STUDENT Experience

Evidence of Success
GRADUATE SCHOOL AND DISTANCE EDUCATION STAFF

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In This Issue

2 Letter from the President
3 Letter from the Dean
4 Quantifying the Grace of Aerial Silks
6 Generations of Hornets
8 A Gallery of Beauty
10 An International Adventure
14 New Location, Better Education
16 Hornet Happenings

18 Lights, Camera, Art Therapy!
20 Archives and Opportunities
22 Alumni Spotlight
28 Evidence of Success
31 Deanna Durkes
32 Hope and Healing Through Art
34 3 Minute Thesis Award Winners
36 Application Guidelines
Letter from the President

Dear Current and Prospective Hornets,

For those of you who have just been admitted to graduate studies at Emporia State University, congratulations! We are so glad you’ve joined the Hornet Nation to continue your education. For those of you who are choosing a graduate program, consider the following items as you decide.

ESU has high-profile programs across many disciplines. Our outstanding students have distinguished themselves in many ways, including:

- National debate champions (2013)
- More than twice as many awards from the Kansas Academy of Sciences as any other Kansas university in the last decade;
- Great Plains Honors Council (six states) Boe Award and poster presentation recipients (2016);
- Student athletes are ranked No. 4 in the nation in Division II athletics and No. 14 in the nation across all NCAA divisions in service hours (2015);
- Kennedy Center Region V theatre awards (2016);
- Strong performance on the Kansas CPA examination;
- ESU publishes the journals of Sigma Tau Delta, the international English honor society; and
- Many awards to students and alumni in connection with ESU’s outstanding teacher education programs.

Hornet Nation is a fantastic place to be. Best wishes as you pursue your goals and enjoy your studies at ESU.

Go Hornets!

Allison D. Garrett
President
Letter from the Dean

Dear Current and Prospective Graduate Student:

Thank you for your interest in graduate study at Emporia State University. The decision to engage in graduate study can be a difficult one; however, as part of your decision-making process you might consider the following information:

- Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects employers will need to add nearly 2.4 million jobs requiring a graduate degree or higher between 2012 and 2022.
- According to the U.S. Census Bureau, over the course of a lifetime, a person with a master's degree will earn (on average) $400,000 more than those with a bachelor's degree. Those with doctoral degrees will earn approximately $1.3 million more than those with a bachelor's degree.

Whether you are considering graduate education to further a present career, to retrain for a different career or to embark on study toward a doctoral degree, Emporia State University is uniquely situated to meet your educational needs. We offer 31 distinct degree programs with 33 concentrations and 14 graduate certificates. Many of our programs are nationally ranked for their quality and rigor of study, and most feature small class sizes that allow students to develop professional relationships with faculty who are experts within their fields. In addition, we offer a number of different modes of study, including face to face, online and hybrid instruction that features cutting edge technology. Finally, Emporia State University is competitive both regionally and nationally in tuition and fees. I encourage you to contact the staff at the Graduate School, if we can answer questions concerning this important educational step in your life.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jerald W. Spotswood
Dean, Graduate School and Distance Education
Quantifying the Grace of Aerial Silks

Dagney Velazquez

MATHEMATICS

Aerial silks: think Cirque du Soleil, silk fabric billowing from the ceiling to the floor, and graceful performers flowing through them with ease, sans safety harnesses. Strength in its most beautiful form is exhibited through the art of aerial silks. Rather than allow that the beauty is unexplainable, Dagney Velazquez is attempting to explain the movements through a series of equations.

“I began taking aerial silks lessons about the same time as I started my graduate work at ESU. It was a difficult start for both disciplines. I hadn’t taken a math course in a very long time, and even then it had all been applied math, not theoretical. As my brain was stretching to understand how mathematical proofs worked, my mind and body both struggled with the aerial arts. Initially I lacked the upper body strength required, but that was fixable. What was more difficult was understanding the complicated wraps and twists of the fabric. It seemed simple enough when my teacher demonstrated, but as soon as my feet left the ground and I was hanging in midair, my mind couldn’t grasp what I was supposed to do with the fabric,” Velazquez said.

“I eventually became adept at mathematical proofs, but aerial silks still eluded me. My physical strength improved, and I could perform some tricks, but I was memorizing formulas much like students memorize math formulas — without any real understanding of what they mean. I sensed that there was some hidden language behind the complicated wraps of fabric around the body, but I couldn’t comprehend it. Terminology varies widely, so even experts don’t always understand one another, and no one had published any kind of systematized step-by-step vocabulary.”

Velazquez began to understand math theory better, but struggled to understand the movements necessary to dance with the silks.

“A couple of years into the math program, I was introduced to a field of math called Knot Theory which, as it sounds, is the study of knots. It occurred to me that there might be something useful in this that I could apply to aerial silks. I approached Dr. Wiley about the idea. He suggested I read some articles that investigated the tying of neckties to see if something similar could be done with aerial silks. The necktie mathematicians had written a simple code that could be used to describe every possible variation of knotting a tie. This simple code ended up revealing hundreds of unique tying sequences,” Velazquez explained.

Inspired by Wiley’s suggestion, Velazquez began to navigate the aerial silk acrobatics by quantifying each movement in relation to the next.

“I developed a similar, though more complex, code that can be used to describe many of the body wraps in aerial silks. It took some time to come up with a code that was thorough enough that it was not ambiguous, but also not more complex than necessary. The code involves an alphabet of specific symbols that each describe a movement of the fabric. One symbol, for example, indicates to move the fabric hanging below the aerialist counterclockwise around the hips half a turn. I used this to codify several of the most common body wraps. After that, I experimented with combining lines of code. Just as you can add and subtract numbers, you can add and subtract lines of code to create new body wraps. I also discovered that some symbols are inverses of one another, and some (but not all) can be rearranged within a line of code without changing the end result. I used this discovery to come up with new, sometimes simpler ways to enter or exit a wrap. I can also use it to determine which moves an aerialist could perform that would undo a wrap, which is a good thing if that’s what’s intended, but could be disastrous if unintentional.”

“Quantifying the Grace of Aerial Silks

A couple of years into the math program, I was introduced to a field of math called knot theory which, as it sounds, is the study of knots. It occurred to me that there might be something useful in this that I could apply to aerial silks.”

-Dagney Velazquez
Velazquez is working to complete her master's degree now, and she hopes to unveil the numbers behind the movements of aerial silks even further.

“So far, my work has focused on body wraps where the fabric moves as if it is one piece, but aerial silks involves two pieces of fabric, and sometimes they are wrapped separately in different ways. So, I intend on expanding my work to refine my code so that it can be used for these wraps as well,” said Velazquez.

With a bachelor’s degree in chemical engineering, Velazquez was able to teach as an adjunct instructor at Kansas City Kansas Community College while on staff in adult education there.

“I had a pretty solid math background, but the idea of going back to graduate school for math was still daunting,” Velazquez said. “While teaching adult education, I found that not only did I love teaching in general, but I especially loved teaching math. Part of that might be the challenge. I hear, ‘I’m terrible at math,’ or ‘I hate math,’ multiple times a day, and I feel joy when I help someone not only succeed but also when I can bring them to a point where they can say, ‘I’m good at this,’ or even ‘this is fun!’”

To become a full-time instructor, Velazquez needed another master’s degree and began researching graduate programs. Emporia State was the resounding recommendation that she received from her mother, father, and sister, as each of them attended Emporia State.

