Arts & Science adopts new curriculum

The Faculty of the College of Arts and Science has adopted a new undergraduate curriculum to replace the CPLE, which has been in place for the past 22 years.

The new curriculum, Achieving Excellence in Liberal Education (AXLE), allows greater academic exploration, according to Associate Dean Kate Daniels. “The CPLE has worked well for an entire generation of Vanderbilt students,” Daniels says. “It has enabled us to transform Vanderbilt into one of the top research universities in the U.S. But college curricula are like cars. At some point, if you want to keep moving down the road, you have to trade in the old for the new.”

Under AXLE, students will have more freedom of choice in course selection. “That is a privilege,” says Daniels, “but it’s also a responsibility.”

Daniels is responsible for implementing AXLE, which will begin with the freshman class entering in the fall of 2005. Current students, through the Class of 2008, will continue to fulfill CPLE requirements for graduation. “[AXLE] represents the wishes of the faculty as well as the concerns of students and alumni,” says Michael Stone, associate professor of chemistry and chair of the Curriculum Revision Work Group (CRWG).

Focused to develop the new curriculum, the CRWG compared Arts and Science’s requirements with those at other top-tier universities and considered Vanderbilt’s growing needs. After consulting with the faculty, students and alumni, the CRWG concluded that AXLE would benefit from a new curriculum that would continue to attract the best students, take advantage of rapid technological development, and promote intellectual discovery without boundaries.

AXLE’s broad-based curriculum includes a three-course freshman-year common experience, writing-intensive core, a liberal arts core program, and the majors.

The liberal arts requirement contains 13 courses from humanities and creative arts, international cultures, American history and culture, mathematics and natural sciences, social sciences, and behavioral sciences, and perspectives, an interdisciplinary category focusing on individual and cultural diversity.

— Julie Neumann and Joanne Beckham

Arts and Science gains new deans

The College of Arts and Science has named three new associate deans:

Edward B. Saff, professor of mathematics, is the new executive dean. He is responsible for faculty actions including recruitment, renewals, promotions and tenure, as well as faculty research initiatives.

Carolyn Dever, associate professor of English, is the new associate dean for undergraduate education.

Kate Daniels, associate professor of English, is the new associate dean for graduate education. Part of her duties will be implementing the new AXSL curriculum. AXSL (Achieving Excellence in Liberal Education), which replaces the decades-old CPLE (please see related article on this page).

They replace former Executive Dean Constantine Tsiaras, professor of mathematics, and Associate Dean Jan Landers, associate professor of history, who are taking research leaves after working with the deans office for three years.

Expert on American frontier

Arts & Science new chair studies visual culture

Christopher Johns, the Norman L. and Roselea J. Goldberg Professor of Art History, vividly recalls the moment he decided to become an art historian.

“It was good teaching that got me into this,” he says. Johns became interested in art at a young age through his parents, who took him to numerous art museums. However, his inspiration for becoming an art professor began during his sophomore year in college while he was studying in Florence, Italy.

“One cold, rainy, gray winter day in the Church of the Gesù, I was standing against the back wall of the church, tired and huddled up with my fellow students because we were freezing to death. My teacher, Fred Licht, was talking about this enormous, glorious ceiling fresco, Triumph of the Name of Jesus. He was a spectac-ular teacher, and while he was talking, the sun came out and illuminated the fresco in a completely new way. It was a transforming experience. Here was my admired teacher talking about this uncelebrated work of art, and I’m thinking, ‘I want to be him.’”

After graduating summa cum laude with a B.A. degree from Florida State University, Johns earned his master’s degree and doctorate at the University of Delaware. He was a member of the faculty at the University of Virginia for 18 years.

While he has taught and written extensively for nearly two decades about 18th- and early 19th-century European art, he remains fascinated by contemporary visual culture and considers it an integral part of his research.

“Visual culture — ranging from television commercials and billboards to high fashion and political cartoons — embraces a much broader spectrum of the academic disciplines than classical art history,” he says.

Johns has recently returned from Rome, Italy, where he was Resident in Art History at the American Academy, a prestigious center that helps emerging artists and scholars. Twenty years ago as a graduate student, he received the academy’s highly competitive Rome Prize.

“To receive the rare distinction of both awards was the greatest honor of my professional life,” he says. The author of numerous articles and two books, Johns is currently writing another book with the working title, The Visual Culture of Catholic Enlightenment.

The Norman L. and Roselea J. Goldberg Chair in Art History induced Johns to come to Vanderbilt in 2003. Established through a bequest by the Goldbergs, the Goldberg’s collection graces the walls of Johns’ office in the Fine Arts Building.

“The fact that Dr. Goldberg was an amateur art historian made this chair particularly attractive to me,” Johns says.

