

## Dean's Note



Greetings from the College of Humanities & Social Sciences. You'll notice the ampersand prominently displayed in our newsletter, and there is a reason for this.

& has an interesting history, originating from cursive Latin in the first century, when the letters that spell the Latin conjunction *et* were written together. With the advent of printing during the Renaissance, the cursive ampersand was transformed into a logogram widely understood in the Western world as shorthand for connection and inclusion.

We embrace the ampersand as a bridge connecting the two principal areas of academic inquiry in the college, the humanities and the social sciences. After all, connections among disciplines and inclusiveness of ideas are the mainstay of our mission. As this issue of *HSS News* demonstrates, the college includes many academic directions and ever-evolving opportunities for learning and growth. At the same time, HSS connects these individual branches of knowledge into a tapestry of liberal arts education that celebrates overarching goals. We help our students think independently while also taking into account the circumstances that connect individuals to each other.

Scribes writing in Latin likely never imagined that one day their ampersand would be a common feature of electronic text messages. As you read this issue of the *HSS News*, I invite you to reflect on the many ways that HSS builds upon the past to appreciate the present and that you will join us in discovering new connections that will shape our future. May the ampersand be with you!

Dean David Caldwell

## Bringing Education to Life

This year's HSS newsletter again brings together the five themes that capture the UNC experience. We welcome new faculty and say farewell to retiring faculty; highlight student achievements and faculty initiatives; and feature notable HSS events and community engagement. We invite you to explore the College in this issue of our publication as HSS faculty and students Find, Create, Lead, Advance, and Become.

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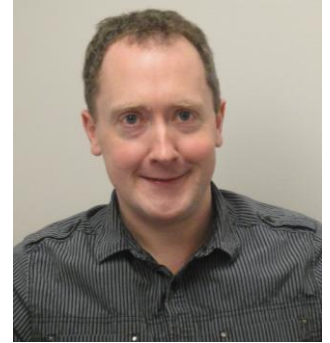
For comments or inquiries about this newsletter, feel free to contact us at [HSSNewsletter@unco.edu](mailto:HSSNewsletter@unco.edu). We love to hear from and about you!



## Find Your Sense of Belonging

### New Faculty 2010-2011

After graduating from Cambridge University with an undergraduate degree in English, Professor **Richard Bownas** didn't intend to go into political science, but a life-changing experience running his own NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) in Nepal shifted his perspective. Bownas spent two years in Nepal teaching children and training volunteers to carry on his work. He then returned to England for a master's degree in Development Studies followed by a PhD in Political Science at Cornell University. Now he's here at UNC encouraging students to engage with issues from human rights and immigration to developing states and transnational politics. Bownas has always taken great pleasure in teaching whether he's teaching small children in Nepal, working as an English as a Foreign Language instructor, or teaching political science courses at UNC. "It's a challenge," Bownas says, "to try to explain sophisticated and complicated ideas in simple language and [break] things down to the building blocks of those complicated ideas." The "enjoyment of seeing people grasp something [for] the first time" is why he wanted to become a teacher and why he's glad to be here with us at UNC.



Go to <http://hss.unco.edu/newsletter.html>  
for extended interviews with new professors  
Richard Bownas and Nic Brown.



Photo by Jeremy Lange

**Nic Brown** is a fiction writer who began teaching in the Department of English this year. He is the author of a collection of short stories, *Floodmarkers*, and a novel, *Doubles*. Not one to take the road most travelled, Professor Brown deferred his entry into college for five years while he worked as drummer for Atlantic Records. Faced with a growing passion for writing and tired of the rock and roll lifestyle (although he insists that "unless you're Ringo, you're never really a rock star if you're a drummer"), Brown matriculated at Columbia University and earned a BA in English with an emphasis in Creative Writing. He then was accepted into the prestigious MFA program in University of Iowa Writer's Workshop. Brown already has a reputation as a popular and inspiring professor and perhaps it's because he takes such joy in his students' achievements. "It's cool," says Brown, "to read stories that people have written that are really good and be able to tell them, 'Wow! This is really great,' and see it mean something." He adds that "seeing students rapidly improve over the course of just a few semesters is profound. It's crazy that I get to be even a remote part of that."

### Student Ambassadors Promote UNC, HSS and Build Ties within the College Community

In the inaugural year of the program (2010-2011), a select group of undergraduates represented the College as HSS Student Ambassadors. After brainstorming ideas to promote HSS both within and outside of the College, the Ambassadors met with current students, prospective students and parents; organized a get-together to help student-run and department clubs collaborate with each other; and held workshops and discussions on life after graduation (applying for graduate school, interviewing for a job, and writing a resume, to name a few).

The central goal of the program, says Student Ambassador and graduating senior **Clare Mikhail**, is "to promote HSS within HSS and bring camaraderie and unity into

[a very diverse] college." Another graduating Ambassador, **Amy Jo Heatherly** adds that the relationship between faculty and students that the Ambassador program helps to cultivate is "what makes [HSS] such an awesome College on campus."



