In This Issue

Dean’s Message | Skiing for Scholarships
Featured Alumni | Max Vetter
Featured Faculty | Christie Toth
Featured Student | Mohan Sudabattula
Upcoming Events | Skiing for Scholarships
News | Danielle Olden Awarded an NEH Fellowship
Message From The Dean

Dear Friends,

As many of you know, the historical traditions that pair athletics with academic pursuits are deep and rich. Nearly every culture has a history that includes a connection between exercise of the mind and exercise of the body for the purposes of intellectual advancement, spiritual growth, artistic pursuit, and/or entertainment. American public universities have deep connections to these traditions, and medical research increasingly demonstrates the value of exercise to the maintenance of a healthy brain. Every day brings new information about the benefits of attaining work-life balance, and its importance to mental and physical health over the span of a lifetime.

Here at the University of Utah, we are especially fortunate to work in an environment that presents daily opportunities for recreational sports that we can pursue within minutes of our offices. And at this time of year, there’s no better way to refresh both mind and body than heading for the slopes and taking advantage of an opportunity to carve some turns on the greatest snow on earth. My love of skiing started at the age of four when my father introduced me to the sport, and I still believe there’s simply nothing that can compare to that feeling of flying along the surface of a mountain on a crisp bluebird day.

So, why is the Dean of Humanities waxing poetic about skiing? Here’s why: This year, with the support of two of our spectacular and generous Utah resorts—Powder Mountain, and Brighton Ski Resort—the College of Humanities will be “Skiing For Scholarships” to raise money for our Humanities Scholars program. Powder Mountain is sponsoring us on January 20th, and Brighton is sponsoring us on March 1st. Both resorts will be offering discounted lift tickets that day, with the discounted amount going directly to support scholarships for our College of Humanities first-generation and underrepresented students, and for the Humanities Scholars program we launched this year. You can find more information about our Skiing For Scholarships days here.

I’ll be skiing for scholarships on both days and rumor has it that Swoop will ski the first run with me at Brighton on March 1st. Who knows, we might even see some members of the Ski Team showing up as well! I hope you’ll join me! If you live in the area and you are looking for a way to support Humanities students, please add these dates to your calendar. If you live farther away and were considering a ski vacation, we’d love to see you on either of those dates. I’d be delighted to reconnect with you on the slopes, where we can ski together and do something wonderful to help future students.

Hope to see you on the mountain, and happy new year to all,

Dianne Harris, Dean
Max Vetter
BA in Communication Studies; Minor in Italian, 2015

Max Vetter is a Communication and Italian alum who participated in a study abroad program in Italy that changed the course of his life. “When I started at the University of Utah, I planned on obtaining a degree in biology but quickly realized that was not the path I wanted to follow. I had been studying Italian simply for the pleasure of it, and after two years, decided I wanted to participate in a study abroad in Italy. That experience exposed me to places, people, and experiences that I would have never encountered otherwise,” he reflects. “Living in Italy has not only helped me understand the world better, but it has helped me to learn more about myself. It has made me appreciate my home and even the people I care for to a greater extent.”

When Max returned home from a semester in Italy, he decided to take a few classes in the Communication department and never looked back. “Finding myself in yet another environment that opened my eyes to new ideas and methods of viewing the world was very exciting,” he says. “I believe that my degree in Communication Studies has helped me become a much more open-minded person, a better friend and a better family member.”

On top of his major in Communication, he chose to continue studying Italian as a minor. He said he believes learning a second language is “one of the most rewarding challenges” he has ever taken on. “I genuinely feel that my time spent in the College of Humanities has helped shape me into a more understanding, caring, and accepting person. It has also helped to give me confidence and strength to embark on new adventures and chase my goals,” he says.

Max is realizing one of those goals, as he is currently back in Italy working as a cook in restaurant. Max’s next goal: return to SLC and open a restaurant of his own with the skills he has learned overseas. “I’m very excited to return to SLC and begin the next chapter of my adventure, knowing that the skills I have obtained in Italy will help to give me an edge in the Salt Lake food scene. None of this would have been possible without my awesome experience studying in the College of Humanities.”

