

PERSPECTIVES

2021-22

Connecting
Students to
the U

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35 Years of
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for the Public

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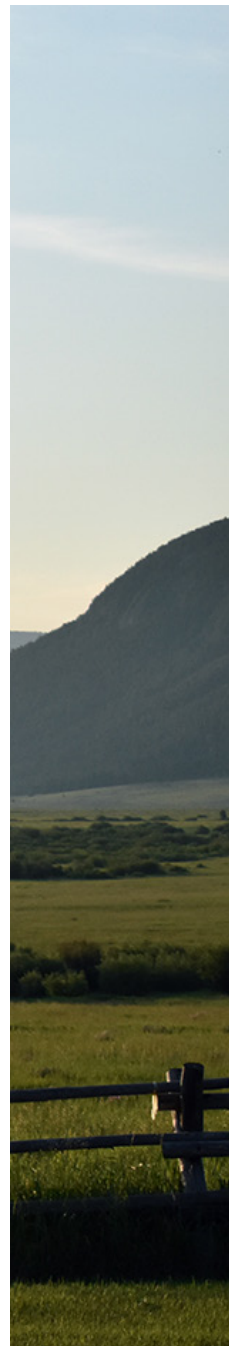
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THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES



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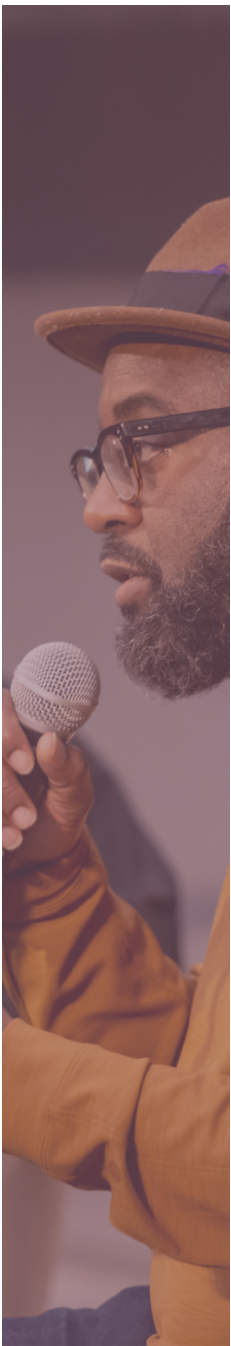
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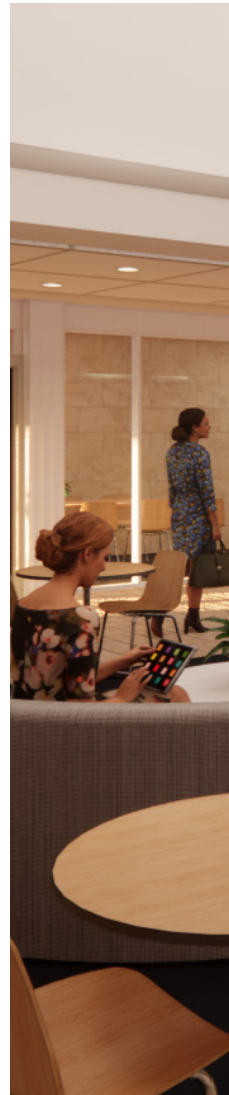
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A Message from the Dean

For this year's edition of the College of Humanities magazine, we decided to take our readers on a tour of some unique spaces in our college. Some are newly under construction; others are being renovated and reopened as we prepare for what we hope is our first truly post-pandemic semester. Each of these spaces offers a unique point of entry to our college and collectively they underscore the evolving role of the humanities on our campus and in our community and remind us that our college is something more than a collection of seminar rooms, lecture halls, and faculty offices.

Farthest away among these spaces is the Taft-Nicholson Center for Environmental Humanities Education in Montana's Centennial Valley. The past two summers, we've been unable to offer our usual set of courses, workshops, and retreats in this beautiful setting, so the center's director, Mark Bergstrom, piloted a program that you will read about here, bringing researchers and artists from across the university together. This summer we are resuming our usual programming, but we will continue to host this interdisciplinary cohort, adding a humanities and arts perspective to scientific research. Here in Salt Lake City, we will be renovating the lobby of the Carolyn Tanner Irish Humanities Building to provide a student success hub, that will make resources such as career and financial counseling, academic advising, and student activities more accessible to our humanities majors. Over the years, our college has benefited from the generosity of quite a few donors, none perhaps as impactful as the O.C. Tanner Foundation. The O.C. and Grace A. Tanner Humanities Center has served for decades as the front door of our college, bringing to our community internationally renowned visitors, providing support for secondary school teachers, and fostering cutting-edge research by our faculty and students. This coming year, under current Director Erika George, the center will be celebrating its 35th anniversary with another season of diverse and engaging speakers and events you can read about here. You can also get acquainted with our wonderful alum Edna Anderson Taylor who, together with her husband Jerry, has made it possible for us to transform the Communication Institute into a more dynamic collaboration with local partners in order to promote responsible and ethical journalistic practices within our current media environment.

The past year and the one to come offer us opportunities both to recover some of our familiar traditions while pioneering new approaches to teaching and new areas of research. This May, we returned to the Huntsman Center to hold our college convocation and to celebrate in-person with nearly a thousand graduates. The occasion was made more memorable by the contributions of our student speaker, Vivian Lee, and our distinguished alum, Doug Bowser. We've included their inspiring words in this magazine as each describes their unique pathway through an education in the humanities. We are also going through a significant transition in our administration. This will be the last time I will be introducing *Perspectives*. Just as the university as a whole is turning to new leadership, our college will now be guided by a new dean, Hollis Robbins, who you will get to meet briefly in these pages. I know that Dean Robbins brings to our college the experience, vision, and commitment to humanistic inquiry that will make her a successful and distinguished leader for the next chapter of our history and I look forward to seeing the future spaces the College of Humanities will occupy.

Sincerely,

Stuart K. Culver

Outgoing Dean, College of Humanities
University of Utah

TAFT-NICHOLSON CENTER

An Environment for the Humanities

Jana Cunningham





As an official extension of the University of Utah campus, the Taft-Nicholson Center, located in Centennial Valley, Montana, works to bridge the arts and humanities with the sciences by increasing environmental literacy, boosting environmental awareness, and inspiring personal connection to nature and the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem. Each summer since 2014, students, teachers, artists, scientists, and community members have been participating in the center's diverse educational programming—sharing their perspectives on the natural world and preparing themselves to create change in positive and meaningful ways.

“A humanities perspective provides a variety of tools that allow us to reflect on and make sense of complex environmental issues that cross disciplinary boundaries while also providing tools that allow us to work collaboratively with other disciplines,” said Mark Bergstrom, director of the Taft-Nicholson Environmental Humanities Education Center. “The center provides a space to train ourselves and our students to make sense of the world from a variety of perspectives, to do so in a critical and informed way, recognizing

Photo: Kayli Timmerman

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We stood quietly as a group and appreciated the moment. The cold air, lighting, and peacefulness of the morning while taking in that rare sight is something I will never forget.

different positions and perspectives, considering the moral and ethical implications and outcomes of not only our actions but our thoughts as well. We train ourselves and our students to clearly communicate our understandings in collaborative and effective means.”

The center serves to examine and explore the environment from a humanities perspective, learning about a sense of place, of more fully inhabiting a specific place by knowing its ecology, its human and nonhuman histories, its cultural traditions and its environmental challenges. The programs are designed to provide visitors with a broad-based understanding of social, cultural, ethical, historical, communication, and literary perspectives and with a focus on how they intersect with and influence public policy, scientific, legal, industrial, and corporate concerns.

Expanding a Visual Dialogue

During the summer, visitors of the Taft-Nicholson Center will often find at least a dozen undergraduate students scattered amongst the marsh, lake, and open fields with their easels and paints as they immerse themselves in the views, sounds, and sky of the landscape. This rugged and diverse setting is the very reason Kim Martinez, professor of painting and drawing, continues to bring art students to the area in hopes it will impact their conceptual and formal processes.

“The residency experience is ideal for artists to learn, share thoughts on creativity, solve problems, and experience multiple remote natural environments to expand their visual dialogue,” said Martinez. “Through engagement

in traditional and alternative painting processes, interdisciplinary environmental literacy study, and seclusion from the distractions of everyday life, students discover unanticipated research topics that have an impact on their studio practices.”

Nature, Martinez believes, engages students through sight, smell, sound, and touch acting as a catalyst to internal thoughts and emotions in a way that cannot be replicated in a studio. With the intact ecological systems, expansive wetlands, diverse native fauna and flora, and concentrations of rare species, the Taft-Nicholson Center provides a landscape that is well-suited to stimulate and create an expansive mindset that can impact students’ creative expression. Martinez notes that the artwork developed by students’ sensory responses from the environment often results in compelling pictorial space that demonstrates the supremacy and vulnerability of the natural world.

Connecting the arts with humanities, Martinez’s students not only study the landscape, but they explore what it means to be part of it. Their approaches to materials and ideas are augmented by in-depth discussions of issues in historical and contemporary painting and sustainability,





Photo: Kayli Timmerman

affecting how they see the Centennial Valley and the materials they use to create and the impact of those materials on life. Each student completes a series of paintings and site-specific investigations through the lens of language, history, and philosophy.

Wanting to be part of a residency in an inspiring landscape, Victoria Attwood took Martinez's course in 2017. Her days were filled with plein air painting, sketching, journaling, experimenting with new techniques while also exploring and learning about area to gain a deeper appreciation of the center and the surrounding valley.

"On a 6 a.m. bird watching hike, we happened to see a moose and her calf run across the plains as the sun rose behind them," recalled Attwood. "We stood quietly as a group and appreciated the moment. The cold air, lighting, and peacefulness of the morning while taking in that rare sight is something I will never forget."

The multidimensional field experience, Attwood claimed, expanded her horizons when it came to who she is as an artist, and how she wanted to express herself.

"The course happened to be the last class that I took to complete my BFA. I could not have imagined a better class to complete my undergraduate experience. This class not only taught me so much, but allowed me to exercise everything that I had learned in art school, and to be able to apply that knowledge during this trip was truly special. It's classes like these that are the most enriching and memorable."

Edgar Archer took the same two-week art residency in 2019 when it came highly recommended to him from previous students. His love for the outdoors and desire to become a better plein air and landscape artist drew him to the Taft-Nicholson Center. Although the experience was challenging due to the busy days—which even included a cattle drive—and required workload, he learned an incredible amount in the short time he was there—how to approach plein air painting, color mixing, maintaining a reference notebook, and participating in critiques.

