

SCOPE

AN ANNUAL SHOWCASE OF STUDENTS

AND PROGRAMS

2017

Career invention

Farm marketing is just one eclectic career blend forged by innovative alumni

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From the editor

The math major who minors in Japanese, the double major in dance and business, the self-determined major in public health—I'm not sure any other college has quite as many mixed-major students applying quite as much eclecticism and practicality to their studies.

When I was in college, I focused tightly on my two, related majors in European history and German. At the time, I thanked my stars that the rules-free spirit of the 1970s had infused the curriculum such that I got away with Psych 101 and "The History of Science" for my outside-the-humanities requirements—no labs, no arts. And my education served me fine over the past few decades.

But if I were a student in 2017, shunning nonverbal expression and rejecting the sciences in order to cleave only to my one intellectual love would be a colossal mistake, given the pace and complexity of today's world. History and language are still crucial (more so than politicians and the public may realize), but only wider, well-incorporated proficiencies can navigate, let alone contribute any solutions to, contemporary issues from energy and medicine to socioeconomics and globalism.

Skidmore's faculty and students know this exigent truth, and they act on it. It forms the integrative core of everything here, and it shapes the lives and careers of alumni ever after. Just flip some of the following pages and you'll see.



CLASS NOTES



A fresh batch of alumni news, from travels to jobs to new babies, can be viewed now on the class notes site at alumni.skidmore.edu/classnotes

SKIDMORE COLLEGE

SCOPE 2017

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About the cover:
Jess Wong '09 is both a farmer and a marketer. (Photo by Don Hamerman)
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SAY IT WITH SKIDMOJI

Skiddies all over the world are expressing themselves with Skidmoji—a free, Skidmore-themed emoji keyboard for the iPhone and other iOS devices. More than 500 sets have been downloaded so far.

From initial designs by an alum, the dozens of Skidmoji feature campus landmarks, school colors, and of course Skids in every mood imaginable. To download the latest set, go to skidmore.edu and search on "skidmoji."

YEAR IN REVIEW 2017

ELECTION 2016

Throughout the campaign season, faculty experts appeared in a range of news media, and several events engaged the campus and alumni communities. Among them:

- Psychology professor Sheldon Solomon gave a talk called “Election 2016: Fatal Attraction,” on how fear affects people’s choice in leaders
- Solomon joined historian Jennifer Delton, political scientist Chris Mann, sociologist Andrew Lindner ’03, and social-work professor Pat Oles for a panel on “Teaching Trump”
- Mann was interviewed for a “This is Skidmore” podcast about two of his courses, “Campaigns and Elections” and “Election Research”
- State legislators Chris Gibson (R) and Paul Tonko (D) held a campus forum called “What Happened to Compromise?” moderated by PBS host Alexander Heffner
- Business professor Minita Sanghvi, a scholar of the marketing of female politicians, gave a lecture titled “A Woman’s Place...is in the White House: Gender and the 2016 Presidential Elections”
- On election night, the Tang Museum’s TV-news watch party ended with poli-sci professor Ron Seyb’s talk “Winning Was Easy. Governing’s Hard. There’s Gotta Be a Morning After”



Erin Covey



FACULTY COMMENTATORS
on Election 2016: Andrew
Lindner '03, Jennifer Delton,
Pat Oles, Sheldon Solomon,
and Chris Mann

FACULTY IN THE HEADLINES

News media sought out the expertise of political scientists Chris Mann and Bob Turner, psychologist Sheldon Solomon, and other election-savvy professors. Others making news included:

1 Paul Arciero, in health and exercise sciences, whose latest study—conducted with the help of Skidmore students, health staff, and others—showed that a “protein pacing” diet beats a conventional “heart healthy” diet for losing weight while also flushing out toxins

2 Oceanographer Meg Estapa, who tweeted, Skyped, and Facebooked during a research cruise with NASA colleagues to study how plankton and other tiny ocean denizens hold and sequester carbon from the atmosphere

3 Novelist and scholar Mason Stokes, whose first foray into personal essay, “Namesake,” was selected to appear in 2016’s *Best American Essays* anthology edited by Pulitzer and National Book Award winner Jonathan Franzen

4 Sociologist Xiaoshuo Hou, who was appointed to the newly endowed Tang Chair in Chinese Studies, and modern Europe specialist **Matt Hockenos**, who was named to the newly endowed Toadvine Chair in 20th-century History.



CLASS OF 2021

The newest Skidmore class by the numbers:

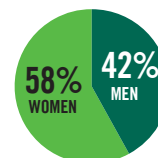
10,052
APPLICATIONS



25%
ACCEPTANCE RATE



13%
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
FROM 32 US STATES
AND 45 COUNTRIES



25%
DOMESTIC STUDENTS
OF COLOR

665
ENROLLED
(25 IN LONDON
SEMESTER)



42%
ON SKIDMORE GRANT AID



SUMMER INTERNS

Students fanned out across the globe for a summer of hands-on learning with guidance from alumni, parents, and other employers in fields from banking to lab science to art.

Some of Skidmore's SEE-Beyond stipends went to:

- **Ann Hill '18**, a geosciences major, to conduct ice-field research in Alaska
- business major **Andrea Tehan '18** to intern (and continue for 20 hours per week in the fall) in human resources at General Electric in Schenectady, N.Y.
- **Ivy Asamoah '19**, an international affairs major, for interning with the International Rescue Committee in New York City
- math major **Robel Gete '17** to teach math and coding at a school in Ethiopia
- **Doris Donelan '19**, in social work, to volunteer at a women's center and orphanage in Nepal

Hewitt Awards, given by Edwin Hewitt, husband of Betty Hartz Hewitt '57, funded:

- **Kelly Cantwell**, **Morgan Akaylia**, and **Dante Tobar**, all rising seniors in physics, to intern at NASA's Jet Propulsion Lab in California

Skidmore's Parents Fund 2019 supported, among others:

- **Joseph Pagliarulo '19** to enrich his neuroscience major with genetics research at a veterans' hospital in Massachusetts

Skidmore's Student Government Association provided responsible-citizenship intern awards, including to:

- history major **Isaac Selchaif '18** to work with a Harlem charter school

Skidmore's general summer-internship funding went to such students as:

- **Langa Bakhuluma-Ncube '18**, a self-determined major in public health, to work with families through the Uganda Village Project
- **Anna Tsaligopoulou '19**, a psychology major, for research in child psychiatric epidemiology at Columbia University

Skidmore's Career Development Center also helped students find internships whose hosts paid the interns directly, such as:

- **Jennifer Lupoff '19**, **Dickfoong Leong '18**, **Siyu Chen '18**, **Sinhchinh Lor '18**, **Sam Cohen '19**, **Finn Westergren '18**, and **Ashley Mejia '19**, to help in communications and programming at the Soteryx data-analytics firm in Saratoga Springs

In all, Skidmore funding allowed 112 students to engage in relevant, resume-building work rather than having to take just any paying job over the summer. And scores of others found or funded their own internships, workshops, and other productive summer experiences.

OFFICEMATES

Busy at Soteryx are (standing, from left:) Jenny Lupoff, Sinhchinh Lor, Siyu Chen, Dickfoong Leong; (sitting, from left:) Finn Westergren, Ashley Mejia, Sam Cohen.



VENUE FOR DIVERSITY

CROSSROADS

Clockwise from top left: Victor Ekpuk explains his Igbo-inspired chalk symbols, Pulitzer winner Jose Antonio Vargas talks about immigration, an *Africa Pop Studio* event, a forum on whiteness and “default” culture, and Kamau Amu Patton channels Sun Ra.

All year Skidmore’s **Tang Museum** served as a campus crossroads for diversity discussion and programming—especially with its launch of a three-year Mellon Foundation-funded initiative called Accelerate: Access and Inclusion at the Tang Teaching Museum. Here are some highlights:

- In the fall, *A More Perfect Union* was the campus’s town square. Beneath the exhibition’s worn U.S. flags, a range of talks, classes, and performances, including Pulitzer winner **Jose Antonio Vargas** speaking on immigration policy and the election, drew big crowds.
- Nigerian artist **Viktor Ekpuk** created a wall drawing and met with classes to help launch *Sixfold Symmetry: Pattern in Art and Science*, featuring contributions by faculty members from nine disciplines.
- After the presidential election, the Tang and Skidmore’s Idea Lab Steering Committee hosted the pop-up course “What Now?” a six-week exploration into issues of media bias, women’s health, and inclusion.
- In March, Tang Curator-at-Large **Isolde Brielmaier** launched the Accelerator series with a forum on race through the lens of whiteness and the idea of a “default” culture; panelists were Ohio State University professor **Treva Lindsey**, filmmaker **Matthew Cooke**, and racial justice organizer **Dara Silverman**.
- For her senior thesis, **Hannah Traore ’17** mounted *Africa Pop Studio*, a show on African studio portraiture with work by the Morocco-born Hassan Hajjaj, whom Traore interviewed for a video to add to scholarship about his work. She also organized performances by Ujima students and Royal Court African Dance Group, spoken words by **Rashawnda Williams**, and DJ-ing by **Merkeb Tesfa**.
- In April, the Tang brought several musicians who create work in the tradition of **Sun Ra**, whose early art and archives were recently acquired by the Tang and shown in the exhibition *Art Forms of Dimensions Tomorrow*. Professor **Adam Tinkle** incorporated the music, art, and musicians into his course and led a roundtable discussion about Sun Ra.