Featured Faculty

Christie Toth
Assistant Professor, Writing & Rhetoric Studies

Christie Toth, assistant professor in Writing and Rhetoric Studies, researches, works with and cares deeply about the success of students who transfer to the U from community colleges. “I think if you care about underrepresented student populations – if you care about diverse students, if you’re committed to the idea of access to higher education – you have to care about community colleges and transfer students,” she emphasized. Toth has spearheaded a collaborative research effort to better understand the writing experiences of students transferring to the U and how to support their successful transitions.

Based on the findings of that research, the team developed two courses: WRTG 3020: Write4U and WRTG 3030: Writing Across Locations. WRTG 3020 is a course for students in any major and was successfully piloted in Fall 2016 at the U. This Spring 2017, the same course will be taught at SLCC.

Read more here
Mohan Sudabattula
Philosophy, Biochemistry, and Health, Society & Policy

Mohan Sudabattula is a triple major in Philosophy, Biochemistry, and Health, Society & Policy who has also found the time to establish a nonprofit, Project Embrace, to reuse noninvasive medical devices for people in need.

While volunteering in a pediatric prosthetics and orthotic services department at a local hospital, Mohan noticed how rapidly children outgrow their devices. Realizing the huge potential to refabricate these devices for others instead of disposing of them, Project Embrace was born.

His multiple and varied selection of majors is no accident, he says. “I wanted to explore the intersections of the empirical and quantitative approach the sciences offer with the qualitative and critical approach of philosophical thought. In doing that, I found myself fascinated with bioethics, a concept that for me connects my first two majors, Biology and Philosophy. This discovery ultimately led me to declare my third major, Health, Society & Policy.”

Mohan says he feels like his studies in the College of Humanities have given him “the edge” in his life and career because he is consistently challenged to think of himself and issues he cares about on a critical level. “I can say for a fact that I am much more open-minded because of the humanities because this field has taught me to be a more empathetic listener and has really helped me with my speaking and writing skills. A criticism many people face in the hard sciences is that many people do not know how to disseminate their work to a more general audience. My time studying the humanities has helped me overcome this by really refining my ability to speak, write, and present to various audiences while still remaining true to what would otherwise be highly technical material.”

All of the skills he is honing in his classes inform the way he runs his nonprofit. Project Embrace is dedicated to the reduction of global health inequalities and the promotion of a healthy planet. Mohan works to reuse noninvasive medical devices that provide either skeletal structural support and/or provide mobility-based aid for patients in need. “We donate devices such as crutches, slings, neck braces, knee braces, medical boots, wheelchairs and orthotic materials,” he explained. “I created Project Embrace because I saw an opportunity to solve a problem. Currently, medical devices, like these, are thrown away after limited use when they could easily be re-used by someone else who needs them. I wanted to take this idea and apply my educational background to create a solution to a problem I care deeply about.”

In a recent interview with the U's weekly newsletter, “@theU,” Mohan further articulated his goals to bridge the humanities and the sciences through his studies: “I’ve always been interested in approaching my education from an interdisciplinary perspective. If there is one thing I am absolutely fond of, it is the ability to collaborate with others from various backgrounds. For me, being able to approach, or even view a problem from multiple angles has constantly proven the best way to combat an issue. A single perspective alone is never enough to fully understand the complexities of the subject at hand,” he explained. “I grew up appreciating the empirical approach that the sciences traditionally take, but it wasn’t until I declared a major in Philosophy, that I began to appreciate the importance of qualitative and rhetorical approaches. Being able to utilize both these methodologies was, and still is, very important to me.”
Events

Skiing for Scholarships at Powder Mountain
January 20, 2017 | Powder Mountain Ski Resort

Ski with the Dean of Humanities and help support U of U Humanities Scholarships! $54 Discounted Lift Tickets $14 of every ticket will benefit the College of Humanities Scholarship Fund.

[Book your tickets in advance here]

For more information contact Director of Development Lexie Kite. lexie.kite@utah.edu

Community Discussion on Bears Ears National Monument
January 26, 2017 | 4-6 PM | Gould Auditorium

Jeff McCarthy, Director of Environmental Humanities Graduate Program and Dave Derezotes, Director of the Peace & Conflict Studies Program will be leading a community discussion on Bears Ears National Monument.

