

The new program, Origami Design for Integration of Self-assembling Systems for Engineering Innovation, was so successful that in 2012–2013 it awarded nearly $30 million to 15 projects that explored new paths of technology inspired by origami.

A 2017 NOVA documentary on PBS, The Origami Revolution, profiled a number of those research projects, showing how engineers are using origami to design drugs, micro-robots, and future NASA space missions.

We asked Dr. Bloebaum to unfold a few facts about herself and her future vision.

First job: I started babysitting when I was 11, but at 14 I became a bagger at the local grocery store.

Recent read: I just finished reading the John Grisham novel, The Rooster Bar.

Happy place: Any relatively empty beach with a pool close by.

Advice to my younger self: Never be afraid to fail.

On the radar for the field of aerospace engineering: Designing a modern complex aerospace system—such as what will be required for Mission to Mars and the NextGen air transportation system—on budget, on time and with minimal unintended consequences.

Challenges as dean: Ramping up fast enough to put in place the necessary pieces to grow the college. The College of Aeronautics and Engineering has a wonderful story to tell. A huge challenge is to tell it to prospective students, parents, industry partners, research partners and funding agencies in a way that captures the college’s capabilities and unique potential.

—Susan Menassa

Flash FORWARD

Flash FORWARD
At Kent State University, design innovation is more than an abstract concept or the latest educational buzzword. It is a movement that is sparking cross-disciplinary partnerships to solve complex challenges by using design thinking and innovation.

Kent State’s recently announced Design Innovation (DI) Initiative will not only promote interdisciplinary collaboration and elevate design thinking principles, it will strive to create the next generation of innovators for the 21st century.

The initiative will bring ideas and innovations from many disciplines—including aeronautics, engineering, brain health, sustainability, biochemistry, marketing, advanced materials science/liquid crystals, computer science, fashion and entrepreneurship—together in a 68,000 square foot DI Hub at the center of the Kent Campus. Renovations to the former Art building, which will be transformed into the DI Hub, are planned to begin in spring 2019, with an expected opening date of August 2020.

“At Kent State, like most universities, we have more expertise centers than I have time to mention,” President Beverly J. Warren recently shared with an audience at Pitch NEON, a pitch contest sponsored by the Burton D. Morgan Foundation. “But developing them is only half the battle. The other half is sparking cross-disciplinary curiosity and partnerships. Discarding obsolete boundaries. Boring through protective silos to try new things.”

The DI Hub “will be shared by all, but owned by none,” says J.R. Campbell, inaugural executive director of the Design Innovation Initiative. He envisions the Hub as a 24/7 space to hatch solution-oriented ideas, where “flash challenges” will bring people together to try their hand at solving real-world problems.

“The goal for the Hub is to connect the makerspaces and design, technology and resource laboratories across all Kent State locations to make them understood and accessible by the larger community,” Mr. Campbell says. (Learn more at www.kent.edu/designinnovation.)

Having a dedicated space like the DI Hub will create a home base for the kinds of innovative partnerships that already take place across Kent State’s campuses. Design innovation is happening every day as the university’s students, faculty, leading experts, alumni and community members from diverse disciplines come together in collaborative teams to tackle difficult challenges—as seen in the following innovative projects that teams have been working on over the past couple years.
Ms. Deibel, who recently did an internship later use. into hydrogen and store the solar energy for solar panel can be used to electrolyze water charged, the electricity generated by the charges the batteries all the time. When emissions. The solar panel on the roof into electricity with no greenhouse gas

batteries. The fuel cell efficiently converts fuel, such as hydrogen or natural gas, into electricity with no greenhouse gas emissions. The solar panel on the roof charges the batteries all the time. When the cart is resting or the batteries are fully charged, the electricity generated by the solar panel can be used to electrolyze water into hydrogen and store the solar energy for later use.


Renewable energy is the future," says Ms. Deibel, who recently did an internship at a solar panel company. "I'm putting all bets on fuel cells."

In summer 2016, Ms. Deibel interned with Dr. Yanhai Du, PhD—associate professor in the College of Aeronautics and Engineering and team leader and principal investigator of Kent State University's Fuel Cell Program—in the Summer Undergraduate Research Experience (SURE).

At the time, she was a marketing major with a minor in sustainability who knew little about fuel cells or solar panels. She joined a team of students who were majoring in electrical engineering, chemical engineering and digital sciences. They all received hands-on experience with fuel cells to develop the first version of the ZEV.

"I saw that I could count on her," says Dr. Du, who made Ms. Deibel the team leader. "I knew that if I guided and supported her, she would be successful."

Ms. Deibel says Dr. Du gave her the opportunity to make mistakes as she explored her deepening dedication to sustainability and engineering, while sustaining her passion for marketing—and she is grateful for her mentor's support. Since immersing herself in renewable energy, she has charged her major to mechanical engineering and made marketing a minor.

"The biggest thing is to get students into research," she says. "Getting into it early on propelled me."

The ZEV, with its state-of-the-art sound system that allows music to be streamed around campus, is available for alumi tours and for use by student organizations. And driving the ZEV around campus is a perfect way to educate people about renewable energy.

"I want to be a voice in the renewable energy community," says Ms. Deibel, reluctant to give up her marketing edge. "I don't want to just be an engineer—though I love it—but I want to tell [the public] about renewable energy."

Learn more at www.kent.edu/cae/zero-emission-vehicle-zev. To rent the ZEV, contact Dr. Du at ydu5@kent.edu.

PROJECT: ZERO EMISSION VEHICLE

ANGELA DEIBEL, BS '19

PROJECT: FRINGE

Don't be alarmed if you see graduate student Michelle Park, BA '18, striding across the Kent Campus one evening and her clutch purse flashes from radiant red to pulsing purple to glowing green.

The fiber optic purse that she and a team of students invented earlier this year at Kent State's Fifth Annual Fashion/ Tech Hackathon may be alerting her that she has just received a text message or phone call. The team won the "Best Use of Technology in Creating New Fashion Project" award for the purse, which at the time they named "Firefly."

Ms. Park and her teammates come from a cross-section of disciplines and backgrounds. She recently began a two-year graduate program in fashion industry studies and is from Seattle. Naser Madi is a PhD candidate in computer science from Jordan; Elena Blagynkh, MPH '18, is a medical doctor and PhD candidate in social and behavioral science from Russia; and Paramanand Deginal, is a junior aeronautical engineering major from India.

"Elena, with her medical background, advocates for health-promoting ideas, while Param, as an engineer, constantly tries to find the most efficient way for doing things," he says. "At the same time, Michelle pushes for sustainability and environmentally friendly solutions from fabrics to boxing and shipping. I am fortunate to work with such a talented group of accomplished individuals."

