



DIRECTIONS

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UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Winter 2023

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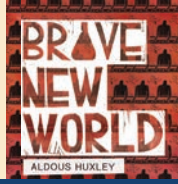
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Cover photo: Student Tiffany Mack (*right*) speaks with Grace Ananda, Africa Policy and Advocacy Manager (*left*), in the United Nations General Assembly Hall. Photo courtesy of Tiffany Mack. *See article, page 4.*

The College Changes Lives



Dear Ichabods,

It has been a tremendous honor to serve as the interim dean of Washburn's College of Arts and Sciences these past six months. I have had the pleasure of leading a faculty that is the most dedicated to students of any around. I have worked with staff members who go the extra mile and then some to support this faculty and our students. And I have gotten to interact with Washburn students in ways that have left me more impressed than ever by their passion and commitment to cross the stage to graduation and follow their dreams.

It is an exciting time to be an Ichabod. New building projects, like the new recital hall and renovation to Henderson Learning Resources Center, open space to imagine the future of our campus. New administrative leadership promises fresh approaches and solutions. New scholarship opportunities like "Together We Thrive" create tuition-free paths to graduation while doubling down on Washburn's commitment to serve Shawnee County and our legacy of expanding access to higher education.

The College of Arts and Sciences remains at the heart of it all. It is not just any education to which Washburn University is committed to providing access but, specifically, an education grounded in the empowering traditions of the arts and sciences. Even students who do not major or minor in College programs are impacted by the College through general education classes that provide knowledge foundational to civic life, professionalism and success. Our emphasis on experiential learning and leveraging the opportunities right here in Topeka differentiates us from other institutions in the state and region.

In this issue of *Directions*, you will find stories that highlight the impact the College makes every day. From our award-winning debate team to our Great TEXTS certificate program, to the special academic and travel opportunities we provide, the College of Arts and Sciences at Washburn is a special place, indeed.

I am so humbled to be part of the College. Thank you for being part of it as well. We could not do it without you.

Kelly Erby, Interim Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences

Protecting Human Rights

Theatre department chair Dr. Sharon Sullivan retired in spring 2023 to become the executive director of the organization Stop Trafficking and Reject Slavery (STARS). Sullivan remains connected to Washburn, however; this spring she will teach a six-week travel course that provides students the experience of attending the United Nations (U.N.) Commission on the Status of Women, an annual two-week event held at the U.N. headquarters in New York City. Through this course, which Sullivan has taught since 2014, students learn about the history and organization of the U.N. and, through Sullivan's U.N. connections, have the rare opportunity to attend as actual U.N. delegates.

Tiffany Mack (*junior, psychology major*) took Sullivan's U.N. travel course in spring 2023 and described what it was like to attend the U.N.'s opening session. "It was incredibly overwhelming, but in a good way." Mack found herself a long way from home, in a large room filled with strangers speaking dozens of languages, but she didn't let the experience intimidate her. "Looking around at all the people, representatives of so many different cultures, I thought about how we were all so different. Yet I felt such a bond, such connection, to all these people because everyone was so focused on the same goals of protecting human rights. All I could think was how grateful I was to be there."

The United Nations is a global organization comprised of 193 Member States whose goals are to maintain international peace and to develop friendly relations among the world's nations. The U.N. has many different departments and sub-organizations that hold conferences and events continually throughout the year. One such department is the Commission on the Status of Women, which holds its annual event in March. Mack and her fellow students were able to attend the Commission's 68th annual event through Sullivan's travel course. Multiple U.N. departments run events simultaneously, and Sullivan estimates 15,000 to 16,000 people were at the U.N. during the trip.

"What I love about the Commission on the Status of Women is its different subjects and approaches," Sullivan said. "Some panels feature high-level academic research; some showcase cultural rituals. One presentation might ask how the experiences of female refugees differ from those of men; another might address online violence directed at female politicians. It's incredibly diverse." The theme for the Commission's event in 2023 was Women and Technology.

Sullivan's introduction to the U.N. came through her work educating the public about human trafficking, which is transporting and/or coercing people into forced labor or sexual exploitation.

While Sullivan always had an interest in women and gender studies, she learned about the issue of human trafficking through her students. In the early 2000s, Sullivan attended a presentation on human trafficking by the Social Justice League, a student group focused on social justice. "I went just to support them," Sullivan said. "But I was stunned by the information they presented." What Sullivan learned that day changed the trajectory of her research and professional focus. It surprised her to discover human trafficking isn't a problem that is physically distant or confined to the past but a pervasive, current issue that happens everywhere, including Kansas. "I came to understand human trafficking as a component of the work I was already doing in the field of women's justice," Sullivan said.

Through Sullivan's anti-trafficking work she met Sister Anele Heiges, a Catholic nun who was then the leader of the International Public Policy Institute (IPPI), a nongovernmental organization (NGO) to the U.N. After the two talked, Sister Anele Heiges asked Sullivan to attend a conference at the United Nations as part of IPPI. As an NGO, IPPI is allowed a certain number of U.N. delegate passes, and Sullivan immediately asked if she could bring students. She was able to get one pass, so that year she took one student. The next year, she was offered three student passes. The IPPI board and U.N. contacts were so impressed by the students Sullivan brought that the third year they simply asked how many passes she wanted.

Sullivan assumed leadership of IPPI when Sister Anele Heiges retired, and her first mission was to get younger people involved with the organization and onto the board. Mack, now a member of IPPI's board, was introduced to the organization by Sullivan. As a member of the IPPI board, Mack gave a presentation at the U.N. on empowering women to inform battery intervention services. She said giving the presentation was "intimidating, but an incredible opportunity."

The effects of the U.N. trip are so impactful that many students feel a changed or renewed focus for their studies and community involvement. Lillian Mulenga (*sophomore, public administration major*) said she returned to Kansas with more appreciation for the opportunities and education she has been given. She intends to pursue a master's degree in public administration and was excited about the networking opportunities available through the U.N. trip. "Attending most definitely helped my career path," Mulenga said.

