



# SIGHTS *and* SOUNDS

May 2023

A Newsletter for the College of Fine Arts & Communication

# The best kept secret



**H**ello! My name is Golden Wright, and I am the Interim Dean of the College of Fine Arts and Communication at Lamar University. In my opinion, the College of Fine Arts and Communication is one of the best kept secrets. The students, staff and faculty in this college are brilliant and extraordinary. The creation of this monthly newsletter is to highlight and promote the amazing accomplishments of these individuals within each discipline of the fine art and communication

fields. Within this newsletter, one can find out when and where to experience live performances, learn about current research topics and the accomplishments of our students, staff and faculty. This is just one of the ways we are trying to rewrite that narrative and tell our story. The College of Fine Arts and Communication is a diverse college with communication being one thing we all have in common.

Each area relies on communication in various ways. The area of communication and media utilizes a variety of mediums such as television, radio, social media and newspaper to share information. Using voice or instruments, music majors use song to share a feeling or story. Speech and hearing sciences help us to hear and speak to improve quality of life. Deaf studies teach individuals to be the medium for individuals to communicate. Theatre and dance provide an

escape from reality through movement and text. Finally, art provides a visual communication that captures a time or place and transcends us to new places. As a college, communication plays an important role in the successes of our departments.

**Golden Wright**

Interim Dean, College of Fine Arts  
& Communication

# Spring 2023 graduates

Taylor Angelle  
Brianna Barnett  
Erin Black  
Kimberly Boase, Au.D.  
Jacob Breaux  
Sydney Brown  
Krystan Bush  
Tommy Byers  
Sheila Cantu  
Gillian Carona  
Josue Carrizal  
Alexandra Castro  
Timothy Chors  
Allyssa Circello  
Kaitlyn Cofty  
Khalaya Coleman  
Kiara Collins  
Adrien Connor  
Millory Crowe  
Aidan Damian  
Vi Do  
Kylie Dodson  
Alexis Doub  
Natalie Doucet  
Devyn Drake  
Jenna Dreher  
Tylan Drummer  
Hailey Duzan  
Carley Erickson  
Taylor Eubank, Au.D.t  
Brianna Ferguson  
Gracie Fletcher  
Alyssa Flora  
Brianna Frenzel  
Jazleen Garcia  
Abigail Gemza  
Sydni Griffin  
Camden Guarnere  
Kenadi Hagan  
Jayleigh Hancock  
Danielle Harris

Zachary Harris, Au.D.  
Quinton Haynes  
Kailen Higgins  
Jasmine Horne  
Daniel Houston  
Hannah Huff  
Rose Icenogle  
Tristan Isbell  
Dallas Jessie  
Montinena Johnson  
Briana Jones  
Damara Jones  
De'Vionne Jones  
Samantha Jordan  
Kayley Geroux Kemp, Au.D.  
Yaqeen Khawehir  
Allyson Lacombe  
Emily Landry  
Abigaile Larson  
Stephanie Larson  
Nicole Lavergne  
Ambour Leal  
Jimmesha Littleton  
Gavin Lopez  
Peyton Lumpkin  
Yesenia Maldonado  
Caitlin May  
Nicole McDaniel  
Cole McKinstry  
Katie Medicis  
Callie Melancon  
Corina Mena  
Alexis Miller  
Karl Morales  
Haley Morris  
Reyna Moss  
Nicholas Northrup  
Amber Palos, Au.D.  
Lexus Patrick  
Emaley Phillips  
Aubry Placette, Au.D.

Benjamin Porter  
Omar Ramos  
Gaeson Ratcliff  
Brianna Reed  
Joshua Rigsby  
Yared Rodriguez, Au.D.  
Aaliyah Ruiz  
Caroline Schmidt  
Dylan Schofield  
Rebecca Shaffer  
Brooke Smith  
Chloe Smith  
Madison Smith  
Victor Sotomayor Caballero  
Rachel Spelz, Au.D.  
Katherine Spexart  
Carter Storm  
Mallory Strader  
Brett Strahan  
Nejon Sturgent  
Jetta Terrell  
Chloe Thompson  
Gracie Thompson  
Brooke Tilton, Au.D.  
Tristan Tonche  
Amanda Torres  
Nathan Trinkle  
Alyssa Jade Alicog Ulep, Au.D.  
Jaclyn Untrecht  
Carla Vallejo  
Breanna Ward  
Syr White  
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## Upcoming Events

