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Academic Affairs Newsletter  
September 21, 2017  
Volume 4, Issue 2



# Academic Affairs

## WELCOME TO TECH!

This issue is focused on introducing and welcoming our new faculty hires to the Arkansas Tech University campus community. Inside, you will find a brief biography and photo of each new faculty member, organized by college and department. I hope that this, along with the New Faculty Academy, will ease the transition for our new faculty members by helping to establish their presence here on campus. Please help me give them a warm welcome to ATU!!

This is an exciting time to be here at Tech, as we are entering the second year of the strategic plan under the leadership of President Bowen. The first year of the strategic plan proved to be a very productive year, and I expect this year to prove even more dynamic.

Of note is the 2.7% increase in retention rate for the freshman class, which climbed from 68.6% to 71.3%. In addition, the graduate enrollment reached a record level of 1,048, marking the first time graduate enrollment exceeded the 1,000 mark. New programs that enrich the offerings at Tech, such as the Master in Business Administration (MBA), the Bachelor in Applied Science (BAS) and the Bachelor of Science in Cyber-security, were introduced, and other relatively new programs, such as the EDD program in Educational Leadership and the BS degree in game design and interactive media, have established themselves as solid programs with strong demand. I'm pleased to say that other programs with strong demand from students and businesses are currently in the pipeline as well.

We are excited about having all these new faculty onboard at Tech, for we all know that faculty are the soul of the institution and recruiting new qualified faculty is important to the continued success of Tech. Welcome aboard!

Mohamed Abdelrahman, Ph.D.

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### SAVE THE DATE

- Deadline for Undergraduate Research Fund Applications  
Monday, September 25
- Last Day to Withdraw/Drop Courses with 80% Reduction  
Wednesday, September 27
- Deadline for Faculty Research Fund Applications  
Monday, October 2
- Deadline for Professional Development Grant Applications  
Monday, October 2
- Deadline for Student Interdisciplinary Research Grant Applications  
Monday, October 2
- Midterm  
Wednesday, October 11



# New Faculty

## ARTS AND HUMANITIES

### *Art Department*



Jesse Ring will be joining the Department of Art as an Assistant Professor of Ceramics and Sculpture. He received his BFA in 2006 from the Kansas City Art Institute. In 2015, he received his MFA from the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University. Ring was a 2016 visiting artist at CAFA City Design School in Beijing and recipient of the Windgate Fellowship for Craft Media Artists at the Vermont Studio Center. Ring's work has been exhibited at The Alfred Ceramics Museum in Alfred, NY; The Burchfield Penny Museum in Buffalo, NY; and the Aspen Art Museum in Aspen, CO. He has shown consistently in the US since 2006 and internationally in China.

John McGrew joins the Department of Art as an Assistant Professor of 3D Modeling and Animation for the Game and Interactive Media Design program. He received his BA in Chinese from Brigham Young University, and a MFA in Animation from Savannah College of Art and Design. He specializes in 3D and stop motion character animation, and has worked on a variety of commercial, music video, and film projects.



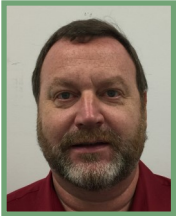
James Peck will join the Department of Art as a Visiting Assistant Professor of Art History; he will also serve as the new Director of the ATU Museum. He received his BA in History and Criticism of Art from Florida State University, shortly followed by his MA in History and Criticism of Art from the University of South Carolina. Peck earned his Ph.D. in History and Criticism of Art from the University of Oklahoma. He has served as the curator of collections at the Rockwell Museum in Corning, New York, and the executive director at the Old Jail Art Center in Albany, Texas, and the Oceanside Museum of Art in Oceanside, California.

### *Behavioral Sciences*

Daniel Warwick, Assistant Professor of Psychology, is currently working on his Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from UCA. His dissertation topic is "Assessment-Guided Intervention." He has a Master's in Counseling Psychology and 11 years experience working as a Licensed Psychological Examiner in a variety of mental health clinics, as well as in his own private practice. Prior to changing careers to become a psychologist, he acquired a B.S. and M.S. in Electrical Engineering from the UA Fayetteville.



Robert Stevens, Assistant Professor of Rehabilitation Science, is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC). He completed his bachelors degree in psychology from UCA and his masters degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from UA Fayetteville. He received his Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision in Ohio and also completed the requirements to become a licensed professional counselor (LPC) and a licensed independent chemical dependency counselor (LICDC). Stevens' research interests are adjustment to disability/chronic illness, disability and sexuality, and counseling diverse populations.