The selection process for the next cohort of HSS Student Ambassadors has been completed. The students chosen for 2011-2012 are

- **Kacey Brewster** (Sociology)
- **Amanda Grassello** (Anthropology)
- **Sofia Lopez** (Mexican American Studies)
- **Carissa Olszewski** (Journalism)

For short statements from the 2011-2012 Student Ambassadors about their hopes for the program, please see the online version of the HSS newsletter: <http://hss.unco.edu/newsletter.html>

# Find Your Sense of Belonging

## Highlighting Student Achievement

We're very fortunate in HSS to have not only inspirational faculty and hardworking staff, but also passionate and remarkable students. Below are just a few of our dedicated students' noteworthy achievements this year:

**Brendan Davidson, Brianne Posey** and **Catherine Sauter** were honored on March 31<sup>st</sup> at the annual HSS Celebration of Student Scholarship where they presented their award-winning research papers.



**Davidson's** paper, "Fractionalization & its Link to Violence in Mexico," explored the Mexican government's response to drug trafficking organizations and how and why levels of violence have risen in the last ten years. He considers "whether or not the arrest or killing of key members within [drug trafficking organizations] causes significant shifts in the amount of violence occurring in the different provinces in which the drug cartels operate."

In her paper, "Boy Eats Girl: The Evolution of the Living Dead in American Cinema," **Posey** analyzes the films *White Zombie* (1932), *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) and *Zombieland* (2008). She examines and contrasts each film's historical context while considering how changing modes of "racism, sexism, and xenophobia [affect] their portrayal of zombies."

Lastly, **Sauter's** "Another One Bites the Dust: The Death of the Small Independent Farmer & the Attempts of the Government

to Save Him in the 1930s American Dust Bowl," elucidates the shifting fate of American farmers during the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl. "Doubly pinched by the pressures of a severe global depression and a brutal onslaught of Nature," she writes, "the small American farmer sunk deeper into despair and he and the nation watched unsure that he may ever rise again."



Philosophy major **Brandon Archuleta** and sociology major **Michael Infante** both had the distinct honor this year to present papers at professional conferences.

**Archuleta's** paper, "Virtue Ethics and the Whistleblowing Dilemma," which he began writing during a directed study course with Professor **Nancy Matchett** this past fall, was chosen by blind review for inclusion in the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics Annual Conference in Cincinnati. In his paper, he argues that a practical application of virtue ethics—which impacts a person's character development—serves as a better model for solving the moral quandaries of whistleblowing than other ethical models. Archuleta says that "the best part about the conference was the interaction with other people in the field. I actually got to meet Michael Davis, who is one of the people I cited in the paper. [...] We got to have a long discussion about my paper, [...] and it was an amazing experience to be on sort of an equal footing with someone of that stature."

Archuleta credits Professor Matchett as an enormous influence on his work and interest in ethics; she also helped convince him to submit his paper for inclusion in the conference.

**Infante** was invited to present his paper, "Integrating the Best of Both Worlds/Integrando lo Mejor de Ambos Mundos: A Qualitative Exploration of Influences on the Adjustment Process of Mexican-Origin College Students," at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research, held at Ithaca College in New York. His paper reports on findings from surveys of teens and young adults of Mexican origin, research he conducted under the auspices of the McNair Scholars Program and with his mentor, Sociology

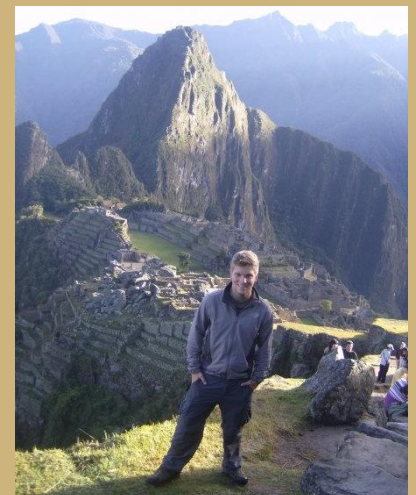
Professor **Kyle Anne Nelson**. Infante attempts to address the question of "What influences the successful adjustment of ethnic minority adolescents into the U.S. culture?" Through his research, Infante concludes "that a bicultural adjustment experience is preferable for high-achieving Mexican-origin adolescents, as opposed to fully assimilating into U.S. culture and losing or disregarding their Mexican identities."



Geography students **Caleb Anderson** and **Sarah Evans** spent the fall semester as interns at the National Geographic Society in Washington, D.C. The National Geographic internship "furnish[es] students [with] a professional learning experience" and was undoubtedly an invaluable step in Anderson and Evans' careers. **Anderson** worked with the education program, helping to write grants and doing his own research, while **Evans** worked as a public communications intern, blogging for National Geographic's website, "My Wonderful World," which is aimed at teachers.

Evans also organized an event for college professors to work toward education reform, which "led to many more trips [to Capitol] Hill and working with others to try and get geography funded in schools."

The experience, Evans says, has encouraged her to consider a career in which she can influence education policy, "to give a voice to teachers, students and parents, who know there is a better way for this country to run schools and educate our youth."



## Create Meaningful Connections

Events throughout the College and across the University feature UNC faculty and students and reach out to the Northern Colorado community at large. Some examples are featured here.

### HSS Faculty Play Key Roles in Campus-Wide Events

Hispanic studies professor **Priscilla Falcón's** heartbreaking and profound personal narrative, given during the morning "welcome" of UNC's first annual Women's Conference, "Women at Work Making Change," set the stage for an intense and meaningful day-long event in which a number of HSS faculty and students took lead positions. Organized by the Women's Resource Center, the conference opened up a space for UNC faculty, staff and students to come together around issues of gender equality, pay equity and advocacy for women's and minority rights.

