

LIBERAL ARTS



THE NEXT





SHATTERING EXPECTATIONS

Celebrating CLA's 150th Anniversary

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DEAN
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ASSISTANT DEAN FOR DEVELOPMENT AND
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Scott Meyer

CREATIVE DIRECTOR
Tessa Eagan

MANAGING EDITOR
Stephanie Splett

CONTRIBUTING STAFF
Amanda Haugen
Kaylee Highstrom
Lisa Miller
Colleen Ware
Simon Whitney

STUDENT ASSISTANTS
Delana Haglund
Sophia Norwood
Emily Raper

DESIGNER
Woychick Design

COPY EDITOR
Susan Maas

PRINTER
Modern Press

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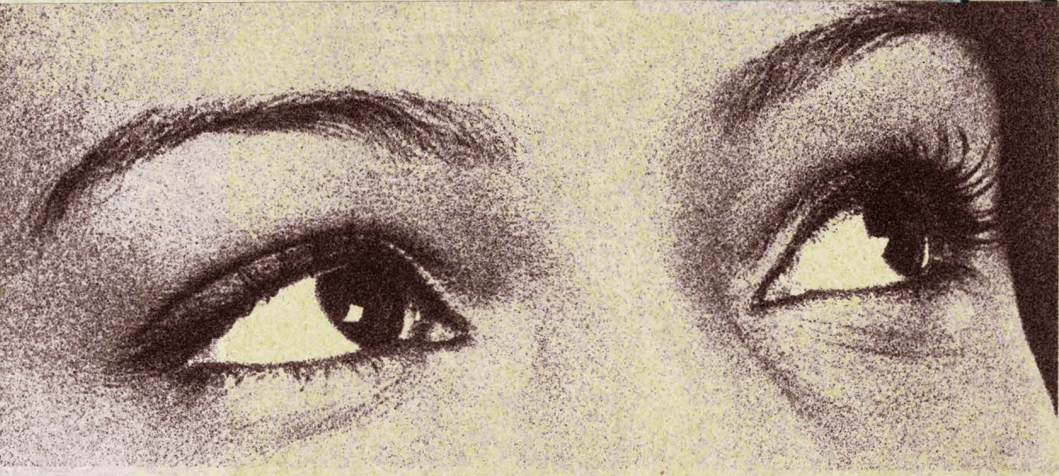
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COVER ILLUSTRATION: JACKIE PARSONS



150

YEARS



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THE NEXT



THIS 150TH YEAR has been a remarkable one for CLA. From thought-provoking commemorative exhibits to the best fundraising year on record, it's going to be hard to beat.

But as we wrap up this year of celebration, it's important to consider the future. What will the next 50 years bring? The next 100, or 150 years? How will the College of Liberal Arts change? What problems will we have solved? What will be the challenges of those times? What will have stayed the same?

Of course, no one can say. The world will change in ways we can't even imagine. But while we can't predict what will come, there are three things I know for sure.

The first is the College of Liberal Arts' primary mission will always be to give back and do the most good it can for others.

A hundred and fifty years ago, CLA was founded as a land-grant institution. The vision of the land-grant system was to empower individuals who would then go on to empower their communities. This vision was about extending the learning of a liberal arts education to a larger population in a growing country. It was profoundly democratizing at its core, spreading skills and knowledge beyond the elite strata of society.

The land-grant tradition will always be about educating individuals for the good of communities. As a college, we will always aim to be better, to train the finest minds, to graduate the most accomplished students – not to pat ourselves on the back, but because the better we are at our work, the better our research, the more ready our graduates, the greater good we can do.

As long as CLA is around I know that that will remain the core of who we are: a liberal arts education for the



betterment of individuals, families, and future generations.

The second thing I know is that the future of CLA’s legacy is bright, because of our students, staff, faculty, and alumni.

In our students, we have the stewards of a remarkable legacy. They are bright, ambitious, and dedicated to contributing to the people around them.

In our staff, we have institutional knowledge, ingenuity, and commitment to the land-grant mission of service.

In our faculty, we have cutting-edge researchers, stellar instruction, scholars dedicated to tackling society’s most compelling issues.

And in our alumni, we see the liberal arts advantage play out every day. Our alumni start businesses, run organizations, and create better futures for their communities. Their leadership is proof of what the liberal arts offer.

Our students, staff, faculty, and alumni—they are our best ambassadors, and the future of CLA’s legacy could not be in better hands.

The last thing I know is that the future for everyone is bright, because of who we are as a college.

We live at a time of enormous challenges, from polarized politics to poverty to disease and beyond. But I don’t agree

with doomsday depictions of the future—because every day I see evidence of the liberal arts impact on the world around me. What we study in the liberal arts is literally front-page news.

The CLA community includes leading scholars, innovative artists, dedicated professionals, passionate philanthropists, and leaders of industries. This community of people has mentored and empowered individuals and communities for 150 years—on campus and around the globe.

They’ve analyzed disparities and conflicts, placing them in historical, economic, and social context. They’ve asked the difficult questions. They’ve provided evidence, information, and perspective. They’ve offered direction and clarity in the face of what others may perceive as insurmountable obstacles.

I know that the future is bright because of all the wonderful things that our students, staff, faculty, and alumni have already accomplished, and all they will contribute in the years to come.




PHOTO: XAVIER TAVERA

The next 150 years

What we’ve begun in our first 150 years here at CLA is a legacy of excellence, of giving back, of service.

CLA was founded with a vision that a liberal arts education can be used as a tool towards a better life. One hundred and fifty years ago, CLA—in the form of the College of Science, Literature, and the Arts—was more a dream than reality. It was small, untested, unproved.

The CLA of today is the result of 150 years of hard work and passion. A century and a half of dedication and brilliance, of questioning: where do we excel? How can we be stronger and more effective today than we were yesterday? And where will we go next?

Those questions will continue to guide us. And as long as we continue to ask them, we’ll continue to head in the right direction. 

— JOHN COLEMAN, DEAN, COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

Researchers in the College of Liberal Arts are asking the enduring questions that move us forward. This special 150th anniversary publication looks to the future: stories that offer an examination of our changing planet, our democracy, and how we create truth and knowledge from a breadth of liberal arts vantage points. ● ● ●





— The —

NATURE

OF CHANGE

Exploring humanity's response to an evolving Earth

Life has existed on Earth for at least 3.5 billion years, and in 2019 humans stand firmly at the top of what used to be a more natural order. We may have achieved remarkable societal evolution, but we've done so at great cost to our ecology and climate. Now facing rising seas, melting glaciers, and disappearing species and ecosystems, humans have choices to make about the future of the planet.

While there is no easy path forward, proponents of change assert that humans must first reconsider our belief that there is a division between us and nature if we're to achieve a more sustainable future. Three CLA professors share their forward-looking work in the context of two questions: What is our relationship to nature? And how do we make sense of our connection to the physical world as we face the challenges of our changing Earth?

BY MELEAH MAYNARD
(BA '91, POLITICAL SCIENCE)





KURT KIPFUELLER, GEOGRAPHY, ENVIRONMENT & SOCIETY

Creating Resilient Forests

Kurt Kipfmüller used to think humankind's relationship to nature could best be described as hands-off. True wilderness, he believed, could only be considered such so long as human influence remained extremely limited. Now, an associate professor of geography, environment, and society, he's spent years researching wildfire ecology and analyzing tree rings collected from Minnesota's Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW), Cass Lake, the Apostle Islands, and other areas of the Upper Great Lakes. What he's learned has not only shifted his thinking; it's helped him better understand the complexity of humans' relationship to nature, and how knowing more about the past could help us maintain resilient forests for the future.

"It's been an emotional and intellectual struggle for me, but the word natural means something much different to me now than it used to," he says, explaining how early on, his work was primarily in areas that had not been widely visited or used by Native Americans. But about 10 years ago, master's student Lane Johnson told him that he wanted to study how fires set by Native Americans in the BWCAW might have affected the forests over time. Kipfmüller was skeptical, but he went along on a canoe trip to the Canadian border. There, Johnson showed him trees and stumps with preserved wounds from

many repeated fires. Paddling on, they found more and more trees with fire injuries, recording more fires than Kipfmüller had ever seen in Great Lakes forests, and seemingly more than could have resulted from natural causes like lightning. It was clear that they needed to learn more about how humans may have influenced what's considered iconic wilderness in Minnesota and is also the most visited wilderness area in the United States.

Over the years, Kipfmüller and his colleagues have expanded on what is known about the ecological role of fire in

If we don't intervene, the red pine forests in the Boundary Waters will be gone and other species will take their place.

— KURT KIPFUELLER



the Boundary Waters. Their work builds on the Herculean efforts of Miron “Bud” Heinselman, a US Forest Service researcher and early advocate of fire ecology in wilderness landscapes, as well as Ojibwe stories passed down through oral tradition and explorers’ journals.

Funded in part by the National Science Foundation, Kipfmüller and his colleagues now have data on fires in the BWCAW going back 400 years. We now know that the Ojibwe routinely burned parts of the red and white pine forests to clear trails and promote the growth of blueberries and other edible plants in the 1700s and early 1800s. But those restorative burns declined dramatically after the arrival of white settlers, who increasingly emphasized the danger of fires and cut more and more trees down for timber.

In the absence of periodic fires, the red pine forests of the Boundary Waters have been gradually disappearing from the landscape. Fire, it’s now well understood, played a key role in the rejuvenation of the iconic trees that, for many, are the essence of the BWCAW. And that understanding raises some challenging questions for those who manage the BWCAW and other public lands—as well as everyone else who grapples with humans’ relationship to nature in this time of rapid climate change. Perhaps the first step, Kipfmüller suggests, could be to stop believing we are managers of the landscape, and instead consider ourselves more as active stewards. “It’s a judgment call,” he says. “We could argue that we need to let nature take its course. But if we don’t intervene, the red pine forests in the Boundary Waters will be gone and other species will take their place.”