**Art Student Senior Thesis Exhibition**  
Until May 13 – 9 am to 4 pm - Dishman  
Art Museum

**Commencement Ceremony**  
May 12 – 2pm - Montagne Center

# Eclectic Collective

ART & DESIGN STUDENTS TO PRESENT SENIOR THESIS EXHIBITION AT DISHMAN ART MUSEUM



**T**he Lamar Department of Art and Design invites you to join them for “Eclectic Collective,” the Spring 2023 senior thesis show in which art students fulfill the requirements for their degree by presenting their thesis projects. “Sanity Not Found” will be in exhibition April 28 to May 13 at the Dishman Art Museum.

“Eclective Collective” features work from ten students: Adrien Connor, Katherine Correa, Danielle Harris, Yaqeen Khawehir, Jimmesha Littleton, Yesenia Maldonado, Destinique Rahming, Chloe Thompson and Preston Wooten

“The audience will see a vast array of traditional and digital

artworks including drawing, illustration, graphic design, photography, and animation,” said Prince Thomas, professor in the department of Art & Design. “The works are based in the student’s area of concentration within the department.”

“The senior students came up with the title for their show. I think they were trying to come up with a title that could encompass the variety of methods and ideas that they were all exploring,” said Thomas. “Thesis is the capstone course for all our art majors and consists of several components, with the final component being an exhibition of their works in the Dishman Art Museum. They have been working

on their thesis the entire semester with a faculty committee that oversees and guides them through the process from initial idea to sketches to fully realized works.”

Admission to the Dishman Art Museum is free of charge and open to the public. Free museum-dedicated parking is available in front of the Dishman during museum hours.

Photography by Lynn Lane



# COLLABORATE

THE NEXT STEP FOR THEATRE & DANCE

**C**ollaborate. Innovate. Create. That is the motto of the Lamar University College of Fine Arts & Communication. In fact, it is more than just a motto. It is a mission, and that mission is about to become more evident and crucial for the Department of Theatre & Dance.

As the department has brought another busy season to a close following the spring faculty dance concert, "Dance Unleashed," faculty are already in planning mode and making preparations for the 2023-24 season. Going into the new season, the department has been asking questions on how to offer the best education that they can for their students and future ones to come. Ultimately, the answer comes down to one word: collaboration.

Amy Elizabeth, assistant professor of dance, began creating a conversation amongst her peers and trying to determine the vision and values of the department.

"The idea is that the students are getting a degree in theatre and dance, not just a degree in theatre or just a degree in dance," said Elizabeth. "The goal is that when a student leaves this program then they will have a well-rounded education in all things performance art."

Elizabeth, who founded and owns Aimed Dance, a dance company based in Southeast Texas, said that when she first started the company, she handled costume design, construction, lighting design and music editing all on her own due to lacking resources. However, it was thanks to the education she received that

helped her feel prepared. This is one of the main goals of the department to share with current and future students.

"I was very thankful, that the institution I came from, I was able to take lighting design, costume design and four semesters of production," she said. "That's something we try to share with our young dancers."

Despite the name of the department including both theatre and dance, according to Elizabeth there had been very little crossover between the two since she began at LU. That is something that hopes to be changed with progress already being made towards it.

"We have a very unique degree in that dancers will take theatre classes and theatre students will take dance classes, and when I first got here there was a big gray area when it came to that," she said. "When it came to the students, they didn't really interact a lot with one another. So, I think the biggest shift that we're looking at moving forward is how can we cross pollinate and then collaborate."

Elizabeth added that the modern dance class she teaches this semester is half dance students and half theatre students. On the flip side, dance students have started taking lighting design classes that have previously been taught to theatre students primarily. Ultimately, this overlap helps all involved.

"You have lighting designers in a dance class learning the language and vocabulary, and then there are the dancers in the lighting design class learning that language and vocabular," she said. "At the end of the day, it helps everyone to speak a more familiar language so that collaborations are smoother and have more depth to them. There is more overall investment from both parts."

