



# the Collage

Kutztown University's College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Apr. 2018

## Faculty highlight

Dr. Steve Lem may be the Department Chair and Associate Professor of Political Science at Kutztown University, but he still considers himself a student. His career trajectory has been purely academic, and it's his belief that higher education, a business of ideas, is where we quantify our experiences, study the past, and research ideas in order to create something new and better. "The only real difference between the students in my class and me, is that I've been in the business longer," said Dr. Lem.

His teaching philosophy is built upon two pillars: his being an eternal student and the resulting emphasis on searching for questions, not only their answers. "It's how I see the world," said Dr. Lem. "And I know that if I can give [students] a glimpse of that perspective, they'll develop the passion for lifelong learning."

For Dr. Lem, the classroom is not where the student meets the professor, it's where a lifelong student has the opportunity to impact the next generation of learners. It's here that the two pillars of Dr. Lem's teaching philosophy intersect. In most instances, the time a student spends with a professor will be very brief. "There's no way I can disseminate decades of knowledge I've acquired in a few semesters," said Dr. Lem. Instead, he tries to inspire his students to ask their own questions, while providing the necessary framework to help answer them.



Dr. Steve Lem | Political Science

Dr. Lem is also no stranger to the PASSHE undergraduate experience. "I went to East Stroudsburg University as an undergraduate, and I had really fantastic faculty members," said Dr. Lem.

Justice called, "Choices of Justice: Examining the Effects of Civil War Termination on Post-Conflict Justice Mechanisms Implemented by the State." This past semester, he worked with two students on a project titled, "Ethnic Conflict, Post-Conflict Justice Mechanisms, and Perpetual Peace," after which they presented their work at the Midwest Political Science Association Conference in Chicago, IL.

He quantifies his own success by how well his students do as he prepares them for research, publication in industry journals, conference presentations, and workforce placement. Their ability to assume new roles and increasing responsibility highlights the cyclical nature of his message, and he hopes that his students will share their positive experiences in whatever they do.

**"...how do I recreate the fantastic undergraduate experience I had at ESU for the KU students..."**

"A lot of what I think about while I'm here is how do I recreate the fantastic undergraduate experience I had at ESU for the KU students?"

Each academic year, some students become so involved that he selects them to evolve the questions they raise in a class project, into an independent research opportunity—the ultimate goal is that the students will then present their research.

Last year, Dr. Lem and two of his students published a paper in the International Journal of Transitional

"The other, perhaps, more subtle way you'll be remembered is by the students you've inspired," said Dr. Lem. "One of the interesting aspects of any academic discipline, is that you can trace the intellectual lineage of scholars. And the stories students and alumni share about their professors show that their presence made an impact that transcended time, the discipline, and their work. They made a difference in the lives of the people they inspired."



**Andrea Dempsey | Marine Science**

Teaching what you're passionate about to the next generation is an incredibly noble pursuit, and when Andrea Dempsey '18 first came to KU that was exactly what she had first planned on doing. For some, standing before a classroom cultivating young minds is a fulfilling career. For others, there is a need to continue to pursue firsthand experience and knowledge. "I had so many questions and it just made me want to do science," said Dempsey. "You're not a scientist because you have all the answers, you're a scientist because you have all the questions."

And not to evoke the marketing campaign of an American multinational athletic shoe corporation, but sometimes it is better to "just do it," which is exactly what Andrea Dempsey did. After having changed her major from Secondary-Education Biology to Marine Science and breaking from the narrative she had pre-planned for herself, she took an 18-

hour plane ride to South Africa and dove headfirst into shark-infested waters.

This journey stems from staying in pursuit of her dream and having worked diligently in Marine Science over the course of her academic career. Dr. Nancy Butler, Dempsey's then interim-advisor, helped get the ball rolling by emailing her this opportunity; and Dr. Wendy Ryan, Dempsey's academic advisor and school mom, helped her with the planning and paperwork. And while this internship was everything Dempsey had wanted, it's not always that easy to follow your dreams. Sometimes you have to calm down your mom, buy a plane ticket, write an essay, and get a few shots, before finally being able to follow through with your plans.

In December of 2017, she certainly followed through. Dempsey worked with Oceans Research, a South African based research institute dedicated to the conservation and management of South Africa's wildlife. The internship opportunity groups aspiring researchers and conservationists with leading marine biologists, involving the interns in all of the active projects Oceans Research is currently working on.

"We were there wherever they needed help, for whatever project they needed to do, and we [interns] were the ones doing most of the [physical] work, [while] being supervised by the people [conducting] the research."

## Student highlight

While there, Dempsey took the tools she learned at KU and implemented them as she worked alongside PhD students and marine biologists on many fascinating, hands-on research projects. She helped conduct both intertidal and cetacean surveys, where she observed and recorded the diversity of rocky intertidal zones between tides, and helped to track the movement of dolphins and whales throughout the bay in order to calculate pod sizes and their space utilization. She also worked with pyjama and leopard cat sharks, helping to study their diet, collect blood samples, and observe shark stress physiology. The "highlight" of her internship took place when she helped examine great white shark population dynamics—where she was able to see and work up-close with great whites, which can't be kept in captivity. "They were beautiful and working with them was literally life-changing," said Dempsey.

Andrea Dempsey '18 is a Marine Science major minoring in Professional Writing. She has been actively involved in her sorority, Delta Phi Epsilon, where she helped raise money for Cystic Fibrosis. Her current plans are to continue traveling the world, earn a Master's degree, and hopefully attain her dream job of becoming a research voyage science writer.

## Dean's Scholars' Reception

The CLAS Dean's Office hosted the Dean's Scholars' Reception to recognize a select group of students for their academic achievements. Recognized students included the nominee for the system-wide Syed R. Ali-Zaidi Award, the Carole & Ray Neag Grant, Beacon Scholarship, and the Stimmel Scholarship recipients, the KU Bears, and the CLAS Star Students. The students also shared their evening with faculty mentors, including Dr. Dale Parson, who was honored with the 2018 Dean's Outstanding Faculty Award.



**Students and faculty socialize in the Georgian Room.**

The Mar. 2018 edition of *The Collage* was designed, edited and written by Jesse R. Stayer '18, Professional Writing major, under the supervision of the CLAS Dean's Office.