CHRISTINE MARRAN, ASIAN & MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES

Looking Within to See Beyond

In her recent book *Ecology Without Culture: Aesthetics for a Toxic World*, Christine Marran, chair of the Department of Asian & Middle Eastern Studies and a professor of Japanese literature and cultural studies, challenges the human-centric view of nature, arguing that meaningful environmental thinking happens only when humans recognize our deep connections to the material world. “Humans have long viewed themselves as more special than anything else, and that impedes our ability to think critically about the environment,” she explains.

Marran’s cultural studies perspective makes her exploration of the relationship between humans and the environment a multilayered one. Some of her research focuses on examining how nations have used the concept of nature to describe themselves through time. For example, during Japan’s period of colonial expansion, Japanese intellectual Shigetaka Shiga intentionally used the word “biodiverse” to describe the country’s trees. What he was implying, Marran says, “was that Japan should rightly be diverse, and its imperialist endeavor was ‘only natural.’”

Of course environmental issues aren’t only about cultural conceptions of nature. In *Ecology Without Culture*, Marran shows that environmental thinking requires an understanding of the natural world and an acknowledgement of the histories of species, land, and water.

Inspired by artists, writers, and documentary filmmakers whose work focuses on environmental pollution, she examines the ways people and their communities have been shaped by devastating events, such as the severe mercury poisoning people suffered in the Japanese fishing village of Minamata from the 1950s to the 1970s. “They were poisoned by eating the fish they caught in water that was contaminated by toxic levels of mercury,” Marran explains.



In *Minamata*, filmmaker Noriaki Tsuchimoto documented what happened next—how a new community emerged as thousands of residents still struggled with what was dubbed Minamata disease. “This catastrophe made the whole concept of these people being Japanese citizens secondary,” Marran continues. “What they have in common is that they were poisoned along with their environment, and that happens in all kinds of communities in which people are exposed to things like toxins or radiation. What connects these people is what they are going through.”

Analyzing environmental pollution through the eyes of artists makes sense to Marran, a co-convenor of CLA’s Environmental Humanities Initiative (see page 7), because artists, writers, and filmmakers are able to offer multiple perspectives in their work, some of which extend beyond human concerns, making it clear that environmental health is also at stake. Getting beyond humanistic concerns is imperative, she says, if we really want to solve the complexities of environmental pollution. “In 1970, a Japanese farmer remarking on his fertilizer and pesticide use said, ‘I used to think nature was out there, but now I realize it’s within me.’ Looking at how toxins affect humans and the environment makes that really clear. Nature is not out there, because our bodies contain what’s in the environment—in our food, water, and air. At this point, no one and no place on the planet is untouched.”

In 1970, a Japanese farmer remarking on his fertilizer and pesticide use said, ‘I used to think nature was out there, but now I realize it’s within me.’

– CHRISTINE MARRAN

DAVID VALENTINE, ANTHROPOLOGY

Leaving Earth Behind



Associate Professor David Valentine is a cultural and linguistic anthropologist, which means “I spend a lot of time seeking to understand how humans go about the business of being human in all of its complexity and diversity,” he explains. Ordinarily, Valentine’s work focuses on what it means to be human in our earthly environment. But over the last several years, he’s turned his sights on outer space, specifically the commercial space settlement movement.

For years scientists and entrepreneurs have been exploring ways to enable humans to live permanently in a variety of places in outer space. Curious about the ways European colonialism is analogous to space settlement, and why advocates are so committed to a future they would most likely never see for themselves, Valentine spent six years conducting research at more than 40 commercial space conferences. He learned that while profit is a key motivation, most of those working tirelessly toward an extraterrestrial future are doing so because they believe that’s the only way that humans, and Earth’s nature, will survive.

For Valentine, who’s currently working on a book with the tentative title *Leaving Earth*, all of this planning for a future in space has inspired questions about humans’ relationship to our own planet. What does it mean to be human in our earthly environment? And maybe more importantly: how are colonial precedents on Earth upended by the radically

different conditions of space? “European colonialism was built on the premise that nature is something that humans are above or outside, but that kind of thinking isn’t going to work on Mars, or the moons of Jupiter, or in an artificially constructed rotating station. In those environments, everything will have to be monitored, changed, and adapted to avoid immediate disaster,” Valentine says.


In other words, humans may find ways to transpose what we know as the natural world to outer space. But in recreating Earth’s nature in different levels of gravity, or in the absence of Earth’s atmosphere, every living thing could be easily wiped out by a simple, unanticipated relationship—a chemical reaction, a bacterial mutation, or a social conflict. “Humans have evolved in relationship to Earth’s environment for hundreds of thousands of years, so what we call nature proves a kind of absorptive buffer to human activity,” Valentine explains. “But there is no buffer on Mars, and space settlement advocates constantly grapple with this issue, thinking that human ingenuity can solve all problems.”

Valentine doesn’t agree. He believes it will take a new kind of imagination if humans are ever to move into space. And it’s the same kind of imagination we need right here on Earth if we are going to do anything meaningful about climate change. To his mind, it’s the modern Western belief that humans are separate from nature that’s led to the climate change crisis.





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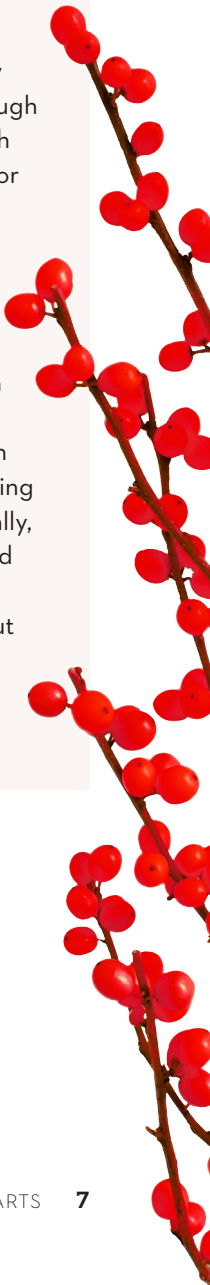
So just as we would have to do on Mars, more humans need to redevelop an ethical, interconnected relationship with nature, revising historical injustices and expanding our understanding. “I propose in my work, and my book, that perhaps we could learn something from human settlement on Mars that would help us here on a rapidly changing Earth,” Valentine says. “What if that could help us reimagine how we continue to live on this planet? That might be precisely what we need.” 

CLA's Environmental Humanities Initiative

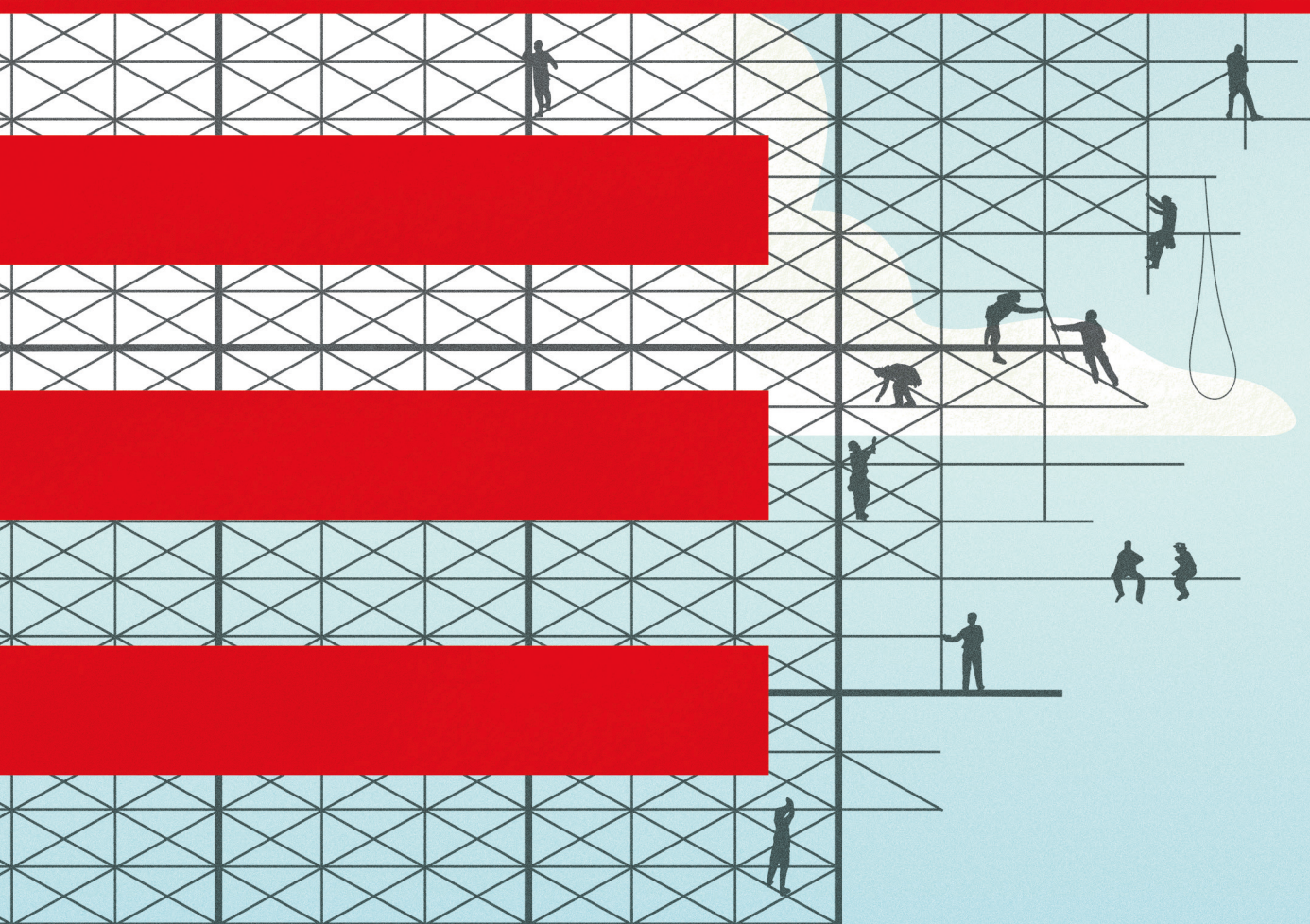
As our climate rapidly changes, it's abundantly clear that it will take thinkers from many different disciplines to effect real global change. That's why, in fall 2017, Christine Marran teamed up with Charlotte Melin, professor and chair of the Department of German, Nordic, Slavic & Dutch; and Dan Philippon, associate professor in the Department of English, to launch CLA's Environmental Humanities Initiative (EHI).

