



Stephens College

STEPHENS F.Y.I.

PRESIDENT DIANNE LYNCH TO RETIRE IN MAY 2025



“Stephens College has truly been my life’s work,” President Lynch told her community in announcing her plans. “It has been a privilege beyond measure to be a member of this extraordinary, mission-driven community.”

She will continue to lead through May 2025 as the College implements block scheduling, a pioneering curriculum shift to prepare students for careers in an AI-dominated world.

Board Chair M. Anne Murphy ‘78 lauded Lynch’s transformative leadership, recognizing her profound impact on the College’s academic programs and campus culture. Lynch’s accessibility to students, pet-friendly campus initiatives, and a generous supply of snacks have endeared her to the community since she arrived in 2009.

Lynch’s tenure has been marked by significant achievements, including securing the largest donation in Stephens College’s history and spearheading the establishment of various academic programs such as the School for Health Sciences and the co-educational Conservatory for the Performing Arts. She also oversaw renovations to campus facilities, transforming Sampson Hall into a state-of-the-art medical facility and revitalizing the Okoboji Summer Theatre campus into an artist’s village.

Beyond Stephens College, Lynch has been a prominent community leader, receiving accolades such as the Athena Award and the Distinguished Service Award from the Columbia NAACP. Her impact extends nationally through her leadership roles in organizations like the American Midwest Conference of the NAIA and the Lillian Lodge Kopenhaver Center for the Advancement of Women in Communication.

As Lynch prepares for retirement, Stephens College reflects on her legacy of innovation, community engagement, and educational excellence. Plans for commemorating her tenure and transitioning leadership will be unveiled in the coming months.

To read previous editions of Stephens F.Y.I. – click [here](#)

TOP NEWS FROM CAMPUS



This spring marks the last chapter of our traditional semester-based schedule as we put the finishing touches on our **Reimagining Stephens** strategic plan, transforming the College's academic delivery into an immersive and flexible block schedule this fall. With our block schedule, our famously dedicated and impressively connected professors have the uninterrupted time to help students dig deep into a topic, understand its meaning in the bigger world, and own what they know through a wealth of hands-on learning experiences in and out of the classroom.

Our new **Women in Trades** program is now enrolling. This uniquely-Stephens program is designed to address the gender gap in skilled trades professions. It will offer wrap-around services such as training, mentorship, certifications, and support for students seeking to enter dynamic and rewarding industries such as construction, carpentry, and highway construction while working on women-only crews.

Stephens Athletics continues to advance with the appointment of **Melinda Wrye-Washington** as Associate Vice President and Director of Athletics, the hire of a new volleyball coach, **Maggie Hans**, the softball team's sweep of Hannibal-LaGrange University and first-ever victory over cross-town rival Columbia College, and the basketball team's history-making season capped with their first ever appearance at the NAIA Tournament including a first-round win!

There is so much energy heading into the close of the academic year with a never-ending calendar of events, from the 80th Annual Student Designer Fashion Show to the School of Health Sciences Spring Research Conference, from the Harbinger Spring 2024 launch party to the Ten Ideals Ball, from Crossing the Bridge to Commencement.

NEWS AROUND THE QUADS

Stephens College Alumni Weekend 2024



April 11-13 was a beautiful weekend on campus, and we welcomed alums from classes spanning 1956 to 2023. The College hosted events that celebrated tradition and innovation and gave a special nod to members of the Class of 1974 celebrating their 50th reunion. The campus was abuzz with activities highlighting Stephens' trailblazing educational strides while honoring its rich history.

The reunion included many engaging Campus Connection Experiences, including student-led tours highlighting the College's academic and extracurricular programs. Thursday concluded with the Harbinger 2024 Edition Launch Party and an entertaining Karaoke Night, blending alumni nostalgia with contemporary student culture.

On Friday, alums participated in interactive sessions like the simulated patient experience with the Physician Assistant Program and visits with the students in our Children's School. Attendees participated in the grand opening of the Center of Excellence for Veteran Success as the new home for the Mission Promise Kept program. They learned about the newly launched Women in the Trades program, which will empower women in male-dominated fields. The Crossing the Bridge Ceremony for the Class of 2024 symbolized the seniors' upcoming transition from students to alumni, underscoring the continuity of the Stephens community.