Sullivan will be leading another U.N. travel class in spring 2024. While she will miss teaching theatre, she is excited for the opportunities ahead of her. As the executive director of STARS,



she will be working to collaborate with other organizations to influence anti-trafficking legislation and spearhead risk-reduction efforts, including education. The contributions Sullivan has made to the theatre department during her time as faculty and chair have been substantial, and students and faculty will feel her absence in the halls, stages and practice rooms. Her legacy at Washburn continues, however, both in the theatre community and through her students' work in social justice.



Far left and above: Mack in front of the U.N. buildings and posing by a sculpture, both in New York, NY.

Right: former theatre chair Sharon Sullivan waits for a U.N. session to begin.



TEXTS Classes Feature Humanities

by Jeremy Wangler

The opportunity to study great works of literature and art—from timeless classics to modern pieces—has always existed at Washburn University. But until now, if a student wasn't majoring in the humanities, their exposure to these works was usually limited to introductory general education classes, or the electives they took as they completed their degree. A new certificate program at Washburn, called Great TEXTS (Transformative, EXperiential and Team-Taught Studies), is making it easier for students to experience the humanities.

Through a series of five courses, students study not only texts, but also significant and transformative artworks, musical compositions, theatrical performances and more as they explore issues and questions of humankind. Faculty from varying areas team-teach the classes, meaning students from all degree programs will learn and discuss with each other in an interdisciplinary setting. Thanks to a generous donor, Washburn can offer Great TEXTS classes, books and local outings at no cost to students.

"This will be one of our hallmarks of differentiation: an experience students can only get here at Washburn University," said JuliAnn Mazachek, president, Washburn.

"Interdisciplinary approaches help students to see connections between the topics they study across different classes," said Kelly Erby, interim dean, College of Arts and Sciences. "The humanities, in particular, are so important to broadening students' perspectives and developing their ability to think critically, read closely and speak with confidence. In TEXTS courses, students grapple with big, timely and timeless questions that are as relevant today as when the work was originally created." Erby, also a professor of history, and Rik Hine, an associate professor of philosophy, team-taught the course "Critical Thinking, Communication and Transformative Texts: Antiquity to Modernity" (TX100), in spring 2023.

Madelin Gates (*junior, psychology major*), who took TX100, didn't enter the program with a great deal of enthusiasm about the humanities, but the first class in the program changed that. "I enjoy college, and I want to be here. However, I'm not always excited about what I'm learning," said Gates. "This course has reinvigorated me and made me more excited. I want to be at school. I want to learn. I credit this course for that because I just haven't felt that way in a long time."

This fall, Madeline Eschenburg, art history lecturer, and Kerry Wynn, professor of history and director of the Honors Program, co-taught the second Great TEXTS course, TX200. The course poses critical questions about key dimensions of human experience, including the body, space and time. How do humans experience life as

embodied individuals? How do we imbue places with meaning? How do we understand time?

"Someone who studies medicine or somebody who studies many different topics would be very interested in the readings and artworks we're considering and maybe could find new ways of thinking about their own research in their own field of study," Eschenburg said. "The value is for students to see how connected what they study is to the humanities."

Wynn recalled with excitement how books moved her in college and is eager to include artworks in the interdisciplinary class. "It's part of the richness of life to look at art over the centuries or to read fiction over the centuries. There's a beauty in it," Wynn said. "I still have the books that really moved me in college. I still have those books on my shelves."

This excitement was echoed by Ryan Durst (*junior, public administration major*), who also took this fall's TEXTS class with Wynn and Eschenburg. The class read Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus," and Durst was surprised by the text. "It was short, but if you dig into it there's so many big topics to discuss, so much about what it means to be human." Durst added that art helps him think about and contextualize the situations of real people.

Great TEXTS faculty facilitate trips to places like museums, plays and historical sites. Last summer, Erby and Hine took their TX100 class to the Topeka Civic Theatre to see the play "The Crucible," showing the students that art and the humanities can be local experiences they can seek out. This fall, Eschenburg and Wynn's TEXTS class visited an art installation in Lawrence, "The Hear-ing Labyrinth," a field labyrinth in the shape of a human ear created by a local artist. TEXTS faculty have dreams of nationwide or international travel as part of the curriculum as well.



Above: Eschenburg and Wynn's TEXTS class visited "The Hear-ing Labyrinth," a local art installation. Back row: Steven Amrhein, Hayden Eddy, Tim Shepley, Brady McGivern, Tiffany Mack, Ryan Durst, Madeline Eschenburg, Kerry Wynn Front row: Bella Wood, Madelin Gates

Left: TEXTS classes have read Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein" and attended a showing of "The Crucible" at TCT.

"Great TEXTS fits so well with our mission and how we view the liberal arts as being such an important part of what we do," Mazachek said. "I believe the program will have tremendous demand as the word gets out, and then I think it's going to invigorate and help us attract the very best and brightest faculty."

As the program grows, the success can already be measured in the responses from students.

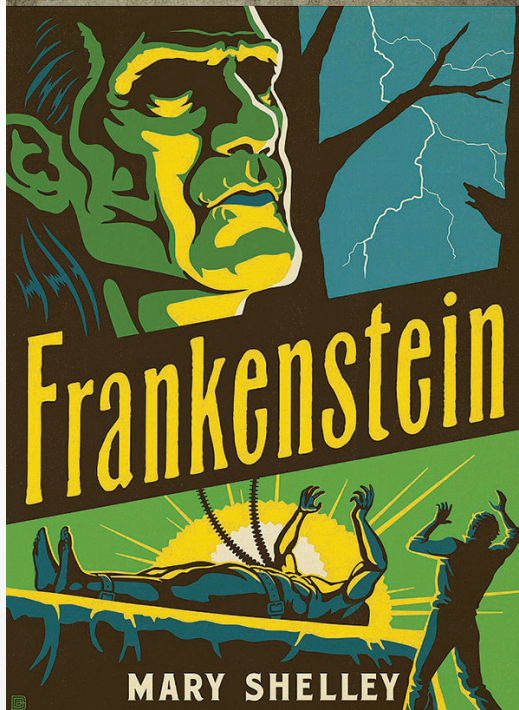
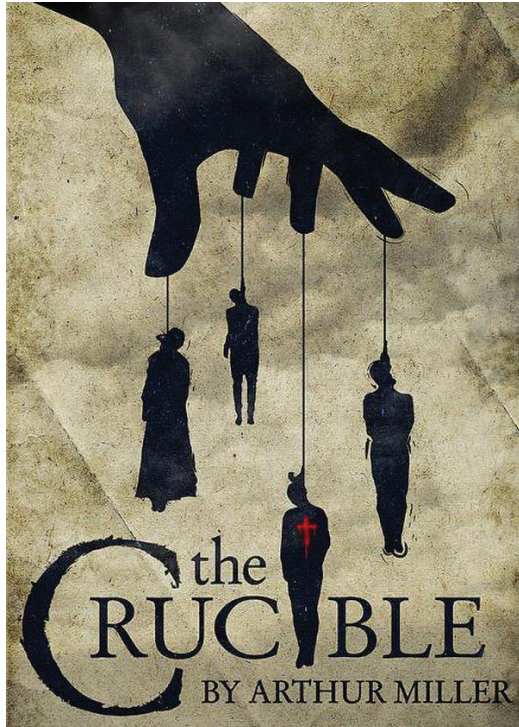
"To have these discussions that are changing my worldview in such a big way, it's just really exciting. I've never experienced a class like this," Gates said.