ENSEMBLE'S 10TH YEAR

A high point of Skidmore's music calendar each year, Ensemble Connect celebrated its 10th anniversary of partnership with the college. The February residency featured an elementary-school workshop, participation in an experimental text-and-music event at the Tang Museum, and a performance of classical and new works in the Zankel Center's Ladd Concert Hall.

A program of Carnegie Hall, the Juilliard School, and the Weill Music Institute, the ensemble of up-and-coming music greats has now worked with more than 3,000 Skidmore students, performed for some 800 clients at area nursing homes and community-service agencies, given concerts large and small for more than 12,000 Skidmore-ites, and engaged with nearly 3,000 local schoolchildren.

ART AND EQUALITY APPOINTMENTS

A scholar and innovative curator, **Isolde Brielmaier** was named curator-at-large for Skidmore's Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery. A professor of critical studies at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, Brielmaier has developed programming for the Bronx Museum of Art, the Guggenheim, and others. Working with Skidmore's \$1.2 million Mellon Foundation initiative to strengthen the way the Tang uses its collection to engage with issues of identity and race, she moderated a spring panel discussion, "Whiteness and 'Default Culture,'" with guest speakers from race-and-gender studies, documentary film, and advocacy.

Skidmore's first full-time Title IX coordinator is **Joel Aure**. For more than 10 years he was the chief diversity and affirmative action officer and Title IX coordinator at SUNY-Purchase. Aure's expertise in interpersonal violence prevention and response includes Title IX investigations, compliance, bystander intervention, and more. He chairs Skidmore's Advisory Council on Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct; guides the deputy Title IX coordinators in student affairs, academic affairs, and human resources; and works with campus safety, wellness, and counseling staff as well as off-campus legal and counseling resources.



Isolde Brielmaier



Joel Aure



Brielmaier: Mangué Banzina; Aure and ensemble: Erin Covey



CHAMPIONS IN AND OUT OF UNIFORM

Four Thoroughbred teams entered postseason NCAA playoffs. Field hockey went 16-6, beating Rochester for the Liberty League championship and then making it to the NCAA quarterfinals, where it lost a tough 1-0 battle to Tufts. The men's basketball squad won an at-large bid to the NAAs but was defeated by Babson; the T'breds finished with a 20-8 record. In tennis, two men were selected for NCAA individual and doubles competition, and their team advanced to the regional finals before falling to top-ranked Middlebury; the women's team also entered NAAs, losing to Amherst in the second round.

Along with many league and regional honorees, Skidmore teams produced three all-Americans. Lacrosse player **Rachel Talanian '17**, who got the nod for her second straight season, led the league in ground balls, draw controls, and caused turnovers. Basketball player **Aldin Medunjanin '17** became the program's first all-American. He led the league in assists and broke Skidmore's record for career assists, with 552. **Kelly Donnelly '18**, who was co-Rookie of the Year in 2015, reached her 1,000-career-points mark in January, with another season still to go.

In the spring, the national "It's on Us" campaign against sexual assault was led on campus by the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, the athletics department, and a wide range of varsity players.



ALL-AMERICANS
this year were Aldin Medunjanin (top), Rachel Talanian (again!), and Kelly Donnelly.

SCIENCE CENTER PROGRESS

Earlier this year, Skidmore's trustees gave approval to move forward on preconstruction work for the Center for Integrated Sciences.

Customized trailers are being planned to house classrooms, laboratories, and faculty offices that will be displaced by the renovations to the existing Dana Science Center and by new construction at the site of Harder Hall. Last summer and fall, geothermal wells and conduit were installed under the Palamontain Hall parking lot. They will greatly reduce the huge new science center's energy consumption, providing all the building's cooling and heating. Other site-enabling work for the CIS includes the creation of new access roads, utility line and pipe relocations, and removal of bedrock.

The plan is to complete all preconstruction, permitting, and relocation by early 2018, so that the project's first phase—the new construction—can begin in late spring or summer. Meanwhile, fundraising continues for this high-priority project.

"We are on the cusp of realizing the important new academic facility that will further solidify Skidmore's place among the best colleges in the country," says Beau Breslin, dean of the faculty and vice president for academic affairs.



ARCHITECTS' RENDERINGS give just a suggestion of the CIS's integrated and shared facilities for the sciences and much more.



HELP AT THE END



Eighty percent of Americans receive end-of-life care from volunteers as well as health professionals. A summer fellowship offered jointly by Skidmore and Union colleges helps students build care-giving skills to support people as they die.

Developed by Carol Weisse, Union College's director of health professions, and Crystal Moore, a Skidmore social-work professor and associate dean of the faculty, the eight-week, full-time Community Action, Research, and Education program includes reading and study, but the centerpiece is hands-on service. Students are placed in end-of-life agencies to provide care from feeding and toileting to bathing and dressing.

This summer, CARE "provided a chance for me to develop characteristics such as attentiveness and patience," says Jason Bourdier '18. "It is very difficult to accept the loss of strength that comes with illness and old age, especially in the presence of family and friends. One resident was distraught when I brought her juice in a 'sippy cup.'" In another case, when a family member saw food left over and said, "You're not feeding my mother," two nutrition majors researched eating at the end of life and created a pamphlet for future use.

Moore says the program draws in "students interested in social welfare, nursing, psychology . . . and they become passionate and motivated. It's about being present in the face of suffering and about compassion, problem-solving, and ethics."

Elisa Smith '18 reports, "This program inspired me to want to care for people. I think I touched residents in ways that heightened their ability to see beauty even while dying." When an artist with brain cancer sketched her, "it felt special to contribute to his creativity and to empower his sense of dignity." In holding the hand of sleeping patient, she says, "I tried to make him feel respected and valued."—*Helen Edelman '74*



Top: Elisa Smith '18 makes a bed at the Joan Nicole Prince Home.
Bottom: Crystal Moore (center) meets with Union students Kristen St. Andrews and Sydney Keane in the Mary's Haven kitchen.

PRECOLLEGE PREVIEWS

Since 1972 Skidmore has welcomed high school students to a five-week session of liberal and studio arts courses alongside Skidmore undergraduates. Precollege students can earn up to eight college credits while living in residence halls, doing community service, taking side trips, and sampling Skidmore's busy summer schedule of readings, concerts, exhibits, and more. The program is designed to offer "academic rigor and opportunities to meet peers with diverse viewpoints and backgrounds," according to its director, Michelle Paquette-Deuel.

This year the program enrolled 67 teens from across the U.S. and around the world, many who came from under-served environments or will be the first-generation college student in their family. Paquette-Deuel notes, "They are high-achieving, but will benefit from the head start of being at a residential college." And about half of them end up applying to become regular Skidmore students.

Wenqin He, from Shandong, China, arrived last summer with concerns about her lack of background in a classroom where English is spoken. But it went so well that she's pleased to be a Skidmore freshman this fall, and her summer genetics professor is now her academic advisor. Realizing that "the challenge is to adapt a new lifestyle," she took advantage of the residential experience to figure out how to budget for her personal supplies and how to use appliances such as a clothes dryer—both firsts for her.

Andrew Vella of New York City chose Skidmore after considering other precollege programs. He and his family were so impressed by its support and openness, including for his cerebral-palsy-related mobility issues, that he returned again last summer. He also applied and was accepted as a freshman this fall. Vella, whose long-term goal is to become a doctor, has advice for other precollege students: "Don't be afraid to say 'hi' to people. Also, don't be afraid to get a little lost; you'll find new places!"

—Helen Edelman '74

Wenqin He and Andrew Vella take lawn seats for a ballet at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center.

BIG IDEAS

Commencement 2017 featured earnest advice and warm wishes, such as:

“Being able to make the right choice based on the truth that is you—that is the dream and hope that I have for you today.”
—*Oprah Winfrey, actress and media mogul, whose South African girls’ academy sent Mohau Mazibuko ’17 to Skidmore*

“The question of what you majored in will fade; the question of what you stand for will not.” —*Wes Moore, advocate and author of the classwide reading, The Other Wes Moore, in the graduates’ freshman year*

“Learn to redefine failure as part of your success.” —*Ann Tisch, educational philanthropist, whose Young Women’s Leadership Network and CollegeBound Initiative sent seven students into this year’s Skidmore graduating class*

Summaries, social posts, photos, and video are at skidmore.edu/commencement.