"The center allowed me to get out of the traditional classroom setting and provided me a venue to enjoy a truly remarkable landscape—

“

There's time to read, time to write, time to draw, time to walk, and it takes a couple of days to get into the groove and timescale of the landscape. Carve out two hours to just sit on your porch and stare out into the red rocks, wildlife, and wilderness and when they ask you to go bird watching or canoeing the answer is always 'yes.'





Photo: Victoria Attwood

important to a landscape painter,” said Archer. “The center offered an environment that allowed me to grow as an artist and gave me the opportunity to study the ecology of a unique area.”

Lasting Bonds

On her most recent trip to the center, Brenda Bowen, professor of geology and geophysics and director of the Global Change and Sustainability Center, created a small but impressive band with her colleagues—her on the drum, fellow professors on the guitar and electric bass—and they would jam every night around the campfire. Although no platinum records were made, Bowen and her colleagues formed a connection that would surpass their time at the center.

“I will forever have a bond with them because of those types of experiences that you just don’t get on campus in Salt Lake,” said Bowen. “I think people at the center really appreciate the chance to connect and anytime I see someone on campus that I met at the center, it’s like we’re old friends. You really get to know people and feel like a part of a community.”

It’s not only the bond with colleagues that has continued to bring her back to the center—Bowen has attended various retreats and most recently completed a faculty fellowship—but the greater appreciation and understanding of the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem and a richer connection to the humanities.

“At the center, we talk about the link between the humanities and sciences and sustainability and we think about the intersections and the struggle between science and art. We also explore place and human’s place within that. That’s a core part of the center and being in that environment, you can’t help but think about things like ecosystem and places, management, changes and landscapes over time, and the role of humans in shaping that. It’s a natural link between the disciplines.”

As a faculty fellow last summer, Bowen’s research focused on how changing environmental conditions influence the composition of sediments, authigenic minerals and fluids in both modern dynamic systems and ancient lithified strata. She collaborated with Wendy Wischer, an assistant professor of art and art history, and prepared for an exhibition of Wischer’s sculptural work that was inspired by Bowen’s research, which focused on the landscape of the Bonneville Salt Flats.

The Taft Nicholson Summer Fellow Residencies are available to tenure-line faculty in all disciplines for one to three weeks of dedicated writing time for scholarly pursuits of research or creative projects. Fellowships are designed to provide intensive, dedicated, writing time for faculty to work on their research and creative agendas.

“I really appreciate the culture of the College of Humanities in being inclusive and welcoming people from other disciplines but within the context of how you engage with the humanities,” said Bowen.

After frequent visits, Bowen has wise advice for visitors of the center:

“Be prepared to have focused time where you can really get into a project. There’s time to read, time to write, time to draw, time to walk, and it takes a couple of days to get into the groove and timescale of the landscape. Carve out two hours to just sit on your porch and stare out into the red rocks, wildlife, and wilderness and when they ask you to go bird watching or canoeing the answer is always ‘yes.’ Also, be prepared to make new friends.”

Sustaining the Future

The center was made possible the generous and visionary work of John and Melody Taft, and Bill

and Sandi Nicholson. These two couples invested their time and resources to purchase Lakeview and lovingly restore its unique and historic buildings. Accommodations include charming and elegant guest cabins, a student dormitory (soon to be refurbished), a large conference room, and a dining hall where guests can engage in lively conversation while sharing a meal and the unlimited vistas of the Centennial Valley.

Recently, Melody Taft established a \$1 million arts endowment at the University of Utah’s Taft-Nicholson Center. She has donated her 160-acre ranch in Centennial Valley to the university. The endowment will be funded with proceeds from the sale of the property and will be administered by the director of Taft-Nicholson Center. Earnings on endowment will be used to support the arts programming at the Taft-Nicholson Center, including expenses associated with the Artists-In-Residence program and arts programming.





Photo: Kayli Timmerman

THE EDNA ANDERSON-TAYLOR COMMUNICATION INSTITUTE

A Space for Collaboration

Jessica Guynn

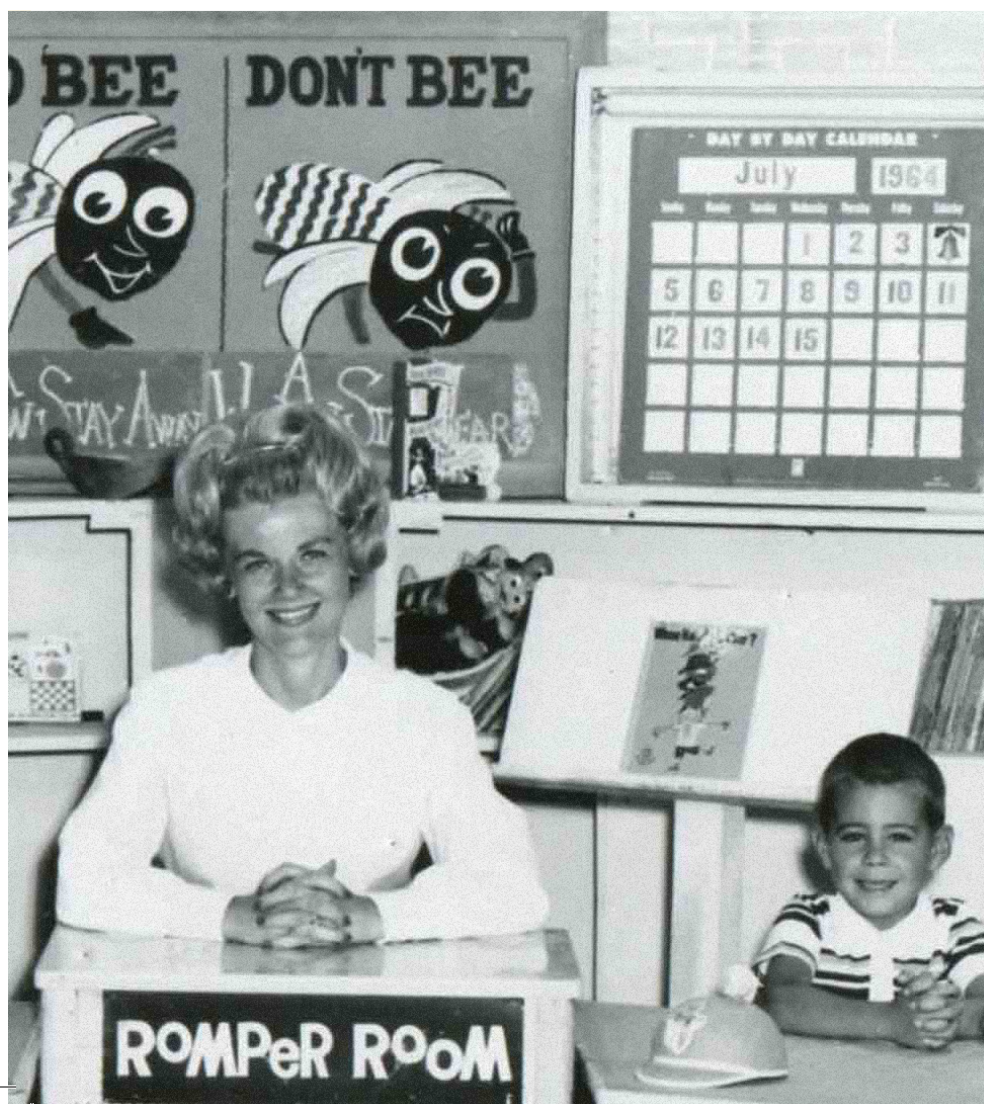


On April 12, 2022, the College of Humanities' Department of Communication accepted the largest donation in its history. Thanks to Edna Anderson-Taylor (Class of 1959) and her husband, Jerry Taylor, the University of Utah Communication Institute celebrated its 25th anniversary with an additional \$1 million in funding to support its mission of connecting people and ideas. The institute will now be known as the Edna Anderson-Taylor Communication Institute in gratitude for this generous gift and in recognition of Anderson-Taylor's legacy as a pioneer in the field.

Many may remember Anderson-Taylor first as "Miss Julie" from the children's television series, *Romper Room*, which aired on KSL-TV from 1963-1980, but her experience in broadcast began at the University of Utah. She was an undergraduate in communication when the department first launched the public television station KUED in January 1958. She fondly recalls building a rudimentary studio alongside other students and professors in the basement of Libby Gardner Hall. "It seemed like everything was stuck together with Scotch tape," she laughs.

The crew began broadcasting with only two cameras and a boom mic. Anderson-Taylor learned how to run the equipment, produce content, and communicate with an audience. "I worked hard and learned how to do every job in that studio," she says. Anderson-Taylor went on to become the first face of KUED, introducing local live segments between broadcasts of national PBS programs. This was a milestone in public broadcasting as there were then no other female announcers in the United States. By the time she graduated with a bachelor's degree, Anderson-Taylor had mastered the multi-layered art of public communication. "You need versatility, curiosity, and a strong work ethic to be an effective communicator," she advises. "Oh, and leave your ego at the door."

Sean Lawson, professor of communication and current director of the institute, says he's grateful for Anderson-Taylor's example and the legacy reflected by the institute that now bears her name.



"The opportunity to name and endow the Edna Anderson-Taylor Communication Institute puts the U on the map in a really significant way. We now have the first named communication institute in Utah, the surrounding states, and most of our peer universities. Even more, we are named after a female pioneer in the field. Thanks to the generosity of Edna and Jerry, the incredible work we do in communication at the U will be more accessible to the campus, the community, and far beyond."