First Corrections Project Cohort Graduates

In May 2023, 12 Ichabods graduated with associate of liberal arts (ALS) degrees earned through the new Corrections Project initiative at Washburn. The Corrections Project offers women at the Topeka Correctional Facility the opportunity to earn an ALS degree over five semesters. Once the ALS degree is completed, these Washburn students may continue taking classes through the program to earn a bachelor's of integrated studies (BIS) degree.

The College of Arts and Sciences would like to congratulate these graduates on their hard work and academic success.

Congratulations, Ichabods!



WU Debate: A Lineage of Excellence

Debate is a highly competitive activity at both the high school and collegiate levels. Typically, it is competitive even within a team because most squads only send their top debaters to competitions, so a deep bench on a debate team usually means students don't get to compete their first year. In this milieu of intense competition, the Washburn debate team excels year after year, even in years when the team is young and inexperienced. Their secret? Teamwork.

"I went to my first tournament as a freshman all cocky and confident," said Cade Blenden (*junior, communication studies major*). "However, my record at that tournament was five losses and one win—and that one win was because I had a bye in the bracket. It was not a great start; it took me a while to get my swagger back." Blenden had moderate success through the season and traveled with the team to compete at the end-of-season national competition, where he qualified to advance to the final debate. Blenden won, despite facing a senior with years of experience. He then scored another win in the next round, this time against the previous year's national champion, which propelled him to the semifinals. While Blenden lost the semifinals, it was with a score of 3 to 2, and his competitor went on to become the national champion.



*The 2023-2024 debate team
Pictured left to right, front row: Maddox Misak, Alfonso Rascon, Hunter Squires, Jacob Bailes, Jenna Gorton, Wendo Kimori, Jyaira Ware, Daniel Archer, Carla Torres and Lauren Province Back row: Cade Blenden, Braxton Kindel, Andrew Rea and Logan Michael*

Certainly, hard work accounts for part of the difference between Blenden's performance at his first tournament compared to his final competition at nationals. He says, however, the lesson he learned that year was that winning was contingent upon the team behind him. "It looks like a solo activity," Blenden said, "but at Washburn, it isn't. We aren't there for ourselves alone, but for the team. I am deeply appreciative of the entity that is Washburn debate—we are very fortunate to have the community we do."

Director of debate, Kevin O'Leary, agrees the Washburn debate community is truly special, and that "community" is not limited to the current students participating in debate competitions. "We have tremendous institutional support," O'Leary said. "The campus knows about the debate team and is proud of them. Faculty work with students when they need to miss class for tournaments, and the administration provides us solid funding. Our true strength, however, lies in our alumni, in the preservation of institutional memory."

*The 2022 NFA team
Pictured left to right:
Logan Michael,
Hunter Squires,
Carlos Cedillo-Silva,
Cade Blenden,
Zach Wallentine,
Jenna Gorton,
Daniel Archer and
Jacob Bailes*



The debate season begins in July, when the National Forensic Association releases the resolution, or topic premise, that will be debated that year. This year's resolution is "The United States federal government should substantially reduce the number and/or role of its nuclear weapons." All teams prepare arguments for and against the resolution. During a competition, the team giving the positive argument creates a plan to enact the resolution, and the team giving the negative argument must counter the other team's plan, not the topic itself.

It's in July, therefore, when the Washburn debate team begins their preparation for the year. The day the resolution is announced, they meet at the home of assistant director of debate, Steve Doubledee, and begin planning immediately. But, again, they aren't alone—Washburn debate alumni join the meeting via Zoom to assist with the team's strategies.

"Alumni from every walk of life continue to actively participate in the program, and their expertise is invaluable," Doubledee said. "Their contributions mean our team not only has access to a tremendous amount of technical expertise on virtually any subject, but also to their years of debating experience." Alumni participation continues all year, even during tournaments—maybe especially during tournaments. This means when preparing for a difficult round against a talented opponent, expert help is just a Zoom call away.

This was the lesson Blenden learned during his first year in the program: he could be a better competitor with his team behind him than he could be on his own. "When I made it to semifinals at nationals that first year, I was as successful as I was because the



The debate team's trophies fill display cases in the welcome center of Morgan Hall and in the communication studies office. O'Leary has more stored in his office.

2023
NFA Championships
2nd place, LD Squad Sweepstakes

Nat'l LD Grand Prix
2nd place, Squad Sweepstakes

2022
NFA Championships
4th place, LD Squad Sweepstakes

Nat'l LD Grand Prix
2nd place, Squad Sweepstakes

2021
NFA Championships
(online due to Covid-19)
5th place, LD Squad Sweepstakes

2020
NFA Championships
cancelled due to Covid-19

2019
NPDA Championships
8th place, Squad Sweepstakes

2018
NPDA Championships
Nat'l champion, Squad Sweepstakes

2017
NPDA Championships
Nat'l champion, Squad Sweepstakes
Nat'l champion & 2nd place,
individual teams
(first close-out in NPDA history)

Nat'l Parliamentary
Tournament of Excellence
Nat'l champion & 4th place,
individual teams

Nat'l Round Robin
Nat'l champion & 2nd place,
individual teams
Nat'l champion individual speaker

2016
NPDA Championships
Nat'l champion, Squad Sweepstakes

Nat'l Parliamentary
Tournament of Excellence
2nd place, individual team

LD: Lincoln Douglas
NFA: National Forensic Association
NPDA: National Parliamentary
Debate Association

Continued on next page.