Later that day, during the Alumni Awards Ceremony, the College honored **Kristin Atwell Ford '91** with the Alumni Achievement Award, celebrating her Emmy-Award-winning career as a filmmaker and **Sally McClure Jackson '56**

for her nearly 70 years of service to Stephens and the Equestrian Program. The evening culminated in the Ten Ideals Ball, a fairytale-themed gathering that enchanted all attendees.

Saturday's State of the College Address by President Dianne Lynch provided an overview of the challenges facing private higher education and outlined Stephens College's innovative strategic responses, including the adoption of a block program launching in Fall 2024, the addition of new academic and certificate programs, the strengthening of athletics, and a focus on affordability for students. Her address was particularly significant since, on Thursday, she announced her retirement in May 2025 after 16 years of service. This revelation added a poignant note to her speech as she reflected on her tenure and Stephens' trajectory towards future growth and the College's adaptation to the educational needs of students.

President Lynch's forthcoming retirement stirred deep reflections among the alumni about her impactful leadership and the foundation she has built for her successor. Her updates and strategic vision have bolstered alumni's confidence in the College's direction and plans for continued success and a promising future.

The weekend continued with the 80th-anniversary fashion show "The Collections" and the Conservatory for the Performing Arts Senior Showcase, each highlighting the impressive talent of today's students.

President Lynch's State of the College Address can be viewed [here](#).

2024 Alumni Awards Ceremony can be viewed [here](#).

Alumni Weekend Photos can be viewed [here](#).

Thank you to all who attended for making it such an enjoyable weekend for all of us on campus!



See you next year!

April 24-26, 2025

The Stephens Promise: Free Tuition for Eligible Students



Beginning in the fall of 2024, the Stephens Promise program will provide up to four years of free tuition for full-time students whose annual adjusted family income is less than \$75,000, a cap that reflects Missouri’s median family income of \$71,520.

To qualify for The Stephens Promise, students must have

a GPA of 3.3 or greater, be residential students, and file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) annually. The program will be available to all current, new, and transfer undergraduate students who meet the criteria.

For many students, the Stephens Promise means they could graduate from college debt-free. “We are delivering on our promise that students and families who need to take on college debt won’t have to,” said President Dianne Lynch.

Unveiling New Cross-Cultural Experiential Learning Program



Stephens will launch an exciting new dimension in our educational landscape this fall: a comprehensive cross-cultural experiential learning program to enrich our students’ academic journeys.

To weave cross-cultural understanding throughout every aspect of student life, this interdisciplinary initiative will span academics with career and personal development by embedding culturally immersive experiences into the fabric of our living and learning experience.

Study Abroad Italy (SAI) is the flagship of our cross-cultural offerings, featuring the course BUS386: Global Markets. Led by Business Program Chair **Dr. Scott Taylor** and Associate Vice President for Student Experience and Director of Cross-Cultural Studies **Alex Bryan**. This course will take place during the second block of the fall semester and promises to be an adventure that will transform how our students engage with the world.

Participants will have the chance to experience firsthand Italian culture, journeying through the historic cities of Milan, Florence, and Rome. This isn't just a tour; it's a total immersion into the Italian way of life, where every street corner, every meal, and every conversation is an opportunity to grow and learn.

SAI goes beyond the traditional classroom setting. Students will interact with local entrepreneurs and delve into sustainable business practices across a variety of industries. From the artisanal craftsmanship at a leather factory to the traditional techniques employed at a winery, from cheese production to organic farming, our students will gain firsthand insight into international business and marketing strategies.

Beyond the professional sphere, the SAI program is brimming with cultural activities. Students will tantalize their taste buds with Italian cooking classes, unravel the stories behind historic landmarks on guided city tours, and stand in awe within the hallowed walls of cathedrals and art museums. Iconic sites like the Colosseum and the Roman Forum will serve as classrooms, offering lessons in history and humanity that can only be learned through experience.

Students will broaden their horizons, enhance their personal and professional competencies, and embrace a myriad of perspectives. At Stephens College, we believe in education without borders, learning that transcends the traditional, and experiences that last a lifetime.

Gifts from alumni to support the Student Experience Fund will ensure the College's goal to provide every student, regardless of economic ability, the opportunity to participate in at least one cross-cultural experience during their time at Stephens. If you're interested in learning more, contact us at giving@stephens.edu or (573) 876-7110 or by visiting Stephens Connect [here](#).