In a breakout session, "Implementing the Female Vision," philosophy professor **Nancy Matchett** took a hands-on approach to exploring the themes and research presented in Sally Helgesen and Julie Johnson's book *The Female Vision: Women's Real Power at Work*. In a second breakout session, film and women's studies professor **Aviva Dove-Viebahn** led a roundtable discussion that encouraged participants to consider ways in which global issues have local relevance while brainstorming about local opportunities for advocacy and their potential widespread effects.



The César Chávez Center's Latino Lecture Series also provides opportunities for HSS faculty and students to participate in and attend events that cross disciplinary boundaries. The series is designed to showcase the diversity of research on Hispanic and Latino issues at UNC. This year's lecturers included Hispanic Studies professors **Priscilla Falcón, Joy Landeira, Jungwon Park** and **Don Perl**. History professor **Robert Weis** also spoke as part of the series.



### International Film Series Brings Unique Speakers and Films to Campus

Founded in 1973, the [International Film Series](#) (IFS) is a student-run organization currently housed within the Film Studies minor and the Department of English. It provides a singular film-going experience to the UNC community, offering many foreign and independent films that students may not otherwise have the opportunity to see. In addition to screening a new film every week over the academic year, IFS also collaborates with other campus organizations to feature special film-related events.

This spring, two special collaborative ventures took place, offering IFS viewers distinctive and multifaceted perspectives on documentary filmmaking and docudrama. In February, IFS screened the 2010 war documentary *Restrepo* in collaboration with Veteran's Services. In the film, directors Tim Hetherington and Sebastian Junger follow a platoon of soldiers during their deployment in Afghanistan's Korengal Valley, currently known as one of the deadliest war zones. Following the film, Professor **April Miller** and UNC student and veteran services academic advisor Konrad Schlarbaum led a poignant and animated discussion with the audience on the realities of war and the precarious nature of this type of documentary filmmaking.

In early March, IFS had the good fortune to welcome filmmaker Evans Chan to campus through the auspices of the Schultz Speaker Series. Chan screened two of his films, *The Map of Sex and Love* (2001) and *Bauhinia* (2002).

Not only did Chan meet with faculty and students during his visit to UNC, he also discussed his process as a filmmaker during an informal luncheon for faculty and graduate students. At a very well-attended screening of *Bauhinia*, Chan discussed his interpretation of docudrama and its value as a cinematic form for confronting controversial and troubling subject matter.



### Summit on Social Justice and Diversity and Working Conference on Family Violence Address Issues of Diversity and Advocacy

The Summit Organization Committee, a student-run group committed to promoting awareness of injustice and issues of diversity, held its 8<sup>th</sup> annual [Summit on Social Justice and Diversity](#), an all-day conference featuring a keynote lecture by award-winning sociologist, historian and author James Loewen on "How History Keeps Us Racist and What to Do About It." This year's Summit incorporated working sessions into the academic conference format. The Summit included sessions on how to teach the history of slavery, as well as workshops on cultural expression, diversity in the military, mental health and sexual orientation. HSS professors **Lin Allen, Travis Boyce, Genie Canales, and Herman George**, as well as students from Africana Studies, Anthropology, Political Science and Sociology, gave presentations. The Summit also hosted a screening of the documentary, *Race to Nowhere*, followed by an enlightening discussion led by Professor **Don Perl**.



This spring, a working conference, Safe at Home: Addressing Issues of Family Violence, brought together community members, faculty and professionals to address issues of domestic violence and work toward developing and implementing action plans focused on victim advocacy, legislation and programs for victims and offenders. The conference was co-sponsored by community and on-campus organizations, including the Department of Criminal Justice. Sessions during the all-day event focused on, among other topics, on family law, vulnerable populations, and cultural and gender issues.



## Lead a Richer Life

### Documentary Class Breaks the Mold of the Traditional Classroom Structure

Journalism and Mass Communications professor **Gary Swanson** has been working on documentary films and news programs for many years, earning several Emmys along the way. He's also a dedicated educator. Earlier in his career, he helped students at Northwestern University to create an hour-long documentary on former news anchor Tom Brokaw, earning them a Student Emmy. More recently, Swanson has brought his unique perspective to UNC in the form of a hands-on class on documentary filmmaking.

Last year, Swanson's fall and spring classes wrote, shot, edited and produced a twenty-six-minute documentary about prescription drug abuse entitled, *MORxE*. When the film wasn't quite complete at the end of the spring semester, several dedicated students worked over the summer to finish it. "That's one of the things that I've appreciated the most about being here and the quality of the students," Swanson says, "even though [students have] other things on their plate, they feel the same as I feel, that [the film] is so important that it needs to be finished." *MORxE* has won ten awards to date, including the Platinum 2010 Hermes Creative Award, one of the highest awards given by the Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals; the film was selected from over three thousand entries for the award.

This year, students in Swanson's class—whose academic interests range from journalism and communications to art and film—are writing and shooting a documentary that explores the effects of the internet on young adults, addressing, in particular, the issue of internet addiction. Students brainstormed ideas and researched potential topics before settling on the subject. "I don't know how it's going to turn out," says one current student, but "I think it's a really interesting topic that relates to our generation." In addition to choosing the topic, students are in charge of manning the cameras, conducting interviews and editing the film,

giving them valuable practical experience to support careers in broadcasting, journalism and film.

One student in Swanson's spring course says he's "really excited about [the] class because [he's] really interested in filmmaking." He adds, "This is the only opportunity I've heard of in Greeley where you can actually get into something like that without having to pay for your own equipment." While a couple of students joke that they hope their documentary will win an Oscar, one of their classmates has more immediate concerns. "I'm hoping," he says, "for [the film] to be a start of a portfolio"—a wholly practical goal that speaks to the significance of this type of experiential learning.



