

ALP



KYLE WERNKE

S&T music professor
has composition
recorded and played
around the world

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The face of arts, languages and philosophy

The ability to think critically with creativity and innovation skills is important for a student's academic success. And Missouri S&T's arts, languages and philosophy (ALP) department offers excellent opportunities for future engineers, scientists, researchers and humanists to develop these skills, so they leave S&T as well-rounded graduates, prepared to make a difference in the world.

Robert Achenbach, ME'18, conveys a harmonious blend of art and technology in a beautifully crafted steel sculpture he recently designed, fabricated and donated to the department. This stunning piece greets visitors on the second-floor landing of Castleman Hall.

SUPPORT STUDENT SUCCESS

From time to time, you may receive a phone call from a student caller on behalf of ALP. We hope you'll take the time to talk and consider making a gift.

Your support to ALP will help our students heighten their critical thinking by understanding timeless world philosophies, expand their global communication skills through modern language studies, and build their confidence by providing opportunities for creative expression through the performing and visual arts.

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BONJOUR, GUTEN TAG, ЗДРАВСТВУЙТЕ, AND HOLA!

Greetings from arts, languages and philosophy. I am delighted to share with you some of the exciting news from our department in our first newsletter.

As you will see throughout this issue, the interests and talents of our students and faculty encompass a diverse array of creative and scholarly activities. Our department's commitment to teaching extends far beyond the classroom walls. Particularly exciting are faculty-student collaborations that encourage students to explore their passions, try new things, hone their skills, and showcase their talent. Examples include the Opportunities for Undergraduate Research Experience (OURE) and First Year Research Experience (FYRE) programs, both of which led to publications and awards, including first and second place in the arts and humanities poster session at the annual S&T Undergraduate Research Conference in April.

ALP has numerous plans on the horizon. We are developing certificate programs to help our students stand out from their peers as they begin their careers. And we teamed up with the CASB dean's office, the history and political science department, and the English and technical communication department to create S&T's new Collaboratory, a state-of-the-art research communication hub to be housed in the Humanities and Social Sciences Building.

ALP is dedicated to providing rich and engaging performances for our campus and local community. We are gearing up for a fantastic season next year to commemorate S&T's 150th celebration. If you cannot join us for these events, please follow us on Facebook to learn more.

Do you have news to share? If so, please let us know. We would love to hear from you!

Best wishes,

Audra L. Merfeld-Langston
Chair, Department of Arts, Languages, and Philosophy

Keep in touch ...

It's easy to stay in touch with your alma mater. Just say hello when a student representative calls during phonathon, or drop us a note at alp@mst.edu. Tell us what you've been up to since you left Rolla. We love to hear from our graduates and share their accomplishments among our alumni achievement stories.



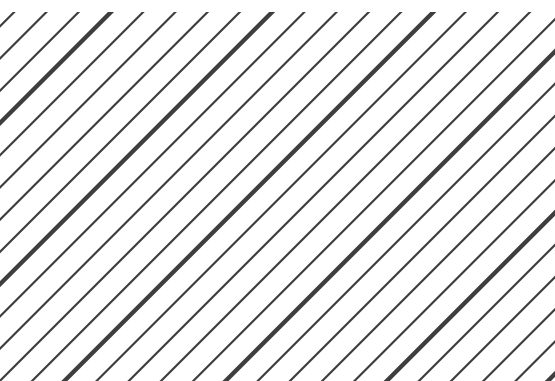
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There are some new faces in ALP.

A man in a tuxedo is smiling and pointing a baton towards the camera. He is standing in a theater with rows of red seats behind him.

BY JONATHAN AHL,
ROLLA CORRESPONDENT
OF ST. LOUIS PUBLIC
RADIO, 90.7 KWMU

S&T MUSIC PROFESSOR HAS COMPOSITION RECORDED AND PLAYED AROUND THE WORLD

A decorative graphic consisting of a series of parallel diagonal lines.

Kyle Wernke is an up-and-coming composer, but he doesn't teach at a high-profile music school.