The 2023 NFA team

Pictured left to right: Steve Doubledee, Logan Michael, Daniel Archer, Jenna Gorton, Andrew Rea, Hunter Squires, Carlos Cedillo-Silva, Cade Blenden, Jacob Bailes, Braxton Kindel and Kevin O'Leary

entire team helped me prepare for each successive round. Together we considered new arguments, then brainstormed and researched ways to counter those arguments. Alumni were there via Zoom, pitching in as well. All the engines were running.”

The Washburn debate team’s culture of “team before individual” is baked into every aspect of the program, including how O’Leary and Doubledee recruit students. While they are happy to recruit new students with a record of excellence in high school debate, they don’t make assumptions based on past performance. They sometimes even recruit new debaters from public speaking classes, even if the student has never debated before. And unlike most teams, they also don’t encourage internal competitiveness by limiting who gets to travel and attend competitions. “We don’t leave talent on the table,” Doubledee explained. “It’s our job to get them to see their potential.” Because the program is well-supported, all students who want to attend a tournament can go and compete, and anyone who makes it to the final rounds has the full support of their teammates, coaches and alumni debaters to help them prepare.

“Our ties to the past are strong,” Blenden said. “Washburn debate is special because of the lineage of excellence that continues into the present. I don’t even know the names of all the alumni who maintain contact with us, but I know they each contribute to my success, and I’m grateful for every one.” Blenden noted that people who are active and successful in debate tend to think of debating as a core part of their personal identity. His goal after graduation is to teach high school or collegiate debate; he will be attending tournaments his entire life. One day, perhaps, he’ll be the alumnus on the other end of the Zoom call, helping a nervous first-year debater make it further at the national competition than they thought was possible.

2015
NPDA Championships
 Nat’l champion,
 Season-Long Sweepstakes
 2nd place, Squad Sweepstakes

Nat’l Parliamentary
Tournament of Excellence
 9th place, individual team

2014
NPDA Championships
 3rd place, Squad Sweepstakes

2013
NPDA Championships
 4th place, Squad Sweepstakes

2012
NPDA Championships
 Nat’l champion, Squad Sweepstakes
 Nat’l champion & quarterfinalist,
 individual teams

Nat’l Parliamentary
Tournament of Excellence
 Nat’l champion, individual team
 Nat’l champion, individual speakers

2011
NPDA Championships
 2nd place, Squad Sweepstakes

Nat’l Parliamentary
Tournament of Excellence
 4th & 6th place, individual teams
 Nat’l champion, individual speakers

2010
NPDA Championships
 Nat’l champion, Squad Sweepstakes

Nat’l Parliamentary
Tournament of Excellence
 8th place, individual teams

2009
NPDA Championships
 2nd place, Squad Sweepstakes

Nat’l Parliamentary
Tournament of Excellence
 3rd, 8th and 10th place, individual teams

Lincoln Douglas Open Championship
 Nat’l champion, Squad Sweepstakes

Forensic Science: More Than You See on TV

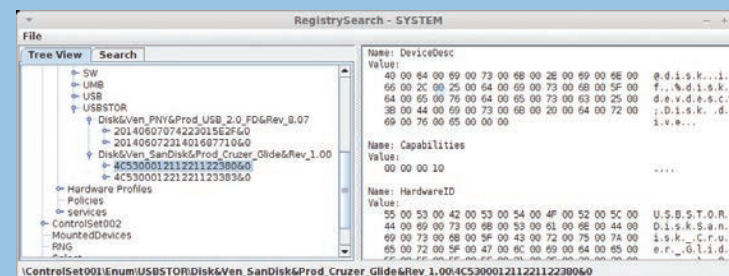
In popular television shows like “NCIS” or “Criminal Minds,” a lone “forensic expert” is often portrayed as a master of several different forensic disciplines. In real life, forensic analysis is typically performed by a team of forensic scientists, each of whom is specially trained in a specific forensic discipline. The College of Arts and Sciences at Washburn is home to four such forensic degree programs: digital forensics, forensic anthropology, forensic biology and forensic chemistry. Additionally, Washburn’s School of Applied Studies offers a degree in forensic investigation through its Criminal Justice department. Studying forensic science at Washburn is unique because the Washburn campus is also home to the Kansas Bureau of Investigation’s (KBI) Forensic Science Center, which provides our forensic science classes state-of-the-art facilities and equipment. Students have the opportunity to learn directly from KBI professionals in addition to Washburn forensic faculty.

The experiences of forensic students from the four CAS forensic programs highlight the overall strength of Washburn’s forensic programs and the distinctive opportunities each offers. While different than what is portrayed on TV, these experiences are no less exciting and fulfilling for CAS students and put them on the path to successful internships and careers.



Digital Forensics

recover digital information and data trails



Above: Looking into registry to discover serial numbers of USB drives that have been inserted into a Windows computer.

On television, a single computer expert can solve any technology-related problem. In reality, computer information sciences (CIS) is a rapidly evolving field with a growing number of specialties. In law enforcement, teams of computer specialists work together on various components of a case. In particular, the specialties of cybersecurity—prevention of a crime—and digital forensics—data analysis performed after a crime—are growing into distinct disciplines.

Jeremy Low (*junior, CIS major*) is a non-traditional student who came to Washburn to learn to be an information security analyst. He found the digital forensics electives to be an interesting addition to his other courses and is now considering the field as his career path. While he acknowledges the options can be overwhelming at first, Low encourages interested students to try the digital forensics classes. “Dr. Mechtly does a great job of breaking it down and showing you what is possible,” Low said.



Forensic Anthropology

recover, analyze and identify human remains

Forensic anthropologists work within the medico-legal system to recover and analyze human remains that are often decomposed or skeletonized. The goals of a forensic anthropologist include discerning information about a deceased person's identity, including their age, ancestry, stature and sex. Forensic anthropologists also help determine how and when a person died.