REUNION REJOICING

Alumni awards went to 11 grads and a trustee, class giving elicited oohs and ahhs, and alumni of every era enjoyed faculty minicolleges, old- and new-campus tours, discussions, performances, exhibits, and much more at Reunion 2017. Social posts, awardee profiles, photos, and video are at skidmore.edu/reunion/2017.php.



Top row: middle-row hug: Erin Covey; other photos: Andrew Daddio

Integrative education to shape the future

Biochemists with business acumen, linguists with sociopolitical expertise, artists who blaze new trails in digital media . . . the world's pressing needs call for cross-competencies. Finding solutions in energy, climate, medicine, justice, and geopolitics requires critical thinking skills in both analysis and synthesis. Building those abilities in students is at the heart of Skidmore's 2015–25 strategic plan—and of the Creating Our Future campaign now under way to support it.

Creating Our Future, with a goal of more than \$200 million, will allow construction of the Center for Integrated Sciences, as well as new Tang Museum programs, expansion of financial aid, and more internships, collaborative research, and other high-impact learning opportunities. These strategic priorities directly underpin the carefully and creatively integra-

tive approach to liberal learning that makes Skidmore Skidmore.

As a key author of the strategic plan, President Philip Glotzbach knows the stakes are high: “A liberally educated human being is one who can enter fully into the central debates of our time,” he has said, and “Skidmore has something quite important to add to our national conversation.” The same commitment is felt by the campaign's national co-chairs, Skidmore trustees Nancy Hamilton '77 and Thomas Wilmot Jr. '99. Ditto for legions of volunteers including alumni from all eras, trustees, parents, Skidmore employees, and other benefactors. All eyes are now on the public campaign kickoff to be held November 15 at Gotham Hall in New York City.

For now, *Scope* presents a few avenues by which flexible, comprehensive Skidmore minds are fostered and applied. >>



IS IT AN ART LAB, OR IS IT A SCIENCE STUDIO? YES!

BY SUE ROSENBERG

TEACHING TEAM

Business professor David Cohen, chemist Kim Frederick, and physicist Jill Linz pose in the new “Hub” makerspace.

“You will be designing and building a campus resource from the ground up,” reads the syllabus, which also stipulates an 8:10 a.m. meeting time and just one credit. Yet 13 students and three professors from a range of disciplines willingly dove into the minicourse on “making a makerspace.” It was meant as a dry run, a prototype, or a partner for the Idea Lab in Skidmore’s Center for Integrated Sciences, coming soon with help from the Creating Our Future campaign. The CIS’s Idea Lab will offer a wide range of equipment, tools, and collaboration and will coordinate with existing programs from the Tang Museum to the Freirich Business Plan Competition to the Moore Documentary Studies Collaborative.

Echoing other seniors in the class, Hadley Haselmann ’17 says, “Even though I’m graduating, I am so excited to see what comes out of this space.” For her the project was about its “potential to add to our campus and encourage collaboration and innovation.”

As if born from a makerspace itself, the minicourse was invented, engineered, and launched by a business professor,

a chemist, and a physicist: David Cohen, Kim Frederick, and Jill Linz. As members of the Idea Lab planning task force, Cohen and Frederick had attended a 2016 conference at MIT, where their exposure to other college and university makerspaces, and the makers of them, generated “lots of ideas for both the physical and the philosophical considerations,” Cohen says. The conference visit, and the minicourse and other projects it inspired, received support from a two-year \$100,000 Arthur Vining Davis Foundation grant for pedagogical innovation expressly with the Idea Lab concept in mind.

Cohen cites “three core ideas for me: preparation for designing the CIS’s Idea Lab; engaging with the growing social movement around ‘making,’ including concerns that hand-crafting and manufacturing are disappearing skills in today’s economy, whether because automation is taking up such jobs, or because high technology is expensive for individual makers to afford, or other factors; and the opportunity to establish an all-discipline, student-operated venue to foster ‘making’ as a way of further interconnecting

the whole campus.”

As Linz explains, Skidmore has a strong tradition of makerspaces, such as a digital music studio, scenery and costume shops, physics machine shop, and of course several studios in Saisselin Art Center, and now the mini-course aims to add an integrated facility to help all majors collaborate together. She says “Inventors might want to build a prototype, artists might want to incorporate IT in their works, or scientists might seek guidance on the use of art materials. The Idea Lab will help fill these needs, and the space created in this course may continue as a complement to it.”

For the time being, the makerspace makers hope to open “the Hub,” housed in a large office-trailer near the Wilmarth residence hall, to all comers this year. After readings, field trips, team research, and campus surveys (Frederick: “It was exciting to see the outpouring of interest from the college community”) throughout the spring semester (Cohen: “The students invested more work than is typical for a one-credit course”), the class identified art, textiles, electronics, and woodworking as key focuses (Linz: “The students were so dedicated, submitting full-blown proposals with cost studies and budgets!”). Haselmann, having worked at the Center for Social Innovation and Harvard’s i-Lab in Boston and at the Impact Hub in Vienna, Austria, was pleased with the Skidmore Hub’s comprehensive vision for idea generation and skill-sharing in addition to materials and making.

With their mission blueprinted, the class set about procuring 3-D printers, sewing machines and conductive thread, computer workstations, art and hardware supplies, lasers for etching and cutting, and hand tools from pliers and wrenches to hammers and screwdrivers to saws and snips. To stretch the budget, the theater and art departments provided scrap lumber and more, Linz and Frederick brought in their spare laboratory gear, and several alumni entrepreneurs made gifts to buy other equipment.

At its public unveiling in May, the Hub showed off its electronics room, textiles room, and other spaces approaching completion, a sink, a central lounge space, wall art from a collaborative Earth Day project, and whiteboards galore. Ryan Morrison ’17 was building a small drone; other students were leading visitors on tours of the facility. Beatriz Chavez ’18, who had registered for the minicourse “on a whim, because I needed a fun elective to balance my schedule,” ended up working at the Hub for the summer. Along with finishing up the organization and outfitting, she says, “I also gave a few tours to alumni and to the pre-college students.” She and others each “adopted” a particular machine or resource, learning to use it and writing a basic how-to manual to keep nearby.

The co-teaching professors hope the Hub can evolve into a club, run by students as a campus organization. Whether it’s a provisional space until the CIS’s Idea Lab is built or it remains a partner space under student management, whether it’s funded by membership dues or usage fees or other revenues, the experience of creating it was “incredibly gratifying,” Frederick reports. In the landscape of college makerspaces, she says, “Skidmore took the creativity up a notch by having students make the makerspace.”

ALUMNI IDEAS ON THE IDEA LAB

As a student, Owen Osborn ’98 used the physics shop to build an innovative banjo, and now he partners with Chris Kucinski ’98 in their very innovative music firm. Kucinski says, “It makes sense that Skidmore is encouraging cross-pollination of ideas and practices among fields like computer science, the arts, and business. Our work designing, building, and selling musical instruments, as Critter & Guitari, puts us at the intersection of these disciplines. I hope the Idea Lab will prepare students to step out on their own entrepreneurial paths.”

In Philadelphia, Nicole Haddad ’03 and her brother moved their clothing line Lobo Mau into a budding makerspace in an empty high school, and as more businesses moved into the old classrooms, she says, “we started to understand the immense possibilities for collaboration that were at our fingertips. Need a 3-D printer, furniture builder, jewelry designer, physicist? Everything is available.” For her, “This is how you grow knowledge and community.”

Predicting that this approach will shape the future of commerce, she’s excited about Skidmore’s “preparing students for a world that is constantly expanding and contracting. The Idea Lab will allow students to begin thinking big while allowing them to go deep within themselves to hone their interests on a personal level.”



Top: Chris Kucinski and Owen Osborn prep their elevator-music show at Skidmore’s Tang Museum last year. **Bottom:** Nicole Haddad works on her apparel line at a Philadelphia makerspace.

ATTENTION, SCIENCE ALUMS

Skidmore is pleased to announce the Fred L. Emerson Foundation Challenge, an opportunity to raise \$1 million for the new Center for Integrated Sciences. From now through November only, thanks to the Emerson Foundation, all gifts and pledges by nursing and science alumni will be matched dollar for dollar, up to \$500,000.

The CIS will greatly strengthen the college’s long tradition of creativity in the physical and life sciences, expand science literacy across campus, and prepare new innovation leaders.

Only those alumni who majored in nursing, biology, chemistry, computer science or mathematics, neuroscience, psychology, exercise science, environmental studies and sciences, geosciences, or physics are eligible for the challenge, which ends November 30, 2017.

To double your gift’s impact and help make the CIS a reality, visit skidmore.edu/emersonchallenge, email kverstan@skidmore.edu, or call 518-580-5660.

Fitzhugh Karol, Mark Klein, and Bill Caleo bring hand-crafting, psychology, and performance skills to the real-estate rehab business.