Rodney Roosevelt holds a doctorate in experimental psychology from Southern Illinois University and most recently held the post of visiting assistant professor of psychology at Indiana University Southeast. Roosevelt studies noradrenergic influences of behavior, and risk-taking behavior including binge drinking and hazing.

Mark Peacock earned his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Arkansas in 2007. He then completed a predoctoral internship at Patton State Hospital in Southern California and a postdoctoral fellowship in forensic psychology from Patton State Hospital, as well. Peacock returned to Arkansas in 2008 and began an Assistant Professorship in the Department of Behavioral Sciences here at Arkansas Tech University. He left ATU in 2011 to develop and direct the lone forensic psychology Postdoctoral fellowship in Arkansas at UAMS and the Arkansas State Hospital.



### *History & Political Science*



Guolin Yi received his Ph.D. degree in history from Wayne State University in Detroit, MI. Before joining Tech, he taught at Stockton University in New Jersey. When he is not reading or grading, he likes swimming, running, and photography.

Gregory Michna completed his doctorate from West Virginia University in Early American History, with research focusing on the relationship between Native Americans and ministers in colonial New England. His current research explores the intersection of religion, philosophy, and race in British North America and the Caribbean. Michna taught history courses at Texas Woman's University and completed a month-long research fellowship at the Massachusetts Historical Society in 2016.



### *Music*



Christopher H. Harris, native of Fort Worth, Texas, is a music educator, conductor, performer, and choral composer. In August 2017, he joined the faculty at Arkansas Tech University as Director of Choral Studies and Instructor of Music. He received his Ph.D. in Choral Music Education from Florida State University in Tallahassee, FL; his Master's in Choral Conducting from Ithaca College in Ithaca, NY; and his Bachelor's in Music Education from Texas Southern University in Houston, TX. Harris is the founder of the Houston Master Singers and has served as the Assistant Director for the Houston Ebony Opera Guild. He is a published composer with several accolades including winner of both the Eastern and National Divisions of the 2013 National Association for Music Education Composition Competition, and the Grand Prize Winner of the 2016 Ithaca College. As a performer, Harris has performed as guest soloist for concerts with the Texas Southern University Choir, the Houston Ebony Opera Guild, the Houston Symphony Chorus, the 2013 Owego School District's Production of Faure's *Requiem*, with choirs from Florida State University, and the Tallahassee Community Chorus. Harris will be a guest soloist with the ATU Symphonic Wind Ensemble for their performance at the Southwestern Division of the College Band Directors National Association Convention in Houston, Texas in March 2018.



## BUSINESS

### *Dean*



Lisa Toms is the new Dean for the College of Business and Professor of Marketing. Toms received her D.B.A. from Louisiana Tech University in 2004, an M.B.A. from Louisiana Tech University in 1995, and a B.B.A. from Southern Arkansas University in Magnolia in 1990. She served with SAU since 1991 and was Dean of the College of Business there since 2007.

### *Accounting & Economics*

Wan Wei is an Assistant Professor of Economics at Arkansas Tech University and primarily teaches Principles of Macroeconomics and Money and Banking. She holds a Ph.D. in Applied Economics from Western Michigan University. Her fields of specialization are monetary economics, international economics, and applied econometrics. Her recent research interest has focused on the impacts of monetary policy on financial markets, such as foreign exchange market.



Peng Huang is an Associate Professor of Finance and Economics. Huang earned his Ph.D. at Western Michigan University. His fields of specialization are asset pricing, risk management, risk-return relationships, monetary economics, and applied time series econometrics. Huang is a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) charter holder and currently serves as the director of the ATU MBA program.

### *Management & Marketing*

Wayne Williams is a Visiting Instructor of Analytics. He earned both a B.S. and M.Ed. at Arkansas Tech University before going on to earn his Ed.D. at UA Fayetteville. He was Assistant Professor of Education at Missouri Valley College in Marshall, Missouri, for a year and then went on to serve as Professor of Education at University of Central Missouri (formerly Central Missouri State University) for 26 years. Williams taught undergraduate and graduate courses and served as Graduate Coordinator in the Department of Educational Foundations and Literature. He was granted Professor Emeritus status in summer of 2015.