The opportunity to strengthen the Vanderbilt master’s program in art history was the tempting. “What impressed me about Vanderbilt,” Johns says, “is the focus to make the University a nation- al and internationally interesting place for scholarship. I wanted to be part of a place that was growing and was ambitious.”

As for the future, Johns would like to see Vanderbilt acquire a new art gallery to complement the Studio Arts Center cur- rently under construction (please see draw- ing elsewhere on this page).

“The current gallery [in the Old Gym] has very limited exhibit space,” he notes.

“The Cohen Building on Peabody cam- pus, where studio arts is currently housed, would be an outstanding space for a gallery. In terms of architectural history, it is also the most important building on campus. It was designed by McKim, Meade, and White, who also designed the renowned Bellehammer Ar-Rican Academy in Rome. I’m particularly fond of that connection with an institution that was so important to my own professional development.”

— Ann Marie Owen Dean and Joanne Beckham

New art history chair studies visual culture

To learn more about the College of Arts and Science, visit our Web page at http://www.vanderbilt.edu/caa

You can also access the main alumni Web page at www.vanderbilt.edu/alumni and the on-line version of the A&S Cornerstone at www.vanderbilt.edu/alumni/publications/cornerstone.html

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Joanne Lomayeur Beckhaus, B.S.G., Editor

Sheldon Clark, Kate Perkins, Sarah Harrow, Paul Lipton, Julie Neumann, Amy Marie Dure Owens, Jim Petersen, David Salisbury, Crystin Lowe, Joel Dabbs, Pascale Ley, Ricki Rogers, Photography Donja Pashech, Art Director Keith Wood, Designer

Kate Schapinski, Director of Advancement Communications

Vanderbilt University is committed to principles of equal opportunity and affirmative action.
The launch of a film studies major this fall marked the beginning of a "film culture" designed to enrich life throughout campus, says the director of the program.

It’s hoped that film studies will attract about 15 majors by the end of its first year, says Paul Young, an assistant professor of English who directs the program, which was shepherded into existence by Sam Girgus, professor of English.

“We’re very excited about being able to invite students to think critically about films,” Young says. “This is not film criticism in the sense of sallivating over the new action movie just to get the critic’s name on the advertising. We want to look at films as texts to be analyzed, like literature or poetry, so that we can determine not only what films mean, but how they make meaning in unique ways.”

Where Are They Now?

In November 2004, Richard N. “Dick” Porter, BA’54, MA’58, celebrated the 50th anniversary of his graduation from Vanderbilt. It has been an interesting journey for the professor of Slavic languages and literature, emeritus, who retired from the active teaching faculty in 1999.

After graduation, Porter spent a year studying at the Army Language School in Monterey, California, and another two years in Germany, translating Russian and interrogating East German defectors.

Later while studying for his M.A. degree, Porter returned to Germany on a Fulbright scholarship. There, he says, “I met the love of my life,” Brigitte Arenal, BA’61, MA’64. The couple married the next year at West End Methodist Church. They have a son, Kirk, BA’87, and three grandchildren.

Porter initially taught English and German at Vanderbilt. In 1998, he returned to teach Russian. After earning a Ph.D. in Russian at Indiana University, he returned to Vanderbilt to teach Russian.

As director of the Russian program, he taught Maymester students to the Soviet Union four times and led 16 students to Germany twice. His published novels in Russian are “War, Film and Politics” taught by George Graham, director of cinema studies, and “The Development of Christian Iconography in the Byzantine East and Latin West,” led by Ljudmila Popovich, associate professor of art history.

“I have wonderful memories of teaching and enjoyed it enormously,” says Dick Porter. “And I get a kick out of hearing from my students today.”

Young, who came to Vanderbilt last spring from the University of Missouri-Columbia, earned a Ph.D. in English in 1998 from the University of Chicago. His dissertation, which is being expanded into a book to be published by the University of Minnesota Press, studied how Hollywood films depict other media including radio, television and the Internet.

The film studies program grew out of courses already taught by Young, Girgus and a wide range of Vanderbilt professors, from theatre, communications, philosophy, history, French, German, art history and other disciplines. Will Aker, senior lecturer in communications studies, teaches most of Vanderbilt’s courses in film production, an area that may be expanded as the film studies program grows.

Girgus has played an integral role in developing the program. A film produced by one of his classes, “In Loco Amoris,” was shown at the 2004 Nashville Film Festival.

Young is planning a film festival and several visiting speakers for 2005, including scholars and film industry leaders.

—Jim Patterson

MLAS program offers convenient, affordable master’s degree

Perhaps one of Vanderbilt’s best-kept secrets is the Master of Liberal Arts and Science program, a convenient and affordable way for adults to earn a personal enrichment master’s degree.