NO WORKING STIFFS

Skidmore alumni are remarkably limber and nimble career-shapers. With first-year seminars, double majors, minors, undergraduate research, study abroad, campus clubs, summer internships, senior thesis projects, and other experiences already under their belts, they bring not just knowledge but flexibility and inventiveness to any workplace. Just try these five stories on for size:

Building Brooklyn

THREE ALUMNI ARE PUTTING creative thought to work at the Brooklyn Home Company, a real estate development firm with in-house architectural, construction, and design services. This family-run cooperative of custom home builders and artists says it aims to create innovative living spaces that are tasteful, functional, and timeless. TBHCo has built a reputation as one of the best high-end residential builders in Brooklyn.

Bill Caleo '99 founded the Brooklyn Home Company and serves as president and head of operations, overseeing the purchase, development, and sale of residential properties, particularly Brooklyn brownstones. A business major, theater actor, and original member of the Dynamics a cappella troupe, Caleo credits Skidmore for preparing him for his current career. "I use my business degree and my acting background, and I enjoy collaborating with creative people, technical people, a mix-and-match of different personalities."

Caleo is also active as an alumnus, sharing his experience and business skills as a member of the President's Advisory Council.

Art major Fitzhugh Karol '04 specialized in ceramics, and now

he lends the company's signature trademark to each TBHCo property. Whether it's an oversized, 400-pound, reclaimed-wood barn door or a custom-sculpted banister or fireplace mantel, Karol says, "We build hand-crafted elements and leave a handmade item or two" for new owners.

Mark Klein '05 adds big-city real estate development skills. Klein began as a psychology major but switched to management and business after taking MB 107, the iconic introductory case-study course. "I really enjoyed strategizing a business plan for Callaway Golf—working to solve a problem for an organization," he recalls. Problem-solving is at the heart of his work now: "It's what we do, overcoming challenges and finding opportunities for growth and improvement."

The Brooklyn Home Company's diverse staff of 20 features a full in-house team of experts who, like the three from Skidmore, devote themselves to artistic integrity, individuality, environmental sustainability, fine craftsmanship, and high-quality architecture and interior design. —*Diane O'Connor*

Genetics ancient and modern

IF YOU'VE EVER LOOKED INTO getting your DNA tested for genealogical or medical reasons, you know our understanding of human genetic history is expanding rapidly. The further the science advances, the further back our explorations can go. While you may love learning your ancestry from a few hundred years ago, bioarchaeologist Kelly Harkins '04 is learning about DNA sequences that are many thousands of years old.

"I've worked on an 11,000-year-old human from South America, and on samples from ancient Nubia to the Bronze Age to the Vikings to medieval Europe," says Harkins.

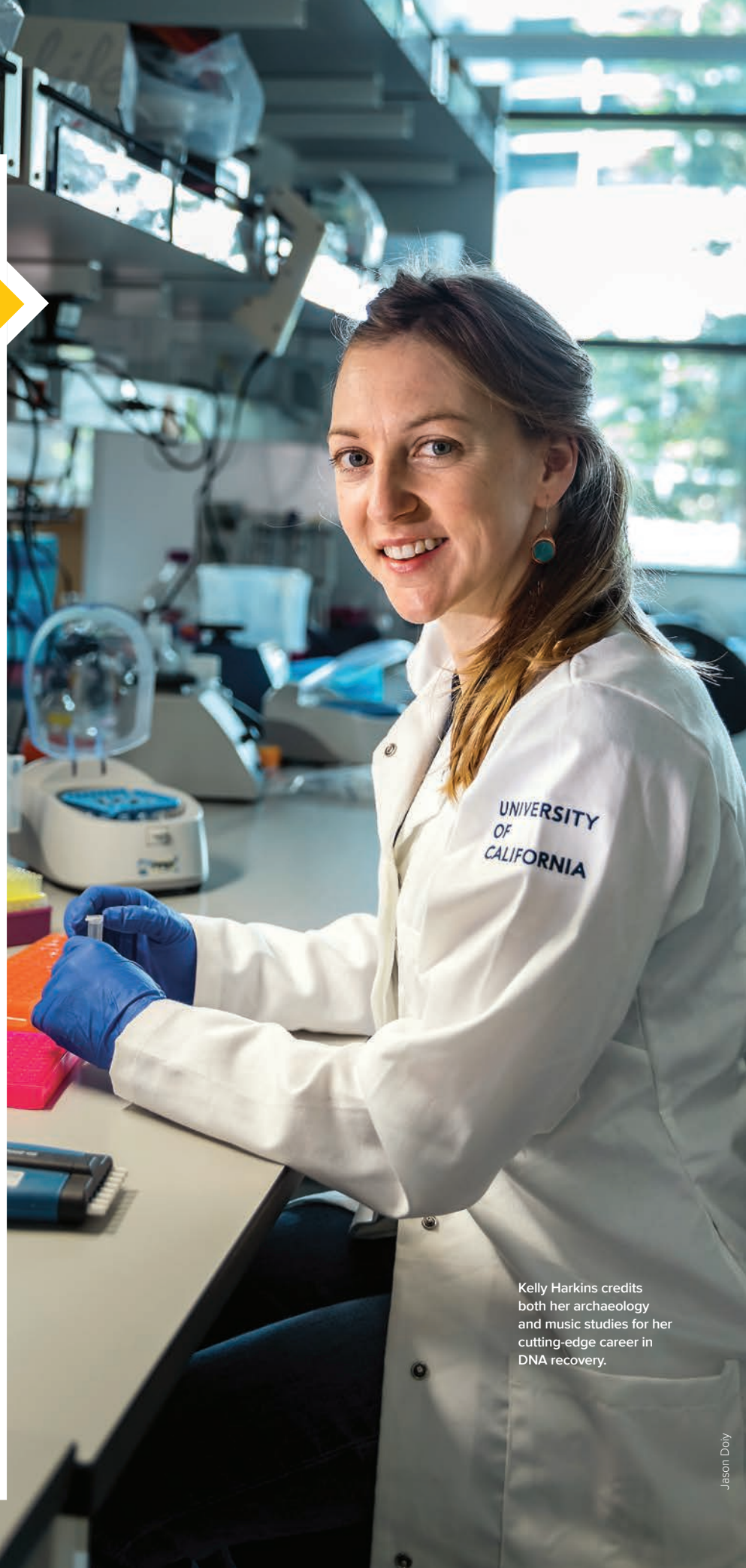
Her specialty is paleogenetics, particularly the evolution of human illness. "I look for signs of disease in bone and try to extract and reconstruct the DNA from the organism that I think caused the disease," she explains. She has found cases of ancient tuberculosis and recently sequenced *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* DNA from the bones of someone who lived in northern Chile about 700 years ago. She has studied parasites that caused the earliest-known skeletal cases of New World leishmaniasis and compared them to *Leishmania* strains found throughout the globe today.

In ancient specimens, DNA has degraded with time and will be overrun with DNA from microbial life. "At some point, a bone will become no different from a rock," says Harkins. But, she adds, "it's always worth trying, and the technology keeps improving such that we now can recover smaller and smaller DNA pieces by methods unimaginable 20 years ago."

At Skidmore, her interest in archaeology evolved into analyses of ancient human remains and the contexts in which they're buried. Her second major in music led her to study in Vienna, where she took piano and flute lessons (her nickname is "Fife") and played in ensembles. Only in her last week there did she make her way to the Natural History Museum, including "a long hallway lined entirely with shelves of human skulls, from its osteology collection of over 40,000 human remains," she recalls. Intrigued, she knew she would return to work there, which she did as a Fulbright scholar in 2004–05. "Had I not studied music abroad," she muses, "I might not have taken that museum tour that led to my current career."

Harkins earned a PhD at Arizona State University and then continued her human paleogenomics research at the University of California at Santa Cruz, where she was named a National Science Foundation postdoctoral research fellow. Skidmore honored her with an alumni Palamountain Scholar Award in 2015.

This summer Harkins's career took a new twist, as she became the founding CEO of a biotech startup working with degraded DNA circulating in living humans, where its release is a result of the constant process of cell death. She says, "The technology we've developed for this was born directly from ancient DNA research." —*Kathryn Gallien*



Kelly Harkins credits both her archaeology and music studies for her cutting-edge career in DNA recovery.

Jason Doiy



Moving out of the office and onto the land, Jess Wong moved her marketing skills into the intensive farming and local food sectors.

Digging the dirt

JESS WONG '09 KNOWS EXACTLY when the chickens come home to roost, because her days don't end until they are in for the night.

She loves every minute of running Holbrook Farm in Bethel, Conn., but her days are particularly long in the summer, when work can begin at 5:30 a.m. to beat the heat and when darkness doesn't drive the chickens in until 9 p.m. Even then, she may stay up working on accounts or updating social media.

Growing up interested in the sciences and animals and envisioning work as a veterinarian, Wong says she started at Skidmore with "a pre-med mindset." But, she discovered, "I was not as passionate about it as I thought," and instead she completed a double major in Asian studies and anthropology.