“Elena, with her medical background, advocates for health-promoting ideas, while Param, as an engineer, constantly tries to find the most efficient way for doing things,” he says. “At the same time, Michelle pushes for sustainability and environmentally friendly solutions from fabrics to boxing and shipping. I am fortunate to work with such a talented group of accomplished individuals.”

In addition to being fashionable, the inventors hope the purse’s visual notification features will be useful for people who have hearing impairments. Ms. Blagynkh says that market niche is appealing to the team because they believe that “differently-abled people want to be trendy, too.”

Accessibility is at the core of the team’s values and making the product available to all is one of their main goals, according to Mr. Madi, who says the Fringe team benefits from the diverse fields of study each of them brings to the project.

"Elena, with her medical background, advocates for health-promoting ideas, while Param, as an engineer, constantly tries to find the most efficient way for doing things," he says. "At the same time, Michelle pushes for sustainability and environmentally friendly solutions from fabrics to boxing and shipping. I am fortunate to work with such a talented group of accomplished individuals."


Above: The Fringe team (l to r) — Elena Blagynkh, Paramanand Deginal, Michelle Park, Naser Madi.

Inset: A prototype of the “Fringe” purse has fiber optics with 16 different colors that can be programmed to match a user’s outfit. It lights up when it receives notification from text messages or phone calls.

"We met at the Hackathon and became best friends,” she says. “All four of us like creating, inventing and putting all of our disciplines together to create something new.”

Currently the project team has two rough prototypes of the purse, which now goes by the name “Fringe.” The team changed the name because the word has definitions from science, fashion and culture that are relevant to the brand.

They also have created a branded website, where they sell earrings made by laser-cut saashells to help raise seed money for putting the purse prototype into production.

An app controls the fiber optics of the purse and includes 16 different colors that can be programmed to match a user’s outfit. The purse also has a GPS system so that it can be located if stolen.

"It’s interactive," Ms. Park says. "You connect the phone to the purse and it lights up when it receives notification from text messages or phone calls.”

"All four of us like creating, inventing, and putting all of our disciplines together to create something new.

MICHELLE PARK, BA ’18
PROJECT: ALULA

More than two years ago, Arielja Yager, BBA ‘17, an entrepreneurship major, and Samuel Graska, BS ‘17, MBA ‘18, a cellular/molecular biology major, got together to work on a project for an entrepreneurship class they were taking. Their project was to develop an auto injector smartphone case, EpriCase, similar to the EpiPen. But before they began the day’s tasks, Ms. Yager realized she had forgotten to take her birth control pill for the third day in a row.

That is when another innovative idea was born.

“I said, ‘We should make a [phone] case for it,’” Mr. Graska recalls. “And Arielja said, ‘Let’s do it! Let’s get on top of this.’”

The classmates, along with architectural designer Justin Gleason, BS ‘16, March ‘18, MBA ‘18, created “alula” (all lowercase)—a product they have dubbed the “first phone case to hold, protect and dispense your birth control.”

That is when another innovative idea was born.

Users load their birth control pills for the month in the phone case and rotate a round cutout on the back of the case. When they hear the click, a pill pops out from a slot on the side of the case. Consumers are encouraged to download the alula app to remind them to take their pill every day. Ms. Yager says. Although the Case.MD team first came together to develop the EpriCase auto injector, that product—a more expensive and complex proposition than alula—is now going through the patent process.

Meanwhile, turning their focus to alula, the team has conducted surveys and focus groups with health and women’s organizations and pharmacies, and they’ve refined the design as they prepare to launch the product by January 2019. Mr. Graska says they would not be where they are today without the staff at LaunchNET Kent State, who taught the team how to start a business. “We have videos, prototypes and we’re building up media,” he says. “We are using crowd funding to raise funds. Now we are trying to find manufacturing. This has been an awesome experience.”

To come up with the name, the team actually locked themselves in a room; during hours of brainstorming, they kept coming back to the word alula. Pronounced the same backward and forward, the word is a palindrome. Alula is an important part of a bird’s wing, which supports it in flight. And an alula is an important part of a bird’s wing, which supports it in flight.

The team believes the collaboration among their disciplines has been the secret to the creative culture of Case.MD. “We each have our own expertise that makes our business work,” Mr. Yager says. “I bring the business and operations, Sam brings the medical and FDA leadership, and Justin brings the design. So far it has been incredible working together.”

Learn more about alula, sign up for the launch and get up-to-date information at www.indiegogo.com/projects/alula-birth-control-phone-case/coming-soon.

PROJECT: IMMERSFILY

Kent State team members Brian Selle (a computer science and political science major), Irvin Steve Cardenas (a senior research scientist) and Chasay Lettiera, BS ‘18 (a computer science major), had a mission in mind when they entered the university’s first collegiate aviation hackathon in October 2017, sponsored by the Burton D. Morgan Foundation.

For the “SkyHack” competition, students were to provide solutions to challenges or “pain points” related to the aviation industry. The team wanted to offer pilot trainees a more immersive and effective flight training experience. Despite hours of simulation-based training, student pilots often feel tense during their first flight, due to the lack of realism in virtual simulators.

At the weekend-long event, the trio invented “ImmersFLY: Next Generation of Immersive Pilot Training,” which won third place in the 2017 SkyHack competition, under the challenge of how to solve the pilot shortage.

According to the brief they submitted with their project, “the system is in essence an affordable flight simulator that allows completion of training hours toward license certification by allowing the pilot to fly a small-scale airplane under real conditions. The pilot is not only able to control the aircraft, but is also able to feel as if they themselves are inside the cockpit of the aircraft. This is accomplished by 1) providing a live stream of the environment within the cockpit into a virtual reality headset, 2) allowing the pilot to rotate their head freely and also 3) receive feedback from the aircraft (such as roll, pitch, yaw) which is relayed by the ‘motion chair.’”

After the competition, the team wrote a paper about the project under the direction of Jong-Hoon Kim, PhD, assistant professor of computer science and director of Kent State’s Advanced Telerobotics Research (ATR) Laboratory at the Department of Computer Science. They submitted the paper to the American Council on Science and Education for its 2017 International Conference on Computational Science and Computational Intelligence, and they were selected to present the project at the conference in Las Vegas last year.

The entire experience was invaluable, says Mr. Selle, because it allowed him to conduct research with other Kent State students, write an abstract about the research, then present it before an audience at a conference.

Before joining Kent State in 2016 as a lecturer and senior research scientist, Mr. Cardenas was a robotics researcher at Florida International University, where he worked with Dr. Kim on virtual reality, autonomous systems and immersive technologies—areas they continue to explore at Kent State’s ATR Lab.