### Mock Oral Boards and Pre-Law Mentorship Program Provide Students Practical Experience and Advice

Twenty-two law enforcement officers braved a snowy February evening to be part of an indispensable and one-of-a-kind learning experience for UNC students. Officers and agents from the Greeley, Aurora, and



Denver Police Departments, Weld County Sheriff's Office, U.S. Postal Inspectors, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and even the U.S. Air Marshal Service volunteered over three hours of their time to facilitate a Mock Oral Board Practicum for students looking forward to careers in criminal justice. The event was organized by Criminal Justice professors **Alan Price** and **Philip Reichel** and is in its third consecutive year.

Forty-three students participated in this year's mock boards (with more female undergraduates taking part than ever before). Sitting alone in front of a panel of three officers, each student fielded

questions about his or her suitability for the field of law enforcement, discussed how he or she would respond to ethically-ambiguous hypothetical scenarios, and had the opportunity to ask unlimited questions.

After a half-hour of being grilled, students were critiqued by their interviewers, who provided feedback about everything from posture to how and when to bring up their love of *CSI*. One UNC junior exclaimed afterward that while she's never been so nervous in her life, the Mock Boards were "incredibly helpful" and one of the most invaluable experiences she's had at UNC.



The newly-established **Pre-Law Mentorship program** offers another opportunity for students planning a law-oriented career to gain first-hand knowledge in the field. The program, run by the Department of Philosophy, is open to any UNC student who is a sophomore or above, is considering law school and would like some guidance from a legal or judicial professional. Current program

participant, Brandon Archuleta, says that "the biggest thing [the program] provides for me is a resource. I feel like no matter what problem I confront in my educational experiences, I can always go to my mentor, and he's going to have some kind of answer or insight into the problem that's going to help me get through it in the best way."

Mentors include judges and lawyers in Greeley and in Weld County who agree to meet with their mentees at least once a semester for the duration of the student's time at UNC. The program currently has thirty mentors and is always open to new student and mentor applicants; interested parties can apply at the site linked above.

## Lead a Richer Life

### Study Abroad Experiences Expand Student Horizons

UNC senior **Clare Mikhail**, a double major in political science and philosophy, determined early on that she wanted to take part in a study abroad program. “I come from a multicultural background,” she says, “and I’ve always been really interested in world affairs and world politics;” it was only a matter of finding the right study abroad opportunity. She eventually chose to participate in the International Student Exchange Program (ISEP), a direct exchange through which a student’s UNC tuition and fees cover a semester’s or year’s enrollment at a school abroad.

Mikhail’s interests led her to the Central European Studies Program in Brno, a city southeast of Prague in the Czech Republic. During her semester in Brno, she took courses on the politics of Central Europe, as well as classes in Czech literature and film. The courses were “fascinating, but the best part of the whole experience,” says Mikhail, “was the dorms. It was an international dormitory. My roommate was French, and we lived on the Spanish floor, and our next door neighbors were British, French and Portuguese. [Another student] was from China. There were people from everywhere. [...] You’re in constant contact with different cultures.”

Mikhail also took the opportunity to travel throughout Europe, including side trips to Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Croatia and Scotland. While she was “pretty terrified at first,” she quickly warmed up to the experience, embracing Brno’s many new sights and sounds. Ultimately, Mikhail says, “I probably learned more about myself in that semester than I have up until then because you have to do so much on your own. [...] I think everybody should study abroad; I think that’s necessary for any major. It’s one of those experiences that broadens you [...]. You gain confidence, and that was the best part.”

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Graduate student **Nico Goda**, in his second year of a master’s degree in communication studies, says he always wanted to travel. So, when an opportunity presented itself for him to spend his summer abroad in Greece while taking a course on classical rhetoric with Professor **Lin Allen**, the merging of his academic interests and his dream of travel were too perfect to pass up.

The four-week course, one preparatory week in Greeley followed by three weeks in Athens and surrounding cities, proved the perfect complement to Goda’s on-campus education. Not only was he able to explore the famous site of Athens’ agora and visit landmarks commemorating Socrates, Plato and other ancient luminaries, but he also had the “best pizza [he’s] ever eaten” in Delphi. One the most amazing days on this trip, Goda says, was a visit to the Temple of Poseidon at Cape Sounion, an hour outside of Athens. After touring the temple, Goda and his classmates swam in the warm waters of the Aegean Sea, under the temple and the famous cliffs on which it was built.

While Goda anticipated the summer experience would broaden his horizons and offer him a unique perspective on the lives of the earliest of orators and philosophers, he didn’t expect the close relationships that developed among the students, undergraduate and graduate alike. What developed, he says, over the course of their many excursions together, was a great camaraderie, a “synergy” that further heightened his experience on the trip.