After graduation, she worked in marketing, but again there was no passion. "I wanted to get out of the office," she says, so she followed a friend into farm work, and that's when "everything just felt right." Wong started at Holbrook Farm by pulling weeds and soon earned the trust of owners John and Lynn Holbrook, who were eager to retire from the day-to-day responsibilities of growing vegetables, running the farm store, keeping the books, and tucking in the chickens. Wong started managing the fields as well as the accounts with area restaurants. "This was all new to me," she says. "John and Lynn taught me everything." Soon she emerged as a natural heir to their business.

Holbrook employs intensive farming methods to produce large amounts of vegetables on just a few acres. "Farming in our area is rare, and microfarming is even more so, but it's gaining popularity," says Wong, who is happiest when the farm is crowded with customers shopping and visitors learning. "The most surprising thing I've realized about farming is how disconnected people are with food," she says, admitting she had once been too. "The more people I can get to visit the farm or grow their own food, the better." Her social media and other outreach is growing those numbers.

In the meantime, area customers can eat well on Holbrook Farm produce, from tomatoes and eggplant to Asian greens and edible flowers, from broccoli and beans and peppers to garlic and herbs. The store supplements all that with fruit, corn, meat, and dairy products from other nearby farms. Holbrook has its own bakery too. And with all those chickens, of course, it sells a lot of eggs.

Wong spends much of her time in the market. But like all the farm's workers, she is trained to do everything, and she eagerly schedules a little time every week to get her hands dirty. "Being outside, in the dirt, that's where I'm in my element," she says.

On a mission to grow good food and educate people about it, Wong is even happy to hear those early-morning rooster crows—odds are she's already awake anyway. —Kathryn Gallien



Jon Brestoff-Parker puts his M.D. and Ph.D. to work on cellular diagnostics and treatments for conditions from diabetes to cancer.

Molecules and medicine

JONATHAN BRESTOFF-PARKER '08 has benefited from a laserlike focus, but his career path has also been marked by turnings that apply the skills of one discipline to other areas.

In high school he was fascinated by the interaction of nutrition and physical performance—an interest fueled by his own struggles with weight as a teen athlete. When he arrived at Skidmore, he wasn't at all sure how his studies would coalesce around those goals, so in his first years, he recalls, "I explored lots of ways of pursuing my interests," including social organizations, business, and writing—all yielding skills that he continues to draw on in his professional life. "Skidmore was a fertile ground for me to plug my interests into lots of different things."

In his sophomore year Brestoff-Parker won a prestigious two-year Goldwater scholarship in the natural sciences. His aims were becoming clearer. He told *Scope* magazine in 2006, "I would like to obtain a PhD in metabolic diseases, with an emphasis on the relationship between obesity and Type 2 diabetes."

He went on to achieve that goal and much more, earning a master's degree in public health from Ireland's University of Cork in 2010 and a dual M.D. and Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania in 2016. The author of numerous research papers and coeditor of a textbook on im-

munology, he is also co-owner of a U.S. patent.

Along the way, the focus of Brestoff-Parker's scientific inquiry shifted as he discovered new applications for his knowledge. Research into cellular metabolism yielded insights into food allergies and certain cancers, for instance. "Cancer isn't typically thought of as a metabolic disease," he explains, "but with cancer we see tremendous metabolic changes, not only at the cellular level but also in the organs and the entire body."

Following such new avenues led Brestoff-Parker to his current position as a pathology resident at Washington University Medical School in St. Louis. He had long planned a residency in pediatrics, but he instead focused on his growing understanding of cells' molecular machinery. He saw applications of his work in two fields: developing new diagnostic tools and also providing therapy—harvesting tissue from a patient, manipulating it in the lab so it can fight disease, and then reintroducing it to the patient's body. Brestoff-Parker is passionate about enhancing these techniques and fostering their commercial potential. He'll keep doing so—until, perhaps, insight and curiosity point him in a new direction.

"Developing expertise in one field opens up windows where you can bring your knowledge into other disciplines," he says. "Education at Skidmore helped prepare me for that." —*Jim Akin '84*

Insuring community values

SHE HAD DREAMS of being a professor or novelist, but not a starving artist, so Cleyvis Natera Tucker '99 did some creative career planning. Having earned a Skidmore bachelor's in English and psychology and then an M.F.A. in creative writing from New York University, she wanted to channel her skills in critical thinking, writing, and understanding human behavior. After a stint in publishing, which did not meet her expectations, she took the advice of a friend to consider a career in the insurance industry. That was 16 years ago; she's never looked back.

"I know this is nontraditional for someone with my academic background, but I find it very rewarding," says Tucker, a native of the Dominican Republic who moved with her tight-knit family to New York City when she was 10. She calls her career "very creative work, but practical. As a director, I use my communication skills all the time, as well as what I know about motivation and decision-making, to train entry-level claims adjusters for success." In fact, she says, she's "passionate about the challenges of work in the insurance industry."

Recalling her student days as "the pillars" for her achievements, she says, "I was a senator in the student government, a residence hall counselor and director, editor of the *Skidmore News*, and a member of organizations that supported Hispanic and black culture on campus." That cocurricular dedication hasn't waned: "I am still engaged, at work and in the community, as a 'good citizen.' The benefits of my involvements at Skidmore became transferable skills, such as leadership and listening."

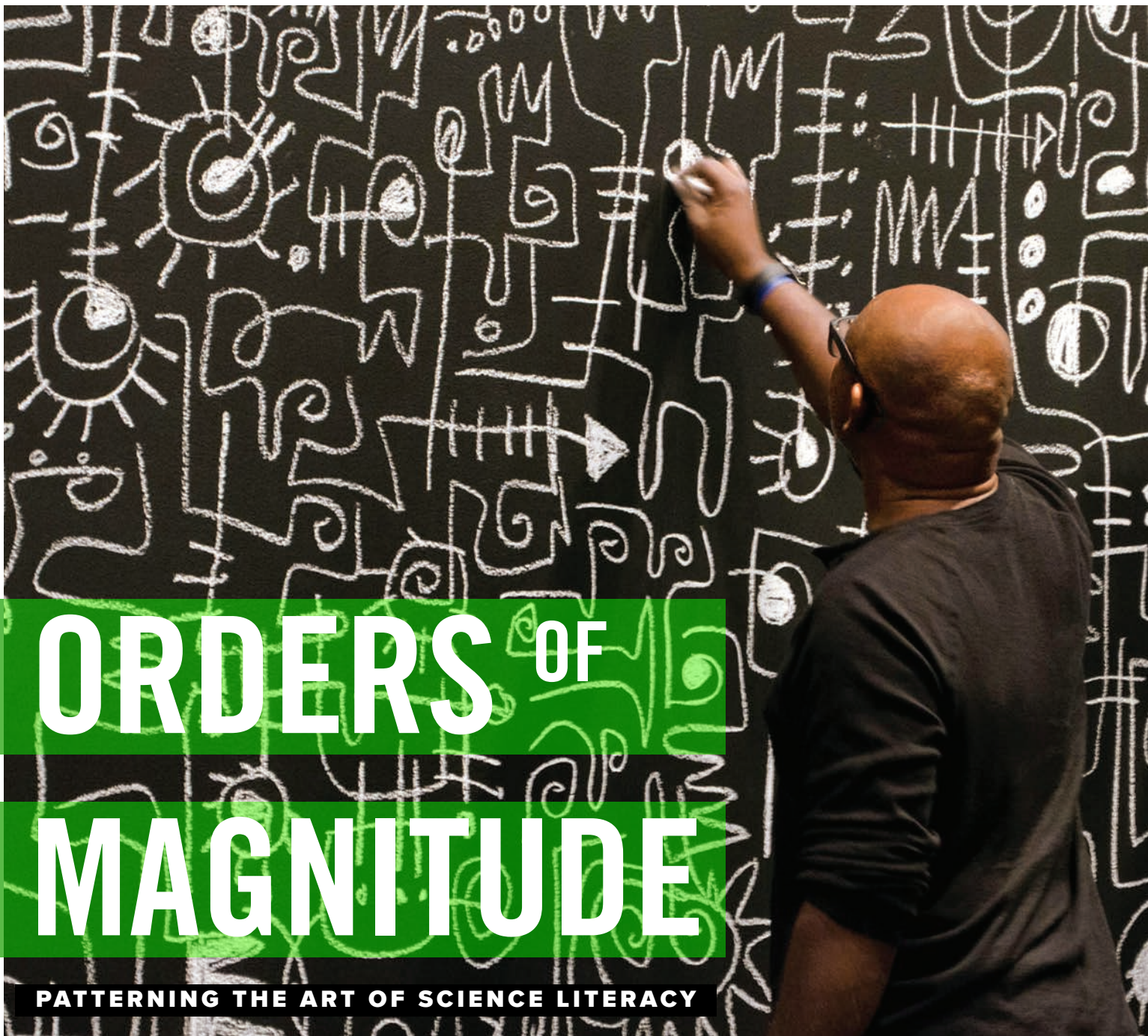
Living with her husband and two young children in New Jersey, Tucker has held fast to her Skidmore friendships. For her recent 40th birthday, she gathered at her mom's for favorite foods (such as goat stewed in milk and spices) and celebration with Skidmore friends. She confesses she is already looking forward to her next class reunion in 2019.