“The future is decentralized,” says Mr. Cardenas. “To develop such a future, we must think systematically—a ‘combine and succeed’ mentality, rather than ‘divide and conquer’.”

He says ImmersFLY could be an answer to high-cost commercial flight simulators, as well as an alternative for consumers who are virtual reality drone racers looking for a more immersive experience. Learn more at www.atr.cs.kent.edu/research/publications/2017-summerpaper-atr-lab-immersfily.
Mahwish Chishty stands in the center of a small exhibit space she has mocked up in her studio at Kent State’s Center for the Visual Arts. Its four walls, covered in shiny mylar emergency blankets—the kind given to refugees and survivors of disaster—reflect back her image, multiplying it.

Mounted on the walls are 3 ft. x 3 ft. square stainless-steel panels, their mirror finish painted with black dots that appear as random patterns when seen up close, then resolve into children’s faces when viewed from a distance. The Pakistani-born artist and assistant professor in the School of Art is pondering how she’s going to exhibit her latest project—the culmination of the prestigious John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship she was awarded for exceptional creative ability in the arts in 2017. (Ms. Chishty, who received a President’s Faculty Excellence Award from Kent State in 2018, has had more than 50 national and international exhibitions in the past 10 years, including a solo exhibition at the Imperial War Museum of London, and a group exhibit featuring top artists’ responses to war and conflict since 9/11.)

The abstract images on the stainless-steel panels portray some of the children she has been working with during her fellowship, as part of a project she calls “Basant: Let’s Go Fly a Kite.”

“Basant is an annual kite festival that takes place to mark the start of spring and is celebrated by people of all faiths in Pakistan,” says Ms. Chishty, who was born in Lahore, Pakistan, and grew up in Saudi Arabia before becoming a U.S. citizen (she has dual citizenship). “Children fly kites to mark the auspicious occasion by holding competitions. In Pakistan, the sky is filled with colorful kites of various shapes and sizes in the month of February.”

Using the funds she received from the Guggenheim fellowship, which she chose to receive over two years because of her project’s timing, Ms. Chishty is facilitating a kite exchange between schoolchildren who live close to contentious border crossings—at the U.S./Mexico border between San Diego and Tijuana, and at the Pakistan/Afghanistan border.

“Pakistani areas that border Afghanistan remain risky for children to enjoy any sort of outdoor activity,” says Ms. Chishty, noting that because of drone strikes conducted by the CIA since 2004 to target terrorists along the Afghanistan border, unofficial reports suggest that hundreds of Pakistani civilians have been killed in northwest Pakistan—and up to 200 of them were children. Amnesty International, in 2013, invited drone strike victims and their family members from Pakistan to come to Washington, D.C., and tell members of Congress what it is like to live under the constant fear of drone attacks. One 13-year-old boy told how he had been helping his grandmother harvest crops in a field when a drone appeared in the bright blue sky and suddenly fired—wounding him in the leg with shrapnel and killing his grandmother. “Now I prefer cloudy days when the drones don’t fly,” he said. “When the sky brightens and becomes blue, the drones return and so does the fear.”

Ms. Chishty says his testimony inspired her most recent project. Besides calling attention to the plight of Pakistani civilians, she wants Pakistani children to be able to play outside and fly kites on cloudy days when drones don’t typically operate (because their cameras can’t visually identify the targets). To allow for variable climate conditions, she’s had to replace the local Pakistani kites—made of thin paper and wooden sticks that could tear or become weak in misty weather—with sturdier, more weather-resistant materials.

---

Guggenheim Fellow Mahwish Chishty’s latest project calls attention to the plight of people who live near contentious border crossings.

By Jan Senn

Left: Mahwish Chishty ponders her abstract portraits of schoolchildren living near tense border crossings in the United States and Pakistan.
Ms. Chishty plans to bring those kites with her to California in February 2019 to exchange with the children in San Diego. And she hopes to hold a Basant kite-flying event in the two countries at the same time that will be shared live at both borders simultaneously via Skype.

“My hope is to shorten the distance between these border conflict areas,” she says, “and allow for a more personal connection.”

Making a personal connection is a driving force behind many of the projects seen at Ms. Chishty’s studio. Trained at the National College of Art in Lahore, Pakistan, as a miniature painter in the style of the Mughal empire of the 16th and 17th centuries, she has adapted that traditional technique to contemporary themes—at first exploring her own identity as both Pakistani and American, and then expanding her perspective to take in a broader view.

On one wall of her studio she’s tacked up small detailed paintings on individual sheets of paper, each depicting a moment from the elaborate flag-lowering ceremony to take in a broader view.

“Performing daily before sunset and witnessed by thousands of visitors and international tourists from both sides of the Wagah/Attari border, the well-rehearsed soldiers of both Pakistan and India attempt to outdo each other with high kicks and intimidating glares in a military drill that symbolizes both the rivalry and cooperation between the two nations. In recent years, border skirmishes have escalated tensions between Pakistan and India and added an edge to the display of force.

Hanging from the ceiling in another area of the studio are brightly painted drone models Ms. Chishty bought to photograph from different angles. She captured their silhouettes for a series of drone paintings that she created after finishing graduate school at the University of Maryland, College Park, and visiting family in Lahore in 2011. Her family and friends there were all talking about the drone war raging along the border with Afghanistan, so she decided to reimagine the drones using Pakistan’s colorful truck art tradition—drivers there decorate their trucks with brightly painted images of spiritual gurus, political figures and popular culture.

“I wanted to find a way to make this topic [of drone warfare] visible, to attract attention with the colors and shapes,” says Ms. Chishty, who painted images of drones decorated with her own version of indigenous truck art.

“I wasn’t trying to say drones are good or bad; I just wanted to highlight what they are and get people outside of Pakistan to talk about them.”

Ms. Chishty approached Americans of the same age and gender as the Pakistanis named on the list and asked them to read aloud those names for her to record—and to hopefully start a dialogue. Even when some of the people refused, she says, “I thought, well, at least I have told somebody that this is what’s been happening in that part of the world.” Visitors to the exhibit can step under the domes and listen to audio of American citizens reading the names of Pakistani casualties.

Sound installations and kite-flying events may seem a long way from miniature paintings, but all are ways to connect people and ideas. “I’m not limiting myself to material anymore,” Ms. Chishty says. “I start with an idea and then explore the best method to convey that message. Right now, I’m exploring these borders in my own way.”

And that includes putting visitors inside a reflective room and having them step back to get a good look at the faces of children, from both Pakistan and the United States, who peer out from mirrored panels.

