A&S Welcomes New Program & New Faculty

The College of Arts & Sciences introduced a new undergraduate program in Fall 2014. Texas A&M University-Kingsville students now have the opportunity to earn a Bachelors of Arts in Criminal Justice. The Criminal Justice program focuses on the three primary components of the criminal justice system: police, courts and corrections.

The Department of History, Political Science & Philosophy, which is the academic home to the Criminal Justice program, has hired two dynamic new faculty to help launch and grow the program: Dr. Nishaun Battle and Dr. Barbara Cooke.

**Nishaun T. Battle** was born and raised in Southern California where she completed two Bachelor of Arts degrees from California State University, Fullerton. She earned her Doctorate in Sociology with concentrations in Criminology and Social Inequality in 2014 at Howard University where she also received a Graduate certificate in Women’s Studies. Her research and teaching interests include the intersection of race/ethnicity, class, gender, culture, and the administration of justice; historical criminology, theory, and the court system. Committed to social justice, Nishaun T. Battle is also engaged in community advocacy in an effort to promote fairness and equality on various issues within the criminal justice system.

**Barbara Cooke** recently completed her Ph.D. in Criminology at the University of Cambridge Institute of Criminology. Additionally, she has an M.Phil. in Criminological Research, also from Cambridge. Prior to Cambridge, she received her M.A. in Theatre from Royal Holloway, University of London. Barbara is originally from California, where she received her B.A. in Psychology and Dramatic Art from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Barbara is primarily a prisons researcher. Most recently, her research has focused on evaluating innovative and alternative forms of correctional treatment as well as dog-training programs, which are very popular in U.S. correctional facilities.
Message from Dr. Dolores Guerrero, Interim Dean

The College of Arts and Sciences continues to grow and expand its degrees and programs. It is definitely an exciting time filled with lots of new opportunities for our students, faculty, staff, and university community. This year, we are excited to highlight our new faculty, the outstanding work of our programs and students, and our innovative and creative initiatives across Arts and Sciences.

We kicked off the year with a successful Welcome Back Social at the Conner Museum on our first day of classes. It was a relaxing and informal opportunity to build community across departments while welcoming our 18 new faculty to the College. For our students, we initiated our 1st Annual College Night Out Jav An Amazing Race which brought together faculty and students for a fun filled adventure and evening. As our A&S Connections highlights, the semester has continued with lots of new happenings and accomplishments for our programs, faculty, and students. I am very proud and privileged to be part of such a vibrant and energetic community of scholars, students, and staff.

Hope you enjoy our news and notes!

Top Students Receive Scholarships
The College of Arts & Sciences realizes how hard students have worked to achieve and maintain academic success. Because of their achievements, ten deserving students were awarded with scholarships. Congratulations to the recipients and best wishes for continued success.

Lorena & Wood Patrick Scholarship
Kyle Wilson, Biomedical Sciences

Olga R. Paul Scholarship
Kevin P. Pendleton, Fine Arts
Carissa Reyes, Music
Luis Saldana, Music Education
William Stridde, History

Peacock Mathematics & Science Scholarship
Stephanie Cazares, Biomedical Sciences
Agatha Diaz, Mathematics
Daniella Herrera, Geology
Ashleigh Popek, Biomedical Sciences
Kyle Wilson, Biomedical Sciences

Dr. Dolores Guerrero was appointed Interim Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences on June 1, 2014. Dolores previously served as Dean of the Honors College.
College Night Out 2014 Hosts JAV-AN-AMAZING RACE

Arts & Sciences held its annual College Night Out on Tuesday, September 30, 2014. This year’s event featured student organization information booths, a moon bounce, photo booth, KTAI Live Radio, and the first JAV-AN-AMAZING RACE. Teams of six members – including one faculty member – participated in an interactive scavenger hunt dubbed the JAV-AN-AMAZING RACE. Teams were given maps, passports and challenge packs filled with clues that led them to the 10 academic departments and 2 academic units that encompass The College of Arts & Sciences, as well as I-tech and Alumni Affairs, who joined in the fun.

At each stop, the team had to complete a challenge that would earn them their next clue to continue on the hunt. Challenges ranged from answering questions to solving a math problem, to singing a song.

Eight teams from across the college participated in this year’s race. Prizes were awarded to the first three teams to cross the finish line – 1st Place: NeRdY (Chemistry Department), 2nd Place: SWAG (A&S SGA Representatives), & 3rd Place: Team Tennis (A&S Tennis Club Representatives).

All racers and spectators feasted on Burgers & Beer - Root Beer- following the race.