“The distance graduate program has not disappointed, and I recommend it to anyone I know looking to go back to school. I am now on the math faculty at Kansas City Kansas Community College (since I have another master’s degree, I was eligible for faculty as soon as I had enough hours in math) and am loving every minute of it,” Velazquez confirmed.
Replay
When my time spins around,
I will return as a record store clerk
and customers will come and ask,
“Hey, man, what do you recommend?”
I’ll say try this one.
I’ll put on the album I’ve picked
and drop the needle-arm down.
The record will spin like the passing world.
When it reaches the end I’ll flip the LP over,
and we’ll listen again—
as many times as we need.

by Tyler Sheldon
(first published in I-70 Review)

Recipe, Condensed
How many tons of rain
we’ll need for the perfect pillar
of hackle-tightening super-
cumulus night terror: take
that amount, eyeball
and pour, lifting
the bucket carefully
with your knees. Whip all this
into a pillar (see above), and
wait. The moment has come
to break a few eggs.

by Tyler Sheldon
(first published in Thorny Locust)

Red-Tails
Eastern Kansas. Red-tails
perch on posts, like mobsters:
“one boid, two boid.”
From the road,
we marvel at the fat
who have earned it,
who lease sky
to leaner chests, sharper
wings. Hawks know
who’s boss.

by Tyler Sheldon
(first published in Cybersoleil Literary Journal)

Discovering
the way a hummingbird
alters its dizzying flight by degrees,
flits up, back and away,
undoes itself.
How cicadas, like teens,
oversleep, never ask
to borrow the car
or stay out late,
then wake up,
brake the rules,
drone into sky.
And the bracket of geese
which wings itself across clouds
each evening, changes leads,
a great self-winding watch
which ticks and shifts its way
through a band of stars.

by Tyler Sheldon
(first published in The Dos Passos Review)

With Emporia State University
alumni as family, Tyler Sheldon has always been familiar
with ESU.
“Emporia State was on my radar for
quite a few years. My grandfather,
Robert Sheldon, taught English here
in the 1960’s, and he worked with
Dr. Richard Keller in the English
Department. Then my dad and
mom met here as graduate teaching
assistants in English in the 1980s,”
Sheldon said.
Albeit familiar with the department,
Sheldon initially had no intention
of following the path of his
family members.
“For the longest time, I wanted to be
the rebellious kid. I wanted to go into
medicine and help people that way.
But while I was in pre-med, I was
tutoring English at my community
college, and so it really never left me
alone,” he said.

Tyler Sheldon
ENGLISH

Photo Credit: Emporia State University Photography
On enrollment day, Sheldon made a quick decision. Rather than pursuing the originally planned psychology degree, he opted to be an English major. It wasn't long after that he became known within his new department.

“Dr. Kevin Rabas and I had met at the arts center in Hutchinson … I didn't know he taught here at the time, but after coming to Emporia, I got to meet with him and that was a nice surprise,” Sheldon said.

“I started meeting poets and writing poetry; writing pretty bad poetry for quite a while. Finally I got through the bilge of my early writing, and found some work that I liked and I found poets to model that I liked — several Kansas poets like William Stafford and Denise Lowe, Patricia Traxler, people like this, and I started sending out to a few small journals, which was fun. So my Emporia State experience has been one where I’m trying to write as much as possible and publish whenever journals let me, and it’s been fun.”

Sheldon has since completed about 500 poems, 40 of which have been published in regional and national journals. He has also enjoyed editing positions with a couple of Kansas literary magazines or journals, such as Flint Hills Review.

“One of our top poets, Tyler Sheldon writes plain-style narrative and lyric poetry, some of which will be published in an upcoming Oil Hill Press chapbook. Tyler appears to be following in the footsteps of his father, Bill Sheldon, another fine poet of our state with multiple books. Tyler writes poems of place, poems of family and heritage, and poems of music. A fine guitar player and musical aficionado, one of my favorites of Tyler's thesis poems is about how working in a record store can be like peering into one's own afterlife. The poem ends this way: I'll put on the album I've picked / and drop the needle-arm down. / The record will spin like the passing world. / When it reaches the end I'll flip the LP over, / and we'll listen again— / as many times as we need,” complimented Rabas.

Sheldon's topic of choice? Kansas.

“I like to write a lot about Kansas. It's what I know; it's where I'm from. Though that's pretty limited because any geographic region has its boundaries, I enjoy it. I enjoy finding little moments in the state where I can relax. I like going out into the Flint Hills to dig a little deeper,” he explained.

More recently, at the urging of faculty members, Sheldon began delving into more personal topics to break the boundaries that a purely geographical poet might experience. He expects that those pieces will be more universally relatable.

“Tyler has always been open to revising and polishing his poems to completion, the sign of a serious poet. He has over 41 individual poem publications in juried, small press literary magazines. That’s a great start for someone who will soon be earning his MA in English. We look forward to great things from him — to a cataloguing of the ways of our people and state to an examination of the artist’s writerly life,” said ESU poetry track leader and professor, Rabas.

“I like the fact that I’m able to write about personal issues and not have it shut me down — that was an empowering thing for me. So I’m trying to get a little bit more personal in my writing,” Sheldon explained.

Faculty members in his department have encouraged Sheldon to expand his comfort zone in more ways than that, though. Through their help, Sheldon has developed skills in analyzing pieces rather than just summarizing and is currently working on his most difficult struggle: fiction writing.

“Writing beyond creative writing, the faculty here have been hugely instrumental in what improvements I have made, and so I owe them quite a lot for that,” he said.

Looking back, he realizes how long he'd fought his interest in the liberal arts realm.

“I was always going to readings and public music events, things like that, and I had no idea I wanted to write. I wanted to be, for a long time, the kid who did the exact opposite of what his parents did. But after starting graduate school here, I started teaching Comp 1 and 2. It was a lot more fun than I expected,” Sheldon said.

“It took a while for me to accept that it was okay to do something that seemed like the natural thing to do. I was always trying to fight it. It was coming to Emporia State that made me decide I wanted to study English and be a writer for most of what I do.”

As for his parents, they seemed quite all right with his degree change.

“I think they were happy that I’d found something fulfilling … encouraged on both sides. I have people I can contact if I need a creative push, or if I need to discuss issues of craft, or frankly, just to talk. Had I gone into a different field, I might not have had that avenue of creativity.”
A Gallery of Beauty

Raven Milam &
Mark Brenneman
ART THERAPY

Valeo Behavioral Health Care has partnered with the Yeldarb Gallery in Topeka, Kansas, to develop an art gallery known as Creations of Hope. Raven Milam and Mark Brenneman, two Emporia State art therapy graduate students, have had the opportunity to play a significant role in the development of the gallery and exhibitions within it.

“This was a unique opportunity to be involved when they opened a full-time gallery,” said Milam. “That’s been one of the drives is to have a full-time gallery that would be able to show artwork from community members and members from all over the Midwest area … it just kind of went hand-in-hand with the internship that I was involved with.”

Creations of Hope is not any ordinary art gallery. It showcases the artwork of people with mental illnesses, giving them the opportunity to exhibit the beauty of their minds — an element rarely featured.

“They spend a lot of time dealing with what’s wrong with them and this gives them the chance to focus on what’s right with them and expand on that, to go with some of the strengths rather than working on the problems all the time,” said Brenneman, who has helped with the gallery since it first began.

Creations of Hope has two-month exhibitions, each of which Milam and Brenneman have had the opportunity to help with as interns.

“We help set up the gallery and doing the processes throughout. Just because we’re not doing the curating position, we still are involved with maybe set up, and going to the opening night to help at least be bodies to move stuff around. Still part of the exhibits,” explained Milam.

The two curated an exhibit this past summer. They reached out to all people who had identified with having a mental illness and showed interest in exhibiting their art.

“We send out a notice to the artists that have shown interest and kind of pass the word around to people who might like to be a featured artist,” said Milam.

Not only does the gallery display the art, but it also allows the artists to sell their pieces, adding more value to their work.