[Find out more here]

Save the date! Skiing for Scholarships event at Brighton Resort on March 1st. More information in the February newsletter, and at Humanities.utah.edu
Danielle Olden Awarded an NEH Fellowship

Danielle Olden, Assistant Professor in the Department of History, has been awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship.

The year-long NEH Fellowship will enable Danielle to complete her book, *Racial Uncertainties: Mexican Americans, School Desegregation, and the Making of Race in Post-Civil Rights America*, which examines Denver, Colorado’s battle over school desegregation in the late 1960s and 1970s. Danielle uses courtroom debates and the community response to court-ordered desegregation to interrogate the ways in which different groups of people constructed Mexican American racial identity. Various parties could not agree on whether they were white or nonwhite. Danielle argues that the existence of such racial uncertainty is one of the hallmarks of the operation of race in modern America. People’s inability to categorize Mexican Americans as either white or black, and subsequent debates about Mexican Americans’ location along the racial spectrum, raised questions about the legitimacy of court-ordered desegregation. Racial uncertainties thus served an important ideological and political purpose: in the post-civil rights era, when overt racism was no longer socially acceptable, anti-integration voices utilized the indeterminacy of Mexican American racial identity to frame their opposition to school desegregation. That some Mexican Americans were among these voices only added credibility to the idea that court-ordered desegregation was not only illegal, but un-American.

Danielle is a historian of the twentieth century United States, with particular interests in the U.S. West, race, and civil rights. Danielle received her Ph.D. in History from Ohio State University in 2013, and she joined the History Department at the University of Utah in 2013.

Many congratulations, Danielle!

Read More Here

The Tanner Humanities Center’s The Beehive Newsletter is Now Available Online

The Obert C. and Grace A. Tanner Humanities Center’s The Beehive newsletter is now available online! Read on to see the incredible work the Center has put toward our Mormon Studies Initiative since its launch six years ago. In that short time, they have launched a permanently endowed Graduate Research Fellowship in Mormon Studies, brought leading Mormon scholars to campus for lectures and conferences, and recently received a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to fund teacher workshops. The Center also recently hosted Utah Valley University Professor Brian Birch as the Marlin K. Jensen Scholar in Residence.

Congratulations to Center Director Bob Goldberg and his team for their incredible work at the Tanner Humanities Center.

Read More here

Integrated Marketing Communication Certificate Program Accepting Applications for Spring 2017

The application period for the U of U Communication Institute’s professional certificate program for Integrated Marketing Communication is now open.

Apply here

Taunya Dressler on 2016 Beacons of Excellence Award

This year, the College of Humanities was proud to have its very own Taunya Dressler as a Beacons of Excellence Award Recipient. This award highlights the achievements of a select group of the many people, programs, and projects that contribute to our excellence at the U.

The goal of the Beacons of Excellence Award is to recognize some of the practices on our campus that make the educational experience a transformative one for students. The University of Utah fosters a transformational experience for all students. We value and recognize a respect for knowledge that empowers students to become actively engaged members of various communities. We accomplish this through recognizing people, programs and projects committed to excellence.

Read More here

For all news stories and to read more about these, please visit our website at:

humanities.utah.edu/news
Our theme for the year reflects a powerful truth: **Humanities Gives You the Edge.** Alumni of Humanities not only lead lives of extraordinary fulfillment, but they also excel at whatever they do. Our thousands of alumni unanimously tell us that **Humanities gave them the edge** that helped them succeed as excellent communicators; multi-lingual and culturally sophisticated global citizens; critical, ethical, and logical thinkers; and outstanding creative partners. And research backs this up! Studies show that Humanities students find careers that provide financial security and job satisfaction that matches those of students in nearly every other major. Employers increasingly seek employees who have strong skills learned in Humanities (writing, problem solving, listening, speaking, critical thinking, etc.). Humanities gives people the edge they need to thrive today. How does Humanities give YOU the edge?