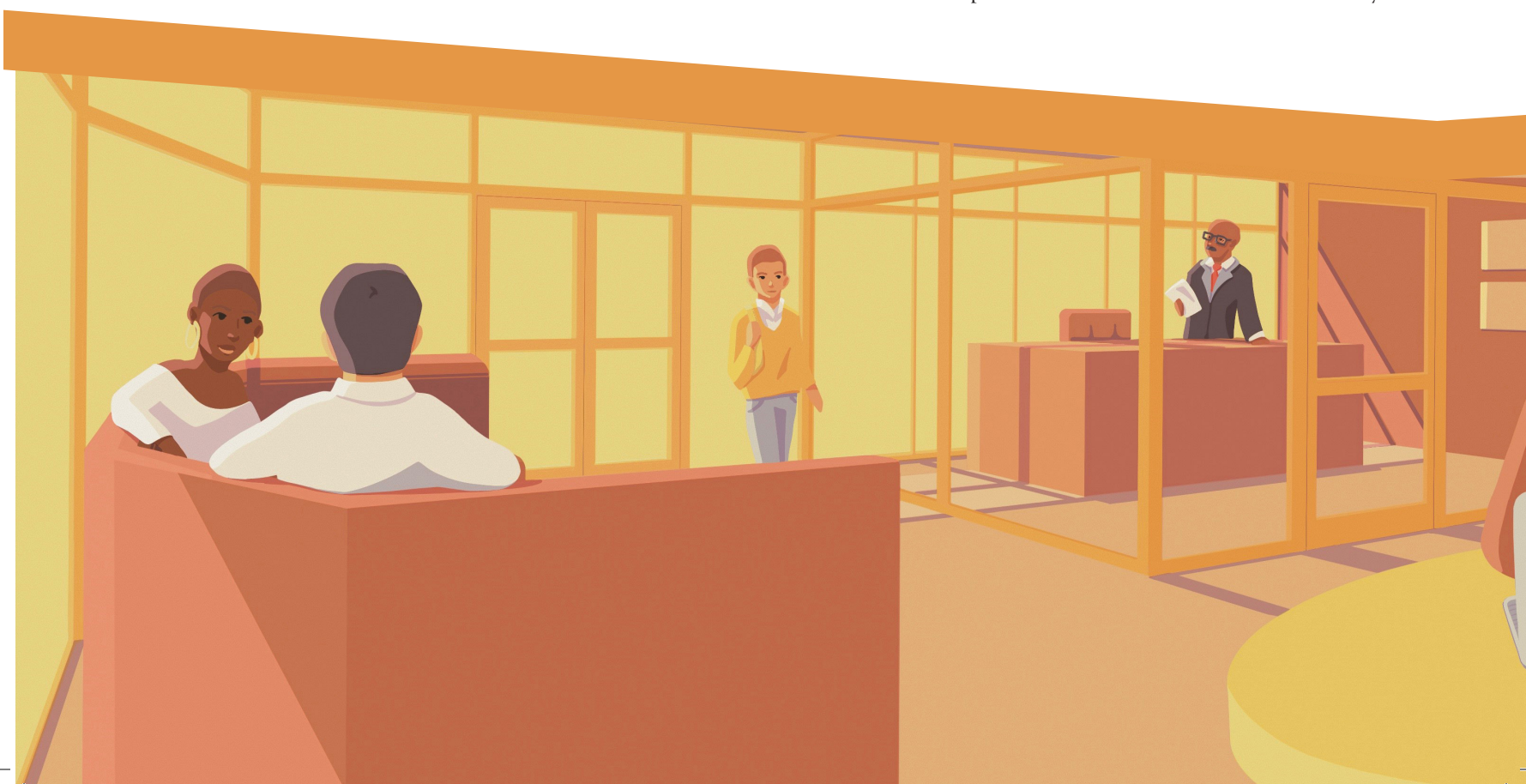
The Board of Trustees originally established the institute in 1997 to develop and promote scholarship in the field through innovative research, state-of-the-art workshops, lectures, and symposia. With funds from Anderson-Taylor's endowment, the institute will continue to host keynotes, seminars, and community panels about the art of communication and its role in contemporary culture. Lawson also plans to offer

student and faculty awards for excellence and to sponsor scholarly content for the institute website. He believes the Anderson-Taylor Institute will be a hub of collaboration between students, faculty, and the community.

"The institute creates virtual, intellectual, and physical space for people to meet and have conversations," says Avery Holton, Department of Communication chair and former director of the institute. In addition to community events and enhanced online content, the institute will soon enjoy a refreshed gathering space in the Languages and Communication Building at the heart of campus. Holton, who holds a doctoral certification in disabilities studies, believes that physical spaces can communicate just as powerfully as words or sounds. "If you had seen the old space, it was dated and dark. It could be a problem for people with disabilities." Now the space features fresh carpet to provide more traction for those with mobility issues and white walls to reflect sunlight in case of impaired vision. "Inclusivity can be as simple as turning the front desk to face the door," says Holton. It offers each person who enters the building the opportunity to be welcomed with a smile.

The upcoming months will bring further enhancements, beginning with a project to knock down dividing walls in favor of a larger gathering space. Holton notes that the project is a good metaphor for the mission of the Anderson-Taylor

Communication is the beginning of everything. It's the basic underlying tool that we use in every field. If you can't communicate you can't succeed.



institute. “We want to signal that as a community we need to be connected and engaged.” The remodeled space is made possible by funds from the department and multiple donors including the Anderson-Taylor grant. It will take an estimated eight months to complete. When finished, Holton hopes the enlarged area will advance the multifaceted mission of the institute with enough space for big events as well as dividers to facilitate smaller discussions.

Edna Anderson-Taylor is certain that the institute, and its mission of encouraging digital and in-person conversations, will continue to play an important role in building community through the art of communication. To her, its role couldn’t be more vital. “Communication is the beginning of everything. It’s the basic underlying tool that we use in every field. If you can’t communicate you can’t succeed. It’s the way we attach ourselves to other human beings.”

In addition to her recent gift, in 1998 Anderson-Taylor and husband Jerry Taylor established a need-based scholarship for talented students at the University of Utah with an interest in communication. Now the funds provide full tuition and fees for seven scholars annually. This year she was able to meet the recipients and hear their stories. “Personal connection is really important,” says Anderson-Taylor. “It’s the flavor of living.”

Author’s Note – Miss Julie and Me

When I was four, I didn’t know that Edna Anderson-Taylor was a pioneer in broadcast television. To me she was simply “Miss Julie” and I loved her. Every weekday of 1978, I assumed my cross-legged position on the carpet and waited for her to light up the room.

Anderson-Taylor had filled the role since 1963 when she learned that *Romper Room* was doing a casting call in Salt Lake City. Her friend, Howard Pearson, was a TV editor at the Deseret News, and urged her to audition. But when she called to put her name on the list, the studio was already swarming with hopefuls. Her late husband Jack urged her to show up anyway. Though last in a line of 179 ladies, she got the job and became Miss Julie for 17 years.

In each episode, a group of six lucky children joined her. Anderson-Taylor says she loved working with the children as they learned to communicate on a show that was “by, for, and about them.” She watched new “friends” grow in confidence as they observed more experienced peers and trusted her as a teacher.

If my 4-year-old self had known that Miss Julie and her classroom were right here in Salt Lake City, I would have begged to join her, but to me it seemed like some faraway place filled with lovely games, good stories, and music, lots of music. Yet there was one magical moment at the end of each show where a bridge might materialize between our two worlds.

“Romper bomper stomper boo, tell me, tell me, tell me do, Magic Mirror, please tell me today, did all my friends have fun at play?” After chanting this rhyme, Miss Julie looked into the camera and read names of kids from the other side of the screen, just like me. It was my one chance to inhabit her world for an instant, and I uttered many silent, vocal, and urgent pleas that she would say that magical word: Jessica.

This story had a sad ending until April 18, 2022, when I called Edna Anderson-Taylor for a phone interview and finally heard Miss Julie say my name. She was even more delightful than I’d imagined as a child. A memory and a wish had found me more than 40 years later. It was a testament to the power of communication that they had lasted so long. I thought of the girl in front of her TV and smiled.



“

The humanities embody what makes us **human**. There is no one in the world who couldn't stand to engage a little more with the humanities.





THE OBERT C. AND GRACE A. TANNER
HUMANITIES CENTER

35 Years of Humanities for the Public

Amelia Diehl

Photo (l): Trish Griffiee
Photo (r): Karynne Aliaga



Photo: Trish Griffiee

On a windy winter night on February 22, 2022, poet and lawyer Reginald Dwayne Betts sat across from Erika George, director of the Tanner Humanities Center, as she asked him direct questions about his path out of prison. Betts, who was incarcerated at 16 years old and went on to become a critically acclaimed writer, Yale Law School graduate, and a MacArthur “genius” fellow, laughed and said, “You’re starting with a hard question.”

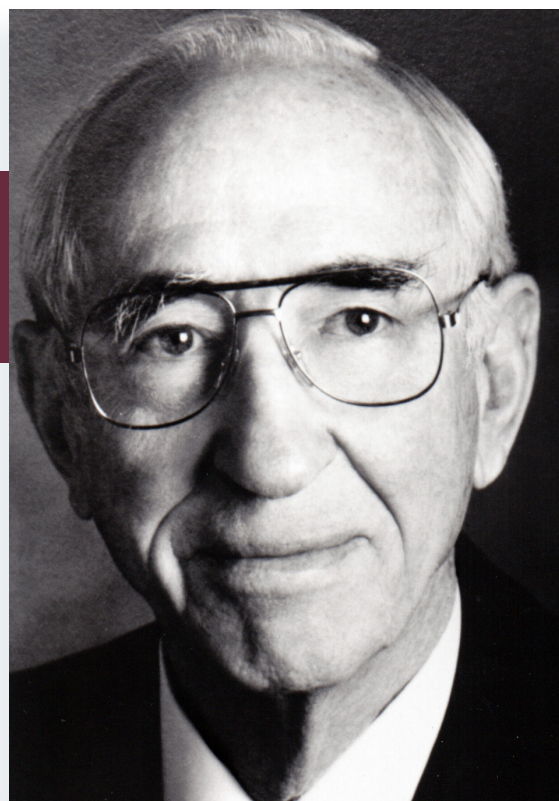
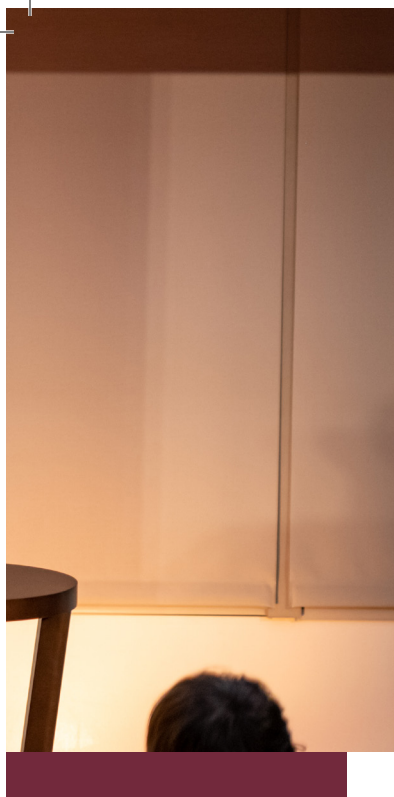
Without missing a beat, George replied, “I don’t know that it gets any easier.”

Over the rest of the night, Betts spoke freely to an enraptured audience, expanding on his journey as a writer and advocate and the role of poetry in healing from the violence of incarceration. Next to him was a replica of a bookshelf. In addition to writing—his fourth book, *Felon*, was released in 2019—he also founded the organization Freedom Reads to distribute libraries inside jails and prisons.