MLAS students enjoy the same privileges as regular graduate students — including walking at Commencement — but at a fraction of the cost. Since its founding in 1992, about 62 individuals have completed their degrees.

“The MLAS degree program offers to working adults . . . a chance to be a part of what we do best: teach and provide a supportive, encouraging environment for learning,” says Russell McIntire, associate dean of the College of Arts and Science and director of the program.

MLAS students pay $1,827 per class, while regular nation for a three-semester course is $1,654. Students may take one class from the MLAS course list per semester at the discounted rate and must graduate in no more than six years.

Classes cover a broad range of topics. Offered this spring are “War, Film and Politics” taught by George Graham, professor of political science, “Visions of Amazonia: Paradise, Purgatory, or Hell?” with Professor of History Marshall Eakin; and “The Development of Christian Iconography in the Byzantine East and Latin West,” led by Ljudmila Popovich, associate professor of art history.

Applications are being accepted now for the summer 2005 MLAS semester.

To The Green Man

Last summer, Professor of English Mark Jarman’s eighth book of poetry hit the bookshelves. Published by Sarabande Books in Louisville, Ky., in the Green Man continues Jarman’s emphasis on spiritual themes.

Jarman has won numerous awards for his poetry, including the Lenore Marshall Poetry Prize from the Academy of American Poets and the Nation magazine. Here is a poem from his latest book:

Prayer for Our Daughters

May they never be lonely at parties
Or wait for mail from people they haven’t written
Or still in middlesmoke God for fate
And forbid their children things they were never forbidden.

May hatred be like a habit they never developed
And can’t see the point of, like gambling or heavy drinking.
If they forget themselves, may it be in music
Or the kind of prayer that makes a garden of thinking.

May they enter the coming century
Like swans under a bridge into enchantment
Or the kind of prayer that makes a garden of thinking.

And take with them enough of this century
To assure their grandchildren it really happened.

May they find a place to love, without nostalgia
To The Green Man

May they return from every kind of suffering
To assure their grandchildren it really happened.

May they be themselves, long after we’ve stopped watching.
May they return from every kind of suffering
May they find a place to love, without nostalgia

For some place else that they can never go back to.

And may they find themselves as we have found them,
Complete at each stage of their lives, each part they add to.

And be themselves again, both blessed and blessing.

May they be themselves, long after we’ve stopped watching.
May they return from every kind of suffering
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— Sarah Hargrove

DID YOU KNOW?

Four published poets and three novelists teach creative writing in the Department of English.

A & S Cornerstone

Correction:

In the summer 2004 issue of the A&S Cornerstone, we incorrectly identified Professor of Economics Robert Margo as the assistant editor of the Journal of Economic History. In fact, Margo is the editor of Explorations in Economic History. Associate Professor of Economics William J. Collins is the new editorial associate at the journal. We regret the error and are happy to set the record straight.

Lights, Action, Camera

Vanderbilt’s new African American studies director, T. Deneen Sharpley-Whiting, is an expert in diverse areas as hip-hop, French literature and film. The 37-year-old professor of African American studies and French plans to use successful programs at Duke and Harvard universities as models to raise the nation’s stature of Vanderbilt’s program.

“There’s a great deal of potential, and [Vanderbilt] is willing to support those efforts,” she says. Prior to her career in higher education, Sharpley-Whiting was a runway and print model. That experience informs her upcoming book, Haute in the Game: Young Women in the Thrill of Hip-Hop Culture.

Sharpley-Whiting earned her doctorate in French studies from Brown University in 1994. She has bachelor’s and master’s degrees in French literature from the University of Rochester and Miami University, respectively. A nationally known and highly respected scholar whose interests encompass history, philosophy, gender, race and culture, she was previously professor of French and director of African American studies at Purdue University and Hamilton College, where she also directed programs in African American studies.

The St. Louis native is the author of four books and co-editor of three others. She succeeds Lucius Outlaw, professor of philosophy, who became associate provost for undergraduate education in July.

Hip-hop and French literature

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Seeding the Future

"Time is money," goes the saying. Yet time and money are often the enemies of the graduate student, because there is not enough of either. During the past year, for instance, many graduate students find themselves in something of an economic purgatory. Their research and scholarship can't slow down, but the economy is making it necessary to spend those months taking whatever work they can to make ends meet. Time and energy for research melt away just when, as doctoral candidates, they need to be ramping up their research and preparing for what awakens them after they've completed their studies.

Over the past two summers, Vanderbilt's College of Arts & Science has helped to break that cycle by offering summer grants for mid-career graduate students. The highly sought grants carry a stipend of $4,000 each for 12 graduate students.