Says Ms. Chishty: “I am confronting the viewer in the present environment to reflect upon the future.”

See www.mahachishty.com for more of her work.
When Richard Costes, BA '06, talks about his first day at a school for deaf children, he describes a room filled with young children crying, trying desperately to be understood, while he sat in a corner playing alone. On his second day, he walked up to his teacher and asked, "Will you play with me?"

The teacher scooped him up, marched down the hall and into the administrator's office and called his parents. When they arrived, the teacher said, "This child can speak. He is too smart to be here with all of these other deaf kids."

That one sentence, suggesting that deaf people weren’t smart, stuck with him. Mr. Costes was born deaf, but grew up in a hearing environment. He told himself he wasn’t deaf. He refused to learn sign language—an attitude that was supported by his school, which prioritized speech. He also declined any assistance in the classroom and his grades often suffered as a result.

"That’s a lot of self-loathing for a big part of your identity," he says. "It wasn’t until college, when I took an ASL (American Sign Language) class—because I thought it would be easy—that I realized how wrong I was."

Mr. Costes’ shift in perspective mirrors a larger evolution in deaf education. As Pamela Luft, PhD, associate professor of special education at Kent State’s School of Lifespan Development and Educational Sciences, explains, early American deaf education was sign language–based. That changed in 1880 when, at the Milan Conference of Deaf Educators, delegates banned the use of sign language in schools worldwide and voted that oralism, or lip reading, would be the sole method of instruction at deaf institutions.

This continued until the mid-20th century when penicillin was introduced. Now, there was a treatment for the childhood diseases that had previously led to deafness. Instead of going deaf as older children with language skills, much of the deaf population was born deaf, or lost their hearing as pre-verbal infants.

Oralism was no longer as successful and sign language was reintroduced, although the debate between the two methodologies remained.

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, the culture was shifting. In 1990, Ohio passed a law recognizing ASL, as a full visual-spatial language—one that is linguistically complete and shares no grammatical similarities to English—and the state began offering grants to increase the skills of school interpreters working with deaf children. When Dr. Luft arrived at Kent State in 1995, the field of deaf education was recognizing, and increasingly valuing, ASL as a true language that would support bilingual/bicultural approaches to deaf education. She saw enough interest to expand the ASL curriculum and offer a minor. “You can’t become fluent in two two-hour courses,” she says.

Dr. Luft also had several Deaf adults (using the capitalized word preferred by individuals who identify as part of the Deaf community), approach her about wanting to teach ASL. She quickly saw a need and worked with the Department of Modern and Classical Language Studies faculty to establish the first four-year program in ASL—now one of the largest ASL programs in the nation.

“I tried to make sure that most of the ASL faculty we hired were Deaf,” she says. “I never wanted an ASL, deaf education, or interpreting student to graduate feeling uncomfortable.”

As deaf and hard-of-hearing students build community and find their voice, increasingly robust programs and organizations at Kent State are opening opportunities for success in their careers—and for hearing students to work with deaf populations.

By Kim Catley
Today, Kent State’s programs reflect the variety of communication styles and needs present in the modern Deaf community. This may mean students who use hearing aids and cochlear implants sitting next to students who communicate exclusively in ASL. Teachers may work with deaf students in self-contained classes, while others work in an inclusion setting. Kent State students who are interested in working with the Deaf community can choose from three distinct majors on campus: Students can major in ASL in the Department of Modern and Classical Language Studies—just as they might major in Spanish, Arabic, or any other foreign language—to work and communicate with deaf populations in a professional setting, or combine the major with an education minor to teach ASL to deaf and hearing populations. The ASL/English Interpreting program in the School of Lifespan Development and Educational Sciences trains students to work as community interpreters (in a range of environments, such as medical, legal, religious, performing arts, social services and education) or as educational interpreters (Pre-K–12).

And students who specifically want to teach deaf children can enroll in the Deaf Education program in the School of Lifespan Development and Educational Sciences, which provides the coursework and field experience necessary to be licensed in the field of special education in the area of deaf education. “Our Deaf Education program is unique in placing students in deaf education classrooms for their last two semesters of coursework, with linked assignments they must complete in these placements,” Dr. Luft says. “And the ASL/English Interpreting program is unique for requiring a one-semester final practicum that is supervised. Many other state programs have students find their own practicum activities and sites without supervision, which can significantly reduce quality assurance and priority seating, as well as Power Transcriptions, closed captioning services for videos, and peer note taking, speech reading, and priority seating, as well as Power Transcription, closed captioning, and priority seating, as well as Power Points and lecture notes before class, peer note taking, speech reading, and extended-time testing.”

“Before getting accommodations, I assumed that the way I learned—and struggled—was normal, and that’s how everyone else did it, too,” she says.

A t the same time that Kent State has expanded the pathways for students hoping to work with the Deaf community, the university also has seen a surge in the number of deaf and hard-of-hearing undergraduate students over the years, although the numbers fluctuate. A robust Student Accessibility Services (SAS) office ensures that deaf students have access to the university’s full scope of academic programs. Kate Croteau, BIS ‘17, graduated from Kent State last December and enrolled in the university’s Cultural Foundations of Education graduate program the following spring. She’s also studying political science, and hopes to eventually work in a community center focused on LGBTQ+ and Deaf youth.

Ms. Croteau works with SAS to access accommodations, closed captioning and priority seating, as well as Power Points and lecture notes before class, peer note taking, speech reading, and extended-time testing. “Before getting accommodations, I assumed that the way I learned—and struggled—was normal, and that’s how everyone else did it, too,” she says.

C. Richard Costes, BA ’06
Theatre studies major

My story: Born deaf, but raised in a hearing environment; he didn’t learn sign language until college. He is now an actor performing throughout Chicago and a consultant for theatres looking to make their shows more accessible to deaf patrons.

Getting access: “When I started at Kent State, I only used note takers, because I didn’t want to admit I needed more help. It was only towards the end of my college career that I realized there was nothing wrong with getting more assistance. That’s when I requested note takers, FM [frequency-modulated] devices and captioning. The captioning improved my learning a thousandfold.”

All the difference: Professors at Kent State helped him embrace his identity. “College is a place for you to find out who you are; it’s where you become the person you’ll be for the rest of your life.”

I’d like the hearing world to know: “There is a big difference between ‘accessibility’ and ‘inclusivity.’”

Stefanie Amiruzzaman, BA ’12, Med ’15
ASL major, with a minor in fine arts; Med in special education with a concentration in deaf education

My story: Born hearing, she became deaf at 9 months old from bacterial meningitis. “My parents wanted me to learn both sign language and English. My mom attended a sign language class to learn, and she purchased a signed English book to teach me.” She is a current doctoral student in the Evaluation and Measurement program at the School of Foundations, Leadership and Administration.