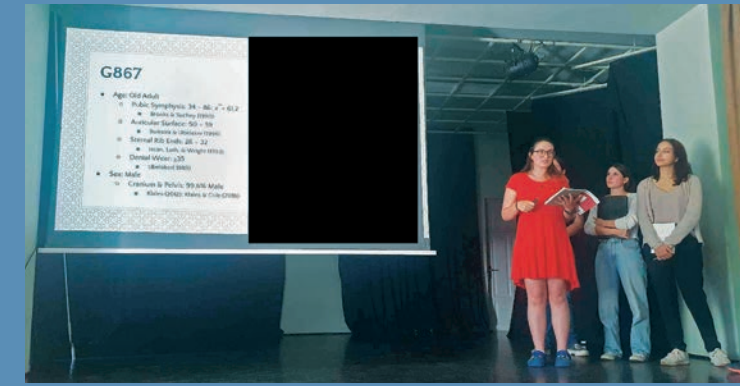
Nicole Stueve (*senior, forensic anthropology major*) is pursuing a career in forensic anthropology, conducting laboratory and/ or field research related to legal cases. She works with the Washburn University Forensic Anthropology Recovery Unit (WU-FARU, *see Directions article from 2019*), where she has volunteered on numerous active forensic cases performing both forensic archaeological recovery and laboratory analyses. Stueve also works as a forensic anthropology lab assistant, a paid student position.

To further enhance the skills she's learned in her degree program and as part of the WU-FARU team, Stueve took on a unique bioarcheology study abroad opportunity, traveling to Romania in summer 2023 through an anthropology program organized by Western Carolina University. The region where

she worked has been claimed by both Romania and Hungary over the centuries, and one ethnic minority, the Szekler community, requested a professional excavation of an abandoned Szekler graveyard to learn more about their own past.

Stueve was able to excavate and analyze remains from the graveyard and presented her findings at a local college in Romania, giving a biological profile of the subjects in the graves she helped to excavate and whether these remains had any obvious traumas or pathologies. Historically, the Szeklers were known to be formidable archers, and Stueve saw that many of the skeletons showed signs of repetitive motion injuries consistent with archery.

Stueve credits the hands-on field and lab experiences through Washburn's coursework and volunteer opportunities with WU-FARU with preparing her for a range of career paths.



Stueve (on left) presents her findings to the local Szekler community in Romania.



Forensic Biology

extract and compare DNA evidence

Forensic biologists analyze biological material from crime scenes, most frequently DNA samples. Investigators often acquire only a small amount of material to test, and each time the DNA sample is tested a portion of the sample is destroyed. When the sample is already small, extending it is vital.

Forensic biology major Jaelen Matthews (*senior, forensic biology major*) completed her capstone project with Dr. Benjamin Reed, assistant professor in biology. Matthews explored different methods to extract the maximum amount of genetic information from small samples taken from turtles in Reed's research.

Matthews learned to use primers to identify sections of DNA, and then to replicate that sample for analysis (amplification), like the process used in crime labs when DNA evidence is limited. These amplified DNA samples generate a DNA profile, or fingerprint, and can also be sequenced. Procedures like this can link a suspect to a crime scene via trace evidence.

For any DNA test, the quality and quantity of the collected sample is critical. Similar to how human DNA is obtained, Reed and his students prefer to swab the turtles' mouths to get DNA because it is less invasive and harmful to the turtles than other methods. But saliva doesn't always provide enough DNA

material for analysis, hence the need for efficient extraction and amplification techniques.

The turtle DNA Matthews analyzed was added to an identification database that helps law enforcement identify turtle poachers. This type of research highlights that forensic DNA analysis is not limited to only human DNA profiles. DNA profiles of plants and other organisms have been crucial in solving many types of crimes.

After graduation, Matthews hopes to pursue a career as a crime lab DNA analyst or work in a cancer research lab.

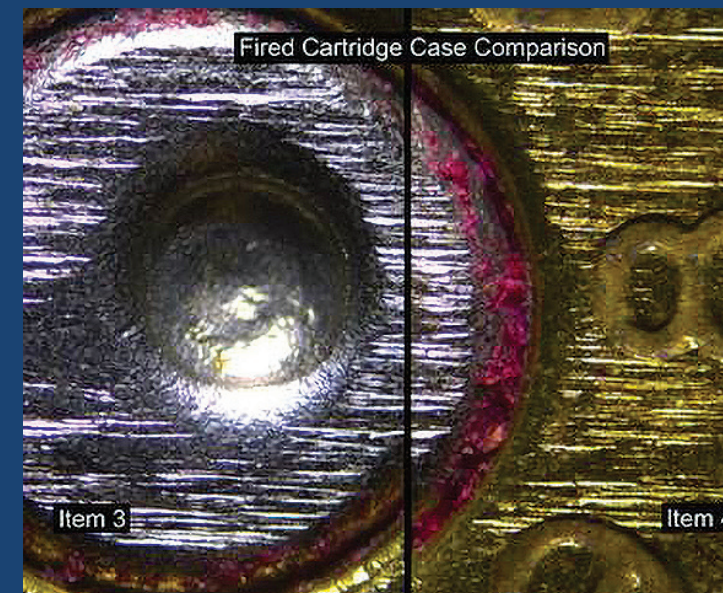


Above: Swabbing the mouth of a nervous turtle to get a DNA sample.