The Lamar University Department of Theatre & Dance continues to evolve and adapt to what is best for their students and what will help them achieve success in the future. As they prepare for next season, the excitement and energy can be felt throughout the theatre, the faculty and the students.



# Enriched experience

*Film students take part in research and presentation opportunity with OUR*

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Since its inception, the Lamar University Department of Communication & Media has thrived in providing students an in-depth education and the opportunity to receive hands-on experience in communication and media fields such as public relations, broadcasting, advertising and filmmaking.

Now, faculty members within the department are looking to build on the opportunities for students and to enrich their experience through research and presentation in collaboration with the Office of Undergraduate Research.

The department has a long history of students who have presented a research topic with the OUR and some have gone to present their research to other parts of the state. At the most recent OUR Expo, Benjamin Porter and Casey Shontz, both film students, presented researched topics that simply stemmed from classes they have taken with their faculty mentors, Andre Favors and Dr. Sheila Springer.

Favors, instructor in the department, said that Porter's research began following an essay he wrote in his rhetorical theory and criticism class while Shontz began their research under Springer during her intro to communication class.



*Casey Shontz, Jacob Breaux, Benjamin Porter, Shane Brown*

-ting research with the OUR is not a requirement, he believes that it can be a benefit to students who are interested.

"I do think they can really enhance student experience, demonstrate marketable skills for employers and graduate schools and can open doors and opportunities for students," said Favors. "These experiences also try to mirror experiences students will have once they complete their undergraduate careers. These experiences will look different for different students and how these opportunities come about will not be the same."

Something new that the department did for this year's OUR Expo is

they showcased student film work from three students and allowed them to take part in a Q&A session.

"Student film work has not been showcased, though I had a feeling the OUR folks would be willing," said Favors. "I talked to the director of OUR and he was delighted to hear that we wanted to do a film panel."

As the film program grows along with Red Beak Productions, the film student organization, Favors and other faculty members aim to provide exposure, programming and continuity along with opportunities for students to showcase their work.



# A NEW ERA

KVLU PUBLIC RADIO NAMES NEW STATION MANAGER



Since the start of 2023, there has been a large void that can be felt through the halls and offices of the KVLU Public Radio station. Now, that void has been filled with the announcement of their new station manager.

Following the retirement of longtime KVLU station manager and Lamar University mainstay Byron Balentine at the end of 2022, the station began their search for Balentine's successor. Balentine left behind big shoes to fill, as the longtime voice of KVLU served the station for nearly 50 years in a number of roles and serving as station manager for 17 of those years.

To take over the office of Balentine is no easy task, but after months of interviewing and contemplating, the committee behind the search found the person they believe will honor the station and those that came before them in KVLU's now-former production director, Jason Miller.

"It's a great feeling and a great honor," said Miller. "Being here for so many years and seeing so many changes over the years from technology to radio to new media and with university things changing and growing, it's an honor to be able



to steer the ship now with respect to everyone that I've worked with and to Byron who became a strong mentor and friend."

An LU alumn, Miller has been a part of KVLU since 1997 after learning of a part-time job opportunity from a friend who knew Miller was interested in radio. At the time, he was working at another station in the area. Miller, having been aware of KVLU already due to their consistent broadcasting of jazz music, decided to take on the opportunity and began paying his dues by sitting in at the board, pushing eight tracks and not saying much.

Towards the end of his academics at LU, Miller began to receive opportunities to read the weather and promos. After graduating, Miller began a teaching career and working for a newspaper, but he never left KVLU as he had a passion

for the station and radio as a whole. So, he kept taking on any work they offered him, eventually leading to a full-time position.

"I was always doing something for KVLU," he said. "I was always working shifts. I was mostly doing evening jazz shifts, and then there was an opportunity to return to LU full time as production director in 2005."

The work that Miller had done as a student and following his graduation is what prepared him to take on his full-time role at the university. Not only that, but his experience as a teacher has helped him blend the two passions as he is able to teach new students in radio and to provide them the same opportunities that were provided to him.

Miller had been production director for his entire full-time tenure at KVLU. Now, he has been

given the chance to get behind the wheel and to guide the station into its new era, a role that he said was made possible due to the leadership and mentorship he has received over the last 18 years.