“There’s a pretty wide variety (of art). Everything from traditional oil paintings, to stuff made out of old plastic bottles, to jewelry, ceramics, stuff made out of fabric,” said Brenneman. “All that we ask is that it is something that they created.”

“If it’s an art media, you can see it in the gallery, but they are presented as you would in any gallery professionally. They are professionally displayed,” added Milam.

Through the internships with Valeo and their work at the Creations of Hope gallery, Milam and Brenneman have gained hands-on experience with professional art therapists, better preparing the two for their future. Throughout the process, their professors in the art therapy program have encouraged and supported Milam and Brenneman’s professional growth.

“Our professors are amazing. They were really great in preparing me to work with individuals, communication skills, to have a therapeutic dialog without necessarily doing therapy to help in the situation,” said Milam. “Our teachers are very well-versed in how to approach the gallery setting ethically — how to work with individuals who are our clients and who are not our clients and how to have a professional discourse.”

Their passion for art therapy is rippling into the lives of the gallery artists, who gain even more purpose through their art.

“When I was volunteering, some of the clients that would make it into the show, it’s like it changes their whole mental focus and outlook on their art. They would come back the week after the first Friday that they exhibited, and they would already be working on stuff for the next year’s show. It’s something the clients look forward to a year ahead of time — it’s a big deal to them,” said Brenneman.

It’s a big deal to the organizers, as well.

“I really enjoy the community of creating the Creations of Hope gallery and the exhibits. I like working with the artists. It’s a great and very rewarding experience to be able to be an advocate in the field, bringing awareness to mental illness,” said Milam.
CREATIONS OF HOPE:
An exhibit by artists experiencing mental illness

Call for Artists
Creations of Hope Gallery
An International Adventure

Neucasha Greene
SCHOOL COUNSELING

In a workshop for international students who planned to stay in the U.S. for employment post-graduation, Neucasha Greene jokingly said she wanted to recruit for Emporia State University across the world. Within two weeks, she was offered the job.

“I was doing international admissions counseling, and I got to travel and I got to speak to a lot of high school students, specifically 11th and 12th grade, since they’re preparing for what’s next when they graduate,” said Greene. “I got to recruit back home in the Bahamas and at my old high school … I thought ‘You know, I could do this. I could kind of encourage and give students the realization that getting a job without any kind of higher education is going to be very challenging, so you need to come up with a plan.’ So that was the main thing that got me interested in school counseling.”

Her original plan did not include graduate school, but that soon changed. The more she thought about it, the more she realized that graduate school might work for her. She began the Parallel Pathways program in the Counseling Department, and has thoroughly enjoyed her experience.

“If I got the opportunity, I would like to be the first stop for students adjusting to U.S. life, U.S. culture, trying to figure out grades and schooling and stuff like that. Just having some counseling background can be helpful for helping those students transition.”

Greene attributes her success thus far to her willingness to step out on campus and try new things.

“I think it’s up to students to make the most of their opportunities, and to reach out and find those opportunities, because they are there,” she said. “To me, there’s always something going on, you just have to step out of your comfort zone and be willing to try new things … Students just have to be willing to put themselves out there. I think a lot of times they miss out because they want the activities to show up at their doorstep; they’re not willing to go and sign up and be a part of things.”

Photo Credit: Emporia State University Photography
Aissatou Kane, a native of Mali in West Africa, wants to help those who took the same path as her. As a graduate assistant for the Office of International Education, Kane's goal is to help international students with their transition to America. Why? Because Kane experienced the same anxiety that most international students do as newcomers, and she wants to show them the community that they are stepping into.

“I was scared at first, because it’s a small town and it’s far away from places where people I know live at, because most people I know that come from my country live on the west or east coast … I remember crying in my dorm room the first night. But then, when the orientation started, I saw how people were welcoming us, how people were nice, how people were helpful. I didn't feel alone, and that's what I'm trying to make other students feel with my job,” said Kane.

“The first week for international students is crucial, because it can determine how well they’re going to do in the school or how poorly they’re going to do. If at first sight they have a bad experience, it lessens their ability to do well in school.”

Kane holds a large role in the initial conversations with international students, ensuring that they are prepared for the journey ahead.

“Before the students get here, I send them information about how to get a visa to come here, what to prepare for, what to bring with them — just provide them basic information that they need to know before they get here. International students, for example, have to have health insurance. We are required to get health insurance when we get here. So I have to communicate that to them, tell them that they have to be prepared to pay that extra money because they’re going to have to have health insurance. I tell them about housing. If they want to live off campus, they have to start signing up early so they can get a spot. I answer all their questions. If they have any concerns, they shoot me an email. I’m basically their point of contact before they get here.”

Once students arrive, Kane is one of the first people they meet in the residence halls. She helps students get settled, then helps orchestrate a one-week orientation for the students.

Kane recalled how different Emporia’s environment was compared to Mali.

“It was drastic, but I have the ability to adapt to different environments quickly. It wasn’t as hard for me as it is for other students that I’ve seen. With my job, I’ve seen so many students that have had these issues. That made me want to do something for them, and help smooth this transition, because it’s not easy coming from somewhere totally different to here. It's like two different worlds.”

Several factors are different here, Kane explained.

“Technology is one. Everything is online here — you do everything on the computer. You go to class, you work on computers. You do assignments on computers. It may seem like a small thing here, but back home it’s not the same. It’s not as technologically advanced as it is here.

“The weather — a small thing like that can be very different … Small things like that are really difficult for international students. I’ve lived that, and I wanted to help out by reassuring them. Telling them that everything’s going to be okay…that’s what I like the most. I know I’m making an impact in these students’ life at Emporia State University, and most of them live happily from what I know,” Kane said.

Kane will soon graduate, after which she plans to spend a year in the business world before returning home and starting her own natural haircare line based out of Mali.

“I have enjoyed every bit of my time here. I still enjoy it, and I'm sad that I'm going to have to leave this town. I got used to the life, and I like it. I really like Emporia,” Kane said.
Mohammad Albawaneh, a native of Irbid, Jordan, has always enjoyed learning. He began his higher education endeavors at Albaqa Applied University where he completed his bachelor’s in management information systems. After being named a top student, he was hired as an academic advisor for the school. While working full-time, Albawaneh completed his MBA, and, as chance would have it, met the president of the university, Dr. Ekhelif Tarawneh.

Dr. Tarawneh, now the president of the University of Jordan, is an ESU alumnus. Upon learning of Albawaneh’s desire to complete a Ph.D. in the U.S., Tarawneh encouraged Albawaneh to look into ESU.

“I got the idea from Dr. Ekhelif Tarawneh, the president of Albaqa Applied University. After that, I started researching Emporia and what the environment (was like). He recommended me (to go) and told me that the people were so nice and that the town here was so peaceful,” said Albawaneh. “He highly recommended me to come here and get my master’s, and then start my higher studies — to start at Emporia and then get a Ph.D.”

After a bit more investigation, Albawaneh found that he had a distant relative in the area, and one of the professors in the School of Business, Dr. Khaled A. Alshare, was from Irbid as well. After speaking with other students from Jordan, Albawaneh decided to pursue his next master’s degree in instructional design and technology.

“I do believe in our age and our time, technology and designing is a hot major. I think I will get a good opportunity if I stay and do a good job in this major. Education has begun to convert from face-to-face traditional education to online.”

Albawaneh became active on campus from the moment he arrived in 2013. Within two months of his arrival, Albawaneh was named president of the Arabic Student Cultural Association (ASCA), where he educated others about the Arab culture and language.