Forensic Chemistry

identify unknown substances in evidence



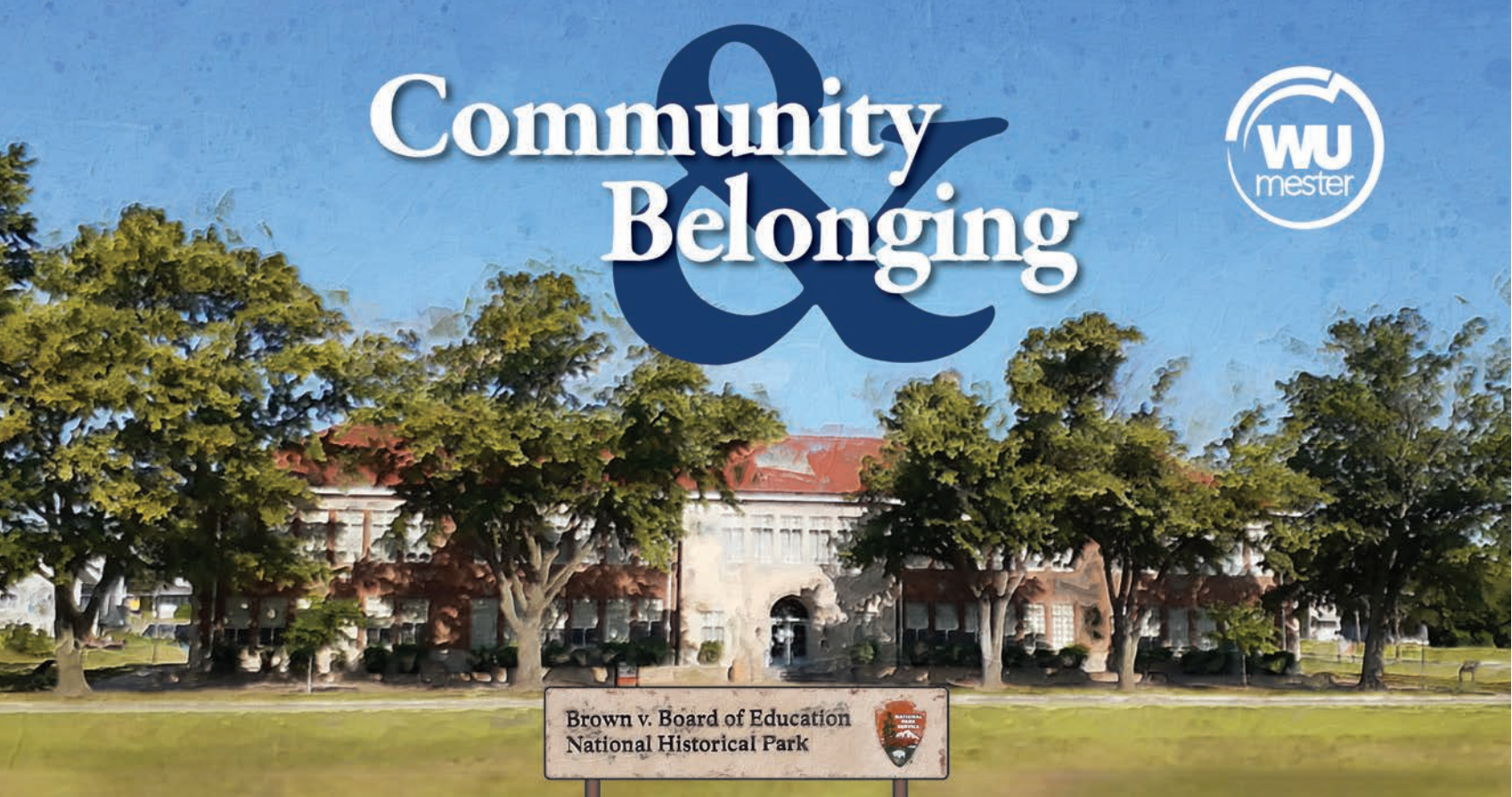
Above: Magnified photo of a shell casing showing its unique markings.

Forensic chemists typically analyze and identify unknown substances from crime scenes. Jessica Voegeli (*bs, '21*) learned chemical analysis during her forensic chemistry degree program, and now has a job with the KBI in the Forensic Laboratory division. Voegeli uses her laboratory skills to identify bullets and cartridge cases from the weapon that fired them. "Some people love the science," Voegeli said, "but my passion comes from knowing I'm helping the community."

Comparing bullets to a particular firearm is a staple of crime scene television, and a common technique used by law enforcement. When a firearm is manufactured, the tooling processes produce markings, which transfer to the fired bullets and cartridge cases. Voegeli learned the techniques to compare these markings during a KBI internship she completed as part of her undergraduate work.

Voegeli knew in high school that she wanted to pursue a career working with law enforcement and firearms; she also knew she wanted to work in a laboratory rather than crime scenes. Her advisor Rebecca Vincent, adjunct instructor and certified crime scene analyst with the Johnson County Sheriff's Office, recommended forensic chemistry as a major because it would help Voegeli connect with the KBI, which it did. Voegeli says that the skills she learned in her classes, under the guidance of forensic chemist and Washburn faculty member Holly O'Neill, set her up for success in her current career at the KBI.

Community & Belonging



Brown v. Board of Education
National Historical Park

WUmester 2024

WUmester is a university-wide conversation on a topic related to social justice that changes each spring semester. The program engages the entire WU community in a cross-disciplinary learning experience on a timely subject and helps students see the connections between the subjects they study in the classroom and real-world debates and problems. In commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the landmark 1954 United States Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, WUmester 2024 will examine community and belonging from the perspectives of academic disciplines across campus and through a variety of cocurricular programming. It will consider how community and belonging contribute to our safety, wellbeing and, ultimately, happiness and empowerment.

Featured WUmester Events

Jan. 16, 6 p.m., Memorial Union, Ballroom: Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration featuring Amri Johnson

March 7, 6 p.m., Memorial Union, Ballroom: Keynote by Nikki Giovanni

April 19-22: WIFI Film Festival - [visit washburn.edu/wifi](https://visit.washburn.edu/wifi)

For a complete list of WUmester events, visit washburn.edu/wumester.

Department Highlights

Art

The art department hosted High School Art Day in both the spring and the fall of 2023. One hundred fifty high school visual arts students and their teachers attended each event. **Wonjae Lee**, assistant professor of graphic design, researched digital pedagogy in education and introduced a cutting-edge course titled “Augmented Reality: Interaction Design.” The art department teamed up with the department of music and theatre to present a professional development program for Topeka Public Schools Fine Arts in October.