"It was a bit of a progressive process," he said. "It progressed along with the experience through the mentorship and through being more confident in how things work and seeing myself in that role. It's easy to come into something right away and thinking 'I want to run this thing,' but it was about humbling myself and learning and then gradually coming into it."

Miller emphasized the importance of Balentine and the impact he has made on him throughout his time at KVLU, crediting Balentine

with giving him the tools and confidence to step into the station manager role.

"A lot of things is just sheer knowledge of the business that he has," said Miller. "He was also very encouraging of trying ideas for shows, programming changes and stuff like that."

Miller said that Balentine's open-door policy and always being available, and wanting to talk about ideas or general conversation is something that has inspired him and is something he plans to keep going as station manager.

"It was the friendship that developed to be able to just talk and pick his brain and to be comfortable to share stuff that was really awesome," he said.

forward to working with our team," he said. "Sitting down with everybody and just saying 'let's go' and 'let's see what we can do' and just taking this team and serving the Southeast Texas community and LU the best we can. It's the people that I respect so much, and I just really want to be able to work together and collaborate with them."

The feeling is mutual throughout the rest of the station. They are ready to go and to get to work.

Balentine's retirement left a large void in the station of KVLU Public Radio, but Miller intends to fill that void and to continue moving forward with a staple of the Southeast Texas community.



Now, as Miller takes his first steps as the captain of KVLU Public Radio, he says that there are a lot of things that excite him. From being able to manage to new technology to building on the brand of KVLU and NPR, there is a lot that he is ready for. However, the biggest thing that excites him the most isn't the title change or responsibilities. Rather, it is being able to lead and to continue working with his team.

"I'm looking

# Student media wins big

*University Press and LUTV students take home 21 TIPA awards*

Lamar University's student media picked up 21 awards at the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association convention in Fort Worth, March 23-25.

University Press photo editor Brian Quijada won first place in on-site competition for Sports Action Photography and honorable mention for Feature Photo. On-site competitions involve students from schools across the state.

TIPA also handed out awards for work produced during the 2022 calendar year. Quijada placed first in the Sports Action and Photo Story categories, also placing second in the latter category.

"Live competition is an excellent teaching tool," Andy Coughlan, director of student publications, said. "The events are fast-paced and really simulate the speed of professional assignments. Just to compete is invaluable experience, but to pick up awards is validation of Brian's progress."

Managing editor Maddie Sims placed first in the Critical Review category for her review of LU theatre's "Clean House."

Sports editor Keagan Smith earned first place for Sports News Story, and Smith and Quijada shared first place for Sports Page Design.

"This past year has been difficult as we all seek to rebound from the COVID lockdown," Sims

said. "I see this year as a chance to reset and begin to rebuild the program. These awards are especially gratifying, and I hope we can use them to attract even more students from all majors to contribute to the UP."

LUTV's Hannah Spikes placed first in Feature Reporting-Video, and Gabriel Poarch and Angel Hastings shared first place for Sportscast-Video.

"Media professionals and organizations are consistently seeing the value of the talent and creative content being produced at Lamar University Television," LUTV director Gordon Williams said. "This frequent recognition says a great deal about the caliber of our students and their work ethic."

Second place awards went to Smith for Sports Column and Feature Story, and to the University Press staff Overall Website Design.

LUTV's Poarch earned second place for Sports Reporting-Video, Cameron Sanderson earned second for Sportscast-Video. In the Program Production-Video category, Tommy Byers, Taylor Justice, Nick Northrup and Khalaya Coleman shared second place.

Third place awards were given



to Justice and Coleman for Feature Reporting-Video. Honorable mentions went to UP contributor Jordan Smith for Sports Game Story and Quijada for General New Photo. LUTV's Poarch earned honorable mention for Sports Reporting Video. The UP's website also earned honorable mention in on-site competition.

"Student media is a vital part of our Cardinal community," Coughlan said. "From newspaper to TV, to radio and podcast, it reaches beyond the boundaries of the campus and into the Southeast Texas community at large. I see these awards as an indication that our students are really stepping up and preparing for bright professional futures."

TIPA is the oldest collegiate journalism organization in the country, and currently has 48 member schools, both four- and two-year institutions.