When she's not on the road or in the office as a certified claims professional, Tucker is a zealous half-marathoner and a voracious reader, both of fiction (last year's *Underground Railroad*, she says, "rocked my world") and of nonfiction, such as *Harvard Review* articles on emotional intelligence and effective leadership. In her scarce free time, she perseveres with some creative writing.

At Skidmore, she concludes, "I developed the ability to overcome challenges, act and think outside my comfort zone, and not always to accept the status quo but to make things right where I can." —*Helen Edelman '74* 5

Cleyvis Natera Tucker, who took the lead on behalf of herself and others as a student, has done the same in building her insurance career.





ORDERS OF MAGNITUDE

PATTERNING THE ART OF SCIENCE LITERACY

BY KATHRYN
GALLIEN

“Pattern is how we create order out of chaos,” says Tang Museum curator Rachel Seligman ’91. It’s a concept that was explored from multiple angles in *Sixfold Symmetry: Pattern in Art and Science*, a Tang exhibition curated with faculty and integrated into courses across the disciplines.

Using art, science, sound, and artifacts to explore the human relationship with pattern, Seligman and co-curator Rachel Roe-Dale, a mathematics professor, collaborated with a wide range of other faculty members: art historian Lisa Aronson, Spanish professor Grace Burton, computer scientist Mike Eckmann, psychologist Rebecca Johnson, musicologist Liz Macy, biologist Josh Ness, religion professor Greg Spinner, and artist Sarah Sweeney.

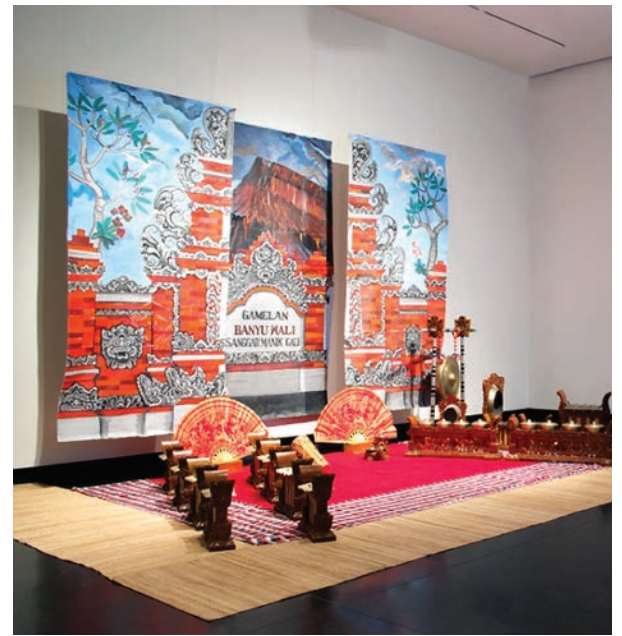
Many of the Tang’s interdisciplinary collaborations begin with a “big picture” question, and in this case, says

Seligman, it was “Why do humans seek out, create, replicate pattern? Why do we desire it, and how do we use it?”

One answer, she suggests, is that we use pattern to help us “make sense of the world around us, in all aspects of our lives.” But pattern also exists in nature, she notes—for example, “in the Fibonacci sequence of a spiraling nautilus shell, and in the way water forms crystals to create snowflakes.” Perhaps we are drawn to “some inherent beauty” in these natural patterns.

The perfect snowflake?

Certainly scientists and mathematicians look for pattern, says Rachel Roe-Dale. “In many cases it exists *a priori* in nature as a fundamental component.” She finds it particu-



larly fascinating “when we can create a model using equations that can actually generate that same natural form.”

Artist-scientists Janko Gravner and David Griffeath, in the show’s *Modeling Snow Crystal Growth*, presented computer-simulated images inspired by the century-old microscopy work of Wilson “Snowflake” Bentley, whose photographs of natural snowflakes were displayed nearby. Both old and new invited close scrutiny. Here was the fractal patterning modeled in the Fibonacci sequence, there the sixfold symmetry of the show’s title. But while the six sides of a snowflake “are fundamentally equivalent,” says Roe-Dale, “there are slight imperfections.” Gravner and Griffeath’s computer model was based on the actual physics of water molecules either adhering to a snowflake or starting a new branch of crystals. In that small randomness, art imitates nature.

Roe-Dale, who had never done museum work before, says being part of a curatorial project “opened up a new door for me. I’ve become really interested in how we can integrate the museum experience with our science and math classes on a more regular basis.”

Symbology, rhythm, and line

Grace Burton brought her “Communicating in Spanish” class especially to see the eye-tracking installation she worked on with psychologist Rebecca Johnson, addressing the phenomenon of “expectancy grammar”: As we learn to expect certain patterns when we read, our eyes and brains process short or common words faster than others. In the gallery, videos demonstrated the increasingly orderly eye movement patterns of a pre-reader, a beginning reader, and a skilled reader, as well as showing the breakdown of that order in a reader who has had a stroke.

Skidmore’s Gamelan Banyu Wali ensemble, coached by Liz Macy, performed in the gallery’s Balinese gamelan installation, which invited listeners to appreciate the cyclic patterning of the music.

A number of classes came in the fall to talk with and observe Nigerian-American artist Victor Ekpuk as he created an intricate chalk drawing, inspired by the traditional

Opposite: Victor Ekpuk creates his *Drawing Memory* on a Tang Museum wall.

Top left: Thomas Bangsted’s *Last of the Dreadnoughts* recreates the “dazzle camouflage” used on old battleships.

Top right: Skidmore’s gamelan ensemble set up in the gallery to demonstrate symmetries of sound.

“Why do humans seek out, create, replicate pattern? Why do we desire it, and how do we use it?”

Nsibidi script symbols of the Igbo culture’s *ukara* cloth, on two blackened gallery walls. Joe Underwood’s art history class “Ephemeral Exhibitions” was a natural: as with all of Ekpuk’s site-specific wall drawings, this one was to be erased when the exhibition closed in the spring. Class member Claire Bernson ’17, who had helped research artists as an exhibitions assistant at the Tang, felt fortunate “to watch him work and discuss his process.”

Others watching Ekpuk at work ranged from Bina Gogineni and her postcolonial literature class “The Empire Strikes Back” to Mark Hofmann and students in his Scribner Seminar “Math and Escher” to Hédi Jaouad with his Scribner Seminar “Africa Through Its Changing Cinema.”

Ekpuk responded to some thoughtful and complex questions from the students and talked about the way his work has evolved from *Nsibidi*-related shapes to his own very personal vocabulary of forms. Students watched as he added detail to the wall, working fast, chalk dust flying, long continuous lines forming intricate patterns.

Navigating and transcending

Greg Spinner brought religion students and colleagues to explore the gallery wall of cosmograms—maps of space or time, such as Tibetan mandalas, Shaker gift drawings, and Kabbalistic diagrams—created for visualizing salvation or enlightenment. Spinner observes, “A fundamental aspect that religions share is the ability to conceptualize a cosmos, to conceive a world that is organized, orchestrated, patterned, and regulated and in which human existence has its proper order, its proper place.” Whether from Jewish, Buddhist, or Christian traditions, he says, cosmograms are intended to “help you navigate toward a goal, transcending this mundane reality to get to heaven or reach enlightenment.”

Art history major Bernson, when leading patrons through the exhibition in her job as a Tang guide, typically asks “what they think of when they picture pattern, and the general consensus involves plaids or geometric shapes.” But after viewing the show, she found, the visitors began to think about pattern as more than visual—“it is underneath almost all things we do.”



OUT

What are the rights and rules for free speech these days?

SPO

INTERVIEWS BY JULIE SCHARPER
ILLUSTRATIONS BY BRIAN STAUFFER

KEN

This is a charged moment for the First Amendment.

President Trump has called news media an “enemy of the American people.” A congressional candidate assaulted a reporter who asked him a question. Social media provide a vast, influential platform to share information and opinions—but also to harass and slander. On campuses across the country, debates are raging about free speech and political correctness.

From the “Shades of Gray” forums and honors courses that began over a decade ago to this spring’s “It’s On Us” campaign led by student-athletes, Skidmore devotes substantial resources to modeling civil discourse, examining freedoms and responsibilities in community life, putting politics into perspective, and building students’ critical thinking skills for participation in a diverse democracy. Last winter, for example, the president’s office helped bring to campus Frederick Lawrence, secretary of the national Phi Beta Kappa Society, a standard-bearer for freedom of inquiry and high standards of scholarship. Lawrence, former Brandeis University president and a civil-rights scholar at Yale and other top law schools, led a forum with Skidmore students, faculty, staff, and trustees titled “The Contours of Free Speech on Campus.”