While all three professors routinely examine environmental issues through their own disciplines, their goal with EHI is to create a lasting platform for graduate students from across the University who are interested in working on eco-critical issues. “We're still building the initiative, but it's encouraging that so many graduate students are interested in this,” Marran says. “Some people in the sciences have told me they wish they could do a better job of speaking about what's at stake environmentally, and I know as a humanist that I need to know my science. Environments remind us that they don't care about disciplinary boundaries.”

Learn more at envhum.umn.edu.



WORK





IN PROGRESS

REVISITING THE AMERICAN EXPERIMENT

Five scholars explore our system of government

BY ERIC BLACK

According to legend, as the framers of the Constitution exited the Philadelphia convention in September 1787, a woman asked the eldest and one of the wisest of them, Benjamin Franklin, “What have you given us?” To which he replied: “A republic, if you can keep it.”

We often call the American system of government a “democracy,” but Franklin’s term is perhaps more accurate: a democratic republic. We are governed by women and men we elect. The idea of our system as a model for the world is in our hearts, even though few of the democracies that have come along since have modeled their system on ours. Perhaps they’ve learned from our mistakes.

How goes our experiment in self-government? CLA is full of students and scholars who look at that question. Let’s explore how our democracy is holding up with five of those scholars from five different disciplines. Is American democracy under stress? What kind of stresses and how serious are they? What light can they shed on the question through their particular academic approaches?

ERIKA LEE, HISTORY

The Fear of the Stranger

A romantic self-image of our country often draws upon a “nation of immigrants” narrative, symbolized by the Statue of Liberty, standing in the New York Harbor saying to the world, “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.”

But there’s a darker side to that image, a xenophobic side that undermines the promise of a nation welcoming those who yearn to breathe free. *Xenophobia* is a fear of the other, the outsider, including the foreigner who seeks refuge in one’s country. The original Greek term means “fear of the stranger.”

“You cannot understand... where we are today without specifically understanding the role of immigration in our history and the history of xenophobia as a political issue,” says Regents Professor Erika Lee. Lee’s forthcoming book *America for Americans* traces the enduring history of American xenophobia.

As a Tufts University undergrad, Lee first became interested in the topic when she studied the xenophobic reaction to the early Chinese immigrants to America. That included the so-called Chinese Exclusion Act, passed in 1882 – the first law in American history to single out a specific group for exclusion. It declared a 10-year temporary ban on Chinese laborers and made it difficult for any

Chinese to enter the United States.

The law was repeatedly renewed and the US established the system of immigrant detention and deportation that’s still used today. The “temporary” Chinese Exclusion Act would last 61 years and wasn’t repealed until 1942.

Politicians have long been aware of a reservoir of anxiety in the electorate about immigration, Lee says, and that “our reaction to immigration over the past decades has been from a position of fear.

“During the ‘90s, both parties took on the issue of border security. Under [Democratic president Bill] Clinton, we get the militarization of the US-Mexican border, with increased border patrols.” says Lee. In 2006, Republican president George W. Bush signed the Secure Fence Act, which authorized 700 miles of new fencing on the Mexican border.

Throughout the 2016 campaign, anti-immigrant rhetoric surged. As a historian,

Lee knew that these impulses weren’t new to America. But as the issue moved to the front pages, she believed Americans “needed to reassess our immigration history, to really understand why in 2016, our country, built by immigrants, celebrated as a nation of immigrants, would have elected someone running on these politics and now supporting these increasingly draconian policies the likes of which we had not seen in our lifetimes.

“We need to have an honest, brave conversation about the democratic values on which the country was founded,” Lee says, and to “encourage a broader and deeper understanding of xenophobia.

“Today’s immigration debate is not just about immigration. The reason it’s so important to America is that it’s about who has the power to define who gets to be an American; who gets to enjoy the privileges of being an American citizen and who does not.”

Lee wants to be clear: every nation is entitled to secure and police its borders, to regulate legal immigration and the path to citizenship, and to deal with these matters in what it believes are the national interest, Lee says. The US government is justified in making a judgment, based on the national interest, about how many immigrants and refugees to accept.

“But those positions and laws and regulations do not have to be xenophobic,” Lee says. “They don’t have to be drawn from a place of fear, or a violent and racist worldview of hatred for certain groups.”



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BENJAMIN TOFF, JOURNALISM

The Fate of the Fourth Estate

It's hard to picture a healthy democracy without a healthy journalistic culture. Luckily, great journalism thrives—but so does misleading, false, and biased journalism.

The work of Benjamin Toff, assistant professor of journalism, raises a troubling question: How much difference does good or bad journalism make if people don't want to read, watch, or listen to it?

Among Toff's recent research interests is a group he calls "news avoiders," people who go out of their way to not pay attention, and others who don't go out of their way but simply don't consume much news. He began looking at this phenomenon in the UK. He's now headed to Iowa to study news avoiders there and plans to compare notes with colleagues in Britain and Spain.

The extreme "avoiders" are a relatively small group: less than 10 percent of the US public, Toff estimates. Unsurprisingly, news avoiders are less likely to vote and are less able to describe their political views. Avoiders who do vote say they tend to make their decisions based on information from family members they trust or from social media. Another type of modern news consumers are those who don't use traditional forms of journalism: about 20 percent of Americans report that they often use social media for their news consumption. A much bigger group, roughly 38 percent of the US public, reports actively avoiding the news "sometimes" or "often" but otherwise consumes news periodically, Toff says. The reasons they give are similar to the extreme avoiders: current events are "too negative," "frustrating," "annoying." The American National Election Studies found in 2016 that only about half of US citizens said they "always" or "most of the time" paid attention to "what's going on in government and politics."

On the flip side, to those committed to being well informed, the current access to information is "amazing," Toff says. He finds that this population enjoys feeling part of what he calls "communities of news users," and he believes one factor prompting them to follow the news is the social benefit that flows from membership in that informal community. And news followers vote. It's well established, for example, that newspaper readers vote at high rates—although newspaper readership is shrinking.

So how do these wide disparities in news consumption relate to the health of a society's democracy? "If we're fine with a smaller group of highly engaged people being the only ones who vote, that's one thing," Toff says. "But if want to live in a system where our democracy is responsive to the wide range of the public,

whether they are particularly engaged, we need to worry about these trends."

What about the "Fox-MSNBC effect," a modern phenomenon where right-leaning viewers get their news from Fox News, with its lineup of conservative stars led by Sean Hannity, and liberals are more likely to tune in to Rachel Maddow on MSNBC? "It's actually a small number of people who get most of their news from partisan media," he says. "Most people don't follow much news about politics generally. Pew studies show that most people who rely on TV for news get it from their local network stations, which are much less partisan. Most people are not that political, and most of the news they consume is not political news," Toff adds.

"The concern is not about average people... [but] about the highly engaged political class. Activists, politicians, donor



groups do fall into that category. Perhaps that makes those partisan sources more influential than you might think just based on the ratings, which aren't that high. So it's complicated to evaluate the impact of the Fox-MSNBC phenomenon.

"But I do have concerns about whether our news environment is all that conducive to creating an electorate of people who actually hear the other side, can think through complicated political debates and issues, and understand a variety of different perspectives."

FATIH GUVENEN, ECONOMICS

The Core of the Economy

The health of any nation's democracy is linked to the health of its economy. The United States has long been a wealthy nation, but experiences constant tensions over whether our wealth is reasonably well-distributed or concentrated too heavily. Economic grievances, whether well founded or merely perceived, are a breeding ground for political turmoil.

Fatih Guvenen, the Curtis L. Carlson Professor of Economics, focuses on issues of income and wealth distribution at a level of granular detail and complexity that will blow your mind.

"There has been a huge rise in income inequality over the past 40 years," Guvenen says, but it's often oversimplified and misunderstood – and both the changes and the misunderstandings can pack a political punch.

"The US economy is growing. But not everyone is getting the benefit," Guvenen says. Many are quick to blame the "one percent," but Guvenen says that "redistributing it from the top earners to others does not solve much of the problem." He proposes that rather than focus on CEO pay, policy conversations should consider the enormous inequality in lifetime

Economic grievances, well founded or merely perceived,

are a breeding ground for political turmoil.



income and the fact that America's white working-class males have seen their status and incomes declining over several decades: the median male worker today is on average poorer than his father.

"During the same time, by the way, a median woman's lifetime income went up by 60 percent," Guvenen says, highlighting the decades-long pattern of women entering the workforce and, more recently, breaking into high-paying fields formerly dominated by men.

Much of today's political discourse doesn't address the real reasons certain classes of US jobs are paying less or have disappeared altogether. Far more Americans face job loss or downward pressure on wages for reasons that don't necessarily relate to undocumented workers and globalization.

Undocumented immigrants do not work in high-wage factory jobs. "You can find some small examples where someone might get some benefit out of not having to compete with an undocumented immigrant for a job. But those instances are small and few compared to the big picture of what is causing those workers to feel downward pressure on their incomes, their status, and their quality of life," Guvenen says.

"I used to live near Pittsburgh. All those steel mills, thousands of jobs. Where did those jobs go? Mostly not to China, but rather to technological change," Guvenen explains. "A few years ago, Blockbuster stores were a huge business with almost 10,000 stores worldwide and more than 50,000 employees in the US alone. Where did those jobs go? Not to China. Those jobs disappeared due to technological change."



In fact, Guvenen says that manufacturing is “declining pretty much everywhere in the world. Well-understood dynamics explain it. But if you’re a 50-year-old auto worker, it’s very hard for you to retrain for another occupation that will help you maintain your income.”