# Drum roll please...

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC NAMES NEW DRUM MAJOR FOR NEXT ATHLETIC SEASON

**W**hen walking the halls of the dean's suite in the theatre arts building on the campus of Lamar University, there hangs a black and white photo of a young woman in old school marching band garb. Underneath the photo rests a tag that reads "Drum Major with Lamar Band" with the year 1936 attached to it.

87 years ago, a female drum major led the Lamar band. Now, for the first time since the band's return in 2010, the Mary Morgan Moore Department of Music has selected the first female drum major who will take on the role on her own.

Kamryn Knafelz, a fourth-year senior music major, has been selected as the new drum major for The Showcase of Southeast Texas Marching Band following a month-long application, interview and audition process. After being the runner up for the drum major position last year, Dr. Eric Shannon, associate professor and director of athletic bands, said that he saw Knafelz working all season long to earn this position.

Knafelz will lead the band during pep events and football games in the fall semester and will serve as the top representative. She has previously served as president of the Tau Beta Sigma chapter and section leader for the flute and piccolo studio.

"I'm very excited," said Knafelz. "I've spent a lot of time doing the dirty work and teaching people how to march, being in charge as section leader and uniform manager and just overseeing the smaller details that make us look good as a whole. So, now in my last year, I get to take a step back from that and observe and watch from

the sideline and see the effect of what I have left on the field."

Following the band's return in 2010, there were multiple drum major's selected. However, this was changed in 2020 during the pandemic. Although there have been female drum major's since 2010, Knafelz will make history as the first solo female drum major.

"I'm excited to get to represent us and getting out there and doing this thing as a woman in music," she said. "I think it can be really inspiring and help others know, especially for younger members who might feel that it has been primarily male led in the past, that there's change happening."



# A growing partnership

DSDE TO COLLABORATE MORE WITH TSD TO MAKE JOBS AVAILIABLE FOR STUDENTS



Photo provided by TSD

**T**he Lamar University Department of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education and the Texas School for the Deaf are furthering their partnership and collaboration to help provide ASL and deaf studies students job opportunities following graduation.

Currently, the department's Masters of Science in Deaf Studies Deaf Education degree is offered in Austin on the campus of TSD. Some goals of this collaboration is to increase the number of deaf education teachers and to make it easy and cost efficient on the student. Most students who are in the program are already working at TSD or in the Austin area. TSD provides classrooms, internet access and dormitories for students traveling to and from Austin.

Texas School for the Deaf is a place where students who are deaf or hard of hearing including those

with additional disabilities, have the opportunity to learn, grow and belong in a culture that optimizes individual potential and provides accessible language and communication across the curriculum

Now, the department and TSD are looking to futher their partnership that will include job opportunities being shared to all students including undergraduate interpreting and ASL students.

"It is very thrilling," said Dr. Diane Clark, chair of the department. "We can collaborate on a few different levels, and it's nice because we could set up a possible collaboration and help the students after they graduate and to find a job and work at TSD."

As TSD is one of the largest deaf schools in the United States, the deaf community that comes along with it is a big reason for this partnership as it allows for students

to be involved in a prominent, strong and supportive atmosphere.

Kiana Hogan, employment and compensation specialist at TSD, made it clear that this partnership is for more than aspring deaf education teachers.

"I think that an easy misunderstanding and misconception is that if you have a degree in deaf education then you have to be a teacher," said Hogan. "That is not true. We have other opportunities for those who have their bachelor's and master's in anything related to deaf education."

Opportunities include operation and interpreting, while a big one involves their Statewide Outreach Center where the goal of that is to spread knowledge of resources, working with deaf and hard-of-hearing children and supporting regional schools.

# Just another reason

SPHS VOCOLOGY CERTIFICATE PROGRAM SETS DEPARTMENT APART

**T**he Lamar University Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences is home to a number of great aspects. From the community resource clinics to having the only Doctor of Audiology program in the state of Texas, the department has a lot to offer its students and surrounding community members. An essential area of the department that has flown under the radar is the online vocology certificate program.