Getting access: Note takers, captioning services for videos, and interpreters. “I love the access that interpreters provide for my education. I would be lost or struggle if it was not for them.”

Tri-lingual: “I want my son to grow up having respect and involvement in the Deaf community. On the other hand, my husband, who is hearing, is originally from Bangladesh, and his family still lives there. So, I am teaching my son, Alan, both ASL and English, while my husband is teaching him both Bangali and English. Also’s first sign in ASL was ‘milk’; his first Bangali word was ‘ima’ (mother), and his first English word was ‘mama.’”

I’d like the hearing world to know: “Being Deaf is not a disability; it is a point of pride, along with its own official language, and a close-knit community.”

There is a big difference between ‘accessibility’ and ‘inclusivity.’”
“Realizing that I could embrace my accommodations, use them to the best of my ability, and could advocate for them any time they weren’t being appropriately offered really reshaped the way I was able to focus on and enjoy my education.”

Leah Subaik, PhD ’18, an ASL/English interpreter and coordinator with SAS, says the office works to keep classroom accommodations—which include transcriptionists, interpreters, note-taking and closed captioning—in line with national best practices. They also bring in speakers to connect the campus and Deaf communities. SAS even crosses over with the academic programs on occasion when students observe the professional interpreters or build their skills in a practicum placement with the office.

While accommodation services are critical for deaf and hard-of-hearing students to access their academics—and the ASL, ASL/English Interpreting, and Deaf Education programs ensure a strong field of professionals—there are also opportunities at Kent State to build and strengthen the Deaf community.

For example, Elexis Blake, BA ’18, teamed up with Nebyat Mamay, BA ’18, to found the Deaf Power Organization at Kent State in 2016. Its goal is to create a community for all deaf and hard-of-hearing students. “We even welcome CODAs (Children Of Deaf Adults) and hearing ASL signers into our organization,” she says, “to create a stronger community that will help us advocate for Deaf awareness at KSU.”

These kinds of connections are what elevate a campus or community from accessible to inclusive.

Austin Hale, BA ’21
Communication studies major, with an applied communications concentration

“My story:” Severe hearing loss since birth; he began using hearing aids at age 2.

Why Kent State:” Signed up for Kent State’s College Credit Plus program to take college courses as a high school student. “I received accommodations that far outclassed the ones my high school offered. The positive experience, more inclusive environment and close proximity of Kent convinced me to join.”

Getting access:” Priority seating, closed captioning and real-time transcription. “Being able to lip read the professor, read captions in the videos and have a transcription of what was said make it difficult to miss things.”

Changing communications:” I am working toward an applied communications degree with the hope that my perspective and experience dealing with the frustrations of hearing loss would allow me to contribute to the profession in a useful way.”

I’d like the hearing world to know:” “Any gesture of understanding or patience is greatly appreciated. Even something as simple as repeating yourself makes a world of difference, as we are used to hearing, ‘never mind.’”

Richard Costes experienced this distinction in the classroom of Carol Robinson, PhD, an associate professor of English at Kent State University at Trumbull. While he was beginning to use sign language, it was Dr. Robinson’s use of texts by Deaf authors that made him realize he belonged to a community. He started to see his deafness as part of his identity.

After attending Kent State at Trumbull for two years, he transferred to the Kent Campus to finish his degree in theatre. Now, Mr. Costes is an actor and director. He also consults with theatres looking to make their shows more accessible for deaf patrons.

This past spring, he performed the role of Snout in Chicago Shakespeare Theater’s “A Midsummer Night’s Dream.” When a group from the Illinois School for the Deaf attended a show, the students were thrilled to see a deaf actor in the production. Afterwards, they bombarded Mr. Costes with questions about his career. He was happy to share, in hopes of inspiring the next generation of deaf actors.

“I’ve spent the last 10 years trying to integrate myself into the Deaf community and culture,” he says, “I’m trying to embrace the part of me that for nearly two decades I kept buried.”

Elexis Blake, BA ’18
Psychology and ASL major

“My story:” Born deaf, she uses a cochlear implant to hear. She is now a case coordinator for Easternseas–Community Center for the Deaf, and an ASL teacher. She helps the Deaf community gain independence through case management, advocacy, vocational support and community outreach.

Course change:” She started at Kent State as an accounting major, but switched to psychology and ASL her junior year. “I suffered from clinical depression, and the experiences I went through were even more challenging because I was Deaf. I want to create an opportunity for the Deaf community to have equal access to mental health counseling.”

Getting access:” ASL interpreters and note-taking services. “Having an interpreter provides me an opportunity to be challenged and thrive educationally and linguistically.”

I’d like the hearing world to know:” Deafness is not a disability in the eyes of the Deaf community. We are fully capable of doing anything! The only thing we cannot do is hear. We are just like you, and we are proud to be who we are!”

Resources


Visit the National Association of the Deaf website: https://www.nad.org/resources/.
KSU alumnus and gay rights activist Michael Chanak Jr. was determined to make a difference at his workplace—and his dedication to change prompted a global company to redefine diversity.

By Susan Menassa

Most Kent State students on campus during the late 1960s and early 1970s was no exception, in fact, he credits that time at Kent State during the 1970s and early 1980s. He was the first in his family to attend college and graduate. His Greek grandfather, who had immigrated to the United States because of religious persecution and never learned to write English, always told him, “Michael, be educated.”

Some years later—when he became the unlikely lone gay voice to take on a corporate titan and call for gay rights in the 1980s—made me even more painfully aware that I wasn’t seen as an equal.”

In 1987, he told the manager of worldwide diversity that P&G needed to make sure gay employees were afforded the same equal protections already in place for people of a different race, color, religion, sex or national origin in their equal employment opportunity (EEO) policy. With the manager’s support, it took some time to develop and submit a proposal, which was rejected without comment. Still he persisted, joined by straight peers at the company who had heard about his efforts.

To mark the 25th anniversary of the policy’s adoption, P&G commissioned the 19-minute video, something Mr. Chanak admits he never would have predicted.

“I imagine my surprise when I got that call 25 years later,” he says. “When I left in 2003, I took an early retirement package and never set foot back at P&G until they invited me in to talk about the effort and make the video.”

The short film, produced in partnership with Great Big Story production company, won a prestigious Silver Lion award for corporate and social responsibility earlier this year at France’s Cannes Lion Festival and boasts more than 10 million views. Although several P&G executives appear in the video, the focus is on Mr. Chanak’s workplace struggle for inclusion, as well as that of the Cincinnati gay and lesbian community in the 1980s and 90s.