Throughout 2016 the Tang Museum partnered with several departments and programs to engage the on-campus and Saratoga-area communities in election-related events held in the museum’s *A More Perfect Union* exhibition, which offered a contemplation of patriotism and democracy as well as a venue for civic gatherings. In that gallery space, two congressmen from upstate New York, a Democrat and a Republican, discussed “What Happened to Compromise?” with a PBS host as moderator; faculty from psychology to history held forums on campaigns, elections, and the presidency; and a TV-news-watching party on election night offered faculty-led context and conversation.

Other dialogues and debates engaged faculty and students of every stripe in talking openly about the work of talking openly. Now *Scope* has asked a panel of Skidmore professors, alumni, and others to discuss freedom of speech from their perspectives as social and political scholars, professionals from law to journalism, and shapers of the campus climate. Here are their insights and arguments. >>

SPEAKERS ON SPEECH

Introducing the scholars and practitioners on *Scope*’s panel:



Robert Boyers, professor of English, is the long-time editor of the thought and culture quarterly *Salmagundi*, now in its 52nd year. His most recent book is *The Fate of Ideas: Seductions, Betrayals, Appraisals*.



Jennifer Delton, professor of history, teaches foreign policy, the Progressive era, the Cold War, conservatism, and African American history. Among her books is *Rethinking the 1950s: How Anticommunism and the Cold War Made America Liberal*.



Deborah Jacobs '90, MALS '95, executive director of the New Jersey ACLU for 13 years, now directs King County’s independent Office of Law Enforcement Oversight in Seattle. She is particularly dedicated to just policing, women’s safety, and First Amendment rights.



Jay Jochowitz '78, a career journalist, has managed several desks for the *Times Union* in Albany, N.Y. For the past nine years he’s been editor of the *TU*’s editorial page. He also serves as an advisor to the student-run *Skidmore News*.



Juleyka Lantigua-Williams '96 has been lead editor and producer for NPR’s *Code Switch* and a staff writer for *The Atlantic* magazine. Recently she launched an audio and video production company, Lantigua Williams & Co.



Andrew Lindner '03 is a Skidmore sociology professor who teaches courses on mass media, politics, and sport. His research centers on the impacts of the state, the market, and society on journalism.



Pat Oles is a professor of social work and former dean of student affairs. His courses include “Purple Nation: Welfare and Politics” and “Social Justice and Social Policy.” He has written on economic change, tax reform, and restorative justice.



Themba Shongwe '18 is a business major originally from Swaziland. He has served as the Student Government Association’s vice president for inclusion and outreach and also the African Heritage Awareness Club’s vice president.



Rights at risk?



With the demonization of political opponents and the delegitimization of the press, the left and the right both feel aggrieved, and at the extremes there is little interest in evidence or reflection. Right now, institutional protections of speech seem to be holding up, but working toward evidence-based politics, accommodation, and compromise feels a little like bringing a knife to a gunfight. —**PAT OLES**



It feels as though we—whether we are on the left, the right, or somewhere in between—cannot speak freely without being shouted down, fired, ostracized, disciplined, misunderstood, disapproved of, called a racist, or called a communist. We no longer have even a veneer of common ground on which we can have a reasonable discussion or disagreement. And this is a threat to democratic discourse. —**JENNIFER DELTON**



I don't believe that First Amendment rights are being impinged upon today more than at any other point in recent history. But I think

Americans have had to quickly reckon with the fact that these freedoms are not passive: we have to use them or risk losing them. —**JULEYKA LANTIGUA-WILLIAMS**



Trump's lies are routinely rebutted and corrected by journalists and by other politicians. Though a great many Americans live within a reality constructed for them by Fox News and other such media outlets, we have reason to believe that our First Amendment freedoms will be vigorously defended—by people like ourselves—in the event that they come under further assault. —**ROBERT BOYERS**



I see at least three realms to evaluate: 1) Are people exercising their rights to free speech? Yes, and in new and creative ways. The Black Lives Matter protests, for example, focused on disruptive actions like holding die-ins in malls or shutting down highways. 2) Has the law changed with respect to speech or press rights? Not yet. We can anticipate legal challenges, but I think the courts will stand strong on this issue. 3) Has

the culture changed with respect to speech or press rights? Yes. One example is the Trump crowd's demonization of the press (which is simply demonization of truth and information). Another example is the portion of the public that considers social pressure in the direction of political correctness to be censorship. —**DEBORAH JACOBS**

to individual and corporate profit motives. But campuses have to be careful not to overpolice speech with “trigger warnings,” public declarations on microaggressions, and the self-censorship that curtails young professors as they seek to secure their place in the academic ranks. Obviously, hate speech and anything that endangers anyone physically is always out of line. —**LANTIGUA-WILLIAMS**

Campus discourse



Campuses are once again battlegrounds over freedom of speech, which I think is good news. If the next generation of leaders and active citizens learn to engage in creative conflicts in the microcosm of a college campus, there's a good chance the training will pay off when they reach the workforce, where freedom of speech is often conspicuously absent thanks



Most of us understand that our defense of free speech need not (and should not) extend to speech that is flagrantly abusive or deliberately intimidating—that is, intended to silence others and make genuine debate impossible. When free speech is cast in absolutist terms, as a defense of all speech no matter the circumstances or consequences, then we are dealing with an attempt to dismiss and reduce to absurdity an issue that

“COLLEGES ARE THE SAFEST INTELLECTUAL PLACES ON THE PLANET. BUT THE RISKS INVOLVED IN TALKING ABOUT POLITICS, RACE, CLASS, OR RELIGION CAN DISCOURAGE SPEAKING FREELY.”



is by no means absurd or trivial.

The political right has lately embraced the free speech issue in ways that are opportunistic and dishonest, and recent widely publicized developments on American campuses have played into the hands of right-wing demagogues, from Donald Trump to Ann Coulter. For campus partisans to call attention to the unsavory views or shoddy scholarship of a speaker who is about to appear on campus is not an assault on free speech but in fact the *exercise* of free speech and an invitation to debate. —**BOYERS**



I have often struggled with activism surrounding campus speakers. From a student's point of view, there is a certain perceived level of endorsement when a school allows a person to come and speak. And there is a pattern of disdain for the concept of "safe spaces," particularly among the older generations. Safe spaces are seen as a protective shield that supposedly hinders academic freedom and creates a false bubble within a college, but that view fails to recognize the various shapes and forms of the marginalized within the academic realm. Young men and women who demand a space conducive for learning are brave souls. I have often been guilty of the opposite: finding myself sitting in a class silently as a teacher espouses grossly outdated stereotypes about Africa. —**THEMBA SHONGWE**



Colleges are the safest intellectual places on the planet. But the risks involved in talking about politics, race, class, or religion can discourage speaking freely. The manufactured outrage at "liberal faculty," administrative concerns about publicity and funding, students' desires to avoid conflict, and faculty fear of student evaluations and a tight labor market also conspire against robust discourse on campuses. There is freedom of speech, but also an inclination toward playing it safe. —**OLES**



The controlling of speech via peer pressure is nothing new on campuses—all communities have unspoken rules about what one can and cannot say. But as the social fabric weakens, strictures become more explicit, and some people feel more constrained by rules that don't make sense to them from their perspectives and histories. This goes for a first-generation student of color who might feel constrained by old social rules, or for a middle-aged white professor who may feel constrained by new social rules. And so they speak up, only to be accused of threatening the other person's freedom of speech.

On the one hand, this is a sign of progress in diversity, because it is an almost inevitable consequence of bringing together people from very different backgrounds. On

"SOME TWITTER OR FACEBOOK POSTS HAVE A PROFOUND IMPACT ON U.S. POLITICS AND POLICY; MOST HAVE ZERO. THE TRUE BENEFIT OF SOCIAL MEDIA IS TO SURFACE THE HATE: IT'S MUCH BETTER TO KNOW ABOUT IT THAN NOT TO."

the other hand, it can have a dampening effect on academic freedom as distinct from constitutionally protected freedom of speech (which is not being violated). The bread and butter of intellectual progress is argument, but fewer and fewer students, professors, or administrators want to engage in argument connected to diversity and identity, for fear of making a gaffe, being misunderstood, or being confronted with passion and anger. —**DELTON**



Yes, campuses need to be bastions of free speech, but they also need to be bastions of intelligent, honest, civil dialogue. Sorry, but someone like Ann Coulter offers none of the above, so when Berkeley students objected to her—I'm not talking about violence, but vocal objections—I did not find that an affront to the First Amendment.