There are no music majors in his orchestra, and the students spend more time on equations than they do on scales. Wernke teaches at Missouri University of Science and Technology, a school known much more for engineering than for performing arts.

Wernke's "Burst" has been played by the Tampa Bay Symphony at four concerts. In February, it was performed by Musiques En Seine Orchestra in Paris. It's also available on Ablaze Records, recorded by the Brno Philharmonic in the Czech Republic.

He wrote the piece for a composition competition. Wernke, 30, says he started writing without any idea of what to call it.

"I was listening to the piece one day, listening back, fixing things, and it occurred to me that really this is just a bunch of little bursts of activity that are happening over and over again," Wernke says. "And I thought a quick, one-word title like 'Burst' was probably a good way to get someone's attention."

Wernke and the S&T orchestra members donned “ugly” Christmas sweaters for the Holiday Concert.



It didn't win that competition. But it did catch the attention of a few conductors, and that led to the piece being performed and recorded.

Wernke believes being in Rolla for the past few years has helped him do his best work.

"I don't think that it's a coincidence that I live in a smaller place like Rolla, and I've been able to accomplish so much, because there's not so much pulling at you from every direction," Wernke says.

Wernke teaches music classes at S&T and leads the orchestra and the jazz band. He says leading ensembles made up of science and engineering majors has been rewarding.

"Since they play purely for fun, their commitment is to the joy of the music," Wernke says.

Sara McCauley, a chemistry major and violin player in the S&T Orchestra, says Wernke's composer mind is on display in every rehearsal.

"You can definitely tell that he is thinking about the bigger picture of something, which I think is something definitely that composers tend to do. Whereas we as musicians look at it as a note-by-note basis," McCauley says.

McCauley also says that approach appeals to science-minded students, who often break things down in the lab to see how they fit into a bigger picture.

Wernke is excited about his future in Rolla. He and his wife bought a house and don't plan to leave any time soon.

"I'm really proud that these conductors and these competitions have looked at the music for what it is, as opposed to who I am and what I've done or where I come from," Wernke says. "And that's encouraging to me as a career moving forward."

Wernke says S&T supports him in his efforts. The school helped pay for the recording of his piece by the Brno Philharmonic.

"I don't teach aerospace engineering, but I think that it shows that S&T realizes that the music department is important, if only because it gives our students an outlet," Wernke says.

Next up for Wernke is the premiere of his piano concerto with the S&T orchestra in the spring, and then he is collaborating with a colleague to write a cantata based on the life of Leonardo da Vinci. □



SPEECH AND DEBATE COMES TO S&T

Debate helps students develop essential critical-thinking skills. It helps students question evidence behind a particular stance and then make reasoned, well-thought-out arguments.

Last fall, **Kendrea James**, an ALP assistant teaching professor of speech and media studies, saw the value debate could have for S&T students, and took steps to form a speech and debate team.

The team is still in the process of becoming a recognized student organization, but three students have already joined. They competed at Southwest Baptist University and McKendree University.

"I'm still building the team, but so far we have really hit the ground running," James says. "We're looking forward to attending about three tournaments in the spring."

Studies show that debate's emphasis on impromptu speaking helps students develop strong communications skills and think on their feet. Participants analyze issues and find solutions, and in the process, they learn organization and clarity, and how to listen and persuade.



FROM RUSSIA, WITH LOVE

For over 23 years, S&T students with an interest in Slavic languages have learned Russian from a native.

ALP professor **Irina Ivliyeva** leads S&T's Russian program and teaches courses at all levels in Russian language, literature and culture.

She joined S&T in 1997. Her passion for her native language rivals her passion for her students. And that passion comes through in her teaching.

In 2011, the St. Pat's Board named Ivliyeva an Honorary Knight. And in 2012, she was named S&T Woman of the Year. Her nominators sung her praises.

Ivliyeva "holds her students accountable for their studies," wrote one nominator, "and I secretly believe that some students take her class less for the subject matter and more for her informal mentoring of them."