Now, looking back on those turbulent times, Mr. Chanak is proud to have not only survived but also to have made a difference—though he concedes the work is far from over.

“If there is a legacy to be taken from that video, my private hope is for young people to see that change is possible,” he says. “Who would have thought all those years ago that [this video] would have been viewed by more than 10 million people? Nowadays, all people do is post on Facebook.”

“Keyboards are not going to change the world. Push your chair away from the computer and go join a group. Make the world better. Cause change. Make it about other people.”

The city of Cincinnati passed a resolution in June 2018 that recognizes and honors Michael Chanak Jr. for his work on behalf of the LGBTQ community.

In October 2018, P&G’s worldwide LGBTQ employee network created the Michael Chanak Award for Courageous Leadership to recognize any LGBTQ employee who leads the charge for making P&G a better place to work.
Carole (Painter) Kane, BS '69, Hudson, Ohio, wrote: "Thirty years after meeting as KSU freshmen in 1968 and sharing roommates in Terracina Hall and Pentico Hall until our 1972 graduation, we remain close friends. All three of us went teachers and married teachers." Pictured (l to r): Nancy (Myers) McFarland, BS '65, Commerce, Texas, Barbara (Ujcic) O'Donnell, BS '66, Rocky River, Ohio; Carole (Painter) Kane.

Fred Jermyn, BS '74, San Diego, wrote: "I wrote the Kent State University Men's Club & Variety Soccer Media Guide & Record Book of 1974-1980 to preserve the historical data of the program. More than 1300 pages from digital copies of The Daily Kent Stater newspaper were referenced in building the results from each year. Details were also secured from numerous other sources to include post-season honors, team and player records, plus photos. The 520-page book is available for free download via request by email to that arnold@comcast.net." William Speer, PhD '76, Henderson, Nev., was selected for the 2018 National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Lifetime Achievement Award by the Mathematics Education Trust. He is currently in a 20-year career at the university of Nevada, Las Vegas, as director of their Mathematics Learning Center, following a 20-year career at Bowling Green State University. Speer is a former recipient of the KSU EMHS Distinguished Alumnus Award and Hall of Fame member. Susana Kay, BS '77, Mentor, Ohio, has joined the local office of Home Instead Senior Care of Lake and Geauga counties as community relations manager. She will be instrumental in maintaining and expanding the scope of personalized home care available from this franchise of the company's multinational network.

Class NOTES

1950s

James Sell, BS '59, Cleve, Iowa, wrote: "Hurricane Harvey destroyed our home in Orange, Texas. We escaped with a few personal belongings and now live in Iowa." 1960s

Stephen Hanisky, BS '62, Youngstown, Ohio, wrote: "As a retired Youngstown State University professor of physics and astronomy and former Fullbright scholar, I was honored to receive the VUS Heritage Award, the highest honor Youngstown State can bestow on its former faculty and staff. I also received a 2016 Distinguished Alumnus Award from the New Mexico State University Alumni Association." William Green, BA '63, MA '67, Lexington, Ky., received the Kentucky Political Science Association's 2018 Distinguished Political Scientist Award at the annual meeting. A Morehead State University faculty member for 34 years, he received MUs Distinguished Research Award in 1991, Distinguished Teaching Award in 2005, and the Faculty Internship Award in 2013. Barbara Gregorich, BA '64, Chicago, has published 'Charlie Chan's Popo's Easter Bonnets,' a biography of the golden-age-of-mystery author from Sharon, Ohio, who was known around the world for creating the Chinese-Hawaiian police detective, Charlie Chan.

1970s

David Strahle, BS '72, Fort Worth, Mich., is a physician and founder of Regional Medical Imaging (RMI), one of the leading breast MRI centers in the nation, recognized by the American College of Radiology. Dr. Strahle has developed an alternate breast screening method for women with dense breast tissue. After seven years of research, his liquid breast MRI screening study was published in the journal Breast Cancer Research and Treatment in 2017.

Richard Margolis, BS '69, Rochester, N.Y., wrote: "I'm currently exhibiting 'About Bowsers,' my homage to Andy Bowsers—giant silver prints (from film) that are available in my studio (link) or on the web at: www.richardmargolis.com (see picture above). My studio is open on the first Friday of each month from October through May. I'd enjoy meeting friends who are visiting Rochester."

Findings show that his screening method has the ability to detect breast cancer up to six years sooner than other current technology. Since his study was published, several institutions have installed the Rapid Breast MRI protocol.

Robert Taylor, BS '72, Panazoville, Ohio, wrote: "After a 30-year career in the classrooms of Panazoville City Local Schools and retiring with no further plans than to enjoy life, I'm now serving as a Trustee/Board of Director for the international Women's Art & Space Museum at Burke Airport in Cleveland, Ohio. At last, a blending of my love of history and aviation history." Richard Margolis, BS '56, MA '69, Arden Hills, Minn., wrote: "After completing a PhD in audiology at the University of Wisconsin in 1974 and a post-doctoral research fellowship at the university of Wisconsin in 1975, I held faculty appointments at UCLA, Syracuse University and the University of Minnesota, retiring from Minnesota in 1991. I started Audiology incorporated in 2000 to develop improved hearing tests which are licensed to hearing equipment manufacturers. Funded by grants from the National Institute on Deafness and other Communication Disorders, I participated in service projects in Chile, India, and currently in Mexico, where I'm pictured above) at the San Felipe, Mexico Hearing Clinic, created through a grant from The Rotary Foundation."
Shelby (Landis) Rogers, BA ’85, MED ’93, Carrington, Ga., wrote: “I have been promoted from associate professor to professor at the University of West Georgia, where I am the senior cataloger.”

Joe Wendel, PHD ’85, Euclid, Ohio, is the author of Justice Denied: An Historical Sojourn (Archeos Publishing, 2017), a history of Germany and German Americans, with a focus on the two 20th century world wars from the viewpoint of a German-American who lived in Austria during World War II. It offers information unfamiliar to most Americans, including the personal stories of German Americans sent to American internment camps in World War II.

1990s

Michael Lanstrom, BS ’91, Middletown Heights, Ohio, wrote: “I presented ‘Historical Women in Mathematics’ at the Dwyer Memorial Senior Center in Bay Village, Ohio, in March 2018.”