"A university needs to recruit the best graduate students, educate them well, and place them well," says Constantine Tsinakis, professor of mathematics and executive dean of the College of Arts and Science. "The university's visibility is highly dependent upon whether you place students well, whether it is in academia or industry. To be visible as a graduate student, it requires that they use their summers towards the goals of research and getting published."

Kun Yang, Ph.D. candidate in economics, especially appreciated the time afforded by his summer grant. "Economics is very time-sensitive," says Yang, whose research dealt with the "forward premium puzzle" (a theory based on future foreign currency exchanges).

"The topic one is working on may also be studied by many other scholars. Having a whole summer to concentrate on research definitely gives us a comparative advantage." While Yang was able to do all of his research on the Internet, Molly Morgan needed to travel to the source for her study of Mesoamerican archaeology. Since Morgan's work on the Pacific coast of Guatemala was not part of a larger archaeological project, she had to return to the University for support. The summer grant program was a huge investment on the part of the College of Arts and Science, and it has already made returns.

"We're seeding the future."

—Shelton Clark

Garcia earns doctorate eight years after paralyzing accident

David Garcia lives each day coping with limitations heavy enough to crush the spirit. At Commencement ceremonies in May, the entire Vanderbilt community celebrated the grit of the Dominican Republic native, who received a doctorate in Spanish American Literature and Latino Studies after an automobile accident left him a quadriplegic.

"It's been an extraordinary journey," Garcia said. "I can't imagine having completed such a milestone anywhere other than Vanderbilt.

"Garcia wrote his dissertation on the writer Jesus Colón by using a voice-operated computer program. He lost workdays when circumstances such as a cold altered his voice, and he had to spell out each word of large amounts of the more than 300-page manuscript. He recruited family members and friends to type parts of the dissertation.

He did the work at his home in Apalachin, N.Y. The dissertation took the form of a video conferencing between Vanderbilt and Binghamton University in New York.

"Doing a Ph.D. is difficult enough, but for someone who is only able to move his neck, and maybe slightly his arm, it's unprecedented," said Garcia's friend and mentor William Luis, professor of Spanish. "It's a celebration for people with disabilities — and people who don't have disabilities — helping us to learn to strive to accomplish as much as we can."

Luis was asked to bring one graduate student with him from Binghamton when he began teaching at Vanderbilt in 1991. As an undergrad at Binghamton, Garcia had taken a challenging course taught by Luis and outpaced most of the graduate students in the class. "I noticed something special in him," Luis said. "about his intellectual curiosity, his determination, his willingness to work."

Garcia was on the verge of graduating from Vanderbilt and had accepted a teaching job at Millaps College in Jackson, Miss., when the accident occurred. In a Diploma Day in 1996 while he was driving from Jackson to Dallas.

"The first thing people see is my big wheelchair, and sometimes they don't pay attention to what's in my mind and heart," he says. "But there's more than one way of moving in the world, and I think I've learned about that."

—Jim Patterson

Students cop top awards

Several Arts and Science students received prestigious national and international scholarships this year. They include a photojournalist who is documenting life in a notorious African slum, a junior aiming for a career in the CIA, and the first A&S student to win such scholarships in both his junior and senior years.

John B. Reed, BA'04, has won a Fulbright fellowship to study photography in Nairobi, Kenya. He will spend nine months documenting life in the Mathare Valley, a Nairobi slum. Reed expects to make photographs that will attract support for aid in the international area.

Clay Varney has won a National Security Education Program David L. Boren Scholarship to study at the American University in Cairo, Egypt. An A&S junior, Varney anticipates a career as a CIA operations officer or counter-terrorism analyst.

After winning the Beinecke Scholarship in 2003, Benjamin Brent Ogles, BA'04, received this year's Jacob K. Javits Scholarship for graduate study in the humanities. He is the first A&S student to win such scholarships in both his junior and senior years.

Other awards included Werner Lippert, a doctoral student in history, a DAAD Fellowship for archival dissertation research in Germany; Christy MacPherson, BS'04, and Jonathan Sawyer, BS'04, Fulbright teaching fellowships to Germany; and Jonathan Paul Weindrich, BA'98, MBA'04, a Fulbright Binational Business Grant.

David Garcia, center, receives his doctoral hood from his mentor, Professor William Luis, left, at Commencement ceremonies last May.

Federico Garcia Lorca, Spanish poet, is the subject of Carola Daffner, who is only able to move his neck, and maybe slightly his arm, when he started his summer research, David Richter had a broad, expansive idea of his thesis. What he ended up with was a more refined, focused project, which concentrated on surrealism in the work of Spanish poet Federico Garcia Lorca. Tangible proof of Richter's summer research definitely gives us a comparative advantage.

"It was very important for me to get to read her sister's accounts of what they went through under the personal of the Nazi regime," Daffner says via email from Berlin, where she is continuing her work. "I needed to understand Kolmar's Jewish background and why she decided to stay in Nazi Germany, before trying to understand her work.