Even on a wide stage, the conversation evoked an intimate conversation in a living room. After the talk, audience members flocked to microphones to ask questions.

This kind of open and intellectual banter was characteristic of the kind of spaces the Tanner Humanities Center creates. Since its founding in 1988, the center has provided the University of Utah and surrounding communities a myriad of opportunities to exchange complex ideas, ask hard questions and share meaning and solutions—all for free and open to the public. Betts’ event was part of the center’s Author Meets Readers series, one of many programs they offer, among its three focuses of academic research, public outreach, and educational enrichment.

This year, the center is celebrating its 35th anniversary. Originally founded as the Utah Humanities Center, it was endowed in 1995 through the family foundation of Obert C. Tanner (1904-1993), and renamed for Obert and his wife Grace. Tanner was an entrepreneur, philanthropist, he also taught philosophy at the University of Utah for more than 25 years. His global employee recognition company, O.C. Tanner, produced the medals for the 2002 Olympics. His vision extended beyond the University of Utah. In 1978, he helped found the Tanner Lectures on Human Values, which brings leaders to speak at nine different universities around the world. Aimed at better understanding human behavior and values, Tanner said at the time of founding the series, “This understanding

*Obert C. Tanner*

may be pursued for its own intrinsic worth, but it may also eventually have practical consequences for the quality of personal and social life.”

George, the Samuel D. Thurman Professor of Law at the S.J. Quinney College of Law, continues to build on this mission. “The place of the humanities in a top research university must be a prominent one,” she said. “The Tanner Humanities Center is both the public face of humanities in Utah and a place for facilitating humanities research and scholarship on campus.”

Before George began as director in 2019, history professor Bob Goldberg had led the center since 2006. He broadened the center’s goals to include more free public programs and lectures, including launching the World Leaders Lecture Forum, which became the center’s biggest annual event. The inaugural lecture was given by Ehud Barak, former prime minister of Israel.

“We weren’t sure what to expect,” said Beth James, associate director of the center since 2003. “But the turnout was incredible and the evening dinner event attracted a lot of new donors to the center.”

The center has hosted writers, theorists, historians, artists, Nobel Prize winners, Pulitzer Prize winners, and other leaders, including Margaret Attwood, Tony Kushner, Spike Lee, Isabel Allende, Michael Chabon, Zadie Smith, Maya Lin, Sandra Cisneros, Stanley Nelson, Nobel Peace Prize recipient Shirin Ebadi of Iran, President of Colombia Cesar

Gaviria, former President of Doctors Without Borders James Orbinski, Prime Minister of Australia Julia Gillard, former CIA Director John Brennan, former President of Mexico Vicente Fox, Richard Bushman, Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, David Campbell, and Kathleen Flake.

Since 2010, the center has also screened the National Theatre Live, a broadcast of London’s Royal National Theatre productions. Put on pause during the pandemic, these events have consistently been immensely popular for the center, with proceeds benefitting their K-12 theatre and educational outreach program.

Through the years, the center has provided a vital space for the public to gather during significant cultural and political moments.

One particularly well-attended event was Anita Hill’s Tanner Lecture on Human Values, as the #MeToo movement was growing in 2018. Planned months in advance, the date happened to fall at the same time of the Supreme Court confirmation hearings of Brett Kavanaugh, which drew many parallels to Clarence Thomas’ appointment, during which Hill took the stand to speak up on sexual inequality and harassment.



In 2008, the center relocated from Carlson Hall to the newly built Carolyn Tanner Irish Humanities Building, named for Obert's daughter Carolyn Tanner Irish, who served as the 10th Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Utah. This move "finally gave us the communal space we desperately needed for scholarly engagement and discussion," James said.

While the building itself hosts two auditoriums, many of the center's events take place around campus and even in the community. Through the Gateway to Learning Educator Workshops, university professors offer educational workshops to local K-12 teachers to bolster pedagogy on difficult topics such as banned books, Indigenous history, and queer literature. During Betts' visit, the center arranged for him to lead a poetry workshop for 30 students at the Decker Youth Facility. Many of the students "were proud to stand up and read their poetry aloud to the group," James said. James saw it as an important opportunity for Betts to encourage youth to still accomplish something great despite their current circumstances.

The center also houses up to 12 fellows per year—university and off-campus faculty and graduate students—and welcomes other visiting scholars to the space. Fellows are funded to work on their research for the year and give public talks to share their progress at the end of their stay.

For literary and cultural studies doctoral student Sean Collins, his Tanner fellowship this past year was the "pinnacle of my graduate experience at the University of Utah." His project, "The Life of Significant Soil: Nature, Politics and the Modernist Environmental Imagination," explored

"The event was a massive draw and Ms. Hill was able to speak directly to the current events," James recalls. The day after the talk, gender studies students joined Hill in watching the testimony of sexual assault survivor Christine Blasey Ford in the Tanner Center Jewel Box, and Hill led a discussion.

"While the timing was purely coincidental, we felt honored to host Anita Hill at a time when everyone was riveted by the Supreme Court hearings," James said.

Another popular speaker was astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson, who was booked in 2012 to deliver the Tanner Lecture on Human Values in 2014. When he was booked, he was starting to become popular outside of the science community—and then the talk happened to fall just days before the premiere of *Cosmos: A Spacetime Odyssey*, the reboot of the science documentary show narrated by Tyson. Tickets to the event were gone in just a few hours. Among the audience was a 7-year-old boy named Louis, who was battling cancer and was eager to meet Tyson. James worked with the Make-A-Wish Foundation to arrange for Louis and his parents to attend the event in what was a special and moving meeting.



intersections between environmental humanities, modernist studies, environmental history, and postcolonial studies.

“The center not only provides fellows with the time and space to do their work, but it also offers them the invaluable opportunity to explore new ideas, ask challenging questions and work alongside other humanists in a collegial and supportive environment,” he said.

Nkenna Onwuzuruoha, an English graduate fellow, took advantage of the interdisciplinary community to complete her project, “Fighting Words with Fists: The Paradoxes of the ‘Gater Incident’ at San Francisco State College, 1967-1969.”

“Work-in-progress feedback sessions were more than just suggestions on how to revise the presentation that would follow,” she said. “Each session gave fellows insight into how disciplinary communities outside their own understand their research, how they tackle similar research questions, and what methodological approach they use to do so.”

While public programming takes a summer break, fall events are ready to go with Thi Nguyen, Azar Nafisi, Joy Harjo, Britt Wray, Kyle Whyte, and Heather McGhee giving the Tanner Lecture on Human Values—find dates and stay tuned for more events to be announced on thc.utah.edu.

And all of this happens with a small team of five staff members, who usually work alongside at least one graduate and one undergraduate assistant.

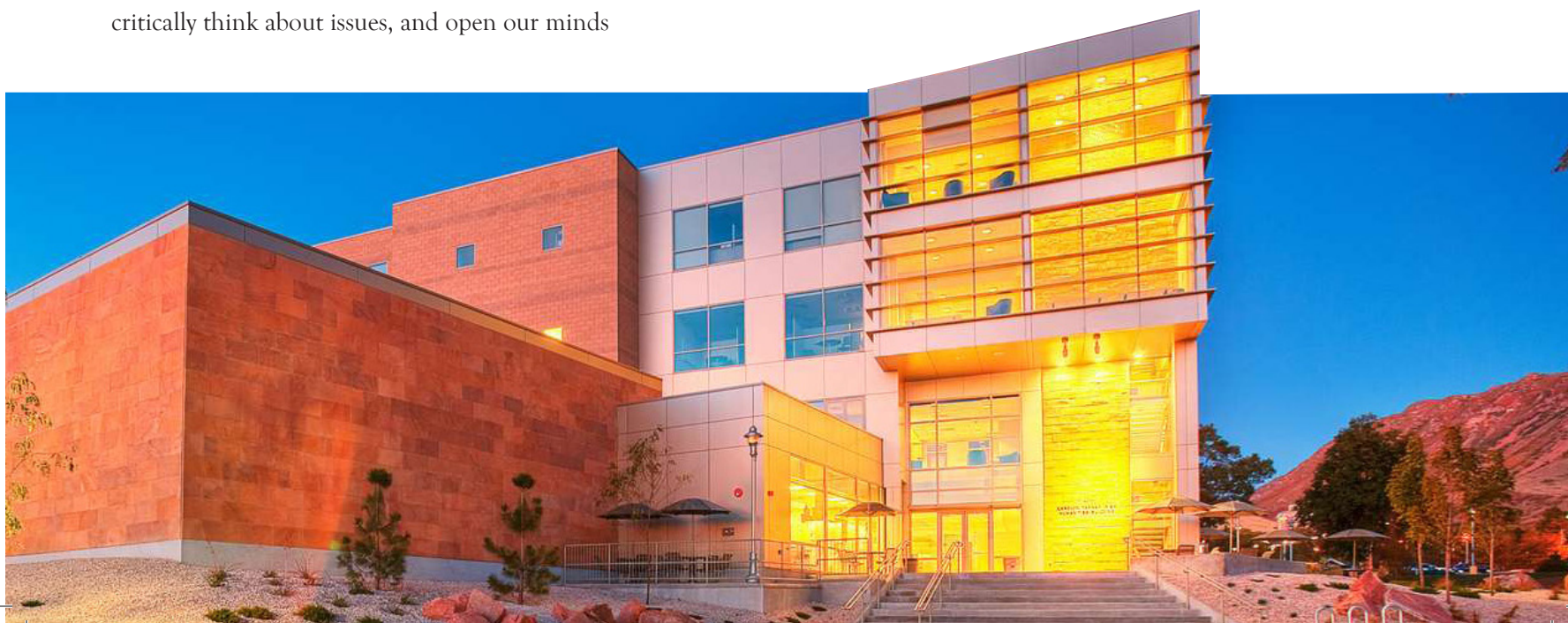
James sees the center fulfilling critical work—not just for the campus, but the broader community. “If we lose our ability to engage with others, critically think about issues, and open our minds

“

Humanities offer us ways to think critically and creatively about our culture and society so that we can better comprehend different ways of being in the world and enrich our lives through learning.

to new ideas, we will live insular lives and miss out on new opportunities to be an active part of society,” she said. “The humanities embody—as the word suggests—what makes us HUMAN. There is no one in the world who couldn’t stand to engage a little more with the humanities to have a well-rounded education and life view.”

As director, George similarly carries with her the urgency of the center’s mission. “I believe the humanities are more important now than ever—especially as we witness increased insularity, intolerance, and polarization,” she said. “Whether it be debates over efforts to ban books or to circumscribe curricular content, or complaints about cancel culture or cultural appropriation, studying the humanities offers us ways to think critically and creatively about our culture and society so that we can better comprehend different ways of being in the world and enrich our lives through learning.”