Many jobs that exist today won’t exist 20 years from now, and new career fields will continue to emerge. Guvenen advocates shifting to economic policies that invest in education and retraining. “We need to educate workers in jobs that robots cannot do,” Guvenen says. “We need workers with skills that are much harder to automate – skills like creativity, heightened cognitive ability, and the aptitude to manage complex tasks.

“There also has to be a system in which policies are created for retraining workers. Unlike many countries in Europe, the US is very poorly equipped at helping workers to transition into new occupations that require retraining. It’s expensive and the worker often cannot afford it,” he adds.

“We talk a lot about inequality at the top. But this is something that’s affecting huge numbers of people. This is the core of the US economy,” Guvenen says. “Bringing back manufacturing jobs is not a realistic proposition. How to educate and train our citizens in the skills that are in demand are the issues we should be focusing on.”

HOWARD LAVINE, POLITICAL SCIENCE

The Politics of Loyalty

In a properly functioning democracy, should citizens hold beliefs that are best for themselves, for the nation, or for their party? Hold that thought for a beat, and think about the concept of “democratic inversion,” as explained by Professor Howard Lavine.

Lavine has a PhD in psychology (U of M, ’94), but his interest in American politics led him to combine the two fields to specialize in political psychology. He’s director of the U’s Center for the Study of Political Psychology, which focuses on the psychological underpinnings of political behavior. That helps explain his interest in democratic inversion.

“The way things should work is that you form policy preferences. Those should come first – substantive political preferences. ‘I want the government to move to the left or the right in this or that policy

area.’ Then your party identification and candidate choices should reflect those substantive policy preferences,” Lavine explains.

The idea of democratic inversion suggests that it’s working the other way around.

“What many people are doing is identifying with a party first, or perhaps a particular candidate,” Lavine said. “Then they find out what the party, or the candidate’s, preferences are; then change their own minds, to move into alignment with a candidate or partisan position. That’s the ‘inversion.’”

It’s called an inversion because it flips the traditional understanding of how one’s voting behavior should be connected to one’s belief about what policies would be best for themselves, or their state, or the nation. Inversion

suggests that “more and more, people are sticking with the team,” says Lavine. “Their higher priority is ‘beating’ the other team,” which is the other party.

Lavine refers to Harvard sociologist Robert Putnam's book *Bowling Alone*, which highlights the fact that Americans used to participate in more groups, and drew on them for portions of their identities and a feeling of belonging. Membership in those groups added elements to people's identities without bringing politics into the picture.

But those kinds of associations have declined. Meanwhile, “other social identifications that we have always had, by race or gender or geography, by urban or rural identity, by religiosity including what religious denomination we belong to, these are lining up more and more with the political parties,” Lavine says. “So all of who you are aligns with whether you're a Democrat or a Republican.

“Instead of thinking, ‘What would I get out of this?’ you're thinking ‘Where does my group stand, and how does it affect my group versus the standing of other groups?’” Lavine explains. Some of the substantive policy matters that pure democratic theory suggests should work in determining which groups will support which parties are overshadowed by these elements of racial or class identity. “People are less motivated by policy substance than they are with showing their loyalty to the team,” he says.

“It's not what their concrete personal interests are.... It's less about personal beliefs or personal policy benefits, it's about the psychological benefits of party loyalty. The idea of self-esteem is related to the idea that my group is right. Social psychologists call this ‘positive distinctiveness.’ My group is different, and better than other groups. So what's good for my group benefits me, even if doesn't benefit me directly personally.”

ROSE BREWER, AFRICAN AMERICAN & AFRICAN STUDIES

The Convolution of Wealth

Martin Luther King, Jr. famously said that “the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.” Does the history of democracy in America bend toward justice? And does justice mean equal opportunity for all categories of Americans to participate equally in, and benefit equally from, the blessings of our democracy?

Whatever your first reaction to those questions, allow Professor Rose Brewer to deepen your thinking. Brewer is a professor of African American & African studies and affiliated with the American studies; sociology; and gender, women & sexuality studies departments. Her research examines issues of race, class, and gender.

“What we have come to understand as democracy has been expanded certainly from the inception of our Constitution when citizenship, in a 1790 naturalization law, was restricted to white males with property,” Brewer says. Yet America is still engaged in “an ongoing struggle for what I would call real democracy.

“It's not simply that racial nationalism is still a threat, or male domination, or class exploitation—but if we think about the way those interlocking systems work together across race, class, and gender, that takes us quite a way toward understanding who can fully access democratic rights and who can't,” Brewer explains. “That access has never been given without some group standing up and resisting.”

Sometimes, it's about the intersection between wealth and power. “I work on issues of wealth. What is it? Who has access to it? And how much of a role does money play in our politics? Who has access to the decision makers? How much is your voice heard if you're poor?”

What many people are doing is identifying with a party first,

or perhaps a particular candidate. Then they find out what the

party preferences are; then change their own minds

to move into alignment with a candidate or partisan position.

How much of a role does money play in our politics?

Who has access to the decision makers?

How much is your voice heard if you're poor?

Brewer cites the Citizens United case, in which the Supreme Court ruled that corporations have free speech rights and can use their economic power to influence elections. That decision, she says, means that “everyday citizens are juxtaposed to corporate power in the functioning of democracy.”

If history bends toward justice, it doesn't necessarily move steadily in that direction, Brewer cautions. It goes back and forth.

“It took a bloody civil war to end enslavement,” she says. But that didn't guarantee equal access to democracy for the freed slaves. “For a quick moment, there was something called Radical Reconstruction,” the post-Civil War amendments (13th, 14th, and 15th) that guaranteed new rights for all. “But that regime was overthrown and the political

and social rights that came out of that were withdrawn,” Brewer says.

“Look at the Supreme Court decision, *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), which stands for the next phase of racial segregation, which pretended that separate facilities would be equal, or the Jim Crow era.... It would require another almost hundred years to restore the rights promised in the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments [via the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting

Rights Act]. And the goals of those laws still aren't fully realized over 50 years later.

“Then think about the economic component of equality, where an African American woman, on average, makes 66 cents for every dollar a white male makes. And white women make 80 cents.”

Brewer's 2006 book *The Color of Wealth* addresses the maldistribution of wealth. “The number of African Americans who are now classified as middle class is the highest in history, but that status is fragile,” Brewer says. “Many already saw their income levels drop dramatically after the housing market crash in 2008. Additionally, many Black youth will never enter the middle class because of the lack of access to education and a too-high rate of incarceration.”

Brewer cites a Pew study of wealth distribution projecting that by 2053, half of all African Americans will have some wealth and half will have none. “We have to take a long view. Obviously we have moved the needle, over history, on many of these issues. We have to be mindful of those things that have moved the needle, and of where the needle has not moved – and that this involves the lives of tens of millions of people.” **MA**



PHOTO: LISA MILLER



ETERN

AL QUESTIONS. NEW ANSWERS.

**How four CLA scholars
are changing the way
we think about truth
and knowledge**

BY TIM GIHRING
(BA '95, JOURNALISM)

As the world changes with unprecedented speed, disrupting the way we live and work, it's the liberal arts that help us make sense of it. Challenging our assumptions and biases. Expanding the very nature of truth and knowledge, and where we look for it.

Here are four researchers who are pulling at the threads of conventional wisdom, unraveling paradigms in the arts and sciences. What they're fashioning instead is a more equitable, accurate, and balanced understanding of ourselves and what we think we know.



JAN ESTEP, ART

Art, Mindfulness, and Meaning

Several years ago, Jan Estep began to feel overwhelmed. She'd been teaching art at the U since 2002, and the demands of academic life were taking a toll. She enrolled in an intensive mindfulness-based stress reduction course and concluded that she'd been neglecting an entire aspect of her existence.

"If the mind and body are supposed to be in balance," she says, "I was heavily weighted toward the mind." She felt compelled to change the way she taught, the way she made art – and the way she made sense of the world.

Estep grew up in West Virginia and began college as a pre-med major. Eventually, however, she was drawn to philosophy, and after graduate school she began teaching philosophy at Bucknell University, a small liberal arts college in Pennsylvania. "I really do love the big, open-ended, existential questions," she says. "Why are we here? What's my meaning? How do I know what's real?"

Estep realized that she wanted to be more creative in exploring these questions. So she moved to the Midwest to study and teach philosophy at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and began making conceptual art. In 2007, she began a series of maps, including one that traces a route through the rugged Great Salt Lake Desert of Utah. As part of the project, she wrote an essay about the relationship between language and the land, divided it up, and buried it in various places along the route.

By the time she began her last map, in 2011, mindfulness had started to change her approach. It's a map of all the known suicides in the Grand Canyon and includes an essay "about being in this place of awesome beauty," she says, "and imagining people so overcome with pain they can't


see the beauty around them." She spent a week silently visiting the suicide locations along the canyon rim and honoring each person with a meditation.

"For many years, I understood the search for truth exclusively as an intellectual exercise. I think there is truth there, in the mind, but my body knows what it needs and wants too. So I think there's not a singular truth, and any means you can access what's true for you is important."

For the last few years, she's been teaching a class called Art and Yoga, which begins with *pranayama* (breathing exercises), chanting, and yoga before moving into creative exploration. It's as much about the process as the product, which is how she tends to work these

days – meditating before deciding whether to paint or draw or do something completely different. "It seems like my entire education and career trajectory is toward more and more integration. It started with my intellect but then brought in the body and now the spirit."

The combination of art and mindfulness has enabled her to reach more people, not just students who identify as artists. Now she wants to take this teaching on the road, so to speak, outside the academic context. "My work is not just about the art anymore," she says. "It's about helping people ease their suffering, helping them understand they're not alone in this human condition we all share."