### Faculty-led Study Abroad Courses Offered Summer 2011:

- “Culture and Language in China,” led by Michelle Low and Adam Fong
- “French Language in Aix en Provence,” led by Lori Sauble-Otto
- “Intercultural Leadership in the Yucatan,” led by Mike Kimball

## Powell Geography Club Builds Relationships, Enriches Lives and Explores Our World

It's safe to say that the student-run **Powell Geography Club** may be one of the most dynamic clubs in HSS—with around forty to fifty active members, an enthusiastic team of officers, and a long list of club events from camping, snowshoeing and geocaching to building houses for Habitat for Humanity and sponsoring Geography Awareness Week on campus. According to its mission, written by current club president **Amy Jo Heatherly**, the goal of the club is to “enrich undergraduate education by exposing students to geography in a larger academic, cultural and social setting,” and it “aims to foster a community of friendship and mutual support.” Powell Geography Club prides itself on being able to offer many free events to a diverse group of students, geography majors or not, which Heatherly thinks of as a great opportunity for networking and a “promoter for the College.” Camping and snowshoeing trips are particularly fun, says outdoor recreation chair **Ryan Hennig**, for the many international students who attend, some of whom, adds Heatherly, “have never even seen snow before!”

One of the most impressive aspects of the club is its ability to bridge the divide between students and faculty. Faculty-student bowling night has become a big hit, even encouraging new students to join the major.. “Get[ting] to know the faculty on such a personal basis,” says Hennig. “makes class a hundred times different.”



## Advance Human Understanding

### Two New Degree Programs—and an Online Program—Open Up Opportunities for UNC Students

When students ask, faculty and the administration listen—which is why HSS boasts two new degree programs this year, as well as an online expansion of an existing program. The new programs bridge traditional disciplinary boundaries and provide students unique outlets for integrating their academic lives with the larger world.

The new major in **Asian Studies**, co-authored by Professors **Michelle Low** (Modern Languages) and **Adam Fong** (History), offers students a way to engage with the culture, art, politics, philosophy, economics and history of their chosen regional focus and take their language studies to the next level (the program currently offers concentrations in Chinese and Japanese; Korean may be added in the future). With only one other Asian Studies major in the state (at CU-Boulder), UNC's program prepares students to find work in fields that require language

proficiency and an understanding of Asian culture and society. Moreover, the program is designed to complement other majors and minors and provides one-of-a-kind study abroad opportunities, including exchanges with Korea University's Sejong Campus, Aoyama Gakuin University in Tokyo, and other semester-, year- and summer-long programs in China, Korea, and Japan.

A reboot of an earlier major, the **International Affairs** program, now housed in the Department of Political Science and International Affairs, is grounded by its new disciplinary home while still maintaining a widespread, cross-disciplinary appeal. International Affairs majors can now specify an emphasis in either International Political Economics or Area Studies (which offers concentration areas in Africa and the Middle East, Asia, Europe, and Latin America). Majors are prepared for post-graduate career choices including foreign service and diplomacy, international human rights, international business, work with NGOs (non-governmental

organizations), and international environmental advocacy. Says Professor **Stan Luger**, as global environmental, political, economic, and cultural issues increasingly shape our lives, the International Affairs major provides a space where “students will be engaged with the world.”

While **Sociology** already has well-established major, minor and master's programs at UNC, the department recently unveiled its [online Bachelor degree completion program](#), slated to begin officially this summer. Through this program, students who have already taken required liberal arts core (general education) classes can complete a degree in Applied Sociology entirely online. Within weeks of announcing the new program, UNC had already received near a dozen inquiries. The department is looking forward to providing this unique and flexible option for students who have full-time jobs, families to support or are attracted to the educational experience that online degree completion offers.

## Advance Human Understanding

### Faculty Awarded for Excellence in Teaching, Service, Research

Each year, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences rewards faculty members for exceptional teaching, service and research. This year's awardees are

- **Karen Barton** (Assistant Professor of Geography) and **Priscilla Falcón** (Professor of Hispanic Studies) for Excellence in Teaching
- **Kenneth Chan** (Assistant Professor of Film Studies) for the College Scholar Award
- **Lee Anne Peck** (Associate Professor of Journalism) for Excellence in Advising and Service



HSS faculty members **Karen Barton** and **Priscilla Falcón** were also awarded one of the top university-wide honors, the Provost's Award for Teaching Excellence in Undergraduate Education. This award honors faculty who are innovative in their teaching, provide students with supplemental education beyond the usual scope of classroom experience, are readily available to advise and guide students, and are exceptionally supportive of their students.



### Faculty Awarded for Promoting Diversity in the Classroom

HSS's Diversity Advisory Board advises the College on matters of diversity within and outside of the classroom. The board has also developed a faculty award to recognize promotion of diversity in the classroom. Faculty members are nominated by their students. Awardees must foster a sense of inclusiveness in their courses, encouraging students to speak freely and recognizing the value of a wide spectrum of interpretations and points of view on any given issue. Awardees are also expected to

demonstrate a facility with engaging their students around issues of race, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, class and ability.

The Advisory Board received twenty-three nominations this year. From the nominations, they chose to give the Diversity in the Classroom Award to Professor **Nick Syrett** (History). Professors **Travis Boyce** (Africana Studies) and **Genie Canales** (Hispanic Studies) received honorable mentions.



Syrett's student nominator commented that he "puts students at ease in his classroom," and is "the definition of inclusive teaching philosophies and practices. He encourages all students to speak in

class and finds value in every comment that is made." Syrett is also known for incorporating issues of diversity into his courses; for example, says his nominator, he "discussed the injustices women encounter throughout the history of America. Through the passion that Dr. Syrett spoke with, it was clear that he advocates for women's rights and focuses on educating students about women's issues."

Syrett majored in Women's and Gender Studies as an undergraduate at Columbia University and then went on to receive his PhD in American Culture from the University of Michigan. His primary focus is American history since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and he has taught courses on topics such as immigration, slavery, sex and sexuality, marriage and queer history. This year, he also taught a senior seminar titled, "Gender, Race and Crime."