HUMANITIES HOUSE AT FORT DOUGLAS

Home to a Family of Scholars

Jessica Guynn

Photo: Christoph Dressler

W

While new construction at the University of Utah promises opportunities to live and learn in state-of-the-art spaces, a few spots on campus still connect students to Salt Lake City's roots. One of them is historic Fort Douglas. Nestled like a time-capsule between main campus and Research Park, the complex of Victorian Era buildings was constructed between 1874-1876. Many appear much as they did nearly 150 years ago when Fort Douglas housed the U.S. Army's 14th Infantry; yet these carefully preserved structures aren't simply collecting dust. Conversations filter across the former parade grounds. Laughter chimes from the gazebo that once hosted summer concerts by the Army's brass band. An upstairs window opens. Someone lingers on a porch. This is still living space.

The state of Utah donated Fort Douglas to the University of Utah after it served as a campus for athletes during the 2002 Winter Olympics. With support of donors, some of the structures were renovated and now welcome university students. Among them are the gabled homes of Officers' Circle, where the O.C. Tanner Humanities House is home to 12 scholars annually. Affectionately known as the Hum House, this space offers a unique opportunity for undergraduates to live together in history. Former resident Ashley Jolin compares her experience to traditional student housing. "I chose to live at the Humanities House after I had lived in other dorm spaces on campus. The stairs creaked a bit and the living room furniture at the time was literally antique. It was an exchange from a modern living space to one with character, liveliness, and a sense of home."



The Hum House offers unique opportunities to live as a student family, according to Taunya Dressler, assistant dean for undergraduate affairs in the College of Humanities. Since 2010, Dressler has overseen the academic and cultural success of more than 3,000 undergraduates annually and she says there's no environment quite like it. "The house is meant to provide a home and a sense of belonging for the students," explains Dressler, who has spent her career at the University of Utah seeking ways to make campus more inclusive and community oriented. Dressler's efforts are especially appropriate to her role as a scholar of humanities, which traditionally value the human experience in all its aspects and varieties. She believes that the Hum House is a model for putting the discipline into practice. "The house's purpose is to teach students how to live with one another by throwing together a group of 12 individuals with diverse lives and interests."

Residents share a common kitchen, study space, and a library donated by former Dean Robert Newman. The house appropriately "hums" with activity each day, from conversations around a communal table to housemates dividing cleaning duties. Students share abundant opportunity to engage in discussion, collaboration, and conflict resolution. "The best way to learn how to live together is by living together," Dressler laughs. She views student housing as another curriculum, and the Hum House as a great example of integrating experience into learning.

Aaron Mendez, a former resident from 2016-2018 remembers lessons

that he couldn't get from books. "Living at the Humanities House provided me an opportunity for social development and community engagement with like-minded individuals of diverse backgrounds. I humbly remember the countless nights gathered, maybe studying with a movie in the background or cooking dinner, all while having deep or fun conversations and enjoying each other's company."

The house is open to students with a declared major in the humanities, a 3.0 GPA and 24 hours credit at the University of Utah, though exceptions are made to these requirements at the discretion of the college. Students selected as residents receive a \$1,400 annual scholarship toward the cost of housing. Other historic homes along Officers' Circle host scholars from the College of Fine Arts, College of Science, the David Eccles School of Business, and others. The neighborhood comes together each fall to host a Halloween celebration called Officer's Hollow for children from Salt Lake's public schools. Former resident Danielle McLaughlin fondly recalls teaming up as a community. "I remember frantically running around with my housemates as we tried to finish decorating, set up games, and put on costumes before the kids came to our door. We had such a great time working on that project and giving back to the community."

Beyond the relationships formed with other students, the Hum House enhances access to university faculty. Students often receive complimentary tickets and VIP admission to campus events. As always, the goal is connection, to each other, the university, and the broader community. Residents of the Hum House enjoy these wider

Photo (l): Jessica Guynn

Photo (r): Christoph Dressler



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The best way to learn how to live together is by living together.

opportunities right in their living room at monthly “FaculTeas” where favorite professors visit for tea and conversation. “The monthly tea talks with our chosen professors were perhaps my favorite of all,” remembers former resident Charlotte Conerly. “They allowed us to delve into humanities subjects with fellow intellectually curious individuals and expand our learning beyond the classroom.”

The value of this unique environment became particularly clear during the coronavirus pandemic when the Hum House nearly shut down completely. In the 2020-21 school year, there were only four residents who quarantined in their rooms as they studied virtually. This year the community has carefully reemerged with an even greater appreciation for the privilege of

human connection. Dressler emphasizes that in an era where “remote” is the new normal, the Hum House and its family of scholars demonstrate the power of shared experience. “I’m still in touch with alums from 12 years ago,” she emphasizes.

The college is participating in ongoing conversations with university leadership on how to replicate the Hum House’s success around campus. For now, Dressler directs traffic as her husband snaps photos of this year’s residents. They’ve gathered on the porch surrounding Stuart Culver, current dean of the College of Humanities. He’s come to toast the students at their annual faculty mocktail reception. Dressler smiles as the group strikes a pose. “There’s so much opportunity that we still haven’t explored.” The students break into conversation on the broad wooden porch overlooking the former parade grounds, now greenspace that slopes toward campus, seeming to welcome these scholars and the lessons gleaned from connecting with and in this historic space.



THE ASIA CENTER

Rosaline Pao Memorial Reading Room

Lexie Kite

When University of Utah alum Rosaline Shao-Ann Yang Pao passed away in 2014, her husband and fellow alum, Yen-Ching (Y.C.) Pao, decided to carry on her legacy by establishing an endowed fund in her honor. Y.C., who graduated from the U with master's degrees in mathematics and mechanical engineering and went on to become a pioneer in computer-aided engineering, generously created the Rosaline Pao Memorial Endowed Fund in the College of Humanities' Asia Center. His gift supports a dedicated Reading Room in Rosaline's name located in the Carolyn Tanner Irish Humanities Building, offers Chinese Fora and provides travel scholarships for students and faculty to study in China.

Rosaline and Y.C. met as graduate students studying at the U and the Reading Room that bears her name serves as a place for students to study, take classes and enjoy Chinese art, furnishings and books. Among the books is one co-authored by Y.C. and Rosaline titled "Our Twosome's Collection."

"This generous gift will be a constant reminder for both students and faculty of the appreciation for our Chinese program from two of our former alums," said Fusheng Wu, director of the Confucius Institute at the University of Utah.

Earlier this year, the Asia Center received another remarkable gift from

a generous donor that will soon be displayed in the Rosaline Pao Reading Room: a set of 18 porcelain Luohan sculptures by the Zeng Longsheng (Chinese, 1901 -1964). The sculptures are rare individually, making a large grouping like this remarkable. Each of the statues measure roughly 16 inches high and are stamped with the seal of the artist. The Luohan are the original followers of Gautama Buddha who obtained enlightenment. They were first painted by monk Guan Xiu in 891 AD when he described each Luohan appearing to him in a dream to request that he paint their portraits with very distinctive qualities, highlighting different roles and lives. Each Luohan has a different story that has brought good fortune and provided examples to follow within the Buddhist tradition for centuries.

"The Asia Center looks forward to displaying the statues in the Pao Reading Room and hosting classes and programming about the Luohan sculptures in the months and years to come," said Kim Korinek, director of the Asia Center. "This spectacular gift will make a remarkable impact on so many, and is a testament to the ongoing support we have here at the U. We are honored to have alumni and friends who contribute so generously to the robust educational experience we offer our students in Asian Studies and beyond."



HUMANITIES STUDENT SUCCESS HUB

Connecting Students to the U

Joseph Stuart



Student success is the focus of every faculty and staff member in the College of Humanities. The college is committed to helping students thrive in the classroom and is confident their training will help them find success both personally and professionally after graduation. Defining success, though, can be a difficult proposition. The college's mission statement declares, "we seek to understand the nuances of cultural issues, to interpret human experience, and to appreciate the power of words and ideas." The college provides opportunities and resources outside the classroom and within the walls of the university, to holistically train and engage undergraduate students. One of the key sites for students' success will be the new Humanities Student Success Hub, an inclusive community space inside the Carolyn Tanner Irish Humanities Building that will offer services, programming, training, and support in an environment that will allow every student to grow.

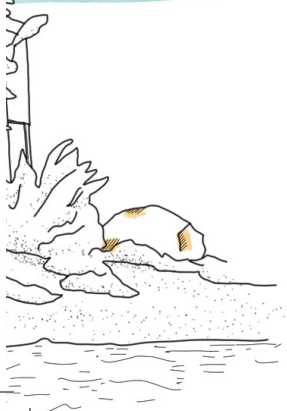
The Humanities Hub was born of a recognition that the college hasn't always had physical spaces for students, faculty, and staff to connect with the university and the broader public. When Caputo's restaurant closed inside the building's lobby during the pandemic, the high-traffic space became open for use. Through careful deliberation, the college decided to use the space to help students access and recognize the many resources available to them at the U.

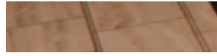
Taunya Dressler, assistant dean for undergraduate affairs, envisions "this new hub as an inclusive space

that fosters a sense of belonging and identity in which every student can thrive." She says the space will operate as a "front door" for the college, and thanks to a generous matching grant from the Alternative Visions Fund and the support of more than 70 individual donors and foundations, including a generous commitment from O.C. Tanner, the space can become a second home for students.

Dressler explains that for her, "the first sign that the Hub is a success will be seeing people come together in the space. Helping students see that they are part of a larger community of humanists and have a home in the college is the first step." Although hard to quantify student thriving—the college is designing metrics to quantify impact—a primary goal is to have each student walk through the doors of the Carolyn Tanner Irish Humanities Building, see the Hub, and know that they are home.

The Humanities Hub will serve as a central location of not just academic support, but also of the many aspects of learning that are encountered at the U. Students can access academic advising, find financial literacy resources, explore internships and career options, and learn about opportunities provided by the college's partners such as the Tanner Humanities Center, the Career & Professional Development Center, Learning Abroad, and the Hinckley Institute, to name a few. Whereas previously, students may have encountered these resources separately, they will now see how they're threaded together to help promote holistic student development.





Renderings courtesy of
RANGE architecture + design

The Humanities Hub is part of a long-term college plan to support first-generation students. As Dressler explains, “The U campus is complex and can be difficult for any student to navigate. Those learning how to access university resources for the first time will especially benefit from having a single space where these resources are centered.”