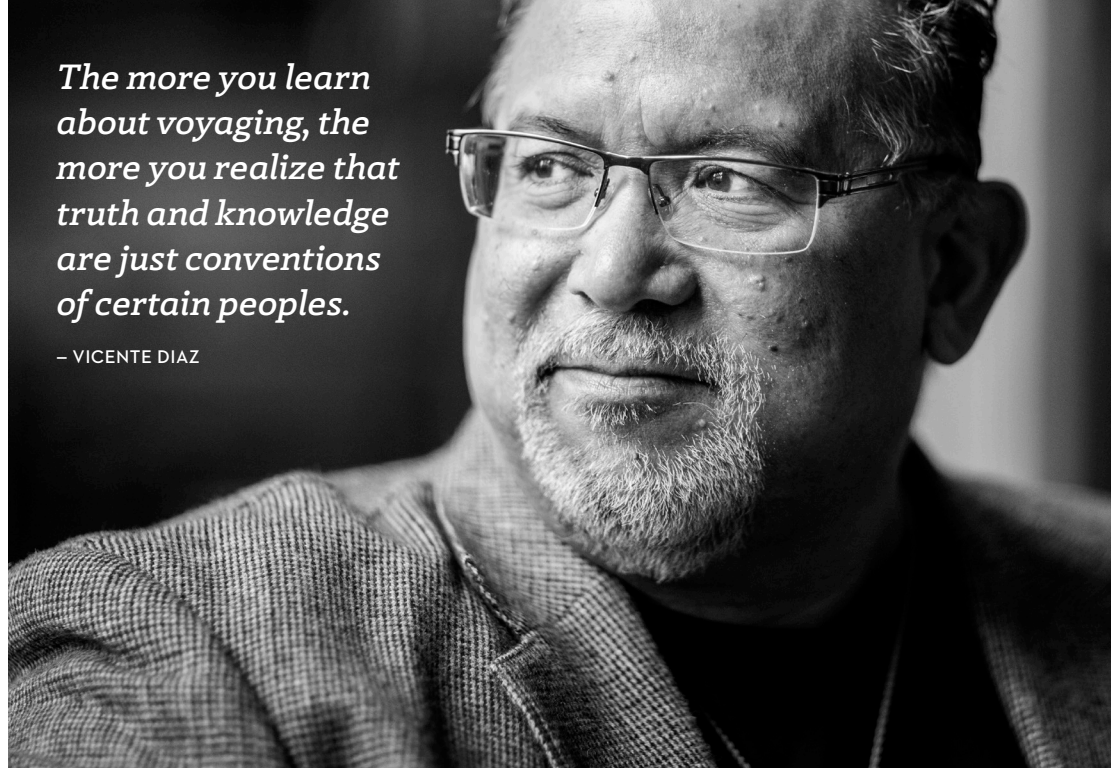
I think there's not a singular truth, and any means you can access what's true for you is important.

– JAN ESTEP

PHOTO: BEN BRASHEAR

The more you learn about voyaging, the more you realize that truth and knowledge are just conventions of certain peoples.

– VICENTE DIAZ



VICENTE DIAZ,
AMERICAN INDIAN STUDIES

Where Islands Move

When Vicente Diaz was growing up on the island of Guam, a territory of the United States in the Pacific, he knew very little about canoes. He was a jock who played baseball and basketball and football. When he left Guam in 1980, it was to play football for the University of Hawaii.

Then in 1983 he saw a film called *The Navigators* about the nascent revival of Pacific Islander canoe voyaging, and realized what he'd been missing: his heritage. A great seafaring tradition had enabled people from Southeast Asian islands to populate the Pacific – thousands of islands across a vast area – but was nearly lost after colonization, along with the memory that it had been done. Only in 1976 had researchers shown it was possible, sailing a traditional canoe from Hawaii to Tahiti.

Diaz wanted in. After earning his doctorate, he returned home and taught his island's history at the University of Guam. He worked with navigators from the Micronesian island of Polowat, where the tradition had survived. He helped his community build the first canoe house in Guam in centuries, refurbish a sailing canoe, and acquire another. He spent most of the 1990s, Diaz says, "challenging centuries of colonial perspectives that I'd internalized."

Diaz was drawn to the U in 2015 partly because of the region's canoe culture. In his office in Scott Hall, where he teaches in the Department of American Indian Studies, he has models of a traditional Pacific outrigger canoe, an Ojibwe

birchbark canoe, and a Dakota dugout canoe – modes of travel that belie the colonial notion of native people as "stuck in time and place."

"The West has never associated native people with mobility," Diaz says, "except in the condescending sense of nomads, to suggest that they don't have a strong connection to the land – so it's okay to take it. Movement, progress, technological development, all that is somehow the exclusive preserve of the West."

Before joining the U, Diaz searched the internet for Pacific Islanders in Minnesota and discovered the town of Milan, where Micronesian immigrants comprise most of the population. Diaz introduced himself, and soon they were sailing his 20-foot outrigger canoe on a nearby lake. He connected with Dakota leaders, too, with help from Dakota colleagues at the U and elsewhere. With their blessing, he and the Micronesians sailed the outrigger near Fort Snelling in 2017 – a confluence of canoe cultures.

"The more you learn about voyaging, the more you realize that truth and knowledge are just conventions of certain peoples," Diaz says. There are other forms of knowledge just as true. The ancient

Pacific navigation method known as *etak*, for instance, appears radically different from Western methods; navigators at sea think of their canoe as stationary while the islands are imagined as moving in relation to the stars. Yet it's a form of science, a study of stars and currents and local ecologies, and its principles can be applied to some of the most pressing issues of our time.

Diaz is working on a virtual reality program, with Dan Keefe in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, that simulates parts of Micronesia, enabling islanders displaced by climate change or other threats to reconnect with their homeland. This summer, as part of an initiative by several U researchers to revitalize traditional ecological knowledge, he's bringing a master navigator from Micronesia to Milan, Minnesota. He envisions the islanders in a park, surrounded by cornfields, with a map of the constellations. They put on virtual-reality glasses and are suddenly in a canoe, paddling the Pacific, following the stars. Without ever moving, they're going home.

J.B. SHANK, HISTORY

Entangled Ways of Knowing

In a recent talk at St. Olaf College, J.B. Shank showed a slide purporting to be a taxonomy of the world's animals as defined in ancient China, including "those that belong to the emperor, embalmed ones, those that are trained, fabulous ones, stray dogs," etc. It was a joke—a wry passage from a Jorge Luis Borges essay—with a serious point: there's more than one way to understand the world and insisting on a "right way" is, well, silly.

Shank questions the emphasis on STEM, the technical disciplines grouped as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Elevating these aspects of knowledge everywhere from preschools to universities implies that they're the definitive means of knowing, he says.

"There are ways of knowing that are not strictly objective, mathematical, or quantitative, and they're central to understanding an ecosystem or the generation of life or even physical, mechanical systems." In fact, he argues, "Historically, the arts and sciences were not opposites; they were very much entangled."

Shank grew up in Ohio and Massachusetts and after college taught history and art history at private schools in California and the Washington, DC area. While in DC, he took evening classes at St. John's College, which eschews majors in favor of reading early Western thinkers like Euclid and Aristotle. He was struck by how little their work conformed to modern academic disciplines, drawing no hard lines between math and faith, reason and mysticism. Western thought, Shank realized, is a mutt.

Historically, the arts and sciences were not opposites; they were very much entangled.

— J.B. SHANK

At Stanford, where he began his PhD in 1992, it became clear to Shank that the history we've inherited—of this stark boundary between science and the arts—was at some point distorted. "I recognized there's a historical reality that's been effaced, and there's a lot of historical work to be done actively dispelling these modernist myths."

Shank joined the U in 2000. In 2008, he published *The Newton Wars and the Beginning of the French Enlightenment*, in which he challenges the notion that Isaac Newton's solitary genius jump-started the modern era. (He followed it with 2018's *Before Voltaire: The French Origins of "Newtonian" Mechanics, 1680–1715*.) What happened to polymaths like Newton and Galileo, he believes, was a kind of reimagining to fit a narrow view of science—intensified during the Cold War, when achievements like the moon landing were seen as triumphs of rationalism. Newton, who wrote Biblical criticism and blended mathematics with religion, became "someone you might run into at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory."

This fall, Shank will teach a course he developed with Michael Gaudio, chair of the art history department, called *Age of Curiosity: Art and Knowledge in Europe, 1400–1800*. It explores how some of the most recognizable artists of centuries past—Da Vinci, Vermeer, Rembrandt—were also deeply engaged in the sciences and how the thinkers regarded as scientists were, equally, artists.

Our instinct to range widely in the search for truth never really died, of course. In 2014, Shank became founding director of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Consortium for the Study of the Premodern World, based at the U. It's a way for various centers of historical research to explore the liminal moments when we supposedly lurched toward the light, collaboratively and across disciplines. "It's a world that still exists, if we let it operate."

SNIGDHANSU CHATTERJEE, STATISTICS

Trillions of Dimensions

Human perception is notoriously feeble. We can see two dimensions, like a painting, fairly well; and with effort we can see three dimensions—the way we perceive ourselves. Beyond that, most of us are at a loss. Which is why statistical research of “big data,” like Snigdhanu Chatterjee studies, is so useful.

Complex systems, like climate or our brains, generate huge amounts of data with trillions of dimensions. “We cannot see them but we can design an algorithm to see patterns in them,” says Chatterjee. As director of the U’s Institute for Research on Statistics and its Applications, he and his researchers have been looking for patterns within seemingly impenetrable problems. How do neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer’s affect the brain? What can we learn by comparing climate

models? Can we anticipate and de-escalate political violence?

Chatterjee grew up in eastern India and entered statistics essentially by accident—he won a fellowship to the Indian Statistical Institute. It offered about three dollars a month at a time when Indian colleges cost about 20 cents a month to attend, so he followed the money. He eventually taught at the University of Manchester before coming to the U in 2002. Chatterjee had multiple offers then, but during his only visit to Minnesota, he crossed the pedestrian bridge from the East Bank to the West Bank and noticed a quote emblazoned on the bridge by a student organization. The quote said something about standing beside the river in contemplation from Hermann Hesse’s novel *Siddhartha*. “Everything being equal,” he says, “I liked the bridge.”