Seth Thomas, MBA ’91, Irmo, S.C., wrote: “My wife, Jennifer Himes Thomas, MBA ’91, and I met at Kent State in 1992. Jennifer is currently a senior designer on the new $20 and $150 AEP Multidisciplinary Research Building at the University of California, Riverside, slated to open fall 2018. T. Douglas Clifford, BA ’95, Norwalk, Ohio, an attorney, received the American Chemical Society Forensic Lawyer-Scientist Designation as recognized by the Chemistry and the Law Division of the ACS. This designation is to recognize proficiency in forensic toxicology in criminal and DUI defense.”

Jodi (Beneditcja) Greh, BS ’92, North Royalton, Ohio, wrote: “I am currently a channel marketing manager at Kichter Lighting, and was previously marketing director at nanofab. I was honored in February with an Achievement in Excellence award by the National Sales and Marketing Executives (NSME) Akron/Canton for my professional experiences and achievements as well as community involvement.”

Neil Colby, MS ’94, Macedon, Ohio, has been promoted to senior vice president and chief financial officer at CM Wealth Advisors in Pepper Pike, Ohio. He started with the firm in 2014 as director of operations and led the sourcing and implementation of a new comprehensive reporting system, among other achievements. He retains his role leading the operations team and other responsibilities on behalf of the firm and its clients. Francisco Owens, Marc ’94, Los Angeles, has been promoted to principal at the Los Angeles office of SmithGroupJJR, one of the world’s prominent integrated design firms. A member of the American Institute of Architects, Los Angeles chapter, he is currently serving as lead designer on the new $20 million, 150,000-square-foot Caltech Chen Neuroscience Research Building and a senior designer on the new $550 million, 179,000-square-foot Multidisciplinary Research Building at the University of California, Riverside, slated to open fall 2018.

2000s


Shawn Hoke, MED ’01, Shippensburg, Pa., wrote: “I was recently promoted to assistant vice president for student affairs at Clarion University and received a PhD in administration and leadership studies from Indiana University of Pennsylvania in May.”

Jason Zygellzo, BBA ’02, Brunswick, Ohio, wrote: “I took a new position with Boecker as a sales rep selling cardiac rhythm management and vascular interventional devices.”

Brad Gable, BS ’04, MS ’05, Columbus, Ohio, a physician who specializes in critical care medicine, has been elected as chair of the Graduate Medical Education Committee at Riverside Methodist Hospital.

Bryan Flachbart, BS ’06, Danville, Ky., was selected as the principal of Cedar Grove Elementary in Shepherdsville, Kentucky.

Timothy Jarome, BA ’06, Niles, Ohio, has been named assistant professor of animal and poultry sciences in the Virginia Tech College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. His research examines the neurobiology of learning and memory, focusing on how memories for aversive experiences are stored in the brain and shape future behavior.

2010s

Marianne Rigganbach-Senivisky, BA ’94, Kent, Ohio, was hired as business development manager for Hope Home’s Foundation in Stow, Ohio. The Foundation’s mission is to provide safe, affordable and accessible housing to individuals with special needs.

Nicholas Dilisabetino, BA ’08, Sommerville, Mass., wrote: “I recently started working as a publicist at the MIT Press in Cambridge, Mass. I spent five years at Beacon Press working my way up from assistant to associate to publicist. I think back to my time at KSU fondly and know I couldn’t have done it without the support of my professors and faculty advisers, especially Kim Winbrenner.”

Laura Kordalski, BS ’09, Evanton, Ill., was recently recognized as a 2018 Top 100 Retail Housewares Executive in Housewares Executive Publication. She is currently the buyer for coolkicks, cutawy, overawe and food for Crate and Barrel.

Andrea Piaassck Legg, MILS ’09, Dover, Ohio, has written her first children’s book, Ifip Your Wings, Little Robin, which was released to major retailers from Mascot Books in February 2018. It’s “an encouraging animal tale with an important message for children with disabilities,” according to Kirkus Book Reviews. Visit www.andreaplegg.com to purchase signed copies, obtain ASL resources and learn about upcoming promotional events.

Jennifer Omaltz, MFA ’09, Cleveland, a painter and installation artist, participated in a recent exhibition, “Illuminous Decay,” at the Kent State University Hotel and Conference Center.

Sneha Jose, BS ’11, from Varanasi, India, and Daniel Cogan, BA ’11, from Canton, Ohio, met at Kent State in December 2011, a week before graduating and Sneha’s move to Texas. They got married in Varanasi, India, on June 17, 2017, in the presence of their families and close friends from KSU. (See class note at right.)
Celebration Event!
Kent State’s Department of Psychological Sciences celebrated the 50th anniversary of its PhD program with a PhD reunion held June 13, 2018. Approximately 200 alumni, faculty, grad students, staff and family members took part in weekend events that included a campus 5K Walk/Run Race and Kids’ Fun Run, a banquet with a special appearance by Diminished Faculties (the department’s all-faculty band), presentations, lectures, a tour of facilities, networking and group photos. (See www.kent.edu/magazine/PhDReunion for lists of reunion attendees.)

Since the PhD program was established, more than 750 PhD degrees in clinical psychology have been awarded to date. Most graduates of the program are employed in colleges and universities, where they are engaged in teaching and research in psychology. Speakers at the reunion included a presentation by the first PhD graduate, Don DeRosa, PhD ’77, President Emeritus, University of the Pacific, and keynote speakers Brian Hall, PhD ’11, University of Macau (“Global Mental Health: Scalable innovations to bridge the treatment gap in China”), Tricia Lusalise, PhD ’08, University of Connecticut (“Next Frontiers in Obesity Treatment Research: Dissemination and weight loss maintenance”) and Lynn Martore, PhD ’97, Penn State University (“Crisis Relationships and Chronic Illness Research: 3 highlights from the past 20 years”).

Professor Dave Riccio, PhD, who came to Kent State in 1969 and will be retiring in 2019, gave a “Last Lecture” recalling the early days of the program, remembering past faculty and grad students and reviewing some of the research he’s done over the years.

“It was a great event,” wrote attendee Robert Klappac, PhD ’69, University of Texas–Dallas Health Science Center at San Antonio, on the department’s Facebook page. “Thanks to the dept. for staging such a wonderful time for us.”

Alumni Honors
The Kent State University Alumni Association hosted the annual Alumni Awards ceremony at the Kent State Hotel and Conference Center on October 5, 2018. The university’s most prestigious honors given to alumni, the awards recognize the exceptional contributions of alumni (and students) in their chosen profession, in their communities and at the university.

“Each of our alumni have left a distinctive footprint at Kent State and have helped to shape who we are today,” says James Bailey, BA ’03, MS ’04, President, Kent State University Alumni Association Board of Directors.