Biology

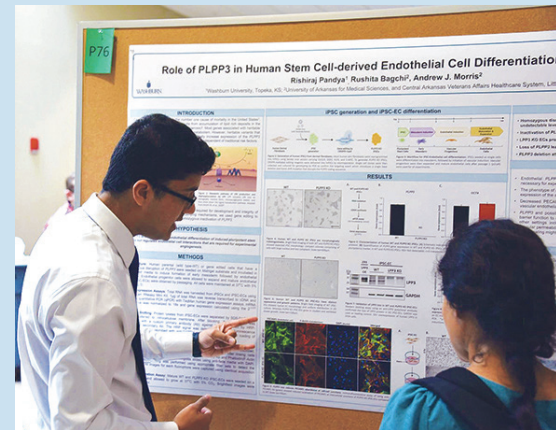
Students Keetan Munsell and Timothy Speer received the K-INBRE Summer/Semester Scholar Award to conduct research this summer mentored by **Dr. Benjamin Reed**, assistant professor of biology. **Reed** published four articles on box turtle research this past year, with faculty and student participation. **Dr. Rodrigo Mercader**, professor of biology, was the recipient of the A. Roy Myers Research Award at the Employee Recognition Celebration. **Dr. Andrew Herbig**, assistant professor of biology, was the recipient of the 2023 Excellence in Science Teaching Award. About 250 sixth through eighth grade girls attended the 15th annual Women in Science Day in October.

Chemistry

Ethan Conners received the K-INBRE Undergraduate Research Training Award to conduct research this summer mentored by **Dr. Seid Adem**, professor of chemistry. Thanks to an anonymous donor, the department gained a UV-Vis and an IR for the Forensic Chemistry lab. The department was also able to purchase two LabPro data acquisition devices with Day of Giving funds and nine Go-Direct Melt Stations for teaching labs using Washburn Women’s Venture Partners funds. The student chapter of the American Chemical Society, aka Chemistry Club, was awarded the Honorable Mention by the ACS Student Communities in October for their work in 2023. **Dr. Allan Ayella** and **Dr. Hoang Nguyen**, both assistant professors of chemistry, were the club’s co-advisors last year.

Communication Studies

At the season opener, the National Warmup for NFA Lincoln Douglas collegiate debate, WU debaters finished as the final four at the tournament, giving WU Debate a clean sweep. WU Debate swept a second time at the “Redbird Classic” National Forensic Association Lincoln-Douglas collegiate debate tournament. Mentored by assistant professor **Dr. Carson Kay**, student Cade Blenden solo-authored a paper that was competitively selected for presentation at the National Communication Association Annual Convention in November 2023, competing against graduate students and faculty to secure this spot.



Biology: Student Rishiraj Pandya was accepted into the Mentored Summer Research Program (MSRP) at the University of Arkansas Medical Center (UAMS). Pandya presented his research in a poster presentation at Research Day at the end of the 10-week program.



Communication Studies hosted its annual Nall Speak Off in November. The event showcases top students currently enrolled in WU’s public speaking classes.

Department Highlights

Computer Information Sciences

Dr. Nan Sun, professor and chair of computer information sciences, supervised two student CIS research projects in spring 2023: Gideon Hockenbarger's "Lost and Found: Testing Cybersecurity Preparedness at a University" and Sarah Campbell's "Web Design: Digital Literacy and User Preference." Both led to conference presentations and publications in the "Journal of Issues in Information Systems." **Dr. Joseph Kendall-Morwick**, assistant professor, presented the paper "Working with Ambiguous Case Representations" at the 31st International Conference on Case-Based Reasoning in Aberdeen, Scotland. CIS hosted a coding session for 7th grade girls during Women in Science Day, which was held on the Washburn campus in October.

English

Two English faculty and seven Washburn student writing consultants honed their tutoring skills by attending the Greater Kansas City Writing Center Project's annual tutor training conference and workshops at Johnson County Community College in Overland Park, Kansas. Washburn opened a new university writing center in Mabee Library this fall, which is available to all Washburn students. The Heartland Literature Festival, organized each year by **Dr. Danny Wade**, professor of English and assistant provost for faculty development, brought hundreds of middle school students and their teachers and community members to campus. **Dr. Andy Farkas**, associate professor of English, and **Dr. Tom Averill**, professor emeritus, helped organize The Kansas Book Festival in fall 2023.

History & Geography

Dr. Kim Morse, professor of history, and students Jessie Revell, Carlos Cedillo-Silva, Trey LaRue and Eleanor Jones attended the national conference of Phi Alpha Theta honor society in Albuquerque, New Mexico, last January. The students presented papers, and **Morse** chaired two student panels. **Dr. Tony Silvestri** was promoted to senior lecturer. The department hosted the Midwestern Victorian Studies Association Conference in March. Congratulations to WU History graduate Mary Lucia Darst, who was selected for the Entrepreneurial Journalism Creators Program (EJCP) at the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at CUNY. The department also mourns the passing of longtime administrative assistant, **Robin Shrimplin**.

Kinesiology

Dr. Yang Song, assistant professor, led kinesiology physical education majors in volunteering for the North Central Regional Special Olympics Track and Field event, as well as the District 501 Adapted Physical Education Day, overseeing student volunteers, running activity stations, and timing/reporting event results. Kinesiology and athletic training graduate Jamie Blackim was awarded the prestigious Servant's Heart award from the National Athletic Trainers' Association this summer. **John Burns**, senior lecturer, has worked with BridgeAthletic to integrate their training programming software/systems into the KN 357 class. As a result, Bridge is now rolling out its software to other universities as a Higher Ed option. Washburn is the first in the country to use BridgeAthletic in this way.

Mathematics & Statistics

Five students and two faculty members attended the 46th Biennial National Kappa Mu Epsilon Convention at Molloy University in Rockville Centre, New York, in the spring. The department congratulates students James Gillin and Sanskar Neupane for their award-winning presentations of their research projects. Gillin, mentored by assistant professor **Dr. Gaspar Porta**, won first place for his project "Eulerian Numbers and Relations to Number Triangles." Neupane, mentored by assistant professor **Dr. Guannan Hu**, won third place for his presentation, "Exploring Ways to Model Stock Prices." High school students from all over northeast Kansas visited Washburn in November to compete in the department's annual Math Day.