A couple of years later, an old friend from India who studies climate and water systems reached out seeking Chatterjee’s insight. “The first thing I told him was, unless I see a data set, I don’t believe it,” he says. It was his entrée into studying climate change. His team has since developed a methodology for comparing climate models developed around the world to understand what patterns emerge, what some models can predict, and the nature of extreme events like severe drought or severe rainfall.

He’s taken a similar approach to learning whether extremes may also factor in neurodegenerative disease. With the data from brain images—the peaks and valleys of neural activity—his team can create algorithms to see what is otherwise difficult to observe: the genesis of disease in the brain, starting perhaps with extreme changes in the firing of neurons.

Statistical analysis has become a hot subject. The internet is allowing more and more information to be archived and converted to data—the raw material of statistics. “In the last five to ten years, there has been a growing consciousness that almost anything is data,” Chatterjee says. “Your fridge can generate data, your commute can generate data, your Twitter handle can generate data.” There has never been so much for statisticians to work with, and so much interest in their work.

“It’s pretty much the only way you can get any other science to operate,” he says. “You can investigate a theory, but how do you know if you’re getting closer to truth? You have to put that theory together with the data, and that involves statistics. Unless you do that, it’s just pure imagination.” **MA**



*Unless I see a data set,
I don't believe it.*

— SNIGDHANSU CHATTERJEE

CLA Students

CREATING NEW KNOWLEDGE

THE COLLEGE of Liberal Arts prepares students to become independent and original thinkers, innovators in their chosen fields, creators of meaning in their lives, productive citizens, and leaders in their communities and the world.

CLA students work alongside world-renowned faculty committed to developing new ideas and knowledge across disciplines. Together they lead breakthrough research initiatives to solve problems that touch our lives every day. *Why do we behave as we do? How do we apply discoveries in science and medicine to improve lives? What makes life worth living?*

Read about three CLA students whose research and creative projects are addressing historical traumas, examining psycholinguistics, and counteracting stereotypes.

These stories are pulled from features written by undergraduate students in CLAgency, a brand communications agency comprising 40 students.

The agency increases college and department visibility by creating engaging content for websites, newsletters, and social media channels. CLAgency supports the dean's Career Readiness Initiative by providing hands-on training and valuable work experience for CLA undergraduates.

Participants in the program graduate with networking experience, an in-demand skill set, and an impressive portfolio that sets them up for success in a variety of career paths. [Learn more at clagency.umn.edu](https://clagency.umn.edu).



A hard look at history

COLIN WALKER WINGATE is pursuing a major in English and a minor in gender, women, & sexuality studies (GWSS). He considers gender, sexuality, and capitalism in his studies and research as a Black feminist. Wingate presented two research projects at the National Women's Studies Association Conference in 2018.

The first project explores ideas about the ghosts of people who died on slave ships or were thrown overboard. Wingate describes "hauntology" as a tradition of thought that deals with ghosts and haunting not solely as supernatural, but as part of the discourse of historical traumas that demand we view violence beyond the boundaries of the past and the present, or of the living and the dead.

His second project looks at the perception of Black women as rebellious or unruly in a Eurocentric society. "After graduating in 2019, I plan to further my knowledge of Black studies and GWSS in graduate school. My professors, including Zenzele Isoke, Diyah Larasati, Richa Nagar, and Alexis Gumbs, have inspired me to pursue a doctorate in feminist studies," Wingate says. "I hope to become a professor to teach, do research, and affect students' lives the way my professors have affected mine."

A matter of semantics and syntax

ANNIKA KOHRT has majors in linguistics and German and minors in neuroscience and computer science. While her four areas of study aren't typically associated with each other, she has found exactly how to combine her interests. "What I found really beneficial about [studying German]," Kohrt says, "was that it offers a cultural lens and a historical lens on language and on the pieces that connect to that." Her wide range of coursework gives her an interdisciplinary, intercultural edge, and her recent research in psycholinguistics proves how beneficial that is.

Psycholinguistics looks at "how your brain produces and comprehends language and

the structures behind it and the rules that influence it," Kohrt explains. She worked in the Minnesota Syntax and Psycholinguistics Lab in 2018, where she used self-paced readings in combination with electroencephalography to study the relationship between syntax and semantics.

Her research shows that that relationship might be more complex than previously thought. "It seems that [your brain processes] the syntax first and [you] make your predictions based on the syntactic structure of what you're hearing, but if you hear a specific type of semantics, then you go back and understand the sentence in a



different way," she explains. Kohrt presented these findings at the 2018 CUNY Sentence Processing Conference at the University of California, Davis.

Kohrt is a Talle Family Scholarship recipient. The award covers the full cost of tuition for 10 CLA students during their senior year.


Changing the narrative

There are at least two sides to every story. Multiple perspectives, ideas, and histories. But what happens when one narrative is consistently put forward? And what if that narrative oppresses the people it's about? JILL FISH, a PhD candidate in psychology,

works to change that single narrative and create more equitable spaces for Native people.

Fish grew up on the Tuscarora Reservation in New York, giving her a deep understanding of the cultural framework of her community. "I was immersed in the culture and history of my tribe... and there was a lot of strength and resilience in that. At the same time, there was a lot of oppression and effects of oppression, like poverty, substance abuse, and trauma," Fish explains. "I was curious: how do these things that seem so opposite [strength and oppression] exist in one place, and how do people navigate both these things?"

Fish's dissertation project is the Native American Digital Storytelling Workshop. She and her team of research assistants

visit urban centers in Minnesota to host workshops where people come in and share their stories. The team records each writer telling their life story, their lived experiences, or their history. Each story helps to change the long-held, single-sided narrative about Native populations and empowers members of Minnesota's Native communities to give voice to their own strength. Fish hopes to continue collecting these stories and create a website so that anyone can access first-person accounts of Native experiences. 

Fish's work was supported by funds from the University of Minnesota's Grand Challenges Initiative and the Dr. Jo-Ida C. Hansen Dissertation Research Award.



Calling to Question

150 YEARS OF LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



THE HISTORY of the College of Liberal Arts is now 150 years old, and three floors below ground on the University of Minnesota's West Bank campus, over 200 boxes contain that history. These boxes represent only a fraction of what's held by University Archives, and it's easy to feel awed by the sheer scale of these repositories. It's also easy to be daunted, even defeated, by their contents.

Box after box, folder after folder, bureaucracy is a common feature of the College's records. That is the nature of an archive, especially one at a large institution like the University of Minnesota. Another is that the archive most often immortalizes the voices of those with positional power at the U and elsewhere.

Another challenge to telling this history is simply its vastness: over 150 years, countless students, faculty, and staff—each with their own story—have passed through CLA. Departments have been created and have changed, merged, or disappeared. Capturing all the stories of a century and a half is an impossible task.



By Noah Barth, exhibit curator (MA '19, heritage studies & public history)

It's hard to know where to look, or for that matter, what to look for. By leveraging the coded language in memos, meeting minutes, and budgets, the personal stories that comprise the College of Liberal Arts can be unveiled. Drawing attention to bureaucracy in the archive can illuminate its oppression of individuals and groups—and how it works to erase counternarratives in the archive.

Calling to Question brings forth these counternarratives in the archive to highlight stories from CLA that demonstrate how questioning has been used to challenge the status quo and create a more equitable learning environment. Other stories feature a different questioning—questioning the value and usefulness of liberal arts and even of academic freedom, the very foundation of a liberal education.

Does liberal education belong to the academy?

Ask the female Ojibwe and Dakota language teachers who were not considered faculty but held knowledge and wisdom for their culture far beyond the understanding of anyone at the University in 1969.

Calling to Question: 150 Years of Liberal Arts Education at the University of Minnesota offers a glimpse into the history of CLA with photographs, documents, and other materials—telling the story of a college that has endured for 150 years. The archival exhibit, curated by Noah Barth, ran at the Elmer L. Andersen Library from March to mid-June 2019.

Can comedy be a tool for education?

Ask the sophomores in 1876 and 1877 who were expelled for satirizing the juniors and University faculty, or the players of a 2006 production of *The Pope and the Witch*, which discussed difficult topics of addiction, AIDS, and abortion—despite protests from Catholics.

How has racism been embedded throughout the College of Liberal Arts over time?

Ask the Afro-American Action Committee in 1969 or the Latin Liberation Front in 1971, which lobbied for the African American Studies and Chicano Studies departments, respectively. Ask the Black students in 1939 who protested a racist production of the play *Porgy* or Forrest Wiggins, the first full-time African American professor who was fired with unjust cause. **MA**

View documents and images from the exhibit at cla.umn.edu/callingtoquestion.

On Purpose

PORTRAIT OF THE LIBERAL ARTS

Individuals from across CLA's **31 academic departments** participated in **60 portraits**, taken at **60 different locations** over **two semesters**. **Hundreds** of faculty, students, alumni, and staff contributed to make this exhibition happen, **186 people** were photographed, and **2,779 photos** were taken for this project.

FOR 150 YEARS countless faculty, students, staff, and alumni have made what is now the College of Liberal Arts. How can one, then, represent 150 years of hard work, struggle, inquiry, study, delivery of information, and service?

On Purpose: Portrait of the Liberal Arts shows only a fraction of time in the history of the College of Liberal Arts. More than portraits, these are documented encounters with remarkable people who are passionate about their roles as alumni, as students, as professors, and as staff. This collection highlights who we are right now; this is how we look, this is what we are interested in, this is our work, and this is how we present ourselves to the camera.

In today's world, where communication through technology pushes for individualism and isolation, where we're becoming less and less sensitive to the human condition, portraiture becomes increasingly important for preserving our humanity, culture, care, and love.

I employ portraiture not just because we simply like to watch people's faces; I take portraits to have personal contact with the

subjects I photograph. Faces are malleable, persistently changing, continually transformed, constantly modified to portray emotion, sentiment, excitement, passion, or disdain. When we encounter a portrait, we dare to stare. We immediately interpret the moment the picture was taken and that person's attitude. We try to have a conversation with the mute sitter.

