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During a recent luncheon for graduate students, President Dan Jones took a moment to remind those of us in attendance, “When you leave this place you take us with you. Everywhere you go, you are always a lion.”

At this time of year it is not unusual to get a letter or card from distant family and friends letting you know how they are doing. If you’re like us, you look forward to these reminders of all the lives we touch by extension of being a part of the same family or the same circle of friends.

While we were interviewing folks for this issue of The Update we couldn’t help but feel lucky to be part of this big family, to be lions. In this issue you will meet truly inspiring students, faculty, and alumni, and it is our sincere hope that you’ll take a moment to consider the good they do for our students, for our community, and for our world. All of their efforts reflect back on you.

It works both ways. Reach out into your world and “give back”—it’s the best time of year to do so. Happy holidays from all of us here at The Update.

Dr. Salvatore Attardo, Dean of the College of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Arts

J.D. Isip
Editor
water-based media. She uses hot wax to save white space while she paints. She layers inks, metallic powders, and finally goes back in with colored wax. “I use a pointillist approach,” she says. “It takes hours.” She has infinite patience. She has given me and Jared Horn (our photographer) hours of her day... and lots of coffee. You feel important when you are with her.

Before we leave, she takes out an East Texas State yearbook. It’s from 1956. “I was part of the Tooanoowe Social Club,” Jo Ann points to her 1956-self with a large painting in the background. “I did this painting for a dance and dinner. The guys said if I did it they would get me a date.” It’s the perfect way to end, on a light and sincere note. Jared and I laugh at the story. She gives us both a few cards from Christmases past; a final, thoughtful gesture.

Jo Ann Durham says she has an “intense delight” in her work and her life. It’s the kind of perspective we could all use going into a new year.
WAR VETERANS SHARE STORIES AND WISDOM IN
EAST TEXAS WAR AND MEMORY LECTURE SERIES

Major General Christopher Adams, Jr. takes the audience on a flight in a B52 right in the middle of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Private First Class Arlen Butler regales students and faculty with tales of battles on the beaches of Normandy, Omaha on D-Day, and freeing POWs.

These powerful and important stories are part of the ongoing efforts of the East Texas War and Memory Project, initiated by Dr. Eric Gruver in 2012. Dr. Gruver has assembled an entire staff of Honors students and the support of faculty across the campus. If you would like to find out more about this project or about future speakers in the series, contact Dr. Gruver at: Eric.Gruver@tamuc.edu
HOLIDAY GALA GIVES COMMERCE COMMUNITY
THE GIFT OF MUSIC

The annual campus Holiday Gala, began as the Madrigal Dinner. Today it is a sold out event featuring performances from every ensemble group from the Music Department. “There’s really something for everyone,” Dr. David Scott says, “It’s a prism concert, so there is always music playing.”

The Commerce community has embraced the five-year-old concert as a tradition, buying up seats as soon as they are available. Proceeds from the performances go toward scholarship monies for the department. Because of the effort it takes to put the concert together, and because students and faculty are busy completing finals and booking trips home for the holidays, there are only two performances of the Candlelight Concert. When asked about offering special seating for alumni for future concerts, Dr. Scott told The Update it is definitely a possibility.

Performances of this year’s Holiday Gala are Friday, December 6th, and Saturday, December 7th. Both performances are at 7:30 PM. For more information about the Holiday Gala, the Choral Candlelight Concert, and all other Music Department events, call (903) 886-5304.

Thank you, Yvonne Polson Clements!

It is always an honor when alumni remember the university and choose to invest in the education and professional development of future lions. Yvonne Polson Clements, who owns and operates Clements Oil in Atlanta, Texas, has given generously to the music program here, providing funding for the piano practice room named in her honor and the Robert S. Clements Memorial Endowment which provides scholarships to students majoring in agriculture at A&M-Commerce.

Thank you alumna of the Class of 1960 for remembering: We are always lions!
“This is a chance for us to reach out to the community. Everybody...every ensemble performs. It’s really a centerpiece performance for the campus during the holidays. We get to celebrate our students’ accomplishments and the Commerce community gets a chance to enjoy that talent.” — Dr. David Scott, Head of the Music Department

56th Annual Junior/Senior Honor Band Weekend

High school upperclassmen, nominated by their campus directors, are offered an opportunity to not only perform with the honor bands (two complete bands are formed to accommodate the demand for the clinic), but they also have the chance to study with the university’s distinguished applied faculty. Director of Bands, Phillip Clements, tells The Update, “Of course this is a chance for us to recruit promising performers. They get to see our campus, experience what we have available, including the Music Hall. Most importantly, they get to meet and work with our faculty and current students.”