Congratulations to the following 2018 Alumni Award recipients:

Distinguished Alumni Award — John R. Elliott, BAC ’70, Owner, American Medical Facilities Management LLC (AMFM)
Professional Achievement Award — Ramsh Raja-Majahin, BA ’93, MA ’95, United Nations Deputy Regional Humanitarian Coordinator, Syria Crisis
Professional Achievement Award — Michael E. Rogers, PhD ’96, Professor of Exercise Science at Wichita State University
Kent State Advocacy Award — Sandra C. Armstrong, Philanthropist, and Lawrence R. Armstrong, BS ’79, BAC ’80, CEO, Ware Malcomb
Outstanding New Professional Award — Nick Belluardo, BAC ’18, CM, Cleveland Hopkins Airport Planning Manager, Business Owner
Golden Flash Award — Chantrell M. Lewis, BFA ’19, Theatre Studies, Concentration in Musical Theatre

in MEMORY

1940s
Annamary (Strand) Acerra, BS ’58, August 29, 2017

1950s
Monte Mack, BAC ’30, November 23, 2016
Marlo Nishar, BAC ’95, December 19, 2015
James Collins Jr., BA ’31, April 28, 2018
Thomas Penston, BA ’53, MA ’60, March 18, 2018
Norman Smyke, BA ’55, July 1, 2018
Nancy Miller, BS ’56, November 9, 2017
Andrew Holko, BS ’59, November 25, 2017

1960s
Myrna Lee (Pat Prevett) Quatros, BS ’60, February 13, 2018
A. Charles Dolco, BS ’61, ME ’64, March 30, 2016
Ruth Ann (Zurr) Briggs, BS ’62, December 13, 2017
Susan Young, BA ’64, October 15, 2017
Daniel DuChes, ME ’69, March 1, 2018

1970s
Dale Ralph Payton, BAC ’73, March 3, 2016
Phillip Lecker, BFA ’73, April 26, 2018
Patricia Callahan, MA ’74, January 18, 2018
Mary Schultz, MA ’74, October 11, 2016
Lydia Cooper, BS ’76, February 2, 2018
David Aaron Bradshaw, ’78, January 19, 2018

Jamied Davis, BA ’73, Cleveland, wrote: “Upon leaving ESU I have written and published several books, and currently speak at elementary, middle and high schools, colleges, universities, and organizations, lifting others up and shining rays of hope. I have my own publishing company and am inspiring children, adolescents and adults with my latest book, Cultivating Minds to Own Thyself.”

Thanks for the Memories

A brief paragraph in the May 5, 1927 Kent Stater announced the opening of a new business in the town of Kent: “The Robin Hood Tea Room, at the corner of Lincoln Ave. and East Main St. under the management of D. G. Miller, former Kent boy, opened Wednesday.”

Initially housed with the first campus supply store and first contract post office in the building that later became Capt’n Brady’s (and now houses Starbucks), the Robin Hood Inn was relocated across Main Street in the 1930s. It evolved from tea room to restaurant to music venue to bar and grill under several owners (and a number of names) before it closed its doors for good in the late 1990s. And many groups of friends remember sharing the infamous Robin Hood buckets of beer. This Kent landmark was demolished over the decades, the Robin Hood’s history.

Throughout its existence, however, the Robin Hood Inn was a beloved gathering spot for generations of Kent State students and locals whose memories are as varied as the Robin Hood’s history.

Kent State alumni from the ‘40s and ‘50s recall the Robin Hood Inn as a fine dining establishment—the place to go for family visits or special dates. For Karen Silt, it was where her parents, Frank and Helen (Scott) Lukas, BA ’44, met in the 1940s. “He spotted my mother, a Kent State co-ed seven years his junior, as she waitressed in the Robin Hood and decided she was the one for him,” she says. “They were married 63 years.”

Over the decades, the Robin Hood served as a meeting spot for fraternity and sorority councils, as well as for local groups such as the Kiwanis Club, who met there regularly in the ‘60s. Later, it was a music venue for local bands, some of which became known nationally in the ‘70s and ‘80s. It became a go-to hub for comedy in the late ‘80s. And many groups of friends remember sharing the infamous Robin Hood buckets of beer.

The Robin Hood Inn was demolished in an afternoon. But for the Kent State community, the memories made at the Robin Hood will last a lifetime.

—Stephanie Langguth, BS ’03

Send your story of the Robin Hood! Post your comments below the story at www.kent.edu/magazine or email magazine@kent.edu and put Robin Hood in the subject line.

Find the Poem in the World

At the corner where North Lincoln Street dead ends at Crain Avenue in Kent, in a bare tree over the roadway, hangs a hornet’s nest, a globe of paper thin patchwork, a sky dome constructed with chewed wood fiber mixed with saliva, an abandoned piñata. ...

When we make the poem, wood pulp paper, black spittle ink, we build a refuge for ourselves and others, a shelter house. Poetry is the house that poems built, line by line, spit, tears and word. It will not save us. Time and cold claim all, even the queen, that sorrowful mother. It is respite, a temporary shelter where we may learn and listen to one another’s hearts.

Go there. Look up. Know this:

We live inside more worlds than we can count.

What we call sky is our own making.

To love is to serve.

To work is to love.

Some leave. Others remain.

The frost is the cold breath of a god who forgives us everything.

There is a single door: egress, enter.

Beyond that is a nameless silence.

We will not be together here again.

The hornet’s nest is finished, as best we could.

It is time to leave before the deep cold.

Let us raise high what we have done here, hoist it into the open arms of the World.


Maj Ragain Poetry Scholarship

Maj Ragain (1950-2018) was a beloved creative writing professor and mentor at Kent State University. In memory of his many years serving the Kent community, his family and friends have established the Maj Ragain Poetry Scholarship that will award a Kent State undergraduate or graduate student annually. The Wick Poetry Center and the Ragain family are also asking for the community’s support to help fund the scholarship for years to come.

Individual and corporate donations can be made to the Wick Poetry Center at 105 S. Lincoln St., Kent, OH 44240. One hundred percent of each tax-deductible donation will go toward the scholarship fund. For full scholarship application guidelines and online donation information, please visit https://www.kent.edu/wick/maj-ragain-poetry-scholarship.
Golden Wave

The Kent State community clamors to catch some free T-shirts that were tossed to the crowd during the 2018 Homecoming game between the Golden Flashes and the Ohio University Bobcats. Other events during the 100 Years of Homecoming celebration included the Bowman Cup 5K Race, parade, Welcome Home Party, Kiss on the K, Flash Nation Tailgate and so much more. The sunny 80-degree day could not have been more perfect as Kent State alumni, students, faculty, staff and friends brought their blue and gold pride home to participate in the fun activities.