“Last year, I worked as a Fulbright Scholar teaching Arabic 1, Arabic 2, and Introduction to the Arab World. It was a big opportunity for me,” he said. “I taught Arabic 1 and 2 for non-Arabic speakers … I taught for Korean, American, Chinese …”

His efforts were not limited to campus, but spilled over into community involvement, where he and others from ASCA go to local elementary schools to teach children Arabic. He’s also helped educate adults within the community.

“I used to teach in the Islamic Center of Emporia, and we offered a course at William Allen White Library,” he said.

In 2014, Albawaneh was awarded the Presidential Scholarship, among several other scholarships that recognized him for his excellence.

Albawaneh is hoping to complete his Ph.D. in the United States, then return to Jordan to teach at a university.

“Before I came to America, I got a scholarship for my Ph.D. in Business Administration from Yarmouk University. I had an interview with at least 15 professors, the president and the vice president of the university.”
Jordan is an unfortunate country; we don't have that many resources. Rarely can you get a scholarship," Albawaneh recalled.

"I still remember what they said. 'Mohammad, you don't need a degree. We want to send you to the United States to get the knowledge, the right knowledge, and we want you to understand the culture there and how they deal with their students — how they run their educational system. So come back with these experiences."

Although most universities in Jordan still educate in a traditional face-to-face fashion, Albawaneh predicts that the transition to online distance education is inevitable and that his training in IDT at ESU will prove vital when that day comes.

"In this era, you'll never see anyone, even back home, that doesn't have a smart phone. The education with technology, it will become easier and more accessible."

Albawaneh said several experiences at Emporia State will stay with him through the ages. He came in knowing little about IDT, and he will leave with tools and goals to improve education through the use of technology 7,000 miles away. He expressed appreciation for ESU’S continual investment in him and for the opportunity to attend several educational conferences around the U.S., one of which allowed him to meet his wife.

"I love Emporia and the people here… Yeah, it is a small town, but so peaceful, no pollution, and the people are so nice and so helpful," Albawaneh said. "One day I will graduate and I will leave Emporia, but Emporia and the people will be in my heart."

“Last year, I worked as a Fulbright Scholar teaching Arabic 1, Arabic 2, and Introduction to the Arab World. It was a big opportunity for me.”

-Mohammad Albawaneh
The purpose of this was to get kids out of the classroom, where they learn better than sitting at a desk all day doing things out of textbooks, but actually doing math problems in real life.

- Courtney Weber

New Location, Better Education
The zoo, a fitness center, Red Rocks and Campus Woods: those are the locations that Courtney Weber, a senior in elementary education, took fourth through eighth grade students to learn.

Weber had seen similar teaching methods near her hometown in Hillsboro, Kansas, where local elementary schools have on-site farms. There, children do the chores and incorporate all facets of education into their daily tasks.

After being approached by Dr. Melissa Reed about research through the ESU Undergraduate Research Program, Weber decided to pursue a project studying place-based education.

"Place-based education is learning in an authentic setting," explained Weber.

In close collaboration with Reed, Weber designed a research plan. She chose the four aforementioned locations, contacted experts at each one and developed lesson plans. The two notified local administrators about the project, and 16 students signed up for the camp.

"The purpose of this was to get kids out of the classroom, where they learn better than sitting at a desk all day doing things out of textbooks, but actually doing math problems in real life," said Weber.

At the zoo, the students had to calculate the cost per ration for animals. They created human lines depicting the amount of sugar in certain snacks and drinks. In their yoga activity, they learned how to make angles with their bodies. Experts helped the children calculate their VO2 Max. Students left each location with understandings of whole new concepts and a retention of information that a classroom setting struggles to offer.

"From what I’ve learned just being in education so far, nobody wants to just sit in their chair, yet teachers continue to teach in this way because that’s the easiest way. But as a teacher, it’s important to be creative," Weber said.

Weber said she took several things away from this experience. One was the confusion that too many experts in one place can cause. She also realized the realistic strains that budgets and a short time period can put on a teacher attempting to carry out such endeavors.

"That was important to note that, yeah, you can use place-based education in your classroom, but you shouldn’t do it all the time."

Weber has accepted a teaching position with the USD 313 Buhler public school system and plans to attend graduate school after she’s completed her first year of teaching.
Hornet Happenings

Photo Credit: Emporia State University Photography

Photo Credit: Emporia State University Photography
Hornet Happenings

Photo Credit: Emporia State University Photography

Photo Credit: Emporia State University Photography
Lights, Camera, Art Therapy!

Photo Credit: Dr. Gaelynn Wolf-Bordonara
Children with autism present behaviors that are often misunderstood. Although she had little knowledge of autism, Keslie Humburg was enthusiastic about working with this special population. Humburg, a graduate student studying art therapy and clinical counseling, was given an opportunity to work in a unique way with children and families affected by autism: through adaptive art activities and sensory-friendly movie showings. Helping others through unique outlets was a passion that Humburg developed during her undergraduate education at The University of Iowa. During a two-year stint working at a nursing home in Iowa, Humburg organized craft activities for the elderly, and much to her surprise, thoroughly enjoyed it.

“While I was there, I led some arts and crafts groups and things like that, and really found out that I was good at it — I was good at helping people who had limitations in completing things,” explained Humburg. “I really saw how helpful and how powerful the art-making process was with them.”

From there, she began looking at institutions that offered art therapy master’s programs. A quick and natural connection with ESU’s faculty led her to Emporia. Once settled in at ESU, Dr. Gaelynn Wolf Bordonaro and Jessica Stallings presented Humburg with an idea — one funded through a Kansas City Royals Baseball Charities Grant. The grant was secured by a proposal that outlined a six-part arts-based program for children with autism spectrum disorders. One part specifically focused on access to cinema arts. Humburg ran with it, and has organized the adaptive art activities for three movie showings for children and families affected by autism.

“I kind of picked certain themes out from the movies that I thought were applicable to an art directive,” Humburg said. “I created the art therapy intervention activities for each movie screening, planned the execution of the activity, led and coordinated the graduate art therapy student interns and worked directly with children and their parents throughout the event.”

Through the grant, the movies like Home, Inside Out and Zootopia have been screened for families of up to four people. The primary focus of these events was to create an open environment that safely welcomes children and families affected by autism to enjoy typical family activities without the fear of social norms dictating acceptable behaviors. Secondarily, children potentially became a bit more desensitized to a social setting that typically targets several senses at once in drastic ways.

“At the movie screening, they have the lights turned up so they’re a little bit brighter, and then the sound is down a little bit so it’s not as loud. It’s really helpful for families with kids with autism because sometimes if they go to a screening with typical functioning families, the kids with autism might be doing one of their behaviors and other people may not be understanding. With the sensory-friendly movie screenings, it really makes it a lot easier for families to go because everyone there knows what autism is like, and it’s okay if the kid gets up and runs down the aisles. It’s fine if the kid wants to get up and start acting like the characters in the movie, so it really is inclusive for families affected by autism.”

Humburg said this was one of many opportunities within her department, including a service trip to the Bahamas, that opened her eyes to the opportunities within art therapy.

“The only way to describe it is that it’s just been a rich experience. Just full of so many different experiences, and my CV has nearly tripled in size probably. I’ve had so many opportunities that I wouldn’t have had if I’d gone to a bigger program or had different professors,” said Humburg.
A lifelong passion for history led Brittany Collins, a master’s student in the School of Library and Information Management, through an interesting journey, one that included an internship at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C., the world’s largest museum and research complex.

“I was always fascinated by the people and events that shaped the world we live in. I wanted to share those stories with the public and what better way to do that than through the original documents written by the movers and shakers? I want to inspire the next generation to get excited about history. There is so much to learn from our past,” Collins explained.

Collins has long loved the field, leading to 10 years of archival experience at places like the Chicago History Museum and Denver Museum of Nature and Science Bailey Archives. Her passion eventually led her to Emporia State University.