Jeff Turner, a doctoral candidate in history, says that student success is about much more than the grades one receives in the classroom. “Students need to learn about the resources that the U, their college and department have to help them.” Turner adds that working with student leadership, specialized centers like the Bennion Center and Hinckley Institute, being trained in financial, physical, and mental health, and receiving mentorship from faculty “are crucial to an education.”

Drawing upon critical resources is particularly important for first-generation students who sometimes don’t know where to begin. Students who have had family members attend a university may know that they need to speak to an academic advisor and that there are classes available on managing money and mental health resources. The Humanities Hub will be attuned to introducing students to the people and programs that will help them succeed at the U. As Dressler says, “An education is a process through which students identify their vocation, or calling in life and are empowered with the skills to answer this calling.” The Humanities Hub will support that reality by investing in academic support, providing space to explore professional interests and career options, gain financial literacy, and connect academic learning to community engagement.

Students are the primary beneficiaries of the Humanities Hub, but they are not the only ones. According to Dressler, faculty and guest lecturers will offer community talks geared to answering pressing questions that the humanities are especially



well-suited to answer. A historian may speak about the history of Ukraine in European history; an environmental studies scholar may discuss the relationship among nature, literature and human flourishing; a literature professor may discuss why it's essential to allow students to access any book they'd like to read rather than restricting their options. The Humanities Hub is a place for everyone at the U to engage in local and global communities.

Alumni are critical to the Humanities Hub's success. The space will host networking events for students and alumni, connecting generations of U students. Its resources will draw upon alumni to help place students in high-impact, high-reward learning experiences. Dressler says that alumni will be asked to participate in skill-building workshops, allowing students to learn from those who have traveled similar learning and professional trajectories. Alumni can make a large impact in the life of an undergraduate or recent graduate and the Humanities Hub provides a formal space to connect generations of students in ways that will benefit the U and its communities.

We wish to thank

The Alternative Visions Fund



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Kathie Snow White, Ph.D.

The Humanities Hub is scheduled to open in the **2022-23** academic year. To make a lasting financial contribution, please contact Lexie Kite at lexie.kite@utah.edu.

A Conversation with the New Dean

**Jana Cunningham &
Hollis Robbins,**
DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

In December 2021, the University of Utah announced that Hollis Robbins would serve as the next dean of the College of Humanities. A noted scholar of 19th-century American and African American literature, film, and poetry, Robbins previously served as dean of the School of Arts and Humanities at Sonoma State University. Prior to that appointment, she was chair of the Department of Humanities at the Peabody Institute at Johns Hopkins University and also served as the director of Hopkins' Center for Africana Studies.

Robbins holds a doctorate in English from Princeton University, a master's degree in English from the University of Colorado, Boulder, a Master of Public Policy from Harvard University, and a bachelor's degree from Johns Hopkins University. She began her tenure as dean of the U's College of Humanities on July 1, 2022.





Photos courtesy of LSE Library

Q&A

WHAT DRAWS YOU TO THE HUMANITIES?

For me, the humanities—the study of the nature of human existence—were the questions I asked before I knew there was an academic category called “the humanities.” Who are we as humans and have we always been like this?

As a matter of organized inquiry in fields such as philosophy, literature, and history, questions about the nature of humanity are central. In graduate school and as a professor, I focused on the 19th century, an era that saw breakthroughs in scientific and technical knowledge. In this era, fundamental questions about the category of “human” became more urgent. What exactly is a human being? Did humans evolve from other species or were they made by God? What makes humans different from other animals? Do they think, communicate, pray, change their minds, change and act out of spite as we humans do? Which human beings get to count as citizens?

How are we the same and how are we different? Are there humans on other planets? These are all humanities questions.

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE FUNDAMENTAL LESSONS OF THE HUMANITIES?

Students always love the question, “In what ways are human beings all the same and in what ways are we very different from one another?” We might approach languages, for example, as all designed for similar purposes: to communicate with one another and bind a group together. And we have scholars who focus on how languages are different from one another and what these differences mean for the development of a society. What is universal and what is local? There is “history” and there are “histories.” The category of “literature” includes an infinite variety of ways that human beings have imagined and artfully crafted fictional ideas, while individual works of literature battle, imitate, and signify upon one another differently.



WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE HUMANITIES ON A COLLEGE CAMPUS AND IN SOCIETY?

Ideally, the role of humanities is to provide a site for continued attention to fundamental questions of humanness so that inquiries into other realms—science, medicine, engineering—are more likely to succeed in ways that benefit human beings.

I like to think that if visitors from another galaxy landed on the U campus, the first place they'd visit would be the College of Humanities to learn about human beings. Later they'd fan out to other colleges to enjoy our arts, architecture, politics, medicine, how we organize ourselves socially, and our ways of doing business, but I'd bet they'd start with the College of Humanities.

WHY ARE HUMANITIES NEEDED TO BETTER UNDERSTAND OUR WORLD?

One critical role of the humanities is to keep asking the old questions in new ways and in the context of new technologies. Satellites and the internet have changed the way we can communicate across the globe and with other humans at a scale never before possible. Social media has changed the way human beings share information about themselves. What does it mean to be “friends” on social media? What does it mean to have a million followers? Does social media create human relations or is our relationship with the technology and not really with each other?

WHAT IS THE LARGEST MISCONCEPTION ABOUT THE HUMANITIES?

There are always headlines about “the humanities” in crisis. We are not in crisis! Crises need the humanities.

DO YOU THINK UNIVERSITY DISCIPLINES SILO THEMSELVES?

Disciplines are important as a way of organizing knowledge and maintaining an archive of that knowledge. Interdisciplinary work is equally valuable, but it is important to note that disciplinarity is the first step to interdisciplinarity.

WHAT ARE YOUR TOP PRIORITIES FOR THE U'S COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND WHY?

My top priorities are to build on the strong foundation already in place to:

- 1** Support faculty and programmatic excellence
- 2** Advance knowledge in the humanities
- 3** Proclaim new knowledge to the world
- 4** Welcome, teach, engage, and launch students in every humanities endeavor



WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND FOR EVERY COLLEGE STUDENT?

There are too many important books! Right now, I'm reading Darren Parry's *The Bear River Massacre: A Shoshone History* (2019), which I recommend highly for undergraduates. For myself, I've got C. Thi Nguyen's *Games: Agency as Art* (2020) on my desk as well as Robin Jensen's *Infertility* (2016). There's so much to read by the college's faculty.

WHAT EXCITES YOU MOST ABOUT COMING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH?

I have met so many of the brilliant scholars who are teaching and doing fascinating research in the College of Humanities and the outstanding staff who are dedicated to supporting a culture of excellence at the college but I have only met a handful of students. I am excited to meet the undergraduates and graduate students who have chosen the U for its cutting-edge programs and world-class faculty. You'll probably also find me cheering in the stands for gymnastics, baseball, football, or basketball.





Ideally, the role of humanities is to provide a site for continued attention to fundamental questions of humanness so that inquiries into other realms—science, medicine, engineering—are more likely to succeed in ways that benefit human beings.

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They didn't owe me anything, but they always checked in with me and asked me what I needed.

FEATURED ALUMNI: REBECCA RIVAS

A Degree Rich in Support

Patrick Jefferies

R Rebecca Rivas was 9 or 10 the first time she visited Salt Lake City from her home in the Bay Area and when she set eyes on the University of Utah campus, she declared, “I’m going there!” She stuck to her word and graduated from the U with honors in linguistics and Spanish in 2020 as a new mother during a global pandemic. Rebecca’s

family immigrated from El Salvador to California and her mother had always assumed she would go to college near their home. While Rebecca’s early commitment to the U was stressful for her mom (both because of the cost of out-of-state tuition and being far from home), her late stepfather was enthusiastic from the beginning.



Once Rebecca started at the U, she was drawn to the humanities instantly. She declared a major in Spanish and immediately noticed how much deeper and comprehensive the coursework was from her high school experience. “In high school, Spanish classes were mostly like Grammar Center. The courses at the U were rich with culture and history and I wanted to know more,” she said. Her love of language drew her to add linguistics as a double major.

As a project manager for a translation services operation, Rebecca incorporates much of

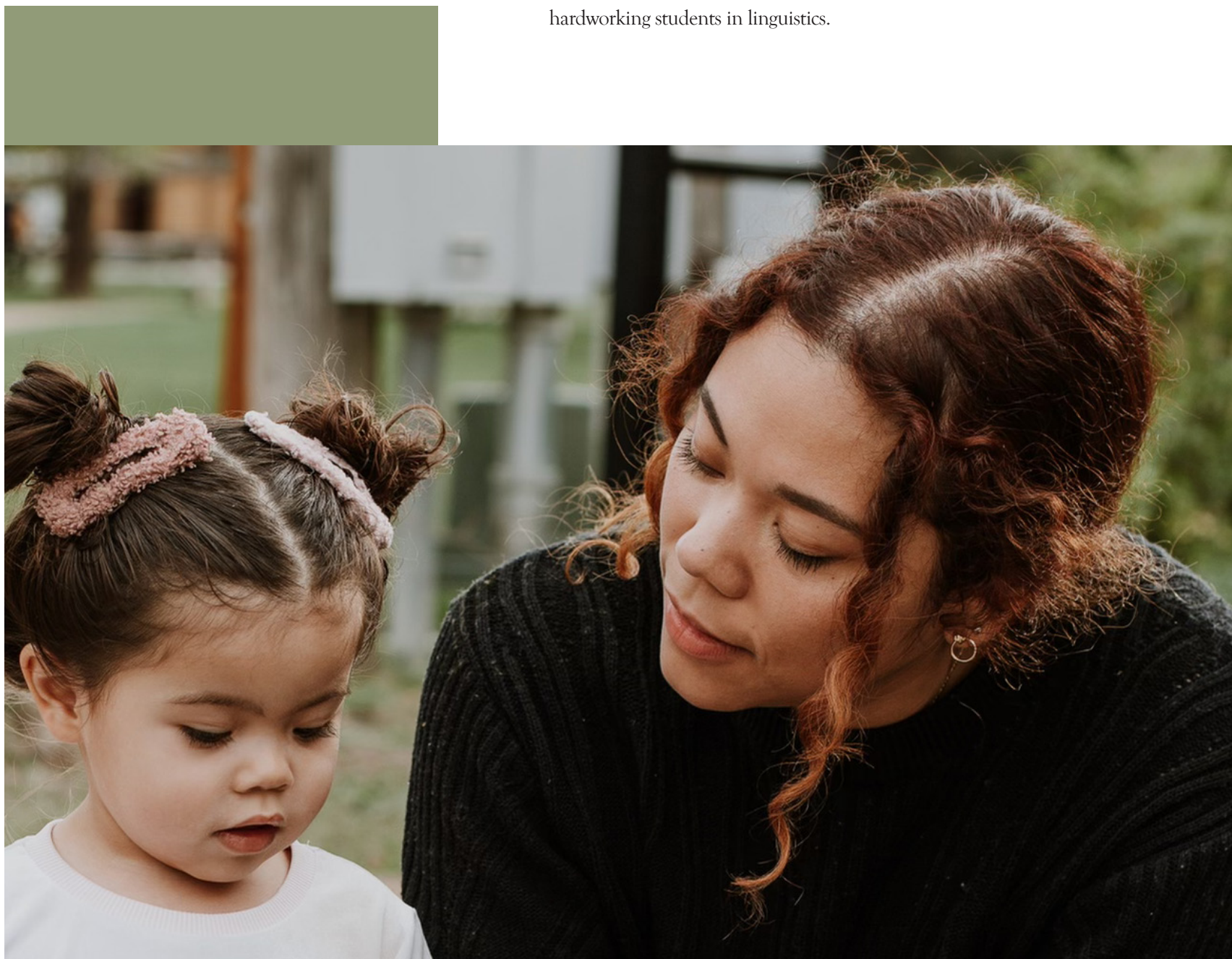


her educational experience in her day-to-day responsibilities. “We have people from different cultural backgrounds and it’s easier to understand what they say, and I strongly attribute my understanding to the knowledge I gained from my linguistics courses.”