The Day of the Horse



2024 SPRING RESEARCH CONFERENCE
Hosted by the School of Health Sciences

On April 18, **the Doris Spiegelberg School of Health Sciences** held its Spring Research Conference, maintaining its annual theme related to animal research and science; this year was **The Day of the Horse**. Students from each Health Science program presented posters and platform presentations showcasing their original research. Engaging in conducting and presenting research allows students to develop skills in project management, problem-solving, and data analysis. This kind of academic pursuit is essential preparation for future careers in the health sciences.

The program included four Plenary speakers:

- **The Equine Gut Group** – A multi-center effort to understand the equine gut microbiome *Dr. Aaron Ericsson, University of Missouri*
- **Equine Glandular Gastric Disease: Investigations into a complex clinical syndrome** *Dr. Heidi Banse, Louisiana State University*
- **The Current Status of Drug Resistance in Equine Parasites: A Growing Problem** Stephens Alumna, **Dr. Michelle Schultz DeBoer '12**, *University of Wisconsin, River Falls*
- **Mentoring the next generation through equine colic research** *Dr. Anthony Blikslager, North Carolina State University*

And four student platform presentations:

- **Parental Involvement, Autonomy, and College Performance: Insights and Implications** *Gracie Cameron '24; Dr. Crina Mansat*
- **Effect of Empathy on Decision-making Regarding Parasocial Relations** *EmmaLee Djerf '24; Dr. Eric Marx*
- **Mental Well-Being and Coping in College Team Sports Athletes** *Kaitlyn Simms '26*
- **The Relationship Between Our Dark Traits And Empathy** *Nicole Snyder '24*

Each year, the conference allows students to participate actively in a highly professional scholarly conference. They present their research and respond to feedback from conference attendees. These interactions offer opportunities for valuable insights and discussions. Stephens is dedicated to ensuring that all students have opportunities to work directly with faculty on original undergraduate research, leading to graduates better prepared for careers or further education than those at larger institutions.

The day also served as the official launch of the WiSR (Women in STEM Research) program, showcasing a partnership with our flagship Equestrian program, our new Animal Behavior degree, and the University of Missouri College of Veterinary Medicine.

New Animal Behavior Program Enrolling for Fall 2024



Known as the pet-friendliest School in the nation, Stephens College is creating a groundbreaking new academic program that intersects animal behavior with practical, non-riding applications for horses. The program demonstrates our commitment to diversifying animal-related education.

A Bachelor of Science in Animal Behavior (ABe) is an interdisciplinary program focusing on the scientific understanding of animal behavior and human-animal interactions. Utilizing collaborations across several academic disciplines, bridging psychology, health sciences, and equestrian studies, Animal Behavior is a comprehensive educational experience to meet today's industry demands.

Students in the program synthesize insights from biology, psychology, animal science, and other disciplines into a comprehensive scientific understanding of animal behavior. Students are encouraged to tailor their program to suit their intellectual curiosity and professional goals, and they take part in numerous immersive and hands-on activities that promote their development as leaders

in their disciplines. Stephens College's superb equestrian facilities and commitment to the health and welfare of companion and service animals are foundational aspects of the program.

An ABe degree prepares students for careers in a wide variety of professional settings, including in training and shelter facilities, veterinary clinics, equine Facilities, Welfare Organizations, Research Institutions, Zoos, Museums, and wildlife and conservation organizations.

Animal Behaviorist jobs are in demand and expected to grow 8% from 2018 to 2028. On average, dog trainers in the U.S. earn over \$59,315, while behavioral specialists earn \$117,760 per year. Pet psychologists earn \$84,660, while zoologists earn \$57,700.

Stephens Celebrates New Center of Excellence for Veteran Success



At Stephens College, we believe that every American veteran deserves our gratitude, respect, and support. But we know that women veterans often face unique challenges. That's why we created Mission Promise Kept: to empower women veterans to earn college degrees, achieve personal success, and attain financial independence.

Mission Promise Kept is the first comprehensive college program designed to meet the full spectrum of living and learning needs of women veterans. Participants and their children live in newly renovated on-campus apartments and receive the wraparound support they need to thrive through a coordinated network of programs and services.