Last summer, Ivliyeva was named chair of the Center for Advancing Faculty Excellence (CAFE). Her mentoring nature aligns perfectly with CAFE's mission — helping S&T faculty succeed as teaching scholars at all career levels.

"Irina is one of those people who leads by setting an incredible example," wrote another nominator. "She serves as an amazing role model for other women as we learn to balance work and life, and be good at both. Her realistic but positive outlook, as well as her example, shows others how to forge a successful career at S&T."



WELCOME THE COLLABORATORY

WHERE HUMANITIES AND TECHNOLOGY MEET

The Collaboratory is S&T's state-of-the-art communication hub where humanities students and faculty can collaborate, experiment, research and engage.

In this new 1,150-square-foot digital lab, which will be located in the Humanities and Social Sciences Building, researchers will gain hands-on experience with the latest technologies used to create and share knowledge.

The space will contain three areas:

- **Display room** — a flexible public venue for educational exhibits
- **Collaboration room** — an open area equipped to plan digital pop-up museums, podcasts, oral histories and more
- **Digital production room** — studios for podcasting and video production to seamlessly produce professional-quality presentations and green screen recordings.

INVEST IN EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

S&T's unique experiential learning environment gives our students a competitive edge in the workplace and graduate school. In the Collaboratory, students will have new opportunities to integrate vital technological skills with their humanities studies.

HELP ADVANCE OUR MISSION

Your gift to the Collaboratory can help us build a better future for tomorrow's leaders and scholars. For more information and naming opportunities, please contact **Kristen Gallagher**, executive director of development, College of Arts, Sciences, and Business at 573-341-6050 or gallagherk@mst.edu.



From left: David Samson, Sophie Julien, Nicholas Schmidt, Cole Kostelac, Braden Millard and Arianna Chaves.

S&T STUDENTS PERFORM WITH CAREER MUSIC MAJORS AT MMEA CONFERENCE

The annual Missouri Music Educators Association (MMEA) Conference held in Osage Beach, Mo., supports the advancement of music education as a profession, and the vast majority of its college-age attendees are music majors.

For the last two years, S&T's music program has sent students to the conference to participate in all-collegiate music ensembles. These groups, which rotate on a yearly basis between band, orchestra, jazz band and choir, include college students from around the state who rehearse and perform a concert during the conference.

David Samson, assistant professor of music and director of bands, says he isn't surprised to see the talent and level of determination S&T students bring to the ensembles.

"Although S&T students aren't music majors, they perform equally with the other attendees, most of whom are studying music full time," Samson says. "S&T attracts many students with musical ability who want to continue performing at the collegiate level. It shows that music education in college is not just for those who want to pursue it as a career."

S&T students chosen to perform with the Missouri All-Collegiate Band at the January 2020 MMEA Conference are **Arianna Chaves** and **Nick Schmidt**, clarinet; **Sophie Julien**, bass clarinet; **Cole Kostelac**, percussion; and **Braden Millard**, trumpet.

At the 2019 MMEA conference, S&T sent four students to perform with the All-Collegiate Honor Choir. These students, all members S&T choral ensembles directed by **Lorie Francis**, an associate teaching professor of music, were **Victoria Kramer**, soprano; **Danielle Baker**, alto; **Nicholas Bourisaw**, tenor; and **Zachary Palmer**, bass.



From left: Zachary Palmer, Nicholas Bourisaw, Danielle Baker and Victoria Kramer. Photo by Lorie Francis

"It was an interesting experience for me since I was one of only a few non-music majors participating," says Palmer, a senior in ceramic engineering from Omaha. "It gave me a chance to make new friends from around the state and to sing among some very talented musicians."

CREATIVITY AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS ABOUND IN ANNUAL STUDENT ART SHOW

S&T students displayed their artwork last May in the 15th Annual Student Art Show and reception, a festive public event held in the sunlit atrium of Havener Center.

The exhibition, which included original paintings, drawings, glassworks, multimedia works, and eco-friendly sculptures made with live plants, was accompanied by a background of live piano music.