Rebecca credits part of her educational success to dedicated faculty such as linguistics professors Rachel Hayes-Harb, Randall Eggert, and Shannon Barrios. While trying to complete her degree during the pandemic, she found out she was pregnant. “I went to their offices, sat down with them and confided that I was pregnant and struggling,” she reflected. “They were there to

support me as I had my daughter, Quinn, and through the difficulty of watching my wonderful and supportive stepfather, Steve Grimes, pass away from COVID-19. They didn’t owe me anything, but they always checked in with me and asked me what I needed.”

The support Rebecca received made a lasting impact and she and her family wanted to give back to the college. They created the first endowed scholarship in the linguistics department in honor of her stepfather called the Steven and Mercy Grimes Endowed Scholarship. “My stepfather would always tell people ‘My stepdaughter is going to the number one university in the nation!’” In 2022, the U awarded the inaugural Grimes Scholarship to a student in need and it will continue to support hardworking students in linguistics.





FEATURED ALUMNI: JEAN WOLLAM

A Passion for Education

Patrick Jefferies

When Jean Wollam reflects on her time as a student studying English at the U in the 1960s, she much prefers to talk about her role models than herself. During her years at the U, she had many professors who supported and encouraged her to follow her passion for teaching, which led her to a lifelong career in education, which began at the old Bingham High School in 1970.

“Jean was easily one my most memorable instructors,” said John Saltas, publisher of the *Salt Lake City Weekly* and former student of Jean’s. “At the time, she wasn’t much older than her students but was very much in tune with the times and trends that challenged all of us back then. I’ve spoken to many classmates since and we all agree that she left a positive impact on the students at Bingham High School.”

After Bingham High School was demolished in 1976, Jean moved to Brighton High School where she continued to teach English until becoming a school counselor. Her love for teaching then took her to a district-level position where she supported



and trained teachers working with advanced students. She retired in 2000 after a full career of connecting and inspiring hundreds of students and teachers.

"I'll always think well of Jean. I certainly would not have dared trying to become a writer or publisher if not for her," added Saltas.

Jean's parents grew up during the depression and never had the chance to attend college, which motivated Jean to pursue higher education. "My father worked for the railroad, but he would've much preferred to have been a history teacher or a journalist and my mother wanted to be an elementary education teacher but didn't have the opportunity. They did okay in their lives but weren't as happy or fulfilled as they could've been," said Jean.



Author's Note – **Writing & Rhetoric Studies**

Writing Studies Scholars is a community for Salt Lake Community College students who major, minor, or pursue a certificate in writing and rhetoric studies. Serving a diverse set of people, the program is composed of mostly first generation college students who work at least part time. More than half are over the age of 25 and 41% identify racially or ethnically from underrepresented communities. Of the 83 writing scholars who have matriculated through the program, 90% have either completed degrees or are on track to do so within two years.

Teachers make a huge difference in whether or not you're going to pursue a subject. Even though you have interest or talent in the subject, teachers embracing you makes all the difference.

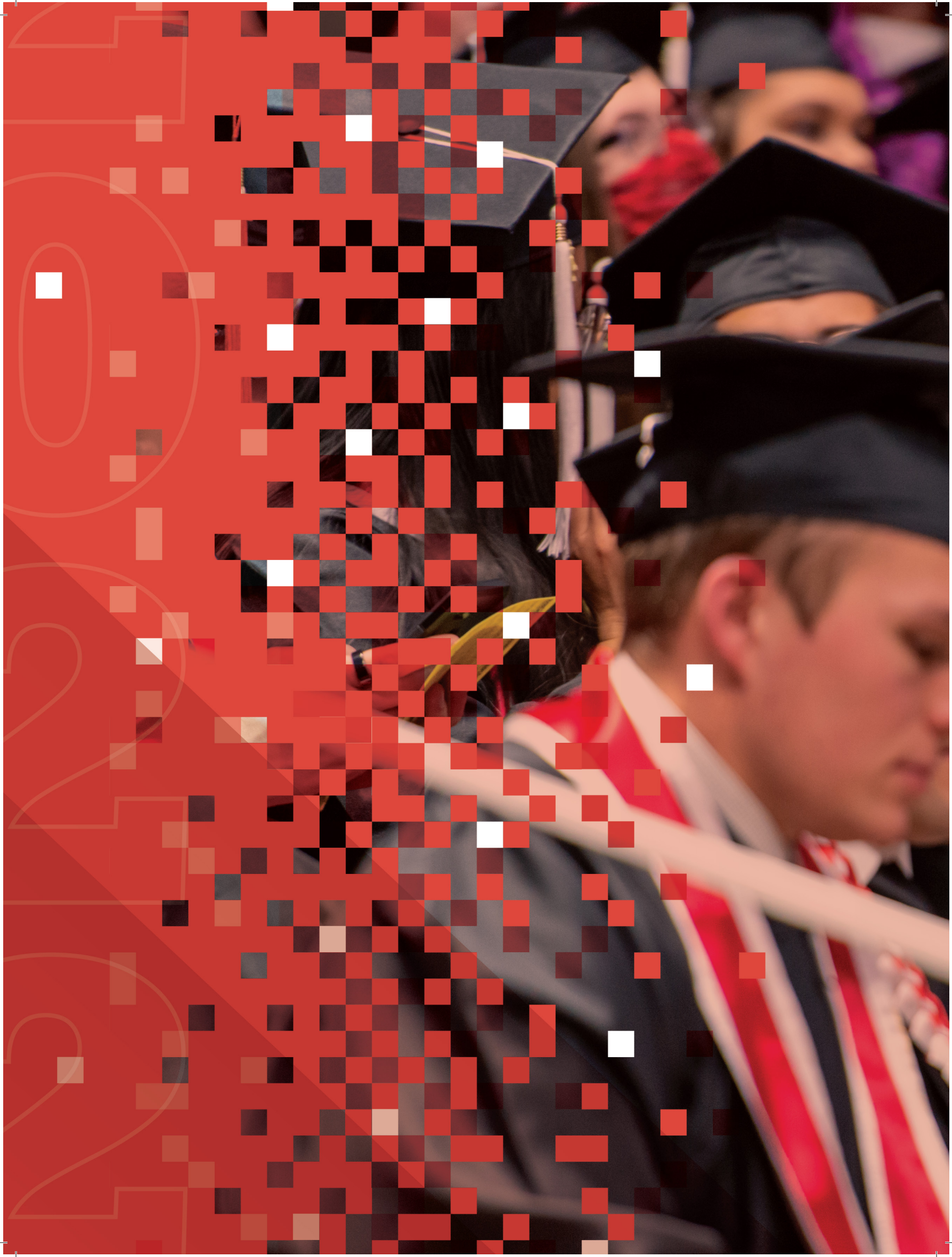
As a student at the U, Jean's role models included her English professors, such as the beloved Edward Lueders, William Mulder and especially Clarice Short. "Teachers make a huge difference in whether or not you're going to pursue a subject. Even though you have interest or talent in the subject, teachers embracing you makes all the difference."

Jean spoke admiringly about Short and recalled how her support and encouragement helped Jean to continue her desire to pursue education. She particularly affected Jean because she was one of the few women professors Jean had as a college student. "At the time, young women in the early '60s weren't ordinarily being encouraged to get doctorates or go to medical school or any of those

careers. Seeing accomplished and interesting women [like Short] was an encouragement."

With a desire to give back to the university to honor both her professors and parents, Jean established the first endowed scholarship in the Department of Writing & Rhetoric Studies in 2021 for students in the Writing Scholars program. The program provides a bridge for students at Salt Lake Community College to transfer to the U and benefit from the kinds of teachers Jean so passionately cares about.

Jean is gratified that her gift will make it possible for students like her to find their passion. Passion, she said, is what makes life fulfilling.



CLASS OF

2022



2022 CONVOCATION DISTINGUISHED ALUM

Doug Bowser

“

Congratulations to this incredible 2022 graduating class! It's also an honor to speak to you, your families, the faculty, and staff here tonight.

Last night at Commencement I shared my thoughts about the ways life can be like a video game. I mentioned that I didn't set out looking to find the College of Humanities and a communications degree, but that instead, after some exploration, the College of Humanities and communications became my light switch. I'd like to expand on that—and how this college has benefited me—and perhaps more importantly—will benefit you.



I've always been curious about the world—someone less inclined to learn by memorizing facts and figures, and more attracted to conceptual learning. I found it far more interesting to understand the why behind things. Why people held certain beliefs about a given subject. That's what led me to the humanities. I found the ability to understand others, whether through their history or culture, their languages or their beliefs, to be powerful, mind expanding, and often humbling.

What I built during my time here was a way of learning about the world that could take me in any direction—skills like critical thinking, problem solving, communicating effectively, collaborating with others, and understanding the importance of social responsibility, to name just a few. I can still remember classes like Interpersonal Communication, Debate and Creative Writing. No surprise, I still draw from the knowledge and insights those classes brought me today—38 years later!

The skills and self-discipline this college helped me develop became a vital foundation, and now it's something all of you now have as well and can build on.

My career allowed me to experience a number of disciplines—many I didn't prepare for or study here at the U. From sales to training, to demand planning and operations, to marketing and PR, and ultimately to the role I am in today. That career path was certainly not vertical. In fact, at times, it was horizontal—many times over! But here is my point. The base I

keep referencing coupled with curiosity and the ability to keep learning allowed me to step into new areas, to learn new technical skills and to continue growing.