On Friday, April 12, **Mission Promise Kept**, led by Executive Director **Elizabeth Herrera**, and Stephens College celebrated the grand opening of a new resource center for veterans with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The Center of Excellence for Veteran Success in Stamper Commons will serve veterans of all genders and provide a place to gather, study, and share their experiences. The Center was funded by a \$600,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

ATHLETICS RISING TO THE TOP



Stephens Basketball Stars Journey to the NAIA

The Stars' historic season came to a close on March 16. However, the Stars' journey to the NAIA was marked by a season of commanding performances, securing the American Midwest Conference Championship title, winning 12 conference awards (see award winners below), and their first-ever appearance in the NAIA tournament. The team finished the season with a 21-6 overall record (16-2 AMC) held in Indianapolis, IN.

As the No. 9 seed in the Naismith Quadrant, the Stars defeated the University of Pikeville (Ky.) Bears in the first round with a final score of 84-69. In the second round, the Stars took on the overall No. 1 seed, Marian University Knights, on their home court. Despite a valiant effort, they lost 49-63, bringing a bittersweet end to their historic season with an overall record of 23-8.

“Our journey doesn’t end here. It’s a stepping stone for greater achievements next season. We’ve grown from this experience and only plan to come back stronger and more determined than ever,” Head Coach Andre Bell said about the season. “We are grateful to the board members and our president for making this all possible. Hopefully, the rest of the basketball world knows who [we are] and where Stephens Stars Basketball resides.”

AMC Award Winners

Defensive Player of the Year & Newcomer of the Year: **Savanna “Chu” Crockett ‘24**

Freshman Player of the Year: **Lauren Friedrich ‘26**

First Team All-Conference: **Chu Crockett ‘24**

Second Team All-Conference: **Mia Morel ‘26**

Third Team All-Conference: **Zaraya March ‘24, Marveen Ross ‘24**

All-Defensive Team: **Chu Crockett ‘24, Alayasia Douglas ‘24**

All-Freshman Team: **Lauren Friedrich ‘26, Aushara Hostetler ‘27**

AMC Academic All-Conference: **Alayasia Douglas ‘24, KaLynn Irey ‘26, Lauren Friedrich ‘26, Aushara Hostetler ‘27, Jordan Salgado-Gray ‘26**

Champions of Character: **Lauren Friedrich ‘26**

Coach of the Year: **Andre Bell**



Stephens Softball is on the Rise

Stars softball is also making its mark in the AMC, with an overall record of 16-27 (8-9 AMC). On April 19th, the Stars split the series with cross-town rivals Columbia College, winning one of two games, tying the season win record, and marking another milestone in the Stars' winning momentum.

In a thrilling non-conference match against Graceland University, the Stars secured a split series, and first-year Head Coach **Clint Poulsen** claimed his inaugural collegiate coaching victory. After a slow start to the season, Poulsen attributes the win to the team's dedication and unity.

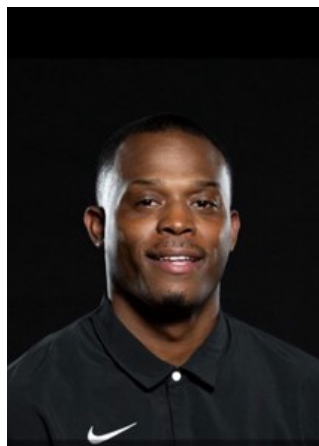
The arrival of conference play on March 23 came with a two-game sweep of the Harris-Stowe University Hornets in dominant fashion, winning games one 10-2 and two 22-5.

Ivy Smart '25 was named AMC Player of the Week in back-to-back weeks, displaying her exceptional batting skills and consistency. Smart's remarkable performance, boasting a batting average of over .700, 13 hits, and seven doubles, solidified her reputation as a standout player. With such talent and determination, Stephens College softball is poised for continued success on the field.

Administration and Coaching Updates



Stephens College has appointed **Melinda Wrye-Washington** as its new Associate Vice President and Director of Athletics. With a distinguished career in collegiate athletics, including multiple accolades and championship victories, Wrye-Washington brings valuable experience to the role. She previously served as Assistant Athletic Director at Stephens before assuming her new position.



Andre Bell, who has been serving as Athletic Director alongside coaching basketball, will return to coaching full-time to continue building the team's winning culture. President Dianne Lynch expressed gratitude for Bell's contributions and emphasized his dedication to excellence. Bell, in turn, expressed enthusiasm for the new structure and praised Wrye-Washington's leadership, indicating alignment in their vision for the College's athletics program.

Wrye-Washington's extensive background includes successful tenures at various institutions, including Columbia College and the Eldon R-1 School District. Her achievements as a coach and athletic administrator demonstrate a commitment to excellence in women's sports.