Honor Band Weekend is November 22 and 23. Phillip Clements is joined by Kevin Sedatole from Michigan State University as conductors for the weekend’s bands.
Literature and Languages alumna, Dr. Lori Doddy, was promoted to Tarrant County College-South Campus’s Dean of Humanities. Prior to joining TCC South, she was Assistant Dean for the Division of Communications, Math, Developmental Studies, Teacher Preparation and Learning Center Programs at El Centro College (ECC) in the Dallas County Community College District.

Dr. Doddy’s teaching experience spans public school, university, and community college levels. As a full-time faculty member, she has taught graduate and undergraduate composition, developmental writing, literature, and ESL courses.

Dr. Doddy, your success is our success. As Dr. Dunbar-Odom would say, “We are beaming.”
An Element of Luck

Dr. Lance Weldy, doctoral alumnus from the Department of Literature and Languages, recently co-edited a special issue of *Children’s Literature Quarterly*. His book credits include *Crossing Textual Boundaries in International Children’s Literature* (2011) and a casebook study, *C.S. Lewis: The Chronicles of Narnia* (2012). I tell him his panel, Risking the Reality of American Childhood, was a crowd-pleaser at the most recent Children’s Literature Association (ChLA) Conference in Mississippi. “Oh, I’m glad. I thought we might have offended some people.”

It’s true, the panel was a risk even at a conference with “play and risk” as its theme, but Lance and his co-panelists manage to do the almost impossible at a conference: they are as entertaining as they are informative. He’s had practice, “My time at Commerce prepared me for academic conferences. I see Dr. Susan Stewart bringing new graduates to ChLA every year; I can see it is still important.”

Lance graduated in 2004, went on to become a Fulbright Fellow in Germany, and is currently Associate Professor at Francis Marion University. He’s also a regular at the annual ChLA Conference and a name just about everyone seems to know. When I mention this, Lance is humble, “Children’s Literature is a small and welcoming field. But there is an element of luck and I am fortunate to be able to teach what I specialize in.” He credits Emeritus Professors Ann Moseley and Richard Tuerk with fostering his passion for his field of scholarship. He tells me “You’re lucky. There’s an even greater focus on Children’s Literature at A&M Commerce than when I was there. You have like two or three graduate classes on the subject.” Actually, it’s five, Lance. And...

The Certificate

Dr. Moseley and Dr. Tuerk had continued to work on class offerings for those interested in Children’s Literature and the Literature and Languages department offered its first Certificate in Children’s Literature in 2008. The certificate program is now co-directed by Dr. Karen Roggenkamp and Dr. Susan Louise Stewart. Often students working on the certificate join Dr. Stewart at the annual ChLA Conference. Dr. Stewart says, “This is a chance to introduce students to the profession and to the scholars they’ll be working with and even referencing.” Lance told me, “Oh, everyone loves Susan [Stewart].” He is right; walking with Susan at ChLA is like being with a celebrity. Half of the value of the certificate is in being able to associate yourself with those creating a good name in the field for our university. Folks like Lance and Susan.
THE CLASSROOM: REIMAGINED

On September 30th high school students from 13 local schools stepped into a different type of classroom for the first department-wide High School Media Day.

Students interested in television were able to conduct a real newscast. Journalism students were in the audience for a regular welcome when all of a sudden a news event happened during the assembly... pulled off by student actors and Michael Knight, Director of Theater. “Students were able to see an entire news event unfold and participate in reporting on it,” Fred Stewart,

“We would like to make this an annual event. We would like to see it grow. Obviously the demand is there,” Stewart says. He couldn’t be more pleased with the day. “We had 260 students registered. We had calls from other schools wanting to participate. The students and everyone had a great time.”

Journalism Instructor and mastermind of the event tells The Update. “It was a chance to bring together the entire department and show off how good our programs are.”

In addition to the journalism and broadcast workshops, students were also able to work with theater students and faculty in improv and theater make-up classes. Mary Hendrix, Vice President for Student Access and Success offered two scholarships for two of the attendees.
When Louis Lufkin, Program Coordinator for the MS in Applied Criminology set up his first class final exam crime scene in 2010, he knew he was onto something. “The students were excited to be working with all of the latest forensic tools and techniques. We weren’t just talking about it in a classroom.”