*For HSS award criteria, see*  
[http://hss.unco.edu/college\\_awards.html](http://hss.unco.edu/college_awards.html)

*For Committees within the college, including the Diversity Advisory Board, see*  
<http://hss.unco.edu/committees.html>



### Hispanic Studies Department Awarded for Excellence in Teaching and *Confluencia* Joins JSTOR

This spring, the Western Association of Graduate Schools (WAGS) and Educational Testing Service (ETS) presented the Hispanic Studies Department's master's degree in Foreign Language: Spanish Teaching an Award for Excellence and Innovation in Graduate Education. Criteria for this award include "increasing the diversity of applicants to graduate programs," and "demonstrating success in enhancing the quality of the entering class."

The innovative master's program "equips teachers with in-depth knowledge of all facets of the Spanish-speaking world, as well as the latest methodologies for teaching Spanish in secondary schools." The program is largely conducted during the summer to enable working teachers to succeed without having to sacrifice their careers or take time off. Classes include intensive language and pedagogy workshops, the opportunity to participate in study abroad, and courses that explore literature, culture and history. The regional focus of classes (Spain, Latin America and Mexico/Hispanic United States) rotates on a three-year basis.



In addition to the many other things Hispanic Studies has to celebrate this year, Confluencia, the bilingual, peer-reviewed journal of Hispanic culture housed in the department, has been officially added to JSTOR. A not-for-profit digital archive, JSTOR selects journals for inclusion based on a rigorous set of criteria, and it makes these journals (and other publications) accessible on a global scale, guaranteeing *Confluencia* the ability to reach and influence an international audience.

## Advance Human Understanding

### *HSS Faculty Members Retire and Share Memories of UNC*

“All good things must come to end” could serve as a fitting motto for the bittersweet farewell UNC must bid seven faculty members who are retiring this year. While they may no longer be at UNC, they are not resting on their laurels. They are looking forward to fruitful retirements filled with book projects, travel plans and maybe even a bit of relaxation.



Professor **Marshall Clough** has known he wanted to study and teach history since he was a teenager. Clough credits a series of influential and inspiring mentors

for shaping his life path as an undergraduate at Columbia University and a graduate student at Stanford. Intrigued and encouraged by fellow students' experiences in Africa and by his mentor Kennell Jackson's research, Clough decided to focus his graduate research on colonial Kenya. After thirty-six years' teaching African and British history at UNC, Clough is still enthusiastic about his specialty and sharing his knowledge and keen insight with students. He's also a strong proponent of interdisciplinary learning. During his time at UNC, he helped to found the Life of the Mind program and served as its first director, taking full advantage of all the opportunities the program offered to explore different disciplines and pedagogical models. A great fan of classic literature, after retirement Clough hopes to finally catch up on his reading. He's also planning to work on a project chronicling the life of his mother, who died in Shanghai during the Chinese Revolution.



Economics professor **Laura Connolly** grew up in Greeley and attended UC-Boulder as an undergrad before leaving her native state for graduate school at

Northwestern University and teaching at Oregon State. However, when the chance came to return to Greeley and teach at UNC, she was more than happy to do so. In her eleven years at UNC, Connolly has been a dedicated teacher as well as a committed member of the UNC Faculty Senate and the American Association of University Professors. Her favorite course, “Econometrics”—a statistics course in which students apply the theories and formulas they've learned to the real world—also revealed one of her favorite things about teaching. Students often find the course one of their most challenging, she says, but “part of what makes it fun is because then [students] can look at it and can go, ‘Wow, you know what? I really can do to this, and I like it!’ when they came into the class often thinking that it was going to be the killer class that they were going to hate.” Her students, Connolly says, are one of the things about UNC she's going to miss the most. And while she may be retiring, she doesn't plan to just lay low. “I have at least three books on my list right now that I want to write,” Connolly says of her post-retirement plans, adding, with a laugh, that she imagines she'll stay pretty busy.



After growing up as what she calls a “real cowgirl” on a Minnesota farm, English education professor **Barb Dickinson** taught middle and high school for seven years before she decided that her true calling was at the college level, teaching soon-to-be teachers the life lessons, strategies and pedagogy she learned the hard way. “I actually did the math one time,” Dickinson explains, “and I thought, if I have sixty students a year and each of those teachers go out and

teach a hundred fifty kids a year, think of the impact that I could make on teaching in ten or twenty years.”

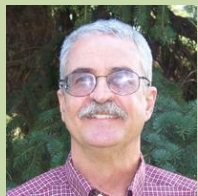
Dickinson received her PhD at the University of Arizona and, after teaching for twenty-six years at UNC, she certainly has made that impact, mentoring hundreds of budding teachers. She also served as director of the Rocky Mountain Writing Project, where she started a project she hopes to carry into her retirement: writing stories about her childhood on the farm to read aloud in schools. After retiring, she's looking forward to vacationing and spending time with her children—twins about to start college and a younger daughter—but Dickinson doubts she'll ever be able to relinquish her passion for teaching.