“ESU SLIM is the oldest library science program west of the Mississippi. I wanted to attend a graduate school that was well-established and capable of challenging me in my studies. I also liked the flexibility the hybrid courses could provide,” Collins said.

Collins completed a two-month internship at the National Anthropological Archives, where she was involved with an archives reference project, the Summer Institute in Museum Anthropology. SIMA brought a group of 12 graduate student researchers into the NAA research room where Brittany assisted them in their anthropological research.

Two months of interning at the Smithsonian has offered more than Collins ever expected.

“Smithsonian interns have unique opportunities,” Collins said. “Being in D.C. has opened up doors that I never thought would open. Chase after your dreams, that’s my advice.”

Collins’ internship ended in July, upon which she returned to Denver. She hopes to complete her degree in January 2017.
Growing up volunteering and working in libraries during her school breaks led Stephanie Miller to her passion. At each library, she was mentored.

“Throughout my young life, librarians mentored me by showing me grace under fire, resilience, determination and curiosity,” Miller said.

While working at a university library in Oregon, Miller came in contact with a cataloger who’d received her master’s degree in library science from Emporia State University. Miller’s colleague told her that the coursework was rigorous and the community was supportive.

“When I applied to library schools, I knew that I didn’t want to trust my education to an online-only program. I wanted to bond and network with my fellow students and that has proven to be integral to my success as a graduate student,” Miller explained, having completed a portion of the hybrid program.

Miller felt welcomed from the moment she began her graduate career with ESU.

“One of the most useful things I received at orientation was a Google Doc full of advice and resources from a cohort that graduated in August 2015. I feel like I’m entering a community, not just graduating with a degree.”

Between the faculty and her fellow classmates, Miller developed confidence in the network of resources that she’d established during her time with Emporia State.

“My classmates are resources I can rely on when I run into real-world problems in my library work,” she explained. “I wouldn’t have received my current job without the help of Dr. Mirah Dow and Perri Parise.”

Along with the networking opportunities, Miller gained knowledge and inspiration to make an impact. Miller was able to observe other well-known librarians in the field like Meredith Farkas, John Russell, Karen Estlund and Lori Robare.

“Working with library legends makes me ask myself, ‘How am I going to make my mark on the academic library scene?’”

Miller hopes to transition into a professional academic librarian position post-graduation, but has one stipulation.

“Above all, I want to work for a place that has a mission to serve, not a mission to earn.”

Photo Credit: Daniel Craig
Alumni Spotlight

Beau Bragg

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN HEALTH, PHYSICAL EDUCATION, AND RECREATION

Beau Bragg has made strides in physical education as a PE teacher for Bonner Springs Elementary School. Bragg has been the recipient of several prestigious accolades during his career, something he would never have imagined as a child.

“I was one of those kids that never spoke up in class, needed to follow the rules and would never want attention,” Bragg said.

His discomfort in the spotlight continued through his college years.

“After my first teaching observation in college, I went to my advisor and told her, ‘I do not think this profession is for me. I do not see myself being in front of others every day for a career.’ After much discussion, she assured me things would be okay and she already knew who my cooperating teacher was going to be for my student teaching experience. I trusted her and stuck it out,” Bragg explained.

Bragg student-taught alongside a teacher with a very similar personality, one that he described as “quiet, reserved, patient and definitely not attention-seeking.” That experience led him straight into his career.

Rather than moving directly into graduate school, Bragg followed the advice of those around him and took some time to focus on his career — about five years.

When he was ready to return to school, he chose Emporia State University.

“I chose Emporia State for a number of reasons … ESU is globally recognized for their online health, physical education, and recreation program. I would not have to travel to campus, which was huge since I live 90 minutes away and had a full-time job,” Bragg said. Bragg also emphasized the influence that ESU alumni and faculty had, due to their involvement in the Kansas Association of health, physical education, recreation, and dance.

Since completion of his degree, Bragg has begun re-evaluating his teaching methods to ensure effectiveness.

“Nearly every class I took required some deeper-level thinking that, as a professional, has helped me in my full-time teaching job … I feel this practice of reflective thinking guided me to developing my teaching philosophy and how I manage my own class. Instead of teaching a lesson and moving on, I make notes during my teaching to make changes for the next class or when I teach the content the following year. My lessons always change, along with my assessments, as I assess my own teaching and the dynamic of the class I encounter,” Bragg said.

Since 2012, Bragg has secured over $27,000 for the construction of an outdoor learning area for Bonner Springs Elementary School and has been the recipient of several awards recognizing his outstanding efforts in physical education. In 2016 alone, Bragg was named KAHPERD Elementary Teacher of the Year and Central District AHPERD Elementary Teacher of the Year. From there, Bragg became a nominee for the 2016 Society of Health and Physical Educators Elementary Physical Educator of the Year award.

“Beau Bragg was an exceptional student who brought maturity and experiential knowledge to the classroom. It was obvious the HPER graduate faculty highly respected his professionalism, as they asked him to be one of the first graduate students to provide leadership as a member of the HPER Graduate Advisory Board,” said Dr. Joella Mehrhof, a professor in the ESU HPER Department. “Beau continues to be an extremely creative and resourceful physical educator. His recent accolades and awards are obvious indicators of his highly effective and engaging leadership.”
Chang Liu
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN BIOLOGY

Chang Liu was a student at China Medical University when she attended a presentation by Dr. Yixin Yang.

“Intrigued by his lab’s research, I talked to him after the presentation. And from this conversation, I got to know excellent graduate programs and numerous training opportunities at ESU,” said Liu.

Liu applied and spent her master’s career working as a graduate research assistant with Yang as her major professor.

“Despite substantial advances in cancer prevention and treatment in the past decades, cancer is still the second leading cause of death in United States, partially because current cancer therapies are largely limited by their side effects. Therefore, I wanted to discover the critical factors affecting their growth and provide the potential efficient treatment for it,” Liu explained.

Liu was ambitious in her research goals, pursuing a better understanding of molecular mechanisms for anti-tumor effects of natural plant extracts. Liu's research was multi-faceted, initially studying effects of a spectrum of herbal extracts on different cancer cell lines. Results from the initial study led to a chain of studies, running numerous assays and real-time polymer chain reactions.

Her passion for cancer research continued into her Pharmacology Ph.D. program at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, where her research involved structural and functional studies of cell surface proteases in tumor progression and virus infection.

Liu has published six papers through publications like the *Journal of Virology* and *Journal of Biology and Chemistry* during her doctorate-seeking career, one of which was featured in over 10 media and press outlets and is in the 99th percentile of all articles ranked by online attention.

Liu has accepted a post-doctorate position following completion of her doctorate degree.

“... cancer is still the second leading cause of death in United States, partially because current cancer therapies are largely limited by their side effects. Therefore, I wanted to discover the critical factors affecting their growth and provide the potential efficient treatment for it,”

- Chang Liu
Ally McNitt dove right into her career after her bachelor's degree, but found it lackluster.

“I always knew I wanted a master’s degree, but I was a stubborn young person, and I didn’t jump right into graduate school right out of college. I had some soul-searching to do, and so I took a job or two in the corporate world for about six years. I didn’t find the corporate world particularly stimulating or challenging,” McNitt said.

She decided to try a bigger city, hoping that it would bring the excitement she was looking for, but again found it lacking.

“I remember sitting on Lake Shore Drive during a Chicago rush hour, wondering what I was going to do with my life. I was waiting patiently for traffic to move, which wasn’t likely to happen for a while. I looked out over the lake. It looked quiet and it seemed wise somehow. I quickly realized I, too, wanted to be quiet and wise, and I knew that nothing would ever happen for me unless I made it happen. When I got home, I looked up master’s courses for the English department at ESU. My mother had earned her undergraduate degree there and always spoke fondly about her time there.”