That first class had 29 students and has since become a class topping at 100 students. “We had to bring it down to about 80 so it is more manageable, but those seats fill up as soon as registration opens.” Lufkin had the idea of linking his class to the mock trial class conducted by Dr. Elvira White-Lewis, “It made sense. The students would be able to see the entire process. How their work in the field would be used in the courtroom, what types of questions they would be asked as witnesses.”

“I don’t know of any program doing what we are doing,” Lufkin tells The Update. “The collaboration we are able to do within the department and the college is what sets us apart.”
Dr. Jeffrey Herndon is fond of referring to the members of The Doctor Who Society of A&M-Commerce as simply “The WHoligans” [That is unique to our campus, Dr. Herdon tells me—most enthusiasts are called Whovians]. Society members share a passion for the BBC’s wildly popular time and space traveling Doctor. In August, Dr. Herndon and the Wholigans participated in the Rowlett Public Library’s “Doctor Who: A Celebration.” Dr. Herndon was the featured speaker and the Wholigans were able to assist the librarians in fielding questions from eager Doctor Who fans. The Wholigans have something special planned for Homecoming. Look for pictures in the next Update..

LEIGH MERRILL received her BFA from the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, NM in 2001 and her MFA from Mills College in Oakland, California in 2009. Merrill’s work has been a part of exhibitions throughout the United States in venues such as the Phoenix Art Museum, the diRosa Art Preserve, The Lawndale Art Center, the Tremaine Gallery, and the Orange County Center for Contemporary Art. Merrill was a part of the 2011 Fotographia Festival Internazionale di Roma at the Galleria Gallerati in Rome, Italy. Merrill’s work has been included in online publications such as the Design Observer Places Journal, BLDGBLOG blog and IGNANT blog. Her work is part of the City of Phoenix permanent collection and various private collections.

WHO ARE THE WHOLIGANS?

Dr. Jeffrey Herndon is fond of referring to the members of The Doctor Who Society of A&M-Commerce as simply “The WHoligans” [That is unique to our campus, Dr. Herdon tells me—most enthusiasts are called Whovians]. Society members share a passion for the BBC’s wildly popular time and space traveling Doctor. In August, Dr. Herndon and the Wholigans participated in the Rowlett Public Library’s “Doctor Who: A Celebration.” Dr. Herndon was the featured speaker and the Wholigans were able to assist the librarians in fielding questions from eager Doctor Who fans. The Wholigans have something special planned for Homecoming. Look for pictures in the next Update..

Mark Moreno received his M.A. and Ph.D. in history from Washington State University, specializing in identity, warfare, and state-building in 19th century Mexico, and in world history. His work explores the relationships between collective identities, race, gender, and violence in historical perspective. His published works have centered on nineteenth century Mexico and on Mexican American street gangs.
Jeff Baker serves as the Assistant Professor of Tuba and Euphonium at A&M-Commerce. Dr. Baker received music degrees from the University of Oklahoma (BM) and the University of North Texas (MM and DMA). As a performer, Dr. Baker has performed with numerous ensembles throughout the southwest including the Dallas Opera, the Lone Star Wind Orchestra, the Allen Philharmonic Orchestra, the Longview Symphony, the Lawton Philharmonic, the Dallas Wind Symphony, the Lewisville Lake Symphony Orchestra, the Metropolitan Winds, and the Oklahoma City Philharmonic. Dr. Baker has also been a part of over fifteen recording projects on the Klavier, Mark, and Naxos labels.

“What drew me to A&M-Commerce,” Dr. Baker tells The Update, “was the opportunity to create something.” Dr. Baker adds, “After the national search, I was fortunate enough to be hired for the newly created position and I’m proud to say that I am one of only two people in the entire Dallas/Ft. Worth metroplex who has a full-time/tenure-track job teaching tuba and euphonium. There’s only about 8 of us in the entire state of Texas. It’s an honor and a privilege to hold such a highly coveted job, but back to your original question...what drew me to Commerce was the opportunity to create my own position where one did not previously exist and I couldn’t be happier with how things have gone.”

Jennifer Glidden, Soprano, B.M., M.M., ABD, is thrilled to join the voice faculty as an Adjunct Professor. She holds a Bachelor of Music Degree in Vocal Performance from Southern Methodist University and a Masters of Music in Vocal Performance from the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. She is currently completing her Doctorate of Musical Arts in Vocal Performance at the University of North Texas. While completing her coursework at UNT, she served for four years on the voice faculty as a Teaching Fellow. Currently, she teaches in the GISD Music Enrichment Program, continues to maintain a private voice studio in Garland, and is Music Director for the Dallas Summer Musicals Academy for the Arts.