I hope that throughout the years we will look back at these portraits, continuing the conversation with the people I was so grateful to meet. **MA**

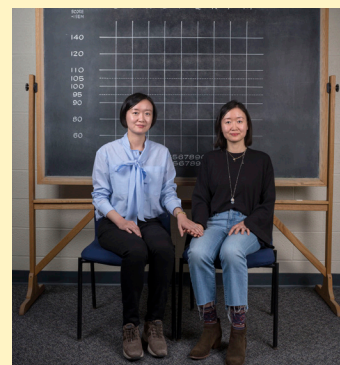
The exhibition received enthusiastic reviews from the media. This review encouraged even non-CLA visitors to check out the gallery:

"They'll get a great sense of the depth of the work that's done here," [College of Liberal Arts Dean John] Coleman said. "They'll get a sense of the power of the inquiry and its relevance. I look around and see the deep dignity of the people in the photos. This is deeply moving to me."

It was to us, too. Tavera's beautiful portraits are worth whatever time you can spend on them. There's humor and wit, seriousness and playfulness, the dignity Coleman mentioned, and a shared sense of pride.

— MinnPost

View the exhibition online at cla.umn.edu/onpurpose.



On Purpose: Portrait of the Liberal Arts is a collection of 60 photographs. Departments and programs partnered with photographer Xavier Tavera to envision their images and to write the narratives that accompany each photograph. *On Purpose* was on display at the Katherine E. Nash Gallery in the Regis Center for Art during 2018's fall semester.



By Xavier Tavera,
photographer (MFA '18,
photography)

We are Liberal Arts



IN THE COLLEGE of Liberal Arts, we're creating tomorrow's thought leaders. To celebrate our 150th anniversary, we've built a library of video stories highlighting our alumni – confident, active citizens poised to take risks, confront challenges, and thrive in an ever-changing world. This video series, *We Are Liberal Arts*, was honored with the University of Minnesota Alumni Association's Program Extraordinaire Award. ▶ [View the full collection at z.umn.edu/wala](https://z.umn.edu/wala).



I'm proud of being engaged in my community.

– CATHERINE GONZALEZ-KLANG

▶ **CATHERINE GONZALEZ-KLANG** (BA '09, Spanish studies) interprets for patients and families at Hennepin Healthcare, ensuring that hospital patients who don't speak English get a voice in their healthcare. "I am really excited to come to work every day knowing that I'm going to be able to serve a population that needs to be able to communicate with their medical staff," she says.

"When I went to CLA, it was important to realize that my education didn't just end with receiving the degree. It's a lifelong process," Gonzalez-Klang says. "When you're a student at the College of Liberal Arts, it's really hard to know if you'll be happy in your job. I think it's important to think about different possibilities that you might not have known existed. Explore them at CLA, seize opportunities, and see where it takes you."



My liberal arts degree really helped me understand that we are global citizens.

– ALEXIS YEBOAH

▶ **ALEXIS YEBOAH** (BA '12, psychology; MPH '15, public health administration & policy) was a community coordinator at the Minneapolis-St. Paul location of Impact Hub, a global community of 15,000 social innovators working to make the world a better place. She welcomed young professionals to the Twin Cities and helped them get connected. Her experience at Impact Hub helped her realize her "personal mission that I want to be a doer of change. My liberal arts degree really has prepared me to be that change agent," Yeboah says.

"Everybody has an individual story and an individual skill set that is valuable," she adds. "I was able to take courses with all different types of people... I was able to look at how society has an impact on the individual, and then I was also able to understand how culture, language, and background really impacts other people."



In so many ways, we are liberal arts thinkers.

- ASHLEY PAGUYO EL SHOURBAGY and AHMED EL SHOURBAGY

► **ASHLEY PAGUYO EL SHOURBAGY** (BA '09, journalism) and **AHMED EL SHOURBAGY** (BA '08, economics) are a husband-and-wife duo who co-run @DogsOfInstagram, which currently has more than four million followers. They've also started a company together, Lucy and Co., where they sell high-quality merchandise for dogs.

"Given the fact that we run two very different businesses, but all simultaneously, I would definitely say that our liberal arts degrees have allowed us to be versatile thinkers, adaptable, and just able to marry those two different businesses," says Paguyo El Shourbagy.

"I wear a lot of hats," El Shourbagy says. "I do a lot of different things—some analytical, some creative—and I think having a well-rounded education from the College of Liberal Arts prepared me for that kind of career. Maybe in some ways, without knowing it, I pushed myself to that type of role, because I have a wider toolset."



This is a big world. You don't have to just do one thing.

- IAN TRUITNER

► **IAN TRUITNER** (BA '95, theatre arts) moved to Los Angeles a year after earning his degree from the College of Liberal Arts. His background combines military service, theater, filmmaking, business development, and technology. Truitner is now a filmmaker and entrepreneur, and he thanks CLA for helping him learn to see circumstances from a larger perspective.


"A degree in liberal arts is a cross section of humanity," he says. "You're not just learning one aspect of how things work and centralizing your focus into that. You're learning small bits about everything... CLA really helped expand my mind. I think that, as a result of that, I never really saw obstacles to what I could potentially accomplish because it was a cross section of everything."



I love learning. Learning is something you're going to be doing your whole life. You might as well enjoy it.

- BRITTANY RESCH

► **BRITTANY RESCH** (BA '12, global studies) works as an attorney filing class action complaints on behalf of consumers. "I represent people. I'm the voice for them in court," she says. During her time working as a CLA Ambassador, she found her first job in law before she was even a law student.

"The College of Liberal Arts uniquely prepared me to be a lawyer because it gave me a wider lens from which to look at problems, to look at cases, to approach thinking through situations and to come up with new ideas," Resch says. "It really surprised me in law school when I found out that my multifaceted approach was a unique strength." 

Bringing the World to Minnesota and Minnesota to the World

Ours is a global world, marked by unprecedented flows of information, ideas, capital, and people across borders. CLA faculty and students address global challenges through research and applied experiences grounded in knowledge of societies and cultures around the world.

Gifts to CLA have far-reaching and significant impact abroad and at home.

Read their stories at z.umn.edu/globalimpact.



Alex West Steinman (BA '11, journalism) is making a difference right here at home. "I believe when women and nonbinary individuals step into their economic power, they put their resources back into their community and their own personal and professional development. I'm proud to create space for the magic that happens when community comes together." West Steinman graduated at the top of her class and was recognized with the prestigious Selmer Birkelo Scholarship.



Associate Professor **Akosua Obuo Addo** observes how music in the classroom leads to success for early childhood and primary-school students in Jamaica. "I have seen the impact of music in children's lives and on teacher education both while teaching in Jamaica and through the annual forums I lead at the School of Music." The Parker Sanders Fund for Music; the Organization for Strategy Development in Jamaica; and the Jamaican Ministry of Education, Youth, and Information support Obuo Addo's collaborations in Jamaica.



Hunter Johnson (MA '20) is producing a documentary on the role of the press in combating enforced disappearances and impunity in Mexico. "Since 2006, over 40,000 people have disappeared in Mexico. This film illustrates how exceptional reporters work with victims' families to demand state accountability in the search for their loved ones, helping to put an end to this ongoing human-rights crisis." Johnson received the Dunn Peace Research Scholarship to investigate and film this project in Mexico.



At the Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina, **Maria Elisa Belfiori** (PhD '13, economics) studies the design of climate policies. "With an average lifetime of 300 years, carbon dioxide emissions matter to unborn generations the most. That's why I study optimal climate policies that internalize both the economic externality and the intergenerational aspects of climate change." The Henry R. Sandor Fellowship in Environmental Economics fueled her studies at the U of M.

Thaddeus Kaszuba-Dias (BFA '19, acting) spent a semester at the iconic Globe Theater in London. "This opportunity helped me gain a global perspective on the legacy of theatre internationally and inspired me to set career goals to contribute to that legacy." Donors to the University of Minnesota/BFA Actor training program made this experience possible.



A Hedley Donovan Scholarship sent **Shayna Allen** (BA '19, history) to Ukraine to gather testimonies from participants of a Peace Summit in Kiev. "With the annexation of Crimea, the Russian-Ukrainian War on the East, and the new leadership in Ukraine, I decided it was an important time to shed light on the work of Ukrainian activists who are pursuing the democratic development of Ukraine."



Professor **Nabil Matar**'s work on early modern travelers, traders, and captives in the Mediterranean world has opened new avenues of study, not only because he has provided the first English translation of several 17th- and 18th-century Arabic travel narratives, but also because of his astute analysis of the religious, political, and cultural exchange between Arabs and Europeans, Muslims and Christians. He holds the Samuel Russell Chair in the Humanities. "I grew up relating to two religions, Christianity and Islam, very intensely. And that's what I still do: how can you bring them together?"



Martin Miller (BA '18, Asian languages & literature), received the Lawrence Scholarship for Experiential Learning and spent a semester in Shanghai, China. During his time abroad, he interned at a film production company, Pearl Studio. The experience paved the way for launching his own TV show. "If I could do it again, I'd do it in a heartbeat."

Professor **Daniel Schroeter** holds the Amos S. Deinard Memorial Chair in Jewish History. He studies Muslim-Jewish relations from early modern times to the present in the Middle East and North Africa, with a particular focus on Morocco. "In an age when all the public hears about is intercommunal violence and intractable conflict in the Middle East, it is instructive to learn that amid the interfaith tensions there is a long history of coexistence between Muslims and Jews, a shared culture and experience that can be the foundation for mutual understanding and peace."



Farrah Tek's parents immigrated to the US in 1981 after surviving the Khmer Rouge's totalitarian rule. Now she's a PhD candidate and N. Marbury Efimenco Fellow in Political Science conducting field research on labor and land groups in Cambodia. "In the barest sense, I study how so-called 'powerless' people make something out of nothing under the most unfavorable of conditions. Without romanticizing notions of the resiliency of struggling communities, my research is a story of human agency in one of the most repressive contexts."