McNitt got in contact with Dr. Mel Storm in the English department and applied right away.

“My time at ESU was productive, inspiring and exactly what I needed at that point in my life,” McNitt said. “ESU’s atmosphere was never intimidating, and I found that I had a great deal of support from the faculty and other graduate students. I enjoyed the variety of courses, and I felt encouraged in my own course of study. Whenever I felt stuck in my studies, there was always someone to help talk me through it. I enjoyed the sense of belonging that I felt when I was there.”

As a graduate teaching assistant, a volunteer at the Lyon County Historical Museum and the secretary of the Graduate Student Advisory Council, McNitt stayed busy during her time at ESU. At the conclusion of her master’s program, McNitt graduated from ESU and began teaching composition courses at Kansas City Kansas Community College. From there, she pursued her doctorate focused on medieval studies at the University of Oklahoma.

McNitt has finally found her niche, and seems to be thriving in it, teaching online composition and mythology courses for Oklahoma City Community College and live composition courses at Kansas City Kansas Community College.
Dr. Angel Yang
MASTER OF MUSIC

Dr. Angel Yang described her time at Emporia State University as a dream. Following a bachelor's degree in piano performance from Liaoning Normal University, Yang was recruited by Dr. Martin Cuellar to attend ESU for a master's in music degree. With the promise of an assistantship, she packed her things and moved halfway across the globe.

Yang describes the ESU campus as "so home-like and filled with musical soil everywhere on campus." After spending her time performing at community events and accompanying students, faculty and visiting artists, Yang decided to continue her education.

Yang graduated from ESU in 2009, then began pursuing her DMA at the University of Kansas. In 2013, she returned to China as an associate piano professor for her alma mater, and has made leaps and bounds ever since in creating partnerships between American universities and LNNU.

Through collaboration with Dr. Allan Comstock, Yang has helped to develop the 2+2 undergraduate and 1+2 graduate dual degrees between Emporia State University and LNNU.

“More and more students from LNNU are interested in joining the program,” Yang said.

Yang has also facilitated the establishment of an exchange program between Missouri State University and LNNU. At LNNU, Yang recruits students to the exchange program, helping them prepare their application materials and readying them for their auditions.

“Music has no borders, especially for students who are learning classical music in China,” Yang said. “I think they need to broaden their eyes in western country to enrich their music knowledge and understanding.”

Yang offered her efforts to help her students have the opportunities that she did.

“When I studied in the States, I got so many people's help — from native faculty and students to friends and universities,” Yang said.

Yang decided she wanted to return the favor by acting as an ambassador to exchange students in academic and cultural aspects between the U.S. and China.

“I also would like to help more Chinese music students go abroad to study. It is my dream.”

In May 2015, Yang was invited to MSU for a solo recital and to teach a master class. The following November, Yang won the Fifth Music Teachers National Competition of China, a four-day competition.

Yang has shared her gift of music, a gift grown from the ESU music department, all around the world, including places like the Beijing Music Hall and Shanghai Music Hall in China, Kani Hoken Hall in Japan and Sydney Opera House Concert Hall.

Photo Credit: Guang Yang
Alumni Spotlight

Ara Carbonneau
MASTER OF ARTS IN HISTORY

Ara Carbonneau began her graduate career at Emporia State University with a rich background in minority history.

“I had studied a combination of minority history at Central Connecticut. This included Native American, Asian and African history. I spent time studying in Ghana, Africa, and completed my undergraduate thesis in Eastern Algonquin (Mohegan) history. I graduated with a minor in French language. Having French in my own family background and knowing that much of early Algonquin history... made the language a mandate for continuing on in graduate school,” Carbonneau said.

Carbonneau’s time at ESU brought enlightenment and opportunity.

“I loved the small environment at ESU. I loved how I could attend classes and still find time to begin my research on my thesis topic. Dr. Therier offered an opportunity for me to complete an archives internship in the winter of 2001-02 at the Kansas State Historical Society.”

The internship at KSHS allowed Carbonneau to research donated archived Native American documents, publishing a finder’s aid for the KSHS.

Carbonneau went on to complete her graduate thesis in Native American history, then began life post-graduate school as a public historian at Jefferson County Historical Society in Oskaloosa, Kansas. In between her summers at JCHS, Carbonneau was working for the Kansas State Historical Society at the Kansas State Capitol.

“Once again, I learned even more about public history, working with large groups and understanding how a legislative institution can also act as a place of preservation and learning. I was working there the same time as the restoration of the Statehouse was taking place. I worked daily with members of the Statehouse and the governor’s office. One benefit was that I was already very familiar with the John Steuart Curry Collection and could promote Jefferson County’s collection and museum as well. Less than a year later, I was interviewing with the architect of the United States Capitol to receive a position as a historic interpreter and visitor guide at the U.S. Capitol,” Carbonneau explained.

Carbonneau was offered the position, and has had several responsibilities during her time on Capitol Hill, including giving tours, teaching government classes and creating training opportunities for congressional staff related to Native American studies. Carbonneau also teaches middle and high school students through educational workshops and trains incoming interns and staff members on the history of the art and architecture of the U.S. Capitol.

“There is an understanding that my staff are the most highly trained experts on the Capitol’s history and design. We have been providing tours here at the U.S. Capitol within my department since 1876,” Carbonneau said.

Carbonneau has been an invited speaker for several prestigious historical organizations, and continues to assist in the development of educational programming on Capitol Hill.
Rock and religion: two topics that have been controversially intertwined, with a history worth revealing. With a master’s in theological studies and a Ph.D. in history, Randall Stephens focuses on such subjects in his latest book.

Stephens, now an American history professor at Northumbria University in Newcastle Upon Tyne, became intrigued with rock n’ rollers in Pentecostal churches after writing a book about the history and origins of Pentecostalism in the American South.

“I was surprised to see in my research that so many of the first rock n’ rollers of the 1950s were either raised in Pentecostal, tongues-speaking churches or had attended them regularly,” Stephens said. “I thought to myself, ‘There must be a bigger story here.’ So, in this new project, on religion and rock I started with that early period and then I looked at the major, negative reactions that American churches had to rock.”

“Next I turned to the origins of what’s now called Christian rock, or Jesus rock, through which many evangelicals and Pentecostals made their peace with at least the style of the music, if not the lyrics.”

Stephens’ research for his forthcoming book, *The Devil’s Music: Christianity and Rock Since the 1950s*, has brought to light an intriguing part of American history.

“Religion and rock were surprisingly intertwined from the start. Rock and roll emerged in large part out of a southern white and black religious context. Key early figures like Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, B.B. King, James Brown, Little Richard and Johnny Cash worshiped in vibrant Pentecostal churches and sat at the feet of gospel quartets and shouting preachers. Yet the most ardent critics of rock and rhythm and blues were white religious conservatives — including Baptists, Pentecostals and Methodists.”

“By the early 1970s, ironically, many of these critics had accepted the new Christian rock genre. Even Billy Graham would share the stage with newly formed Jesus rock groups and would promote the genre fervently. How did religious groups and individuals shape rock? And, in turn, how did rock music come to shape popular American evangelical-style religion? Answering these and other questions, this book will trace how Pentecostal music, preaching styles and performance inspired rock music, how Pentecostals and other religious conservatives led the charge against the genre and how it was that Pentecostals would fuse rock and Christianity,” Stephens explained.

Stephens also currently works with master’s, and Ph.D. students, teaching both graduate and undergraduate courses that seem to fill to capacity quickly. He’s published numerous journal articles and has received several accolades along the way, including being named a Distinguished Lecturer by the Organization of American Historians and Top Young Historian by the History News Network. Stephens attributes some of his success to his professors at ESU.