President Lynch believes Wrye-Washington is an ideal leader for the role, citing her exceptional and winning track record in collegiate athletics. With Wrye-Washington's appointment, Stephens College aims to build upon the foundation and further advance its athletics program.



Maggie Hans, originally from Wichita, brings her passion for volleyball and strong faith to Stephens College. Hans brings a wealth of coaching experience to Stephens, having served for three years as head coach at Southwestern College (KS.) plus other impactful stints at Pinnacle Charter High School, Hesston College, and McPherson College. With her faithful companion, Ozzie, by her side, she embraces outdoor activities and community connections. Dedicated to building relationships within the program and school, Maggie aims to leave a lasting positive

impact. Excited about her journey at Stephens, she sees it as an opportunity to invest her time and talents in the program and the wider community. Drawing from her collegiate volleyball experience and coaching career, Maggie finds joy in nurturing student-athletes and supporting them through their collegiate careers. Motivated by heartfelt connections and inspired by lifelong mentors, she looks forward to exploring Columbia and making a difference at Stephens College.



Clint Poulsen's passion for sports began in his youth, playing baseball, basketball, and fastpitch softball in Missouri. While baseball held his initial affection, his high school experience with fastpitch softball ignited a lasting love for the sport. After playing college baseball at Central Methodist, he transitioned into coaching, starting with basketball and baseball. A pivotal opportunity in Boonville led him to softball coaching under mentor George Monk, spanning various high schools and travel teams. Most recently coaching at Columbia's Rock Bridge High School, Poulsen's

coaching philosophy emphasizes camaraderie and personal growth, fostering a family-like atmosphere. He looks forward to leading his team at Stephens College, drawn to its small school charm within a larger college town. Poulsen's motivation lies in impacting young adults positively, guided by his competitive spirit and commitment to continual learning. He believes in effecting change one person at a time, echoing his dedication to nurturing a supportive environment on and off the field.

The Stars Softball season continues throughout April.

The 2024 Stars Volleyball and Soccer seasons will begin in August.

Follow all Stephens College Athletics [here](#).



Women in the Trades



On April 29, we will celebrate the launch of the groundbreaking **Women in the Trades** program, which aims to bridge the gender gap in heavy and highway construction and carpentry. **Dr. Scott Taylor**, dean of workforce development and the program's creator, expresses immense excitement, citing the initiative as realizing a long-held dream. The program aims to empower women by providing opportunities in traditionally male-dominated fields, particularly as major projects like the reconstruction of I-70 create demand for skilled workers. Fewer than 15 percent of skilled workers in high-demand trades are women.

The program will offer comprehensive training, mentorship, certifications, and wrap-around support to women seeking to enter dynamic and rewarding industries such as construction, carpentry, highway construction, and more. It will provide networking, mentorship, career development resources, and technical training. Enrollment is open to women of all backgrounds and experience levels. This uniquely-Stephens program will also be free of cost. Weekly stipends will be provided so that students can put 100 percent of their focus on learning. For further details and applications, visit the Stephens College Women in Trades program website [here](#).

With a bright future beginning to unfold under the leadership of **Dr. Scott Taylor**, Stephens has named him the new Dean of Workforce Development and Continuing Education. Read more about Dean Taylor in the Faculty & Staff Updates section.

Stephens College Students Shine at International DECA Competition in Austin



In an inspiring display of skill and innovation, Stephens College students took center stage again this year at the prestigious 2024 International Collegiate DECA competition held this April in Austin, Texas. This annual event, which includes 1,200 Collegiate DECA members competing in 25 events, showcases talented students from across the globe to compete in various categories of business acumen, ranging from strategic marketing to entrepreneurship.

In the International Marketing domain, the duo of **Carley Dudley '24** and **Riley Pierson '25** secured a commendable third place, showcasing their ability to devise and implement effective global marketing strategies. Their presentation, which highlighted innovative approaches to international market penetration, was highly praised for its creativity and depth of research.

Adding to the College's accolades, **Kate Stevens '25** achieved recognition as one of the top ten finalists in the highly competitive Digital Marketing Strategies category. Kate's project, which involved a comprehensive digital campaign strategy, was noted for its clear objectives and the successful integration of digital tools to achieve marketing goals.

Avery Throckmorton '24 emerged as a standout performer, clinching the top exam score in the Restaurant and Hospitality Management category. Avery's profound knowledge and strategic thinking set a high standard for future competitors.