JAV-AN-AMAZING RACE
2014 WINNING TEAMS

1st NeRdY
2nd SWAG
3rd Team Tennis
College Welcomes Eighteen New Tenure-Track Faculty

The College of Arts & Sciences is proud to introduce and welcome the following new tenure-track faculty:

Dr. Nishaun T. Battle
Department of History, Political Science & Philosophy
Assistant Professor, Criminal Justice

Ms. Barbara Cooke
Department of History, Political Science & Philosophy
Assistant Professor, Criminal Justice

Dr. Christine Fiestas
Department of Clinical Health Sciences
Assistant Professor, Communication Sciences & Disorders

Dr. Daehoon Han
Department of Psychology & Sociology
Assistant Professor, Criminology

Dr. Nadia T. Hasan
Department of Psychology & Sociology
Assistant Professor, Psychology

Dr. Christopher E. Hobbs
Department of Chemistry
Assistant Professor, Chemistry

Dr. Simona Hodis
Department of Mathematics
Assistant Professor, Mathematics

Mr. Armando Ibanez
Department of Art, Communication & Theatre
Assistant Professor, Communication

Dr. Joseph Jones
Department of Music
Assistant Professor, Music

Dr. Scott Jones
Department of Music
Assistant Professor, Music

Dr. Maura L. Krestar
Department of Clinical Health Sciences
Assistant Professor, Communication Sciences & Disorders

Dr. Soyoung Kwon
Department of Psychology & Sociology
Assistant Professor, Sociology

Dr. Craig A. Meyer
Department of Language & Literature
Assistant Professor, English

Dr. Richard L. Miller
Department of Psychology & Sociology
Professor and Chair, Psychology

Dr. Ryan Paul
Department of Language & Literature
Assistant Professor, English

Dr. Alberto Rodriguez
Department of History, Political Science & Philosophy
Assistant Professor, History

Dr. Catherine Ming Tu
Department of Music
Assistant Professor, Music

Ms. Fulden Sara-Wissinger
Department of Art, Communication & Theatre
Assistant Professor, Art
A.C.T. Department Students Prepare for Showtime

Javelina Showtime was produced by students in the A.C.T. Department during the 2014 football season. The show featured the Javelina football coaching staff, players and events surrounding the sport at Texas A&M-Kingsville. Alan Harwell, a Javelina alumni and current sports director at KRIS-TV Channel 6 in Corpus Christi, served as host for the show. The show was taped during the week and ran on Saturday prior to each game - home or away - on KDF Fox. The students produced packages for each show and coordinated all filming, editing and production.

Globetrotting JAVELINAS Visit Greece, Spain & Morocco

Dr. Stan Hodges and Mr. Roman Smith led students in the Criminology and Sociology programs to Greece during the summer of 2014. After two weeks preparing for the trip, the class flew to Greece. There they enjoyed excursions to the Parthenon, the island of Santorini, and the ancient cities of Mycenae and Corinth.

Marco Íñiguez and Michelle Johnson Vela, faculty members in the Spanish program, coordinated 15-day summer courses in Morocco and Spain. The first segment of the course (June 20-25, 2014) was conducted in Morocco, in order to trace the origins of the African legacy in Spain. The group then traveled by ferry across the Strait of Gibraltar to Tarifa, Spain, and on to Sevilla, where they viewed an historical re-enactment of Moorish-Christian encounters, toured the cathedral of Sevilla, Córdoba, and Granada, Spain. With assistance by Co-instructor, Professor Manuel Flores, Students of Professional and Beginning Spanish participated in an interactive Spanish journalistic blog entitled Javelinas en España y Marruecos/Javelinas in Spain and Morocco, which will culminate in a memory book and documentary film. Journalistic articles derived from the exchange will appear in the South Texan Spanish Page.
Trumpet Studio Selected to Compete

Members of the Texas A&M University-Kingsville trumpet studio were selected to compete in the semi-finals at the National Trumpet Competition, held at Messiah College in Pennsylvania March 19-21, 2015. Felix Cruz, Jonathan de la Cruz, Jorge Rangel, Javier Salinas, Christian Chavez, and Jose Villanueva will be competing in the Small Ensemble Division, performing *Cuando las ranas crien pelo* by Stanley Friedman, a piece written specifically for them. Felix Cruz will also be competing in the Undergraduate Solo Division, performing the Edward Gregson *Concerto for Trumpet*. Dr. Kyle Millsap, assistant professor of trumpet, directs and coaches the group.

TAMUK Pi Sigma Alpha Chapter Honors

The TAMUK Pi Sigma Alpha Chapter was awarded a Chapter Activity Grant from the national organization of Pi Sigma Alpha to bring activist Nathan Schneider to campus to speak. Fewer than 50% of applications were fully funded.