Vocology, the science and practice of voice habilitation, fosters multidisciplinary collaboration in research, as well as interdisciplinary research due to the budding interest in collaboration between those in the areas of pedagogy, voice science and performance. It is a relatively new field that was established in 1989.

The vocology certificate program at LU, the only one of its kind in the state and one of the few in the world, allows students to acquire foundational knowledge of acoustics, anatomy and physiology of the vocal mechanism, correlate physiology to auditory perception, analyze and interpret information, and incorporate this knowledge into their own intervention and teaching.

The program is entirely online and allows for flexibility with finances, scheduling and enables students to proceed at their own pace.

Abigail Dueppen, director of the voice lab, vocology clinic and program, says that LU is “uniquely suited to offer this certificate because of our historically strong programs in music and speech and hearing sciences, faculty who are trained specialists in our curriculum and our voice lab and vocology clinic.”

Dueppen, a coloratura soprano who has performed in national and international houses to critical acclaim, holds her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in music while also carrying a masters in speech-language pathology. Her experience and education in both fields has provided the department with the right person to develop a strong vocology program and to serve the community through the clinic.

“We are here to serve everyone in our community with a voice disorder,” said Dueppen. “We see voice clients who are experiencing difficulties using their voices due to vocal nodules, excess muscle tension, reduced loudness/pitch range and voice banking services for those with degenerative diseases such as ALS.”

Dueppen’s ultimate goal is not only to expand the certificate program, but it is to also make it known to the public and professional voice users that the clinic at LU is available and wants to assist in the best way that they can. This is all just another reason why the Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences is set apart from the rest.





# Fighting for 'HERSTORY'

LU'S THEATRE'S "THE REVOLUTIONISTS" INSPIRES PERSONAL REVOLUTIONS

ARTICLE CONTRIBUTED BY MADDIE SIMS, UP MANAGING EDITOR



A playwright, an assassin, a free woman of color, and an ex-monarch. What do these four have in common? They are all experiencing oppression during the French Revolution.

In “The Revolutionists,” a play, within a play, these women meet and form a sister-like bond as they face the state of their country head on.

Lamar’s department of theatre and dance presents Lauren Gunderson’s dramedy through April 16 in the Studio Theatre.

Olympe De Gouges (Briana Cobos) is a playwright with writer’s block. She wants to change the world with words of declaration and passion. Charlotte Corday (Shelby Eason) plans to assassinate the revolutionary journalist Jean Paul Marat who she blames for the death of hundreds of ordinary people. Marianne Angelle (Domonique Roman) is fighting to end the slave trade in the French colonies. Queen Marie-Antoinette (CJ Jeffcoat), now stripped from her throne, learns just how gruesome the revolt truly is without the safety net of her royal title.

The story takes place in De Gouges’ head, with the set representing the corners of her mind, such as her desk, a courtroom, and an ominous guillotine. It feels like we are seeing everything unfold like a memory, jumping from one place to another seamlessly.

Along with the drama and heavy themes of the revolution, the play is witty with humorous dialogue and its meta-based comedy. The characters are well aware they are in a play, with asides to the audience and winking references to theater. When Olympe decides she wants to add songs, Marianne says, “No one wants to see a musical about the French Revolution,” which made the “Les Mis” fans in the audience laugh out loud.

The play’s balance of happiness and sadness make the character’s feelings and emotions feel truly meaningful.

The costumes are fantastic. Each character has their own color scheme and the details on the clothing are intricate and unique. The colors also make sense for the characters. De Gouge’s blue mixed with purple represents her passion and inner turmoil. Corday’s green and black represent her desire to save her people at the risk of her own life. Angelle’s mixed colors of yellow, pink, purple, and red represent her life, where she’s been, and what she stands for. Antoinette’s pinks represent her initial purity and naivety, along with her bright and cheery nature.



The ensemble is incredibly talented. It feels like we are seeing the real characters they are portraying. They all have a contagious energy and work well with one another. It is clear they are having fun and love the characters they play deeply.

While the play is purely historical fiction, the oppression and injustices these women face are still prevalent today. Guest director Laura Moreno puts it all together with passion and immense creativity in portraying the inner thoughts and motivation of De Gouge. Moreno charges us to look at these figures and be inspired to create our own stories.



COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS & COMMUNICATION  
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