The success of these students at such a competitive international forum speaks volumes about their dedication and the quality of preparation provided by Stephens College. Their achievements reflect their personal commitment and underscore the institution's role in nurturing future leaders in the business realm.

As Stephens College continues to foster talent and innovation, the achievements of Carley, Riley, Kate, and Avery at the DECA competition are a testament to the school's enduring legacy of excellence in education. Congratulations to all the winners and participants who represented Stephens College with pride and distinction.

Screen Queens and Creative Ink take campus by storm!



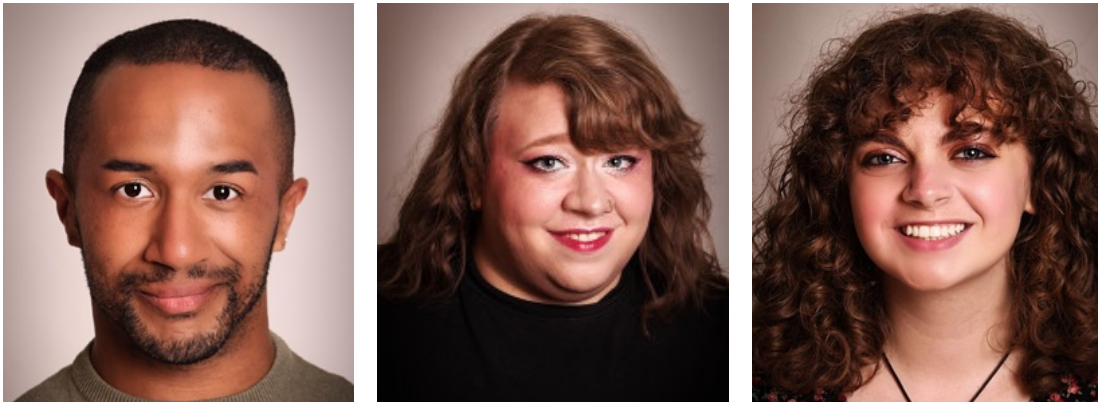
Creative Ink, a student-run marketing firm at Stephens College, is bustling with creativity this semester. Led by a four-person executive team, including Creative Director **Kate Stevens '25**, the team has taken on nine diverse clients. From on-campus projects for Susie's, Mission Promise Kept, and the Creative Hub to off-campus collaborations with brands like Big Hug Blanket and Vintage Homestead + Co., Creative Ink's work is making waves.

Notably, their collaboration with Big Hug Blanket, a brand founded by **Arona Martin '93**, landed their designs on "Good Morning America." The team is also excited about their upcoming work with the Boone County Clerk's Office, which will again impact the civic sector following a successful partnership with the Columbia Regional Airport.

Meanwhile, **Screen Queens**, the new screen-printing shop in Catharine Webb Studios (CWS) 120, is gearing up for action. With an inaugural staff already hired, Screen Queens is set to deliver fantastic designs. Currently, they are only accepting orders from internal Stephens College customers, including Susie's, student clubs, and campus departments.



Conservatory Students Recognized at KCAC Theatre Festival



Students from Stephens' Conservatory for the Performing Arts participated in Region 5 for Festival 56 in Des Moines, Iowa, as part of the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF) celebration. Three received honors. **Devin Michael Leming '25** and **Carly Cramer '25** were recognized as Musical Theatre International (MTI) Dance and Singing Finalists, respectively. **Kaley Sikora '25** was also selected as an MTI Singing Semifinalist.

Reflecting on the experience, Leming shared, "My overall take away from it was to expect the unexpected and to be prepared for ANYTHING at all times." Sikora expressed her enjoyment in collaborating with theatre artists from across the country, stating, "My favorite part of the festival was being able to work and collaborate with other theatre artists." Their participation underscores the dedication of Stephens Conservatory students to excellence and collaboration in the performing arts.

Conservatory students are looking forward to the upcoming 66th season at **Okoboji Summer Theater**. Featuring the following shows: *Leader of the Pack*, *The Ellie Greenwich Musical*, *Ken Ludwig's Baskerville*, *A Sherlock Holmes Mystery*, *Freaky Friday*, *The Mousetrap*, *My Way*, *Barefoot in the Park*, and *The Music Man*. Click [here](#) for more about Okoboji.