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I n less than a decade the Internet, wireless phone networks, and satellite communica-

tions have made the world smaller, erasing age-old geographic barriers between nations. So

have the removal of tariffs and other trade restric-
tions by international agreements such as NAFTA. At

Vanderbilt, one innovative response to glob-
lization is a unique interdisciplinary hub:

The Center for the Americas (CFA).

Established in the fall of 2003, the CFA wel-
combed its first full-time director this past sum-
mer. Vera Kutzinski came to Vanderbilt from

Yale, where she earned her Ph.D. and served

18 years as professor of English, African

American studies, and American studies. During

the past few months, Kutzinski, who also holds

the Martha Rivers Ingram Chair in English, has

drawn a lot of interest from Vanderbilt and the

Nashville area. She has delved into the list, making
calls and conference organizing, to the point of

the promise of the new center.

The decision by the administration to set up a

Center for the Americas meant that right here

on this campus was the interface between the

policy world and the academic world,”

Seligson says. Barsky—a native Canadian and specialist

in Canadian studies as well as in refugee and

migration studies—also rededs the creation of

the CFA for bringing him to Vanderbilt in 2003.

“The Center for the Americas intersected per-
fectly with the types of things I was interested

in pursuing and with the things I was already

actively doing,” he says.

Immigration & Incarceration

Among the interdisciplinary initiatives Barsky

has already launched are graduate courses on

migration policy (with visiting expert lecturers)

and Bear Generation literature across the Amer-

icas. But his most ambitious CFA-related work

involves a project to interview Tennessee pris-

oners incarcerated for immigration crimes and the

prison officials who work with them.

“As incarceration increasingly becomes

d a facto tool for immigration poli-

icy,” explains Barsky, “it becomes filled with people

who have come here from else-


There is a variety of reasons why.

Students are among the fields that will be affiliat-

ed with the center.

Matchmaker, Matchmaker

During a September interview in the spacious

CFA office and conference area on the second

floor of Alumni Hall, Kutzinski, with tongue

in cheek, describes her immediate job on cam-

***

New center spans the hemisphere

Professor Vera Kutzinski heads Vanderbilt’s new interdisciplinary Center for the Americas.

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8

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 sitcoms: North, Central, and South. Funded with

the CFA’s initial mission is to bring together professors from

diverse disciplines as African American studies, American

studies, Latin American studies, and at the same time to

fuse cultural tensions between

hemisphere and hung them from the room’s

high rafters. Though the flags are just symbols,

Kutzinski anticipates that the center’s inter-

disciplinary efforts will soon affect course offer-
ings for graduate students. For example, a student at the

University’s longstanding commitment
to Latin American studies and because of the

promise of the new center.

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Thinking, Acting Globally

A number of young Arts and Science alumni are making their mark on the international scene, to the benefit of many of the world’s citizens. Here are two of their stories.

Building Bridges of Understanding

As fighting in Iraq and the hunt for al-Qaida continue, the rhetoric surrounding the Middle East has become increasingly negative, slowly burning bridges between societies and cultures around the world.

Jake Brewer, BA’04, is trying to rebuild those bridges, one relationship at a time. A psychology major from Columbia, Tenn., Brewer has traveled to the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) four times in the past three years to study Middle Eastern culture and connect personally with its people. Brewer is a member of the Global Student Organizing Committee, an organization based in Abu Dhabi, which holds international student conferences to promote global awareness and interaction.

“The actions of the people and government of the U.S. affect people everywhere,” Brewer says. “As a people we simply don’t realize the power that we have.”

In the spring of 2001, Brewer decided to transfer to Vanderbilt from the U.S. Naval Academy. He also decided to pursue a major in psychology, as he felt it provided the best foundation for working with people from different countries and cultures.

“Americans have been blessed beyond the imagination of most of the world,” says Brewer. “The fact that we have that privilege is not a bad thing. What I am saying is that people all over the world need help. We are currently one of the only countries and the only people capable of doing so, and that is truly a privilege and responsibility I hope we undertake.”

—Julie Neumann

Volunteer of the Year

The Global Health Council has named Na’la Husseini, BA’04, Volunteer of the Year.

The award was given “in recognition of [Husseini’s] unwavering commitment to improving the health and lives of citizens around the world and for her determination in establishing a leading university chapter dedicated to promoting awareness of international health issues and policy.”

A sociology major from Los Altos, Calif., Husseini became associated with the GHC after attending a conference-sponsored forum on AIDS held in Nashville in 2002.

She became an active Global Health Action Network coordinator for the Vanderbilt campus, focusing on women and children’s health, infectious diseases, HIV/AIDS and emerging threats. Vanderbilt’s Division of Student Life also supported her efforts.