Additionally, two chapter members, Joy Barrientes (History & Political Science) and Jose Obed Garcia (History & Political Science) had papers accepted to present at the National Pi Sigma Alpha Student Conference in Washington D.C.
NNTRC Grant Support Undergraduate & Graduate Research

Supported by a $2.5 million/5 year Biological Materials Resource Grant through the National Institutes of Health, the National Natural Toxins Research Center provides snake venom and venom resources to other researchers in the US and abroad for biomedical research and therapeutics development. The grant also supports the research at the NNTRC, which is done in conjunction with both graduate and undergraduate students (Bold: Undergraduate Students Bold and Italics: Graduate Students).

Projects in which students are involved:

- Purification, isolation and partial characterization of dimeric disintegrins from the venom of Broad-Banded and Trans-Pecos Copperheads
  Elyse Grilli, Andrea Alfonso, Amber Goins, Ifunanya Ogbata, Robert Walls, Dr. Elda Sanchez, Dr. Sara Lucena, Dr. Alexis Rodríguez-Acosta

- Inhibition of pancreatic tumoral cells by snake venom disintegrins
  Dr. Sara Lucena, Roberto Castro, Courtney Lundin, Amanda Hofstetter, Amber Alaniz, Montamas Suntravat, Dr. Elda Eliza Sánchez

- Isolation and identification of mRNAs from a cDNA library of Mapanare (Bothrops colombiensis) snake venom glands
  Chairat Atphaisit, Thomas Helmke, Daffanee Thomas, Montamas Suntravat, Elda E Sanchez

- Identification, Isolation, and Purification of Helleramine Peptides
  Esteban Cuevas, Benito Lopez, Cameron Jurica, Ashley Wiggins, Amanda Cruz, Joe Isaac Arriozola, Montamas Suntravat, Elda Eliza Sánchez

- Improvement of Cloning Southern Pacific Rattlesnake Venom C-type Lectins
  Robert Walls, Esteban Cantu, Regiana Dodson, Dr. Sara Lucena, Dr. Elda Sanchez

- Cloning, Expression, and Purification of Recombinant Helleramine for Biochemical Testing of Native and Recombinant Helleramine
  Eric Precise, Gabriella Perez, Dr. Montamas Suntravat, Dr. Peter Davies, Dr. Elda E. Sanchez

- Pancreatic Cancer Cells Inhibits Adhesion through Integrins a2b1, a6b1, and avb5
  Montamas Suntravat, Henriquez S Barret, Cameron A. Jurica, Sara E. Lucena, John C. Perez, Elda E. Sánchez
Dr. Weiman Xi, Associate Professor of Biology, recently completed a modeling project for the National Natural Science Foundation of China. He studied the long-term, coupled effects of wildfires, harvest, management practices and climate change on both forest and soil carbon dynamics by using field survey data and a proven forest landscape and disturbance model (LANDIS-II).

Dr. Xi chose to examine the Greater Xing'an Mountain region because it is an important forest timber production site and a key carbon sink area in China. The project will provide more accurate estimates of existing total carbon storage for the region and the temporal and spatial pattern of carbon dynamics for the future under the projected climate change from IPCC. This research could provide a scientific base for a sustainable forestry regional planning and establishing a healthy carbon credit market in the region.

Dr. Nirmal Goswami, Professor of Political Science is recipient of the Lone Star Conference 2014 Dr. Dave Pariser Faculty Mentor Award. The award honors an institutional faculty member who has demonstrated dedication, support and guidance to student-athletes and the institution’s athletic program. The recipient should demonstrate exemplary support to student-athletes, both on and off the field/court of competition, while representing the NCAA Division II core values of learning, passion, service, resourcefulness, sportsmanship and balance. This support can include, but is not limited to, athletics, academics, life skills, career development or other areas.

Illiteracy continues to be an important and challenging problem in the U.S. To date, numerous studies suggest that inefficient word identification-decoding skills are a source of poor reading and illiteracy. Even if children do have efficient word identification-decoding skills they can still score poorly on assessments of reading because of weak or inefficient processes that are used for comprehending text. Dr. Brenda Hannon, Assistant Professor of Psychology, wants to learn how well comprehension processes predict the future reading ability of preschoolers and which processes are most important. This knowledge would allow us to reduce illiteracy by creating intervention programs that foster the development of comprehension processes in pre- and beginning readers.

