

School Notes

College of Arts & Sciences



Joseph Lenz,
Dean

drake.edu/artsci

A Long and Winding Road. Or, my, what a long strange trip it has

been! This will be my last entry for Blue. Last summer I informed Provost Mattison that, after 10 years as dean, I would be stepping down at the end of the 2017–18 academic year. I'll then take a long-delayed sabbatical to consider the next step in my career.

Gesine Gerhard, PhD, has been named the next dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, effective July 1, 2018. She has served since 2012 as associate dean of the College of the Pacific, the largest and oldest academic unit of the University of the Pacific in Stockton, Calif., where she also served as the director of general education. Gerhard joined the faculty of University of the Pacific in 1999, earning the title of full professor in the Department of History, and served as director of the Gender Studies Program from 2007–2012. She studied at the University of Bologna from 1992–1993 before earning her master of arts in history at the Technical University of Berlin in 1994. She earned a doctorate in modern German history from the University of Iowa in 2000. Her research focuses on agricultural history and food policy during World War II and the Nazi period; she has delivered more than 50 guest lectures, public talks, and conference workshops. Her awards from the University of the Pacific include the Ebhardt Teacher/Scholar Award in 2007 and the University Priorities Award in 2007 and 2009. I am confident that the College of Arts and Sciences will be in very good hands.

When I first became dean, I said I wanted to do more than just tread water (I was an interim and only anticipated having the job for one year). **Together**, we have done much more than tread water: three new buildings; complete

renovations to Harvey Ingham Hall; new programs in data analytics and kinesiology; significant revisions to nearly every major program in the college; three endowed professorships (and three more in progress); millions in scholarships; partnerships with universities in China, Mexico, and South Africa; the expansion of travel seminars; an increase in the number of women at professor rank (from 5 to 17); an increase in the number of full-time faculty (from 114 to 131); a profound commitment to experiential learning, community-engaged learning, and faculty/student research collaborations; and much, much more—including nearly 3,900 graduates swelling the ranks of A&S alumni.

To say the least, I am deeply gratified to have had the honor to serve as dean. It has been a particular pleasure hearing from and meeting A&S alumni at events, games, visits to campus (sometimes as nostalgic former students, sometimes as proud parents of prospective students).

Drake is someplace special. I know it. You know it. It is well past time that we let the rest of the world know it. Drake is now engaged in a rebranding effort to increase awareness of and appreciation for the Drake name. You may have seen the change in our website—bolder, brighter, bluer. You'll see us calling much more attention to the accomplishments of our students, faculty, and staff and to the recognitions the University receives. For some examples, see our "Shout Out" page at drake.edu/shoutouts. The time for Midwestern modesty is over. We need you to be cheerleaders for Drake. For our marketing effort to be successful, we need you to sing our praises, not to exaggerate what we do (because it needs no embellishment), but to state the facts, to remind friends and classmates who they are, what they have achieved, and what we all can still accomplish together.

General College News

Approved new concentration, the Interdisciplinary Study of the Humanities and Sciences (ISHS). This is an 18-hour

concentration that invites students from any academic discipline to investigate topics in humanities and sciences from a variety of perspectives. In doing so, they will develop and articulate their understanding of how scientific inquiry, mathematical reasoning, and humanistic analysis and interpretation relate to one another.

- Established collaborations/partnerships with a variety of community organizations to provide internships and experiential learning opportunities for our students. These include the Iowa Coalition on Sexual Assault, Des Moines Community Foundation, City of Perry Public Library, Urban Dreams, Drake Neighborhood Association, Walnut Elementary School, Living History Farms, State Historical Society, Jordan House, Salisbury House, Blank Park Zoo, Young Women's Resource Center, and Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Faculty News

- Deborah Kent, associate professor of mathematics, won a state award for innovation in STEM education in November.
- Benjamin Gardner, associate professor of art and design, was selected to have his artwork grace one of the Des Moines Area Regional Transit buses.
- Akira Mori, associate professor of orchestral studies, received the Immigrant Entrepreneur Leadership Award during the 10th annual Immigrant Entrepreneurs Summit (IES) in Des Moines on Nov. 18.

Student News

- Colton Sleister, senior chemistry/biochemistry and molecular biology/mathematics major, won the 2017 DMACC Foundation \$10,000 Entrepreneurship Competition with his business, Sleister Brass.
- Three students from the Arts & Sciences have received NASA merit scholarships from the Iowa Space

Grant Consortium: Sophia Siegel, Quinn Meyers, and Carter McCall.

- Katrina Sletten, (senior, physics), was named a Brooke Owens Fellow, one of 36 female students selected nationwide. Katrina will be interning this summer at the National Museum of Flight in Seattle and working with their executive director.
- Drake seniors Tierney Grisolano, Shea Seiff, and Dustin Eubanks presented their work on "A Spectrum of Faith: Religions of the World in America's Heartland," a Drake student-produced book, at the annual conference for the American Academy of Religion in Boston.
- Gabrielle Clutter, senior vocal performance major, is the artist in residence at Deerfield, a senior living community in Des Moines. Through a special partnership between Drake and Deerfield, Clutter lives and eats at Deerfield for free, in exchange for performing two concerts a month. Clutter was featured on CBS Morning Show on Dec. 28th.