Under Husseini’s leadership, Vanderbilt’s chapter successfully hosted an annual “Global Health Week” and sponsored several health advocacy events during the academic year.

Formerly called the National Council of International Health, the GHC is the world’s largest membership association dedicated to saving lives by improving health throughout the world.

Husseini received her award in June at the GHC’s 31st annual conference in Washington, D.C.

—Kara Fanling

Dr. Mildred Stahlman 2004 Distinguished Alumna Award

Dr. Mildred Stahlman, BA’43, MD’46, has received Vanderbilt University’s 2004 Distinguished Alumna Award.

A professor of pediatrics and pathology in the Division of Neonatology at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, she is an internationally renowned expert on diseases of the newborn and widely recognized as an authority on hyaline membrane disease. In 1961, she established at Vanderbilt the first modern neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) in the United States. Over the years, hundreds of premature infants born with underdeveloped lungs have been successfully treated at Vanderbilt, and the NICU concept has spread across the globe.

A graduate of the College of Arts and Science, Dr. Stahlman spent her senior year in abdomen at Vanderbilt University Medical School. After completing medical school, she spent five years in residency and completed a fellowship before returning to Vanderbilt as a faculty member.

Dr. Stahlman earned the nation’s first modern neonatal intensive care unit.

In 1951. She has served in a variety of capacities during the past 53 years and was the first woman chair of the Faculty Senate.

“I am delighted that Dr. Stahlman has received this richly deserved award,” says Richard McCarty, dean of the College of Arts and Science. “She is one of the brightest jewels among our alumni. Through her pioneering efforts, thousands of infants in danger of death have survived and thrived. She has given them and their families a priceless gift.”

Dr. Stahlman has received many awards throughout her career, including the Thomas Jefferson Award in 1980 for distinguished service to Vanderbilt. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) gave her their prestigious Lusitana Award in Pediatrics in 1987. In 1994, the Tennessee Chapter of the AAP named her Pediatrician of the Year.

In 1989, she was named to the Swedish Academy of Sciences, the organization that selects Nobel Prize winners, in physiology and chemistry. She also received honorary M.D.s from the University of Gothenburg in Sweden in 1973 and from the University of Nancy in France in 1982.

Dr. Stahlman says she was encouraged to follow her heart to a career in medicine by her late father and mother, James G. Stahlman and Mildred Stahlman Rhett. Her father was a member of the Vanderbilt University Board of Trust and publisher of the Nashville Banner.

Dr. Stahlman became involved in newborn physiology and fetal cardiology in 1951 as Vanderbilt’s first Fellow to study at the Karolinska Institute in Sweden. “At that time,” she says, “we had no equipment or special care for preemies.”

For several years she concentrated on animal research at Vanderbilt, developing information on how to measure newborn blood gases and lung function, which would later be transferred to human patients.

What happened next was an incredible leap forward in medicine. In 1961 for the first time, a baby born with severe hyaline membrane was helped to breathe by the use of a baby-sized respirator. Her lung function and blood gases were monitored by using umbilical catheters developed in labs.

Today that first patient, Martha Stahlman Humphries Lott (her parents named her for Dr. Stahlman) is in her 40s. A biomedical engineering graduate of Duke University, she works in the NICU where she was once the first patient.

Dr. Stahlman at 82 continues her research daily in Vanderbilt’s Division of Neonatology. On weekends, she retreats to her Humphreys County farm where she rides her beloved horses.

“I think I’m really a veterinarian at heart,” she says with a smile.

Thousands of premature infants and their families are thankful that she chose to treat human patients instead.

(Posts of this article appeared in Vanderbilt Magazine.)
The last, great frontier

O
ten called the last great frontier of scienti-
ﬁc research, the study of how our brains are
organized, how they process information, and
both inﬂuence and are inﬂuenced by our behav-
ior is the focus of researchers at Vander-
bilt’s Center for Integrative & Cognitive
Neuroscience (CICN).

“This is an exciting time scientiﬁcally,” says
Jeff Schall, E. Bronson Ingram Professor of
Neuroscience, CICN director and professor
of psychology. Schall is also an investigator
at the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Research
on Human Development and director of the
Vanderbilt Vision Research Center.

Here is a look at some recent research from the
CICN:

It’s a gamble

An international team of researchers has dis-
covered that dopamine levels in our brains vary
the most in situations where we are unsure if
we are going to be rewarded, such as when we
are gambling or playing the lottery.

The research, “Dopamine Transmission
in the Human Striatum during Mon-
etary Reward Tasks,” was published online in
the Journal of Neuroscience.

Dopamine has long been known to play an
important role in how we experience rewards
from a variety of sources, including food
and sex, as well as from drugs such as cocaine
and heroin. But pinning down the precise condi-
tions that cause its release has been difﬁcult.