The goal of Dr. Hannon’s research is to acquire this critical knowledge by first administering measures of comprehension processes to preschoolers and then by using the preschoolers’ performances on these measures to predict their future reading comprehension ability.
Dr. Rafael Perez-Ballesteros, Associate Professor of Biology, and Dr. Maribel Gonzalez-Garcia, Professor of Biochemistry were awarded $414,000 by the National Institutes of Health to study the Enhancement of Neuronal Plasticity and Axon Regeneration Capabilities of Pro-Neuronal Cells with zRICH.

In this project, a protein derived from fish, which are capable of nerve regeneration in the central nervous system (CNS), will be studied in a variety of experiments designed to test whether it can be used to promote nerve fiber growth and repair in mammalian neurons and neural stem cells. The absence of nerve regeneration in the CNS of mammals has severe biomedical consequences for humans. This protein could become a tool to develop therapies for humans with brain or spinal cord damage, having a global scientific and medical impact in the field of nerve regeneration.
Conner Museum Hosts Images of Valor Exhibit

From September 2-October 10, 2014, the John E. Conner Museum hosted “Images of Valor: U.S. Latinos and Latinas in World War II,” an exhibition created by the School of Journalism and Center for Mexican American Studies at The University of Texas at Austin and produced by Humanities Texas, the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Through images and stories, this twelve-panel exhibition provided a historical overview of U.S. Latino participation in World War II. In addition to photographs from the project’s archives, “Images of Valor” incorporated contemporary photographs of men and women of the WWII generation by photojournalist Valentino Mauricio. The exhibition focused on individual stories that reveal larger themes such as citizenship and civil rights and featured excerpts from the more than 500 oral history interviews that were part of the project. The Museum also displayed photographs of area World War II Latino & Latina veterans brought in by family members.

Images of Valor:
Latinos and Latinas of World War II
September 2-October 10, 2014
Opening Reception September 16

Joe Bernal at age 17 in Salinas, California on September 1, 1945.
Courtesy of the U.S. Latino & Latina WWII Oral History Project.
The Pride of South Texas Cares for the Coast

The Nueces Delta Preserve has long been a focus of the Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program (CBBEP), a non-profit group dedicated to researching, restoring and protecting the bays and estuaries of the Texas Coastal Bend. As a member of the Corpus Christi community, CITGO recently joined the CBBEP in hosting a large scale volunteer effort to clean-up and restore the Preserve.

On November 15, 2014, members of the Texas A&M University-Kingsville Pride of South Texas Marching Band, joined 400 volunteers from CITGO, CBBEP and local school districts to restore parts of the Nueces Delta Preserve. The volunteers scattered native grass and wildflower seeds – the first step in stunting the spread of invasive species and promoting the growth of indigenous plant life – and planted native vegetation within a newly created wetland area that will act as a nesting location for water fowl wintering in the area. The band also showcased their musical talents by performing at the event kick-off. This is the first year that the band has participated in the Caring for the Coast project.

Physics & Geosciences Hosts Earth Science Week

The Physics & Geosciences department organized and hosted Earth Science Week from October 13-18, 2014. The week-long event included the following activities: Outreach at Harrell Elementary; Geosciences Open House – featuring GIS, Paleontology, Mineralogy & Petrology demonstrations; Gem & Mineral display at Fall Carnival; Lecture on Severe Weather & Flood Safety; Lecture on Eagle Ford Shale: New Logging Technologies to Enhance Fracking Production Rates; a Public Astronomy Viewing; Campus –wide Clean Up Activity; a volunteer tree planting activity, and finally a Geoscience Alumni Tailgate.

NEW PROGRAM

The Department of Language and Literature has a new master’s degree in Cultural Studies. Students pursuing this degree can prepare themselves to enter doctoral programs; progress to a higher level of study in English, Spanish, or Cultural Studies; teach English or Spanish dual enrollment courses in the state of Texas, or teach freshman and sophomore courses at community colleges or universities.
Upcoming Events

Women’s History Month Symposium
March 24, 2015 • 9AM-4:30PM • Founders Room
Dr. Susan Roberson, Interim Director
Women & Gender Studies Program
Susan.roberson@tamuk.edu • 361.593.32012

Arts & Sciences Dean’s Colloquium 2015
‘Is Sustainable Management Achievable in the African Context? The African Elephant as a Model’
Presented by: Dr. Mark Vandewalle
March 28, 2015 • 12PM • The Blue Room

Statistics Day 2015
Friday, April 24, 2015 • 8:30am – 5:00pm
For more information:
361.593.3517

Spring 2015 Commencement Exercises
May 15, 2015
10:00am • 1:00pm • 4:00pm • 7:00pm
Steinke Physical Education Center

Summer Session 2015
First Session: June 1 – July 1, 2015
Second Session: July 6 – August 5, 2015