The Conservatory recently unveiled its 77th season: *Disney's Beauty and the Beast*, *Clue: On Stage*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Murder on the Orient Express*, and *Snow White and Me*. *Snow White and Me* features a book by **Phillip LaZebnik** and Ronald Kruschack and music and lyrics by Pippa Cleary. Phillip is a faculty mentor in the MFA TV + Screenwriting program. His brother, **Ken LaZebnik**, was the founding director of the MFA in TV + Screenwriting program. Their father was **Jack LaZebnik**, who taught English at Stephens for four decades.

Nursing Program Accolades and Accreditation



In December, the Stephens College Nursing program celebrated its accreditation by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), further recognizing its exceptional quality and integrity. This achievement underscores the institution's commitment to maintaining high standards and fostering continuous growth. **Dr. Noreen M. Houck**, founding nursing program director, says, "This accreditation from CCNE is a benchmark of our program's quality and underscores our unwavering commitment to providing an outstanding education for our students." The thorough evaluation encompassed curriculum, faculty qualifications, and overall educational effectiveness. This accreditation is also retroactive, meaning all program graduates have now attended a CCNE-accredited program.

Additionally, the program boasts a remarkable 100% pass rate on the NCLEX licensing exam and a 100% employment rate for its inaugural class highlighting its commitment to producing proficient healthcare professionals.



Engaging Community and Empowering Students in Puerto Rico



During their recent trip to Puerto Rico, **Elizabeth Herrea**, Executive Director of Mission Promise Kept and Director of Latin American Initiatives, and **Diana Melissa (Mel) Martinez Torrico '23**, Assistant Director of Student Experience, made significant strides in engaging with the local community. Their presentations to students and parents were met with enthusiasm, receiving positive feedback that underscored the impact of their outreach efforts. Notably, Elizabeth's appearances on two of the island's most-watched television shows, "Jugando Pelota Dura" and "Noticentro al Amanecer," garnered national attention, amplifying their message and extending their influence across Puerto Rico.

A highlight of their visit was a productive meeting with the team from the Puerto Rican Secretary of Education. Together, they developed strategies to effectively reach school counselors throughout the island, ensuring that young women are aware of the opportunities offered by Stephens College. This collaboration lays a solid foundation for future partnerships, marking positive initial steps from Elizabeth and Mel's journey in Puerto Rico.

Their efforts have yielded promising outcomes, with twelve prospective students expressing interest in Stephens College programs, and one student has already applied and been accepted. These early successes fuel Elizabeth and Mel's determination to deepen their involvement and support within the Puerto Rican community.

Looking ahead, Elizabeth and Mel are focused on nurturing these relationships and expanding their presence in Puerto Rico. They are committed to concentrating their efforts effectively to maximize their impact and empower more students to pursue their educational aspirations. With dedication and perseverance, they are confident that their endeavors will create transformative opportunities and forge meaningful connections.

Stephens Partners with MU to Host Afro-Cuban Legacies Symposium



The Afro-Cuban Legacies Symposium is an international, interdisciplinary conference examining Afro-Cuban expressive cultures since the 1960s. The conference took place in Columbia from April 10 to 12, with expert scholars and contemporary Cuban artists providing inspiration and insights at the intersections of Afro-Cuban arts, cultures, and religious traditions.

All Thursday events took place on the Stephens campus, including the Diago and his Afro-Cuban Legacies art exhibit in Hugh Stephens Library, a Keynote address from Vanderbilt's Dr. William Luis, who spoke about Juan Francisco Marzano and the Transatlantic Abolitionist Movement, and a bilingual poetry reading by Nancy Morejon and Sophie Campos.

Stephens Now



STEPHENS | Now

Stephens Now is an all-encompassing campus magazine with riveting stories, informative updates, and stunning visuals from faculty, staff, students, and alums.

The Spring/Summer 2024 issue will be released soon! If you want a copy delivered to you, update your profile in [Stephens Connect](#) or email us at alums@stephens.edu. To view the most recent issue, click [here](#).

FACULTY UPDATES

Promotions



Dr. Scott Taylor

On January 24, 2024, **Dr. Scott Taylor** was promoted to Dean of Workforce Development and Continuing Education. This is a growing priority of the College as we continue to identify and expand new opportunities to recruit and enroll students of all ages.

New Additions



Jerod Quinn

In December, we welcomed **Jerod Quinn** as the inaugural Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning. Quinn will support faculty during the transition to the block program and with course design and development. When he talks about his 20 years of work in higher education, he says, “I partner with educators to create college courses instructors love to teach, learners are eager to take, and administrators are excited to promote.”