“Using a combination of techniques, we
were actually able to measure release of the
dopamine neurotransmitter under natural condi-
tions using monetary reward,” says David
Zald, assistant professor of psychology at Van-
derbilt and a member of the Vanderbilt Kennedy
Center for Research on Human Development.

The research offers promise for exploring
the chemical foundation of problems such as
gambling addiction.

“The most interesting thing we found is
that there were areas that showed increased
dopamine release during the unpredictable
condition, and there were also other areas show-
ing decreased dopamine release,” Zald says.

“So other than just dopamine as reward, there
is a more complicated action occurring.”

Seeing is believing

Seeing is believing, even when it’s ambiguous
or misleading, Centennial Professor of Psychol-
ogy Randolph Blake, and former research asso-
ciates Thomas W. James and Keith V. Soehl
have found that, when judging an object’s motion,
the brain continues to accept ambiguous visual
information even when it conﬂicts with more
reliable tactile input. Their studies, which appeared
recently in two journals, Psychological Science
and Cognitive, Affective, & Behavioral Neuro-
science, provide new insights into how the brain
-blends and balances information from different
senses in its constant effort to comprehend the
external environment.

The researchers found that the middle tem-
poral visual center of the brain, which spe-
cializes in processing visual movement, also
responds to motion detected by touch. How-
ever, they were surprised to discover that,
when presented with ambiguous visual information
and reliable tactile information, the brain did
not fuse the two into a single, accurate rep-
resentation of motion as the prevailing theo-
ries predicted. Instead, it keeps the two inputs
separate, accepting a degree of “cognitive dis-
sonance” when the two conﬂict.

Brain maps perceptions, not reality

When we experience an illusion, we usually
have the impression that our minds are play-
ning tricks on us. New research published in
the journal Science indicates that our percep-
tions of these illusions are no hoax, but the
result of how the brain is organized to process
the information it receives from our senses.

Vanderbilt psychology researchers
Anna Wang Roe, Li Min Chen and Robert
Randolph Blake, have identiﬁed responses in the brain
to a touch illusion that shed new light on how the
-brain processes sensory information. Their
research also calls into question long-held theo-
ries about the nature of the “map” of the
-body in the brain.

“What is surprising is that we found the
cortical map reﬂects our perceptions, not the
-physical body,” Roe says. “The brain is reﬂect-
ing what we are feeling, even if that’s not what
really happened.”

The team completed the research at Yale University before moving
to Vanderbilt this fall.

Roe’s team will continue to study how the brain
-processes sensory input and illusions, though
to the questions about misinterpretation of
that term. “Illusions are not unusual or strange—they are how we interpret the world,”
Roe says. “We think we know what’s out there
in the physical world, but it’s all interpreted
by our brains. Everything we sense is an illu-
-sion to a degree.”

This article was taken from stories by Melanie
Catanzia and David Salisbury. For multimedia
versions, please visit Vanderbilt’s online research
journal, Exploration, at http://exploration.van-
derbilt.edu/home.

Photos by Neil brake and Daniel Dubois

Headlines

Q: Lyndon Johnson’s name is close-
ly linked to the war in Vietnam. Were
there positive ways in which he had an
impact on U.S. history? A: Lyndon
Baines Johnson, the 36th president of
the United States, is a distant memory
to most Americans. But it is arguable
that Johnson had more of an impact on
American life than either his martyred
predecessor, John Kennedy, who
remains an American icon, or his
disgraced successor, Richard Nixon.

Forty years ago this month, Johnson
began his elected term as president,
committed to the vision of a “Great Society,” the most
-signiﬁcant package of social legislation since
Franklin Roosevelt’s “New Deal.”

Having assumed power in the wake
of the national trauma caused by Kennedy’s assas-
-sination, Johnson assumed the country he would
continue in Kennedy’s path. But he went well
beyond it. Over the next four years, under Johnson’s leadership, Congress would enact sweeping programs of
social legislation that changed the face of America. From civil rights to vot-
ing rights to Medicare to aid to edu-
cation to the National Endowment of the Arts, we still live with the domes-
tic legacy of Lyndon Johnson.

Not every program was success-
ful, and some proved that government was not
the answer to some social problems. But one
legacy of Lyndon Johnson that still challenges
us today is to create an America that comes
closer to the ideal of equality for all people,
regardless of race, creed or color.

Vietnam was the great tragedy of Johnson’s years, a conﬂict he inherited from his prede-
cessor but escalated on his watch. A reluctant
warrior, Johnson believed the war necessary
both to prevent a communist takeover of South
Vietnam and to keep an American defeat from
poisoning the political atmosphere, just as the loss of China and McCarthyism had in the early
1950s.