“I really enjoyed my time at ESU. History professors like Karen Manners Smith, Christopher Phillips, Glenn Torrey and Samuel Dicks all made a big impact on me. Each modeled how to be a historian and guided me on writing and research with a great deal of patience,” Stephens reminisced. “In some ways it is hard to believe that I started my grad career at ESU over 20 years ago.”
Q: Did you know you wanted to go into forensic science?

Carney: “When I was in middle school, one of the things I was looking at doing for a career was be a narcotics officer — that’s what I wanted to do. I’m kind of going back to that in a sense. I knew I wanted to do something in science — biology, really — and I wanted to help people.”

Hobson: “I knew that I wanted to come to ESU for either biology or forensic science because I loved it here more than any other school that I went and visited for grad school. Then I had to make the choice of which route I wanted to go down … there’s a forensic DNA route that’s already established, and I can go ahead and do research specific to forensic science, and the field is so much more narrow that I’m also getting all the forensic science background, but I can also do the research too, which is what I would have got with just a regular biology program.”

Ralston: “I’ve been really interested in science since elementary school and knew that I eventually wanted to work in a science field. When I started learning about the larger overall impact of forensic science and how our field can help to provide justice to the victims of crimes, I knew forensic science was what I wanted to do. I may have veered off the forensic science path for a little bit during high school and college, but I always found myself coming back to my passion: forensic science.”
Q: Are the any opportunities to meet others in your field through this program?

Carney: “About half of us went to Las Vegas for a conference. Back in September, a lot of us went to Mackinac Island, Michigan, for another conference. There are plenty of opportunities for us to network with people, both locally, because we bring in speakers from local crime labs, and internationally. The conference that we just got back from down in Las Vegas, there were people from all over the world there.”

Hobson: “We have a lot of seminar speakers that got to come in last semester, which was really good. We got to meet all the crime lab directors from the state. We've had some really good networking opportunities as far as we've got to hear from so many different people from forensic science and they've been really welcoming … we've had a lot of internship offers and opportunities for us as a group because they're so excited to have us.”

Ralston: “The unique thing about this program is that it is the only forensic science master's program in the state, which means that when we graduate and get jobs, we will already have that Emporia State connection. Regardless of where we move or get jobs, that connection will give us the opportunity to network and meet other professionals across the nation.”

Q: What kind of lab work have you been involved with here?

Ralston: “I've had the opportunity to start research with Dr. Crupper in the DNA field this semester. Using DNA techniques, I've been working to develop a method to test for genetic variability in the blow fly species in Lyon County. Blow flies are attracted to dead bodies and are useful in determining the time of death, making them an important forensic tool. With our research, we hope to show that the blow flies in this area have different DNA sequences at different areas in their genome. Our end goal is to create a blow fly DNA database that investigators can access and search to find out where a specific blow fly found at the crime scene might have originated from.”

Q: Has the program prepared you for a career in Forensic Science?

Ralston: “So far our classes have provided us both textbook and hands-on experiences in the forensic field. Some programs are memorization and textbook heavy, but our program does a good job balancing out textbook, education and real-life experiences. You can learn everything about a specific technique or instrument, but if you don't have the experience of actually working with the technique or instrument, then you aren't prepared to be working in the field quite yet. Our program is preparing us to be able to graduate with enough knowledge and experience to enter the forensic science career directly after graduation.”

Q: What has surprised you about the program?

Carney: “I love that the program is very hands-on. You get to practice techniques a lot. The topics are great … You also have to be able to work together as a team because solving crimes is a team process. Not just one person is out there in the field collecting all of the stuff, documenting it, then taking it back to the lab and doing everything. It's a team effort. It's multiple people out in the field.”

Hobson: “I think people assume that it's more of an individual type field where you're sitting at a microscope or doing whatever in the lab, isolated from everybody, but we've been encouraged to help each other out and make it more of a collaborative effort. It's something I didn't expect, but I definitely enjoyed that, and it's definitely been helpful … I didn't expect that all of us students would get along as well as we did, since we are all so different … We're kind of a melting pot of a lot of different personalities. Getting friendships out of it has been one of the best things.”
Ralston: “I’ve been surprised about the overall support we’ve received across the entire campus. I’m a graduate assistant at the Foundation, so I’ve been able to see the support for our program from the staff across campus and even community members. The students, staff and administration at Emporia State and the larger, general Emporia community genuinely care about the success of the program. Instead of just the students in the program just working together to succeed, we know that we have the support from a much larger community than ourselves.”

Q: What’s your plan after you graduate?

Carney: “Find a job! I plan on staying in Kansas. In talking with local lab directors, they really are backing this program because they’re picking up local students — people from Kansas or from surrounding states — who want to stay around here and most likely they will because there are job openings here.”

Hobson: “Work in a lab hopefully … I want to have a Ph.D. eventually, but I think getting experience in the field, networking, and just learning where the research is and what cutting edge research is going on (will be helpful).”

Ralston: “My plan after graduation is to find a job in the forensic science field in the state of Kansas. I’ve grown up in Kansas, received an undergraduate degree at Washburn, and now am receiving a graduate degree at Emporia State, so I want to be able to give back to the state that has supported me. My goal is to work in the DNA section of the KBI at Washburn.”
A graduate degree was just an idea for Deanna Durkes during her undergraduate education — one that she didn’t expect to go anywhere.

“Through my last year of undergrad, I was kind of toying with the idea of getting a master’s degree,” she explained.

While working at the Earl Center, Durkes was asked to put together a brochure about the rehabilitation counseling program. She found interest in the program as she read about it, and was advised to enroll in a couple classes to determine if it was the major for her.

Durkes hadn’t been in the program long when she learned of a grant that supported scholars in her program. Emporia State University had recently received the Rehabilitation Services Administration Long-Term Training Grant that was directed toward 20 vocational rehabilitation scholars. As Durkes’ course load and interest both began increasing, she was selected to be an RSA LTT scholar.

“I ended up falling in love with the classes — I actually had fun reading the textbooks. So I just decided that was going to be my major,” Durkes said. “I have loved every minute of it. I have a 4.0, which is crazy, and I enjoy school because the program is something that I like.”

Durkes is currently working full-time while a full-time graduate student. Upon completion of her degree in December, she will transition from a vocational rehabilitation program specialist to a vocational rehabilitation counselor.
Dione Pompa has a heart the size of Texas for those enduring life’s struggles. That compassion is exactly what led her to a bachelor’s of art in art and then to Emporia State University.

“My advisor, who was also my glass and sculpture professor, told me about art therapy,” said Pompa. Her advisor was ESU alumnus Chad Holliday. “I started looking at schools and comparing programs. ESU was the cheapest and they also had the dual program, which not many schools had.”

Pompa applied and was accepted into ESU’s dual curriculum art therapy counseling and clinical counseling program.

In the summer of 2015, Pompa learned of an internship position funded by the Kansas Creative Arts Industries Commission grant. The KCAIC was designed to create dynamic partnerships between arts-based programs and those that could use them. Dr. Gaelynn Wolf-Bordonaro secured the grant and offered an opportunity to Pompa.

“The grant stipulated that the art therapy program would provide some kind of art therapy to the cancer patients at the specific cancer centers,” explained Pompa, who began organizing the art directives for Central Care Cancer Centers of Kansas, centers located all around the state.

Pompa traveled to places like Great Bend and Newton to visit cancer patients during their chemotherapy treatments, where she offered them a therapeutic distraction.

“I would go into the room where everybody was receiving chemo and set up my art supplies. I would have different art activities every time I came, and I would invite people to make art with me. If they wanted to, I would kind of guide them through whatever I had brought with me. I did a lot of things that would inspire hope or just be positive. You know, when patients are receiving chemo, they have a hard time with their hands and feet because they become numb — it’s a side effect of some of the chemo. So I liked to do art activities that really worked those muscles — those micro-muscles.”