Journalism professor **Wayne Melanson** thinks he might be the only HSS faculty member to earn tenure at UNC twice. That's because after teaching at UNC for many

years, he left to teach in Nebraska and Texas only to return to Greeley seven years later. Earning tenure “was harder the second time,” he quips with a laugh, saying that while he thought he “wanted to go to a big school,” he discovered “that big isn't necessarily better; it's just bigger.” Melanson, who has also worked in newspaper advertising, takes great joy in mentoring students as they pursue careers in journalism, so it's no wonder that one of his favorite things about UNC is that “good teaching is part of the culture.” Having taught—together—at UNC for over twenty-five years, Melanson has had the good fortune to work with many talented and motivated students. “To just spend your whole life,” he says, “with that culture of people who are so full of eagerness and hope, and full of dreams and uncertainty, and to have some role in their maturation—what a privilege!” Melanson looks forward to pursuing a recent interest in genealogy, recording and writing the untold stories of his family's past.

*(continued on page 10)*



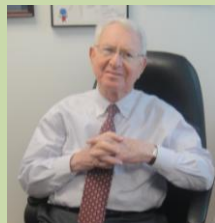
Before **Bill Perrill** began teaching in the Department of Criminal Justice at UNC, he spent over twenty-five years working in the federal

prison system—sixteen of those years as a warden.

Perrill earned a B.S. in Sociology from Northern Arizona University and an M.A. in Sociology and Criminology from Bowling Green State University. In ten years at UNC, Perrill has taught introductory courses in criminal justice and corrections, as well as courses in criminology, correctional administration, organized crime, and women in the criminal justice system.



As long-time chair of the Department of History, former faculty representative on the Board of Trustees, and as one of the self-described “old guard,” it’s fair to say



**Barry Rothaus** has made his mark on UNC in his forty-five years of teaching for HSS.

Rothaus received his

Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin, Madison and says he decided to study history almost by accident. Graduate school, for Rothaus, was “an exciting period because the people I went to school with and the people I met were very bright [...] we talked about books and ideas, and I really liked that.”

Rothaus fosters this same sense of enthusiasm in his students, insisting that he doesn’t “give” grades, students have to earn them. However, he continues, “I have students now who shock me; they know so much. Their comments are breathtaking.” In his retirement, Rothaus plans to spend time with his grandchildren and relax: “I want to de-pressurize very slowly.” He laughs, adding, “Reading and drinking coffee...that sounds very good right now!”



**Charles “Gil” Schmidt** retires this year as a professor of geography, having sustained an injury three years ago that cut short his thirty-year career. Schmidt joined the faculty at UNC in 1991, also serving in varying administrative capacities during his time here: as Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and as Vice Provost. Before coming to Greeley, Schmidt received a PhD at the University of Washington and taught for eighteen years at the University of Colorado at Denver. Schmidt was an engaged and enthusiastic teacher, as invested in his students as he was dedicated to his colleagues. He always wanted students to engage with “the unique opportunity that higher education offered,” says fellow geography professor Phil Klein.

*Expanded interviews with Marshall Clough, Laura Connolly, Barb Dickinson, Wayne Melanson and Barry Rothaus can be found on the online version of the newsletter: <http://hss.unco.edu/newsletter.html>*

## Prof. Jeri Kraver Participates in Seminar at School for Holocaust Studies in Jerusalem

In January, English professor Jeri Kraver had the unique opportunity to attend an eleven day seminar at Yad Vashem, Israel’s official memorial to victims of the Holocaust, in Jerusalem. She was one of eighteen invited participants in the International School for Holocaust Studies’ “Echoes and Reflections” program, attending alongside other noted Holocaust educators from institutions such as Columbia University, Purdue University and the University of Pennsylvania. The program included a lectures, workshops and training designed to give educators valuable personal experience from which to develop new pedagogical models for teaching about the Holocaust.

During her time at Yad Vashem, Kraver was able to speak with Holocaust survivors—including two Jews saved by Oskar Schindler and one of Anne Frank’s closest friends—about their experiences. About the latter, Kraver says, “Her insight into Anne Frank was incredible. She told us: ‘My mother used to say of Anne, ‘God knows best, but Anne knows better.’” Topics explored in the daily lectures

ghettos, Jewish leadership, Nazi ideology and the pedagogical challenges of teaching about the Shoah. The program was intense and rewarding, every moment dedicated to Holocaust education. Even “in the evenings,” Kraver says, “we would discuss how we might—or how we already do—integrate Holocaust education into our programs.”

Kraver is already planning ways in which to make her experience at the seminar manifest in her teaching and research at UNC. She delivered two talks, one on campus and one off, at the end of April as part of Greeley’s Holocaust Memorial Observance, and she will be co-teaching a course on narratives of survival with film professor April Miller. Most notably, she is working on two possible collaborations—one with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. and one with the school at Yad Vashem—to bring Holocaust pedagogy workshops to UNC for secondary school teachers and college educators. These workshops, Kraver says, would be “huge opportunities for our pre-service teachers and for in-service teachers across the region.”