Lyndon Johnson’s greatest talent did lie
in fostering domestic legislation and steer-
ing it through Congress. But he was not with-
out our skill in handling foreign policy. One
of the main theaters of the Cold War, Europe.
Johnson guided the United States with a pol-
cy that balanced the solidarity of the West-
ers alliance with the need to stabilize the
Cold War and reduce the nuclear danger. His administration began a process of treating
Western and Eastern Europe as a whole,
embaring on a patient and sustained effort
to reduce tensions while maintaining the sol-
idity of the West despite the French with-
drawal from NATO.

Johnson sought and furthered the process
of international trade and monetary coopera-
tion with the objective of expanding global
prosperity and decreasing poverty. In a com-
plex world, Johnson understood the necessity
of cooperating with allies and carrying on a
dialogue with adversaries, lessons that remain
as relevant today as they were 40 years ago.

Ask the Faculty

Professor of History Thomas Alan
Schwartz is the author of several books, most recently
Lyndon Johnson and Europe: In the Shadow of Vietnam (2003), an examination of alliance pol-
-itics during the Vietnam war.

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Chemists develop antioxidants more effective than Vitamin E

A new family of antioxidants that are up to 100 times more effective than Vitamin E has been developed by an international team of chemists. The researchers, who are working with Vanderbilt University, hope that the new compounds will eventually be tested in living animals and whether they have any harmful side effects.

The team, led by Derek Pratt, is working with Porter. “When Derek suggested this project, I was immediately intrigued,” says Porter. Porter teamed Pratt with Maikel Witjans, another graduate student who was interested in synthesising the new molecules, called pyridyls. In order to assess their effectiveness as antioxidants, the Vanderbilt chemists sent samples to Luca Valignoni at the University of Bologna in Italy. He determined that the best pyridyls the Vanderbilt chemists had created were as much as 100 times more effective than Vitamin E.

In December 2003, Pratt received his doctorate and moved to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to begin a post-doctoral fellowship. He is continuing to work with Porter’s group on the new antioxidants.

So far, the new antioxidants have been tested in vitro — in the test tube. But studies with biological molecules, such as cholesterol, suggest that the new compounds have properties that could make them suitable for dietary supplements. Shortly, Vanderbilt researchers expect to begin the lengthy process of determining how effective the new compounds are in living animals and whether they have any harmful side effects.

The approach that led to the new antioxidants was the idea of former Vanderbilt graduate Derek Pratt. At the time, Pratt was an undergraduate at Carleton University in Ottawa, working with Keith Ingold at the National Research Council in Canada. Pratt brought the idea with him when he came to Vanderbilt to work with Porter. "When Derek suggested this project, I was immediately intrigued," says Porter. Porter teamed Pratt with Maikel Witjans, another graduate student who was interested in synthesising the new molecules, called pyridyls. In order to assess their effectiveness as antioxidants, the Vanderbilt chemists sent samples to Luca Valignoni at the University of Bologna in Italy. He determined that the best pyridyls the Vanderbilt chemists had created were as much as 100 times more effective than Vitamin E.

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A&S mourns faculty members

Dewey W. Grantham, Holland N. McIntyre Professor of Biology, History, Emeritus, died on Aug. 26, 2004, at St. Thomas Hospital in Nashville. He was 83 years old and had suffered during the past year from cancer and Alzheimer’s disease. Professor Grantham was a member of the Vanderbilt faculty since 1952 until his retirement in 1991. The author of numerous books on the 20th century American South, he received many honors for his scholarship and teaching. They included the Harvey Branscomb Distinguished Professor Award in 1971. He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Virginia B. Grantham, and three children.

Laurel Monga, professor of French and Italian, died July 10, 2004, at Vanderbilt Hospital after suffering a stroke. He was an internationally recognized pioneer in the field of early modern travel writing and a favorite among the undergraduate and graduate students that he taught during his 28 years at Vanderbilt. He served as acting chair of the Department of French and Italian in 1995 and assistant to the dean of the College of Arts and Science and director of overseas study from 1995 to 1997.

A native of Italy, Professor Monga taught a popular course on Italian cinema for the Retirement Learning at Vanderbilt program and led Vanderbilt Alumni Travel programs to Italy on several occasions. He is survived by his wife, Mary, a daughter and two brothers.

Alumni wishing to make memorial gifts in honor of these faculty members can obtain more information at http://sitemason.vanderbilt.edu/officeofdevelopment/giftsmemorial.
About 5,400 alumni and guests returned to campus the weekend of Nov. 5 to celebrate Reunion and Homecoming, the largest event held on campus. This year, classes ending in ‘4 and ‘9 reunited and contributed $43.4 million in gifts and pledges to the University. Here is a look back at Homecoming celebrations across the years.