Pompa helped the patients create hope boxes, decorated boxes that held handwritten papers listing things that brought them hope during their long journeys back to health. They could color, paint or simply watch Pompa create art, an indirect therapy.

Workshops at each cancer center location also presented opportunities to take some of the negatives out of the illness.

“I had an activity where they would make a collage of their experience or their journey of treatment. It could be negative or positive things — it didn’t have to all be positive. Then what I would ask is for them to protect the things that they wanted to keep, like that they wanted to remember — the positive things. Then we would wipe away the negative things with Nevr-Dull® polish,” Pompa explained. “I also had them do ‘Gelli’ prints. I created these blocks out of gelatin, rubbing alcohol and glycerin. It kind of looks like jello, but they’re hard and they’re used to make prints. You put paint on them and then you can draw on them or whatever, and then you put a piece of paper, press it down, and it’s printed on your piece of paper. They had a lot of fun with that — it was messier. That was just more of a relaxing thing that they could do and just have fun with. I did those two directives at every location that I went to.”

Pompa’s impact through ESU doesn’t end there. In completing her master’s degree, she has chosen to complete a book as her thesis project. This book is focused on young girls, but is different than most that are on the market today. Pompa saw a need for information on a difficult topic for the girls: puberty.

“My mom was always very open with me about puberty. As I started to grow up, I began to realize that not everybody’s parents talk to them about those kind of things,” she said. “It can be kind of a cultural thing. I’m half Hispanic and half white. My Hispanic family is … very conservative, and
that’s just not something you talk about. It just baffles me, because it’s so important. When girls don’t know that what’s happening to their body is normal, then they think that there’s something wrong with them — and the media also contributes to that, too.”

Originally, Pompa planned to host a workshop to facilitate talks between parents and daughters, but foresaw low participation and a nervous crowd. Rather, she decided to write the book, which will be more accessible and more private.

“I somehow wanted to interact with both the guardian and the child. I’ve looked at all different types of puberty books, and most of them are very just informational textbook type of books. They pretty much only address the reader rather than the parent as well. I really just wanted something that was interactive to keep the attention of the reader, but also encourage that parent-child communication. I’ve decided to create an arts-based guide to puberty for girls.”

Pompa has more incentive than just educating girls about puberty, though.

“It’s not just focused on educating about puberty, but also focusing on empowering girls, encouraging positive self-esteem and body image, and individuality. I’m really going to be focusing on dispelling myths and beliefs that our culture believes … it’s all something that ‘we have to cover up and we have to hide,’ but those things are a natural part of us and I really want to focus on that and focus on letting them be who they are regardless of what the media says or what society says.”

From pimples to weight gain to emotions and everything in between, Pompa plans to cover the span in her interactive book.

“I want to talk about how these women that we see on TV are often underweight, or the pictures we see in magazine are doctored, so it’s not real. This ideal we have in our mind is not real — it’s unattainable.”

During her time at ESU, Pompa has had more than one pivotal experience. Whether providing art therapy to cancer patients or helping young girls with their transition to womanhood, Pompa has shown determination to help those who are often overlooked. After graduation, Pompa plans to return to her home state, Texas, and continue to write books about different milestones in life.
Research and Creativity Day
3 Minute Thesis Award Winners

Photo Credit: Emporia State University Photography

Erin Lingenfelter
BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES
First Place
Thesis title:
The Impact of Fuel Load and Fire Season on the Control of Sericea Lespedeza

Rosaline Krenger
ENGLISH, MODERN LANGUAGES, AND JOURNALISM
Second Place
Thesis title:
Salted Earth: An Original Fiction Manuscript and Ecofeminist Analysis of the Monstrous Childress Woman Trope

Justine Becker
BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES
Third Place
Thesis title:
Male Response to Female Chemical Signals in Painted Turtles (Chysemys picta).
# APPLY FOR ADMISSION

## Submit your application
The application is available online via www.emporia.edu/grad. Select the “Apply Now” link under the Admissions heading. Then select “Apply Now” under the online application heading to electronically submit. If you need a paper application, please contact the graduate school.

## Pay your application fee
The application fee can be paid upon completion of your online application utilizing Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover or electronic check. If submitting a paper application, please mail completed application and check or money order to the address below.

## Submit your official transcripts
### Degree and Certificate Seeking Students
Transcripts are considered official when they arrive in the Graduate Office in a sealed envelope from the issuing institution or are received through a secure electronic transcript service.

## Complete Departmental Requirements
### Degree and Certificate Seeking Students
Most degree-seeking programs have additional admissions requirements. Please check with your major department for additional requirements.

# MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS
- A bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited college or university.
- Adequate preparation in the proposed area of specialization (to be determined by the department of specialization).
- A grade point average of not less than 2.5 in the last 60 semester hours of study or an overall grade point average of no less than 3.0 for a completed master’s degree.

# DEGREES OFFERED

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* Degree or Certificate offered completely online

## GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS
Information and application can be found at www.emporia.edu/grad by selecting the “Graduate Assistants” link on the top of the page or under the Scholarship Opportunities section. Select, “Graduate Assistant Application” to apply.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION
**Email:** gradinfo@emporia.edu  
**Call:** 620-341-5403  
800-950-4723  
**Visit:** www.emporia.edu/grad  
**Write:**  
Emporia State University  
Graduate School & Distance Education  
Campus Box 4003  
1 Kellogg Circle  
Emporia, KS 66801-5415
Application Guidelines

- **Check your GPA**
  Make sure you will be able to meet the minimum GPA requirements for ESU graduate school and your program of interest. If you do not meet the requirements, you should contact an advisor.

- **Admission tests**
  Make sure you have taken the required entrance tests for your program of interest. The chart below shows which degrees require entrance exams. You can contact Distance Education (620-341-5385) for information on prep courses for these exams.

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<tr>
<th>GRE or GMAT</th>
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- **References**
  Make a list of potential references and begin the process of asking for letters of recommendation. References can include professors, former employers, or other professional contacts.

- **Resume/CV**
  Update your résumé or curriculum vitae.

- **Transcripts**
  Contact all previous schools to have official transcripts sent to the ESU Graduate School.

- **Interview**
  Contact your department of interest to find out if they require an entrance interview.

- **Application fee**
  Complete the application and pay the application fee.

  Once you have gathered all of the necessary materials, you can begin your application.

  To apply go to www.emporia.edu/grad, select Apply Now.

  Specific application deadlines are determined by departments.

  The Graduate School suggests the following deadlines:

  - Fall enrollment - March 1
  - Spring enrollment - October 1
  - Summer enrollment - March 1

Make sure you are prepared before you begin your application. Ideally, you should begin thinking about your application several months in advance. Before you begin:

- **average graduate class size** 7.7
- **average time for degree completion** 2.3 years
- **assistantships offer over** $7,000 in stipend and a tuition waiver
- **ESU’s population is** 38% graduate students
Reduced tuition available

Kansas Resident/Corky Plus
Residents of select Missouri and Oklahoma counties are eligible for in-state tuition.

Located in Emporia, Kansas
Close proximity to the three major metropolitan areas of Kansas – Wichita, Topeka and Kansas City.

NEARR & MSEP
Residents of the following states are eligible for MSEP and NEARR tuitions rates, which is 150% of Kansas Resident Tuition:
- Colorado
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Missouri
- Nebraska
- North Dakota
- Oklahoma
- Texas
- Wisconsin

$0 application fee for McNair Scholars

Accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and many of the programs have national accreditation by an affiliated professional organization

31 programs
17 online
15 on campus
2 hybrid