*For an interview with Jeri Kraver, visit: <http://hss.unco.edu/newsletter.html>*



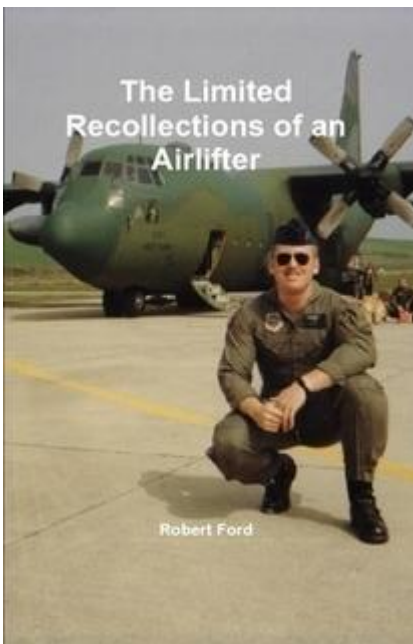
## William E. Hewit Distinguished Professor of History Visits Campus

Thanks to an endowment from alumnus **William E. Hewit**, a former UNC history major, each year the Department of History invites a distinguished American Historian to campus to give a public lecture, deliver a lecture to Phi Alpha Theta (history honor society) and visit classes or offer workshops for students. This year, Professor Karen Halttunen (University of Southern California) was named the William E. Hewit Distinguished Professor of History. Halttunen’s public talk focused on the narrative of naturalization romanticized in Thoreau’s essay, “Wild Apples,” and in the local histories of New England in the 1830s. Illustrating a kind of regional pride, these narratives use ecological naturalization—exotic plants adapting to a new environment—as a metaphor for New Englanders as naturalized citizens of their region, distinguishing them from other Americans who were uprooting themselves through Western expansion. Halttunen’s engaging paper sparked a lively audience discussion and follow-up questions from students and faculty alike.

## Be the Difference

### Alumnus Robert Ford ('82), Author and Former Air Force Pilot, Reminisces About His Time at UNC

Robert Ford entered UNC in 1978 as a music major, but soon set his sights on political science when he realized the field could help bolster his post-graduate goal to become a pilot in the US Air Force. Ford graduated from UNC in the spring of 1982 with a BA in Political Science and an Aerospace Minor; he was also honored as an Air Force ROTC Distinguished Graduate for being in the top ten percent of his class. After graduation, Ford did indeed become an Air Force pilot, and he recently published a book about his experiences (*The Limited Recollections of an Airlifter*; available on lulu.com).



*The 2011 HSS News was researched, written and compiled by Professor Aviva Dove-Viebahn with the assistance of Associate Dean Michelle Behr and Administrative Specialist Shai Steele.*

*Thanks also go out to the many HSS faculty, staff, students and alumni who sent in relevant news items and gave their time to answer questions and sit for interviews. Without their commitment to and enthusiasm for the college, this newsletter wouldn't have been possible.*

Below are a few excerpts of a recent HSS interview with Ford; for the expanded version: <http://hss.unco.edu/newsletter.html>.

**About the UNC Professor who most inspired him:** “[Aerospace professor and Colonel Thair D. Layne] was a fighter pilot with three combat tours in Vietnam and he was the prime example of the quiet professional. He had none of the classic traits you would expect from a combat fighter pilot. He had confidence in his abilities as a pilot, but did not feel it necessary to try to impress anyone.[...]”

“Col. Layne played a pivotal role in my career and he is mentioned many times in my book. [...] I can honestly say that I modeled myself as an Air Force Officer after the example set by Col. Layne.”

➤ **How UNC changed his life:** “UNC was the door to my future. Along with the music, I had been to Greeley twice to compete in the marching competitions hosted by [Air Force ROTC Detachment] 100. I was the commander of the drill team in high school and the competitions further cemented my coming to UNC.

I feel very fortunate that the staff at the ROTC at UNC saw my potential and allowed me to follow my dream.[...] I felt nothing but encouragement and support from everyone at the ROTC and the university in general.”



## Spotlight on Giving

### Donor and Alumnus Bill Benson Hopes to Help Students Like Himself

Alumnus and donor **Bill Benson** ('76) is deeply committed to the transformative power of learning and the value of the liberal arts education he received as a student at the University of Northern Colorado thirty years ago. Benson came to UNC as a first-generation college student in 1974 from Northeastern Junior College in Sterling, CO, and found a happy home in the history department, where he fondly recalls courses in colonial history, diplomatic history and Western history with Professors Gail Rowe, Alexander W. Knott and Robert Larson, among others. College, Benson says, “was such a wonderful time in my life,” an intense experience that instilled in him a continuing passion for history. He graduated from UNC *summa cum laude* in 1976 and is now a financial advisor. But Benson hasn't forgotten his *alma mater*. He is currently one of the Department of History's “most valued donors,” according to department chair Joan Clinefelter, who adds, “he has been very generous to us over the years.”

While Benson paid his own way through college “by working hard all summer

long,” he admits that “the big kicker was trying to come up with money for the books.” Hence, the William H. Benson Scholarship provides five to seven history majors a year with five hundred dollars in funds that they can put toward books or tuition. Recipients of the scholarship must have earned a GPA of 3.25 or above. The Department of History divides the awards evenly between majors with secondary education and liberal arts emphases. Recognizing the impact that his own early financial struggles had on his education and his college life, Benson is glad to be able to give back and finds helping students offset the cost of their educations “very rewarding.”

Benson's legacy as an enthusiastic advocate for UNC students is wide-ranging. Not only is he the recipient of yearly thank you letters from the history students supported by his scholarship, but he's also the proud father of sophomore Lindsay Benson, who was just accepted into UNC's competitive undergraduate nursing program.



College of Humanities & Social Sciences

# HSS News

<http://www.unco.edu/hss>

Spring 2011

## About Us

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Northern Colorado is committed to the liberal arts tradition of advancing human knowledge through serious scholarship, superior instruction, and the freedom of academic inquiry. By examining the contributions of both individuals and societies, our wide array of academic disciplines teach us about the past, help us understand the present, and help shape human experience in the future.

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