Mass Media

Kansas Collegiate Media chose Washburn's student-produced *Indigo* magazine for the top "All Kansas" award. Washburn students also won first place in feature writing and spread design. The Kansas Association of Broadcasters awarded Washburn alumnus Kris Bailey (*ba*, '22 *English; mass media minor*) first place in the student awards documentary category. Rajendra Bista ("Raj") earned an honorable mention for his film, *Frosty*, at the Student World Impact Film Festival. The annual WIFI Film Festival was held April 21-23. A mass media alumnus, John Burns, received a major Hollywood credit, a first for the department. Burns is credited as a concept artist for the new film, "The Creator," by "Star Wars: Rogue One" director Gareth Edwards.

Department Highlights



Modern Languages: Senior lecturer Georgina Tenny took a group of students to Mexico for two weeks in May as part of her "Live and Learn in Mexico" course.



Music & Theatre: Student Adriel Holloway won first prize at the Kansas Music Teacher Association (KMTA) Collegiate Piano Competition in the freshman/sophomore division in October. She is shown here with Dr. Lucy Tan, lecturer of music and director of keyboard studies.

Modern Languages

Modern Languages hosted a Day of the Dead celebration on campus this fall. Senior lecturer **Georgina Tenny**, aided by members of the Spanish Club, organized the event, which brought more than 95 Spanish language students from six area high schools to the Washburn campus for a full day of events. In May, **Dr. Courtney Sullivan**, professor of French, led a group of students to Paris, France, as part of a course she team-taught with **Dr. Kerry Wynn**, professor of history.

Music & Theatre

More than 80 high school students in total attended the department's two summer camps, the Coleman Hawkins Jazz Camp and the Total Percussion camp. Washburn theatre presented two fall shows: "Gruesome Playground Injuries," by Rajiv Joseph, and the musical "Xanadu" by Beane, Lynne and Farrar. In October, the department hosted PianoFest—a festival that celebrates group learning for piano students in grades K-12. The department also hosted Washburn Theatre Day in September, attended by almost 90 high school students from area high schools. Lecturer and director of choirs, **Dr. Lawrence Abernathy**, was selected as the winner of the 2023 American Prize in Choral Conducting. Professor **Dr. Rebecca Meador** coached the Sunflower Music Festival Blanche Bryden High School Woodwind Quintet. **Dr. Bryce Call**, assistant professor of music, published "Concert Etudes in Jazz Styles for Trumpet." Assistant professor **Dr. Von Hansen's** newest piece, "Mortal Coil," was performed at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention in Indianapolis in November.

Philosophy & Religious Studies

Last March the department hosted the annual Thomas L. King Lecture in Religious Studies, featuring Robyn Walsh, an up-and-coming scholar who leads the Redescribing Christianity group—formerly led by **Dr. Barry Crawford**, professor emeritus in memoriam—at the Society of Biblical Literature. In October Dr. Clare Palmer, philosophy professor at Texas A&M, was the guest speaker at the annual Russell Jacobs Lecture in Philosophy. **Dr. Rik Hine** received tenure and was promoted to associate professor; **Dr. Ian Smith**, chair of the department, was promoted to professor. In spring 2023, associate professor **Dr. Chris Jones** used funds from the Morrison grant to start a research project on the status of religious studies programs at regional public universities. Jones will present initial findings at the annual meeting of the North American Association for the Study of Religion (NAASR) in November 2023.

Department Highlights



*Political Science: Lecturer **Bill Fiander** and three political science students traveled to Cuba this spring as part of a program to study its current economic, political and cultural challenges. Left to right: Trevor Ottman; Nolan Meyer, translator; **Fiander** and Katrina Connolly*

Physics & Astronomy

Engineering physics major Seth Phelps completed two internships last summer—one at Automation Controls Inc. in Topeka and another at Every in Kansas City. Phelps completed his A.S. in engineering physics at Washburn last spring and has transferred to K-State to pursue a degree in mechanical engineering. Gabriel Rose, who graduated in the fall of 2022 with a B.S. in physics, was accepted into the Ph.D. program in aerospace engineering at KU. Alumnus Dr. Kevin Kent (*bs, chemistry and bs, physics '06*) has been selected as a 2023 Washburn University Alumni Association and Foundation Alumni Fellow.

Political Science

Political science major Jacob Howell traveled to New Zealand this summer for an independent study to examine the country's law and judicial system and to participate in the New Zealand Public Law Conference in Wellington. Political Science majors George Burdick and Jordan Blair interned in the summer of 2023 in Kansas Governor Laura Kelly's Office of Constituent Services. Professor and chair **Dr. Bob Beatty** produced a 30-minute documentary in collaboration with KTWU, "See How They Run: Presidential Candidates and the Iowa Caucuses."

Psychology

Associate professor **Dr. Dave Provorse** and psychology master's students provided mental skills training for Washburn's tennis team and the track and field team. At the 2023 Great Plains Student Psychology Convention in April, undergraduate students Quinn Leffingwell, mentored by professor **Dr. Michael McGuire**, and Skylar Blaser, mentored by assistant professor **Dr. Julie Boydston**, were awarded "Outstanding Undergraduate Student Poster." Also mentored by **Boydston**, graduate student Jeffrey Downes was awarded "Outstanding Graduate Student Poster." **Dr. Cindy Turk**, professor and chair, and two graduate students published the chapter "CBT for social anxiety" in "The ADAA Patient Guide to Mood and Anxiety Disorders."

Sociology & Anthropology

Student Kiwenke Hubbard received the Mellon Native American Scholars Initiative (NASI) Summer Undergraduate Internship; only three students each summer are selected for this prestigious national internship. Lecturer **Dr. Ashley Maxwell** and associate professor **Dr. Alexandra Klaes** were recently awarded a U.S. Department of Justice grant for their research project "Empirical Analysis of Saw Mark Characteristics in Human Bone: Meeting Forensic Standards in Dismemberment Cases." Associate professor **Dr. Laura Murphy's** AN370 Historical Archaeology class toured the Quindaro townsite in Kansas City, Kansas, in spring 2023.

The music and theatre department presented the play "Xanadu" in fall 2023.



*Sociology: Associate professor **Dr. Sangyoub Park** met with current and former Japanese international students in Tokyo who took his SO100 course.*

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UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

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