He has personally helped guide the design and development of well over 300 courses as an instructional designer at multiple universities in almost every

discipline offered. He has authored three books and dozens of publications, made conference presentations, and created many workshops. He was conference co-chair of the POD Network from 2019-2022, helping build and run the annual conference for the largest professional organization for teaching center professionals.

Quinn holds a Master's Degree in Educational Technology from the University of Missouri and is currently a Ph.D. candidate in Educational Psychology at the University of Missouri. He focuses his work on learner motivation and quantitative measurement. When he's not dreaming about teaching and learning, you can find him wandering through Missouri's state parks or building the occasional guitar.

Retirements



Dr. Kate Berneking Kogut – Dean, School of Integrative Studies

After two decades of dedicated service, **Dr. Kate Berneking Kogut** will retire at the end of the Spring 2024 semester. Serving as Dean of the School of Integrative Studies since July 2022, Dr. Kogut has been a cornerstone of our academic community.

Since joining Stephens College in 2004, Dr. Kogut has made significant contributions to the English and Creative Writing program, serving as Chair of English + Creative Writing and Women's Studies since 2019. With a specialization in scriptwriting and new script development, Dr. Kogut's work has been showcased across the country, including productions in California, New York, and Chicago and film festivals in Wisconsin, Texas, Kansas, and Missouri.

Her commitment to excellence has been recognized through awards such as the Michael Bowling Distinguished Advising Award and the Distinguished Teaching Award. As a member of esteemed organizations like the Dramatist Guild of America and Sigma Tau Delta, Dr. Kogut has brought a wealth of knowledge and expertise to Stephens College.

We express our deepest gratitude to Dr. Kogut for her outstanding leadership, dedication, and countless contributions to our institution.



Dr. James Terry - Art History

Dr. James Terry retired at the end of the Fall 2023 semester. He had been an esteemed faculty member at Stephens College since the spring of 1998, marking a remarkable 25-year tenure. Specializing in art history with occasional ventures into English and creative writing, Dr. Terry's expertise lies in classical archaeology, particularly Greek, Roman, and Byzantine art. His passion extends to teaching world art, delving into diverse cultural expressions from Africa, Asia, the pre-Columbian Americas, and Oceania.

Beyond the classroom, Dr. Terry's tenure at Stephens College has been marked by memorable experiences. He has led study abroad trips to Mexico and France, fostering immersive learning opportunities for students. His dedication to global education also shined through his role as the coordinator of Study Abroad programs, guiding students in realizing their aspirations for international learning.

In his retirement, Dr. Terry plans to work on a book exploring the intersection of artistic pleasure and human evolution, inspired by his "Seven Pleasures" course at Stephens. He says, "I love teaching too much to give it up altogether," so he hopes to work as an adjunct at Stephens or MU. He also plans to continue volunteering at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, where he shares his passion for art history and teaching.



Kelly Hulse - Equestrian Studies

After more than a decade of dedication to Stephens College's equestrian program, **Kelly Hulse** will retire at the end of the Spring 2024 semester. Joining Stephens as an adjunct professor in Fall 2013, Kelly assumed leadership of the saddle seat discipline in July 2014, eventually becoming Associate Professor of Equestrian Studies. Her transition to a full-time role marked the beginning of a transformative era for the program.

In her tenure, Kelly has not only imparted her expertise in riding and driving but also offered invaluable insights into barn management through courses like Stable Management. Drawing from her extensive experience at Mark Hulse Stables, where she served as owner, trainer, instructor, breeder, and business manager, Kelly enriched students' education with practical knowledge and industry expertise.

Kelly's commitment extended beyond the classroom as she mentored students in methods of teaching and horse keeper classes, fostering their growth as equestrians and caretakers. Her involvement with the Prince of Wales Club exemplified her dedication to upholding a vibrant equestrian community within Stephens College.

With her retirement, Stephens College acknowledges Kelly's profound impact on the equestrian program. It reverberates through the countless students she has inspired and the programs she has enhanced. Her contributions to the industry have been recognized with prestigious awards as well as national and international judging appointments, showcasing her stature as a leader in the field.

As Kelly embarks on the next chapter of her journey, her legacy of excellence and passion will endure, shaping the future of Stephens College's equestrian program for years to come. We extend our heartfelt appreciation for her steadfast commitment and wish her every happiness and fulfillment in her deserved retirement.

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