Associate Professor **Michael Wilson** studies chimpanzees to unlock greater understanding of our own evolution. "The behavior and biology of chimpanzees provide fascinating insights into the possible lives of our ancestors. They offer a context for understanding ourselves today." He received a Talle Faculty Research Award to conduct field research at Gombe National Park in Tanzania.



Jasmine Trang Ha (PhD '18, sociology) is a fellow at the Australian National University in Canberra. "People tend to view international students as tourists and that view overlooks their concurrent day-to-day experience as migrants living for several years in an increasingly restrictive immigration regime. My research shows the impact of the migrant experience on international students' migration patterns both into and within the United States." The Don A. Martindale Fellowship supported her studies at the U.

PHILANTHROPY AND THE FUTURE

For 150 years, giving has transformed the College of Liberal Arts. Donors have supported our most ambitious projects and our students' greatest achievements. Together, donors have made 239,566 gifts to CLA totaling \$343 million. Their vision and generosity enrich every aspect of the CLA experience.

Here are just some of the ways donors have made a difference:



Secured Minnesota's place among top destinations for the arts when they created the **Barbara Barker Center for Dance**, the **Regis Center for Art**, and **Ted Mann Concert Hall**



Amplified Minnesota's reputation for producing frontier economic research by establishing the **Heller-Hurwicz Economics Institute**, which honors the legacies of Nobel Prize-winning faculty Leonid Hurwicz and Walter Heller



Introduced **Scholars of the College** to inspire and reward innovative, field-shaping research that pushes the boundaries of knowledge and artistic practice



Increased **scholarships for internships** by 1466% (not a typo!), from a pool of \$300,000 in July 2011 to a scholarship pool of \$4.7 million today



Recognized exemplary teaching with the annual **Arthur "Red" and Helene B. Motley Exemplary Teaching Awards**



The late Myrtle and Charles Stroud gave the largest gift in the college's history—\$14 million—to establish the **Charles and Myrtle Stroud Scholarship**, changing the lives of nearly 200 students each year

Today, we're in the midst of the largest campaign in CLA's history, with a goal of raising \$150 million by June 30, 2021. Through our *Shattering Expectations* campaign, donors are preparing a new generation to address the world's toughest problems with empathy and imagination, and to lead with curiosity and compassion.

CAMPAIGN BY THE NUMBERS

138

million dollars raised to date

59

new funds to support graduate students

110

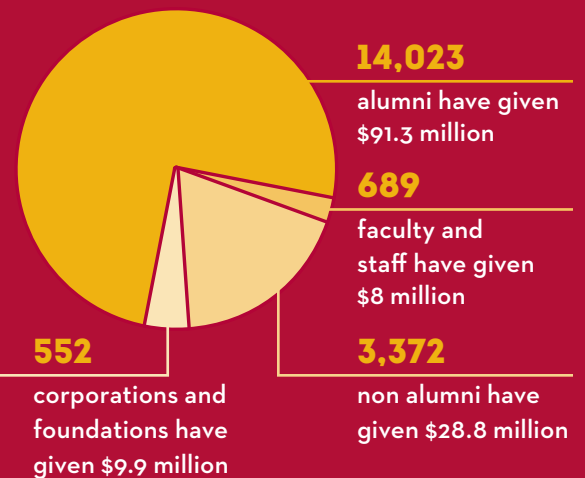
funds to support undergraduate students

67

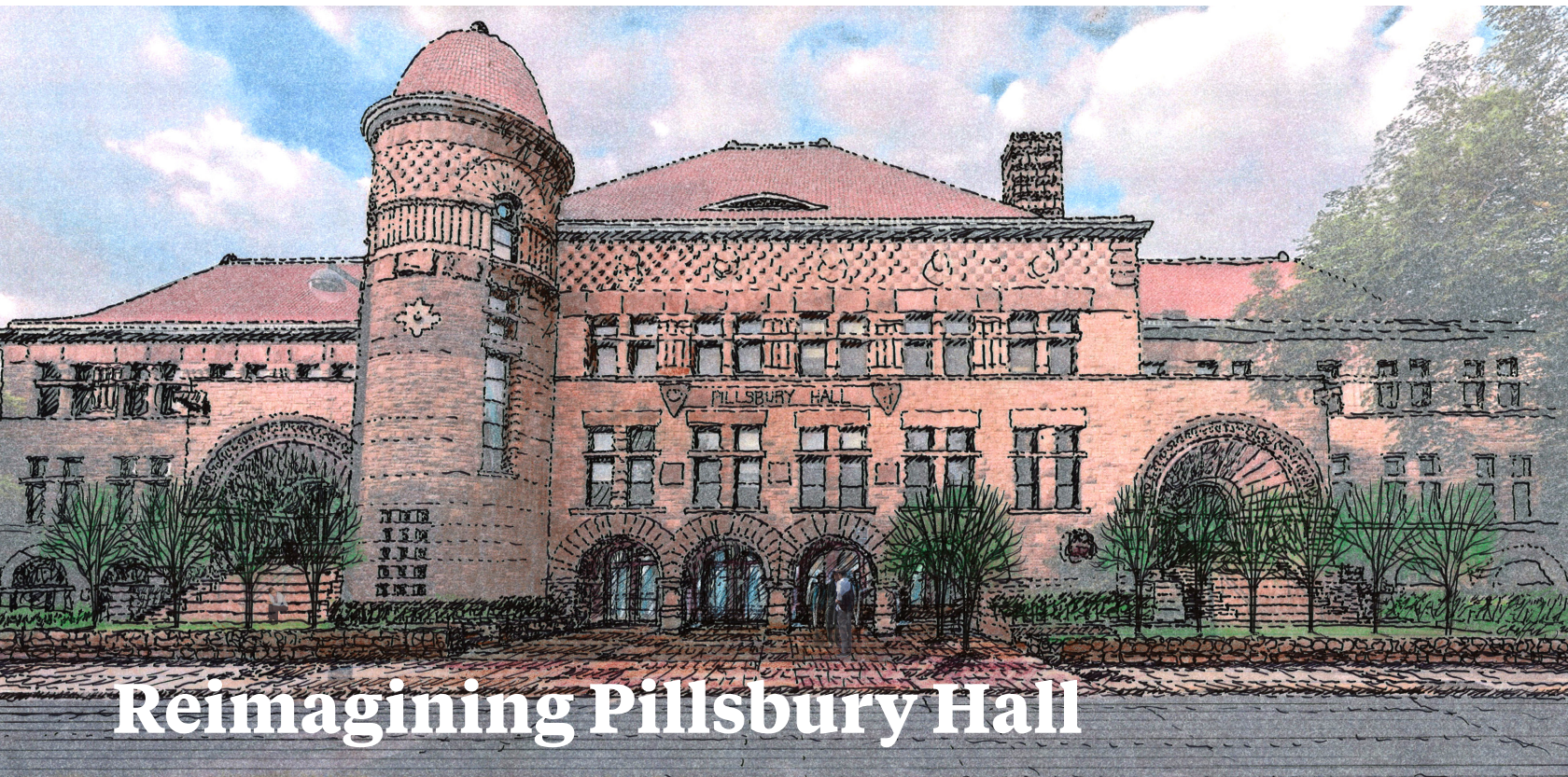
new funds to support faculty research and community engagement

1,100

scholarships awarded for the 2018-19 academic year totaling nearly \$4 million—double what we awarded just 10 years ago



Want to leave your mark on CLA?
Visit cla.umn.edu/give to learn more
and make your gift.



Reimagining Pillsbury Hall

There is no spot on earth I more prefer to be remembered than on this campus... there is no factor that can do more for the state and the nation than the University, with its wide open doors ever welcoming all to enter. — JOHN SARGENT PILLSBURY, 1900

Considered the University's first benefactor, John S. Pillsbury made a gift of \$150,000 in 1889 to erect Pillsbury Hall. He said at the time, "All I ask is that this institution will be made one that this great state can be proud of... that this institution shall be kept for all time, broad in its scope, powerful in its influence."

In the 130 years since, the iconic building has been home to animal biology, botany, geology, mineralogy, and paleontology, complete with lecture halls, recitation rooms, laboratories, and museum spaces. In the 1920s the entire basement of the building served as the student health service with a 27-bed capacity. Long considered one of the University's architectural treasures, Pillsbury Hall stands as an enduring link to its 19th-century origins.

Today, we're reimagining Pillsbury Hall as a 21st-century home for the Department of English, its top-ranked Creative Writing Program, and the innovative new Liberal Arts Engagement Hub. Nestled in the heart of the humanities district, Pillsbury Hall will become a place where campus and community partners collaborate on solutions to the most pressing issues of our time. When it reopens in 2021, Pillsbury Hall will provide students with classrooms and study spaces designed for how they learn today: wired, active, through practice, and in community. **MA**

Learn more about the project and how you can be a part of history: cla.umn.edu/pillsbury-hall-renovation.

When I was a child, stories were a form of escapism from poverty and loneliness. Now stories have become a place to preserve culture and a medium for humanizing marginalized voices; they remain a place of joy. If stories keep history and ourselves alive, they need a home, too.

— MAY LEE-YANG (BA '06, ENGLISH; MFA CANDIDATE)

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MESSAGES FOR THE FUTURE

[DO NOT OPEN UNTIL 2068]

During the 150th anniversary year, we asked our community to contribute their thoughts about the future of CLA. We asked, What is one change you expect on campus in 50 years? What will we be studying 50 years from now? These are a few of the responses placed into a time capsule that will be opened on our 200th anniversary.

“ The changes I’ve seen in just 41 years since I graduated in ‘78 are incredible. As for 2069, I can only guess. But a liberal education will still be crucial for the advancement of humankind. ”

“ The latest Mars-terraforming proposals, how & why we ignored income inequality warnings, and [how to] figure out how to read cursive! ”

“ How to better protect our environment from the byproducts of current society. ”