Prior to her appointment at A&M-Commerce, Libby Vanata taught at The University of Southern Mississippi (Hattiesburg, MS), Indiana State University (Terre Haute, IN), and Millikin University (Decatur, IL). Her teaching responsibilities have included music theory classes, class piano, and applied lessons. In addition to teaching and accompanying, she also served as coordinator of graduate studies at The University of Southern Mississippi and coordinator of class piano at Millikin University. Ms. Vanatta holds a Bachelor of Science in piano performance from Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, Tennessee, and a Master of Music in piano pedagogy from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.
Student Profile: Chris Ramos

Chris Ramos worked with me in the Writing Center my first summer here at the university. He was always the first to volunteer to tutor a student. That's just who he is; the guy always willing to help out. When I started looking into Art Kids (see below), it was really no surprise that Chris was involved. Over the summer, he and campus photographer, Jason Flowers, taught kids and teenagers how to make “sound art” by adapting sounds from circuit boards.

Chances are you’ve seen Chris around campus. There’s a banner of him hanging on the One Stop Shop. He’s an intern for C3: Commerce Community Church, and part of the Secret Sauce Jazz Combo.

He is also one of the student teachers of the Piano Academy (directed by Dr. Luis Sanchez). The academy provides music lessons for the Commerce community and has over 50 students.

That banner of Chris is well-deserved. This fifth-year Music major is not only a talented musician with a promising future as an artist; Chris is also one of the most decent and kind guys with whom you might come into contact. And he’s one of us. He’s a lion.

Art Kids

Art Kids is a collaboration between the A&M-Commerce Art Department and Commerce community local, Ashley Bryan’s art studio, A Space. Local grade-schoolers and teenagers are offered opportunities to make art in all sorts of media, including photography, paint, and, as they did with Chris and Jason, experimental media like broken up electronics.

If you’d like to know more, visit A Space online: www.aspaceart.com
Why Major in Liberal Studies?

Our Liberal Studies major is one of the fastest growing of the college. I asked Dr. Donna Dunbar-Odom, Head of Liberal Studies, what might be contributing to that popularity. “It’s probably the most flexible degree we offer. It allows students the freedom to design their own degree plan.” Those who graduate in the major are also among our most satisfied with their university experience. “I listen to the students. I try to understand what they want to accomplish.” Dr. Dunbar-Odom is also adamant about acknowledging students’ struggles to finish up a degree after trying out one or two other majors. “I use what they have already done. I can usually see a way to cobble together a degree that helps students avoid redundancy while still adhering to the rigor required by the university. I want to help students the way I was helped.” The numbers tell the whole story about Dr. Dunbar-Odom’s passion for her students: Since she took over as head of Liberal Studies, the number of majors have blossomed from 60 to 200. Students trust that she has their best interest in mind. She simply sees herself as doing her job. “This is what we do in the humanities. We all benefit from crossing boundaries between disciplines. Why shouldn’t we offer a degree that celebrates our students’ willingness to cross those boundaries?”

Meet John McCarty

John McCarty, our alacritous Institutional Advancement representative and all-around nice guy works with Dean Attardo on building relationships with College of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Arts alumni.

ALUMNUS WINS FILM AWARD

Ronnie Allman, a Rowlett native, received his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Art Direction from A&M-Commerce in May 2011. Now this first-time filmmaker can add a new feather to his cap as one of five winners of Canon’s Project Imaginat10n contest, judged by award-winning director, Ron Howard, and his daughter, actress/director, Bryce Dallas Howard.

UPCOMING EVENTS

MARCH 20TH

Honors Day Luncheon
This is an awards banquet for students who have received scholarships/awards throughout the year.
Rayburn Student Center
Conference Room C
Thursday, March 20, 2014
11:30 AM–2:00 PM
This is the second annual luncheon.

MARCH 25TH

Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center Performance
World premiere of James Syler’s The Temptation of St. Anthony, commissioned by A&M-Commerce. Performances by all university choirs and bands!
2301 Flora, Dallas, TX 75201
Tuesday, March 25, 2014, 7:30 PM
Please call (903) 886-5304 after January 1, 2014 for ticket prices and details.

APRIL 25TH

Art Educators Workshop
A full day of hands-on workshops and informational sessions discussing all areas of the Department of Art. We invite all secondary art teachers to attend and participate in their choice of two workshop sessions
On Campus
Friday, April 25, 2014
Begins at 8:30 AM (Registration and refreshmenys in Main Art Building) Registration is $25.
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