"This event is one of the highlights of the year for our department, and a meaningful way for students to showcase their artistic talents," says **Audra Merfeld-Langston**, chair of arts, languages and philosophy (ALP) and an associate professor of French.

The event concluded with an award presentation for student achievements in ALP courses and related extracurricular activities, culminating with the Renaissance Student Award and its \$1,000 prize, presented to **Alexandra Garland**, GeoE'19. **Sara Johnson**, Psyc'19, was runner-up. The award recognizes students who demonstrate renaissance qualities, including substantive engagement in some creative pursuit in the arts and humanities.

The annual Student Art Show is sponsored by the Campus Arts Committee; the arts, languages and philosophy department; and the College of Arts, Sciences, and Business.

Top, from left: Audra Merfeld-Langston (left) and Luce Myers (right) present Alexandra Garland with the Renaissance Student Award.

Middle: Guests enjoy artwork by S&T students during an exhibition in the Havener Center.

Bottom: Student artwork, like these examples, hung on display in the Havener Center.



MUCH ADO ABOUT THEATER



S&T theater students performed William Shakespeare's comedy *Much Ado About Nothing* this past October. **Taylor Gruenloh**, assistant teaching professor of theater at S&T, directed the performances.

"Shakespeare wrote about what it's like to be hungry, to be heartbroken, to be stupidly head over heels for someone that is corrupting your person," says Gruenloh.

The play was set in present day at a resort in the seaside town of Messina, Italy, where things became complicated when a group of friends attempted to trick Benedick and Beatrice, who have vowed to never fall in love or marry, into falling in love with each other.

Gruenloh says he believes performance is just what Missouri S&T students need.

"For students to be able to perform any theater during their time at S&T is very important because the need for students to activate creativity in this setting is crucial," says Gruenloh. "It's proven that creative thinking helps individuals with unorthodox problem solving."

Gruenloh says he hopes students learned something from the production. He set several goals for his leadership of the theater department, including helping students to tell stories about the human condition, to analyze human emotion during conflict and to understand that art is rooted in human emotion.





GOING

GLOBAL

Above: A view of the Alps from Annecy in southeastern France.
Right: S&T students **Ashley Crannick** and **Darci Graefser** explored Paris on a study abroad trip led by Audra Merfeld-Langston.



When S&T Chancellor **Mo Deghani** began his tenure at S&T, he told *Missouri S&T Magazine* readers that one of his goals was not only to graduate high-caliber scientists and engineers, but worldly engineers and scientists who can solve ever-more-complex global challenges and convince social, political and economic leaders of the urgency of those solutions.

"If they are equipped with a good level of awareness and understanding of history, philosophy, social sciences and liberal arts, our graduates will gain significant traction in selling their ideas and will be able to provide critical contributions to these global challenges," Deghani said.

S&T is taking the first step toward meeting that goal with the establishment of the Global Engineering Program. Launching in fall 2020 and led by ALP chair **Audra Merfeld-Langston** and **Lesley Sneed**, associate professor of civil, architectural and environmental engineering, the program will allow students to earn two degrees in five years — all while building language skills and gaining cross-cultural experience.

"A top-notch engineering education complemented with international experience will provide our students with a rich toolbox to use throughout their careers," says Merfeld-Langston. "Right now, nine out of 10 U.S. employers say they rely on employees with language skills that extend beyond English. And 56% of them say their demand for employees with foreign-language skills will increase in the next five years."

Graduates of the program will leave S&T with a bachelor of science degree in an engineering discipline and a bachelor of arts degree in multidisciplinary studies with an emphasis on language and culture.

ALP has long understood the importance of studying other languages and cultures, and two recent study abroad programs demonstrate the commitment to giving students a broader cultural experience before they graduate.

Last January, **Terry Robertson**, an associate teaching professor, took students on a two-week course in Peru to study intercultural communications.

Students examined the range of human experiences and their impact on the communication process while touring Lima, Cuzco, Machu Picchu and Lake Titicaca, among other locations. Completion of the course earned them three credit hours of speech and media studies credit in a course called Intercultural Aspects of Indigenous People.