We are living at a time when the force of speech is being redefined. Once, it came from either numbers or the power of a platform, but now the Supreme Court has added money: you are entitled to as much speech and influence as money can buy. Coulter and other rich pundits like her are emblematic of that, and they shut down speech themselves by hanging up on callers, not letting them past the call screener, or shouting them down on the air. Against this, all students have, really, is the power of their numbers to say, "We don't want people coming to our campus bearing a message of hate." —**JAY JOCHNOWITZ**

Online "analysis vacuum"



Social media is in part responsible for the breakdown of elite control over the country's discourse. Voices that were once marginalized, confined to mimeographed or xeroxed handbills, now have a platform that reaches millions. So radical black feminists have more of a voice, but so too do radical white nationalists. And the elite moderate center has lost its ability to manage public discourse. —**DELTON**



Some Twitter or Facebook posts have a profound impact on U.S. politics and policy; most have zero. The true benefit of social media is to

surface the hate: it's much better to know about it than not to. Many Americans were reeling after the 2016 election, not realizing just how much racism, sexism, homophobia, and hate in general still thrive in the U.S. But social media revealed it long before Trump's rise.

Each public figure must make his or her own decisions about how to respond to negativity or threats—that's as true today as for the activists of the 1960s, who risked their lives to make change in this country. There is no way to address hate other than to meet it where it is, confront it, and counter it with love and empathy. Unfortunately, it's a long road. —**JACOBS**



But social media has also served to *amplify* hate disproportionately. A while back the *New York Times* published a piece on how Internet connections among people with mental illnesses have given their delusions a feeling of validity. I think social media has done this with hate speech—it has helped to normalize it, as if it's on par with any other speech. Toss in a celebrity or two, and social media becomes as powerful and alluring as a fan club, in which you can imagine yourself interacting with the stars. To counter this, the best one can do is keep hammering away at the facts and educating future generations of better-informed, more discerning citizens. —**JOCHNOWITZ**

“IF WE ONLY SPEND TIME WITH PEOPLE WE AGREE WITH, WE KEEP OURSELVES SAFE FROM HAVING OUR ASSUMPTIONS SCRUTINIZED. WHAT'S AT STAKE HERE IS THE ERODING NOTION OF A BROADER, COLLECTIVE GOOD.”



Careful analysis of complex problems takes time. It cannot compete with the rapid dissemination of threats by Internet trolls and the targeted finesse of Fox, MSNBC, and other partisan media. Homogenous echo chambers that give rise to certainty tend to diminish the commitment to work toward better but less certain conclusions. That work is the job of scholars and deliberative bodies, but, alas, both are losing status relative to online outlets. —**OLES**



Social media is a beast that still needs taming. While campaigns like #BlackLivesMatter, #OscarSoWhite, and #SayHerName have led to positive change, we have to contend with the livestreaming of suicides and police shootings. The immediate impact of

watching a news event unfold on Twitter leaves us without the proper context in which to place the events and people, creating an analysis vacuum that anyone can fill however they choose. —**LANTIGUA-WILLIAMS**



My mother used to quote a Swazi saying that can be loosely translated to “The one who opened the pot is not the one who boiled the water.” Social media simply exposes the boiling, but it does not turn up the heat.

My first American election was in 2012. I was in a 99% liberal international high school, and my Facebook feed was glossed over by a liberal and tranquil view. Fast forward to 2016, and my feed looked like a bloodbath. Did social media change? No, I added more friends with opposite-leaning beliefs. I am a firm believer in the role of social media as a platform for social change, and I would argue that it has helped increase social awareness of issues like racism and sexism. —**SHONGWE**



Research is pretty clear that the Internet and social media are fairly modest contributors to polarization. First, modern political extremism began to increase in the late 1970s. Yes, polarization continued to rise during the Obama years, when social media emerged, but these trends predate the Internet. Second, research on religious, social, political, and cultural polarization shows that people over 60 years old are the most polarized, while young people are the least, even though they have more exposure to social media. If we're looking for a media-based explanation for polarization, Fox News and MSNBC, beloved by aging baby boomers, are more likely culprits than Facebook and Twitter. But more important factors include declining social trust, the retreat into the home, geographic and social partisan sorting, increasing diversity, and the mobilization of the conservative movement. —**ANDREW LINDNER**

“Alternative facts”



My hope is that a backlash to the current political climate will result in a greater awareness of and, perhaps, commitment to truth. But the real question is how to make permanent cultural and political adjustments that promote truth in politics. —**JACOBS**



At the core of the rift created by “alternative facts” is the circumstance that today knowledge has been almost entirely separated from actual experience. It is no longer the case that most of what people know comes from what they have lived themselves or witnessed someone live. It's become acceptable to believe something is true because a media outlet, a professor, or an opinionated friend says it is so. Sheltered behind our digital screens, we no longer have the urge to go see for ourselves,

to confirm, to question anything that has been presented in a plausible and digestible manner.

Further alienating us from a sense of truth is our self-segregation by class, education, ethnicity, political creed, religion, and on and on. If we only spend time with people we agree with, we keep ourselves safe from having our choices questioned, our privilege checked, and our assumptions scrutinized. What's at stake here is the eroding notion of a broader, collective good. —**LANTIGUA-WILLIAMS**



Fake news is a factor in our public life, and only enlightened citizens—persons with a respect for facts, evidence, and differences of opinion—will have any prospect of differentiating the fake from the authentic. Of course we encourage others to be truth-seekers, and yet it is important, I think, to acknowledge that the world, reality itself, is neither true nor false. We find truth not by declaring that we have secured it at last but only by continuing to seek it and debate it with others, particularly with others who do not see “reality” as we do. —**BOYERS**



We're better consumers when we understand the necessity of skepticism. I suspect a whole generation will learn some painful lessons about “alternative facts” in the coming years. Unfortunately we are all going to pay the costs. —**OLES**



Free speech has always included a lot of falsehoods. I once read some really bizarre white supremacist material that was extraordinary in how gullible it assumed its readers were. But those were pretty small groups. Currently we have huge portions of the population accepting demonstrably false information as fact. I think two adages speak to this: first, that democracy is the worst form of government except for all the others, and second, that with great privilege comes great responsibility. My point is that those who exercise free speech have a moral obligation to do so honestly, and those who listen to it have a societal obligation to educate themselves. But ultimately, I'd prefer to let truth win the day in a fair fight rather than to compromise free speech. —**JOCHNOWITZ**

Partisans and the press



Formerly marginalized voices, representing both oppressed minorities and white nationalists, have been empowered via social media and by the disintegration of a moderate elite, and now passions resistant to reason are prevailing. The white nationalists are arming themselves, as previous versions of them did in Nazi Germany, and the so-called anti-fascist left is also in the mood to fight, as evidenced by the recent protests at Berkeley. —**DELTON**



Right-wing media like Breitbart, WND, and pundits at Fox have been hammering away at the “liberal mainstream media” for years. It's become a part of conservative identity to distrust, even despise, the press. A T-shirt making the rounds during the election—“Rope. Tree. Journalist. Some assembly required”—was a chilling thing to see in public.

The “mainstream media” at its best still offers (as best as humans can do) an objective, balanced package of news necessary to understand one's community/state/nation/world and—this is the really essential part—to participate meaningfully as a citizen in society. That's in danger when real journalism is attacked and marginalized and people get only the reports they want. We cannot act as citizens, or as a society, if we're not at least working with a common set of facts. —**JOCHNOWITZ**




Most surveys show that journalists are considerably more progressive on social issues and slightly more conservative on taxes and welfare spending than the majority of Americans. Research also shows that these personal views are superseded by professional norms like upholding objectivity and by the values of media organizations, which are often owned by conservatives. So there's not a lot of evidence that a persistent “liberal bias” exists.

Nonetheless, starting in the late 1970s, conservatives took every opportunity to complain about it and got media outlets to try to avoid the accusation by changing their coverage. Second, they built right-wing radio, Fox News, Breitbart, and other outlets to allow people to consume a wholly partisan media diet. This alternative media system has helped radicalize a right-wing base that sees the mainstream press, Democrats, and college professors as enemies. The left has become polarized, too, but it tends to maintain higher rates of trust in science, expertise, and mainstream journalism. —**LINDNER**



At stake is the citizens' right to have their government remain transparent and accountable. Without a strong independent press, the country is susceptible to increasing levels of secrecy in government, leaders who move the levers of power behind closed doors, and a merging of personal greed with political opportunism at unprecedented rates. Wait, that all sounds so familiar...! —**LANTIGUA-WILLIAMS**



Our democracy is in trouble. When a sitting president encourages his followers to take matters into their own violent hands and legitimizes assaults on journalists, we can only hope that members of his own party will come to their senses and condemn him. I don't know what ordinary citizens can do to protect the press, but I do know that we have a responsibility to nurture in our students—and in others we can reach in our writings and lectures—a respect and hunger for the work of a free press. Will that be enough? I wish I knew. —**BOYERS** 

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▶ Students are back on campus and fall semester is under way. Inside: news and features from politics and free speech to alumni and student ingenuities.

📷 Stacey Mattison