And now I'm in video games—at this fascinating crossroads of technology, art, entertainment, and yes, the humanities. The word "humanity" itself lives at a crossroads of sorts. It means "human nature" or "humankind," but it can also mean "refinement" as well as "kindness" and "being humane to others." In a world of increasing technological and ethical complexity, social discourse and in recent times, physical separation, the humanities are more important than ever. They're a bridge across disciplines and ways of thinking, whether you're grappling with everyday business or politics, or the conversations like I have around video game narratives, character depiction, or advancements in AR, VR, and artificial intelligence. I fundamentally believe the insights and skills that you've accrued during your time at this college have never been more important, regardless of the field you go into. I am certain you will find this to be true as you go forward.

Thank you again for this honor and the opportunity for me to spend time with you tonight. As I said last night is it only with the passage of time that I have truly realized how much this university and this college have meant to me. My sincere wish is that someday you will be standing here reflecting on the same.

All the best to you all and thank you.

66

Four years ago when I came to the University of Utah I felt like it was a new chapter of my life, where I promised I would be different. I entered college with a concrete plan, I knew what classes to take a semester ahead, what my major was going to be, what I was going to eat for the next day, and what I planned to wear based on the moody weather. I thought I was so sure of what I wanted next and who I wanted to be, but I never would have become who I am today without the rejection I faced on the way.

Rejection is one of the most powerful motivators that we often neglect, when it happens we easily feel defeated with no more open doors. But as they say when one door closes another door opens, and that's exactly it. It isn't until our rose-tinted glasses get shattered that we can engage with the variety of choices approaching us, no matter how long it takes. These new perspectives mold our future, they show us how strong we are, our perseverance, and I hope you are impressed you made it here today.

Rejection has shined a light on new opportunities and the pandemic changed so many of our plans. In spring 2020 I had tickets to Japan with the university's debate team, when it got canceled I was distraught to say the least. Japan shut down, the U cut travel, and we went on lockdown. During lockdown, I like many others spent the first few weeks in confusion, I wasn't confident of what to do or how to move on

so I started picking up random hobbies like making stickers, knitting hats, or playing animal crossing. (Thanks, Doug!) But amidst all of this, we also grew.

We are full of so many unique skills, we've prepared for this day and learned the ropes to get here. Whether you're part of business, art, gaming, or whatever your major is, we as the humanities tie it all together.

The purpose of communication is evergrowing, but it is the root of all our solutions alongside our issues. We have the unique privilege of bridging the gap between our friends, peers, families, and everyone here today. The humanities is now a necessary field for our critical dialogue to safely continue

Although we will be met with opposition and we won't always agree on how to do things, we are provided with the power skills necessary to compromise and find common ground. The obstacles that forced us to change our plans weren't with ill intent as we'd like to believe but we continued to adapt and find new ways to exist.

Maya Angelou states "My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style."

I faced more rejection than I can count, and each one created a devastating blow, however, it was the little wins that got me through the day. Making breakfast, getting out of bed before noon, or finishing my homework on time.

I fulfilled my promise, I am a different person than I was when I started, and we will continue to change and grow.



This chapter of our lives isn't coming to a close, and we can reject the notion of happy ever afters. Shut the door on doubt or insecurities today we walk away with a recognition of our expertise to combat the rejection of our past.

We should find joy in the accomplishments that get us through every day because that's the big picture we are working towards. We are doing so much better than we think we are, we have to give ourselves some credit, and regain the confidence I know we all deserve, and for those that have it, flaunt it.

So Feel secure in your growth and see that you have changed because today is proof of that. While I have anxiety and fear of what's going on, I have this feeling of ambiguous loss, despite there being nothing tangible to grieve. Getting our degree in our hands won't give us the closure we are looking for, because there is no such thing as closure, and this isn't our end. We will continue to be scholars, students, teachers, and friends but most importantly today, we are graduates.



2022 CONVOCATION STUDENT SPEAKER

Vivian Lee

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GRADUATES



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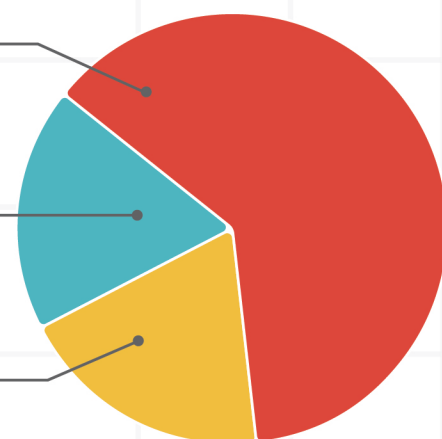


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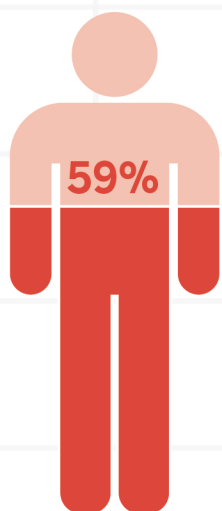
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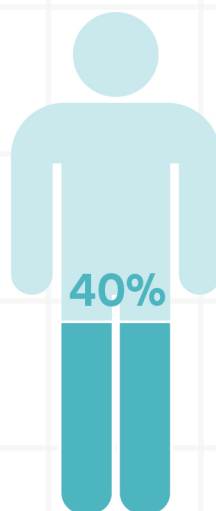
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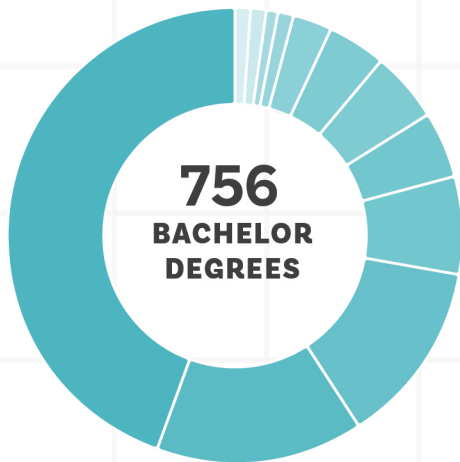
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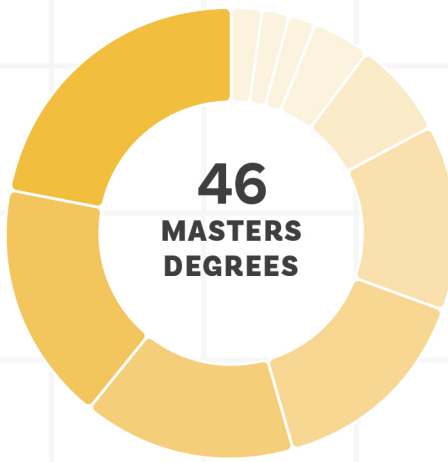
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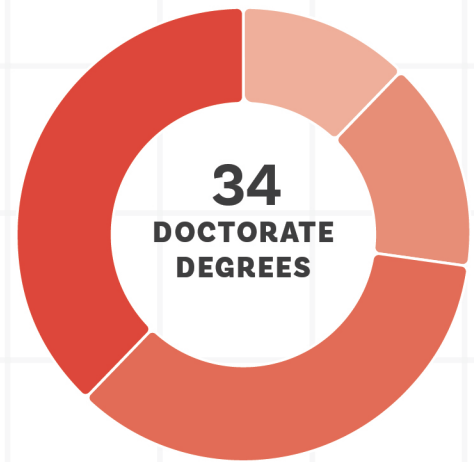
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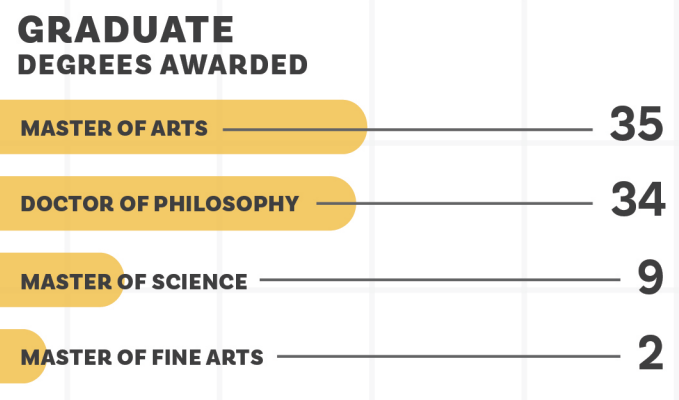
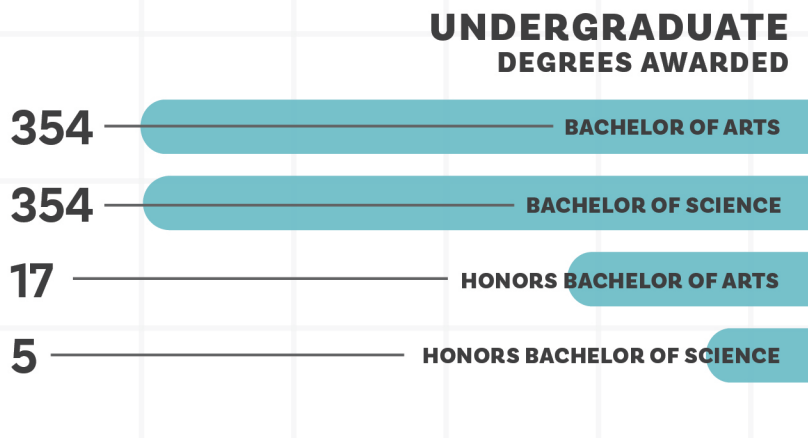
- 337 COMMUNICATION
- 116 INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
- 100 ENGLISH
- 50 HISTORY
- 40 WORLD LANGUAGES & CULTURES
- 37 PHILOSOPHY
- 29 WRITING & RHETORIC STUDIES
- 19 LINGUISTICS
- 8 PEACE & CONFLICT STUDIES
- 7 ASIAN STUDIES
- 7 MIDDLE EAST STUDIES
- 6 LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES



- 10 WORLD LANGUAGES & CULTURES
- 8 HISTORY
- 7 ENGLISH
- 7 ENVIRONMENTAL HUMANITIES
- 6 COMMUNICATION
- 3 LINGUISTICS
- 2 LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES
- 1 ASIAN STUDIES
- 1 PHILOSOPHY
- 1 WRITING & RHETORIC STUDIES



- 13 ENGLISH
- 12 COMMUNICATION
- 5 PHILOSOPHY
- 4 HISTORY



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9.7.22

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9.22.22

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11.17.22

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