Also last January, Merfeld-Langston took students on a two-week trip to Martinique to study history and culture of the island, which is an overseas department of France.

Students studied the islanders' use of French and Creole languages, the history of slavery and colonization, tourism, the environment and traditional culture. In addition to hiking, snorkeling and climbing a volcano, the students took workshops on traditional pottery, cooking, painting and *bèlè*, a traditional dance.

WE WELCOME OUR
NEW FACULTY

This past fall, three new faculty members joined arts, languages and philosophy.

Shane Epting, an assistant professor of philosophy, came to Missouri S&T from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where he was a visiting assistant professor of philosophy. Epting earned a Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of North Texas. His research interests include environmental ethics, philosophy of the city and philosophy of technology.

Taylor Gruenloh, an assistant teaching professor of theater, was previously a lecturer in our department. He earned an MFA in theater and playwriting from Hollins University in 2014. Gruenloh's theater production experience includes working with the Tesseract Theatre, Robert Moss Theatre and St. Louis Fringe Festival.

Kyle Wernke, an assistant teaching professor of music, was also a lecturer in our department. He earned a doctor of musical arts (DMA) in composition from the University of Hartford in 2016. Wernke's conductor experience includes the Willimantic Orchestra, Butler Symphony Orchestra and the Finger Lakes Chamber Music Festival.

SHAW HONORED BY CAFE

During a campus ceremony held in December, the Center for Faculty Excellence (CAFE) honored **Kevin Shaw** for his work to provide hands-on learning for students in theater.

Shaw, technical director of Leach Theatre and an ALP teaching instructor, received the Staff Experiential Award for his dedication in creating an educational learning environment for students.

Each year, Shaw oversees around 30 student technicians who are immersed in the hands-on work of developing sets for theatrical productions and managing the technical details of numerous concerts, performances and university events.

Shaw joined the Leach Theatre staff in 2011.



THE WALL STREET JOURNAL ASKED GERALD COHEN ABOUT "DUDE"

ALP professor **Gerald Cohen** is quite the word sleuth.

His etymological expertise, and that of a collaborator, appeared in a 2019 *Wall Street Journal* article, "Keep Calm and Carry On, Dude" explaining the origin of the word "dude" after U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson used it in his election victory speech.

The word first appeared in 1883 in a New York City newspaper poem about a culture of brainless young men imitating British high society, Cohen says.

Cohen began work on "dude" in 1993, and it's still underway. He hopes to compile his research into a book.

"Even linguists are often surprised at how much work can go into researching a single word, especially one in slang," says Cohen. "I've written books on the origin of the terms 'jazz', 'shyster' and (as co-author) 'The Big Apple' and 'hot dog.' Each topic required years of study — it's all part of gaining a better understanding of our vast language."

Cohen has an affinity for the origin of jazz terms. Before a September performance of the Cab Calloway Orchestra at Leach Theatre, he spoke on the origin of the phrase, "hi-de-ho," featured in Calloway's lyrics for "Minnie the Moocher." Cohen says Calloway forgot the lyrics while singing and used a variety of nonsense sounds or "scat singing" to fill the gap, starting with "hi-de-ho." Audiences responded each time and loved it.



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 MISSOURI S&T'S STORY

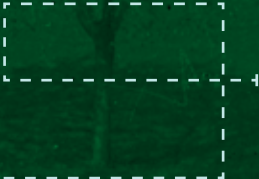
150 YEARS

From our founding in 1870 as a pioneering technical school to our 21st century standing as a national technological university, Missouri S&T's story spans a century and a half of remarkable change.

Get set to celebrate 150 years of Miner pride!

A year of special events kicks off with MinerFest 150 in October 2020 and concludes with the Alumni of Influence celebration in November 2021. In between, mark your calendar in green for our biggest best-ever festival — or "Bestival" — over St. Pat's Weekend in March 2021.

Watch for the publication launch in October 2020 of a commemorative book by Curators' Distinguished Teaching Professor emeritus **Larry Gragg**. His history of the university spans 150 years of Miner milestones, memories and mischief.



150.MST.EDU