## EDUCATION

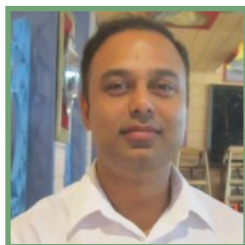
### *Department Head*



Lee Cabell is an Associate Professor and the Head of the Department of Health and Physical Department. He is originally from the Czech Republic. Since 2001, Cabell taught in the Department of Interprofessional Health Sciences & Health Administration at Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ. He is a researcher and movement practitioner in healthcare and sports with the intent to improve performance of athletes and help physical therapists develop treatment programs for individuals with musculoskeletal disorders. He received his B.S. in Engineering from Mendel University, Brno, Czech Republic, M.S. in Biomechanics from the University of Kansas, and Ed.D. in Kinesiology/Biomechanics from the University of Kentucky.

### *Health & Physical Education*

Mike Waller is an Associate Professor in the Department of Health and Physical Education. He comes to Arkansas Tech University from the Department of Kinesiology and Human Performance at Briar Cliff University, Sioux City, IA. His background is in exercise physiology, biomechanics, and strength & conditioning. Waller received his B.S. in Physical Education with emphasis in Fitness from Western Illinois University, M.A. in Exercise Science from Concordia University, River Forest, IL, and Ph.D. in Exercise and Sport Science from The University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT.



Deepesh Khanna (Dr. "D") is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Health and Physical Education. He comes to Arkansas Tech University from the Department of Physical Education, Health & Exercise Science, Lincoln Memorial University, Cumberland Gap, TN. His background is in exercise physiology and environmental health. Khanna received his MBBS in Medicine from APS University, Rewa, India, M.S. in Kinesiology, MPH in Environmental Health, and Ph.D. in Kinesiology – Exercise Physiology from Texas A&M University, College Station, TX.



## ENGINEERING AND APPLIED SCIENCES

### *Agriculture*



Matt Wilson (Horticulture) earned his doctorate in horticulture from Kansas State University in December 2016. His research examined the feeding preferences of the pine sawyer beetle on Pinaceae taxa. In the classroom, Matt evaluated the implementation of virtual plant walk maps. His article, “Student Use and Perceptions of Virtual Plant Walk Maps as a Study Tool in Plant Identification Courses,” is currently featured on the cover of *HortTechnology*.

Bryan Rank (Agriculture Education) completed his Ph.D. in Agricultural Education at Iowa State University. After the completion of his Ph.D. program, he was employed as a postdoctoral associate in the Department of Agricultural Education and Studies at Iowa State University. Rank’s scholarly activity is focused on agricultural teacher education and includes refereed journal articles, as well as conference presentations and posters.



Haiyan Wang (Agriculture Business) earned her Ph.D. in Agricultural and Applied Economics with a minor in Business Statistics at the Texas Tech University. She earned a Master’s degree in the same department at Texas Tech University in May 2013 and completed her undergraduate studies in the field of Economics at Lanzhou University in China in 2011. Her primary research interests are agricultural trade and policy, price analysis, and health economics.

### *Computer & Information Science*

Rajvardhan Patil completed his Masters in Computer Science and Ph.D. in Information Technology from University of Nebraska at Omaha. Before joining ATU, he also worked as Database Engineer at ResearchUSA LLC for two years. Some of his current areas of interest include: databases, image processing, and cloud computing.



Asim Shrestha received his Ph.D. from Louisiana State University in 2017. He developed and tested an integrated theoretical model for self-disclosure on social networking sites for his doctoral research. His research interests include social media, technology adoption, and qualitative research in information systems. In his free time, he plays music, cricket, and philosophizes about life.



## *Electrical Engineering*



Reza Hamidi, Assistant Professor of Electrical Engineering, received his B.Sc. and M.Sc. degrees with honor in the area of Electrical Power Systems. His hands-on work experience (7+ years) includes serving as an electrical engineer in power utilities, consultant corporations, and electrical component manufacturers. Hamidi pursued his education at the level of Ph. D. at the University of Nevada-Reno. During his Ph. D. program, Hamidi managed to publish several high-quality and prestigious IEEE transactions and journals. His areas of interest are as follows: Smart Micro-Grids, Renewable Energies, Distributed Energy Source, Operations Research, and Electro-Magnetic Transients and High Voltage. Hamidi is a member of the different branches of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), namely IEEE Smart Cities, IEEE Smart Grid Community, and IEEE Signal Processing Society. He has served as technical reviewers for several journals, scientific committee member of the 1st International Conference on Electrical, Electronics, and Control Engineering (EECE 2016). He has been selected as the Outstanding Reviewer of IEEE Transactions on Smart Grid, as well.



Kaiman Zeng is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Electrical Engineering. She received her Ph.D. degree from the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Florida International University. Her research areas are in digital image processing, computer vision, and machine learning, with an emphasis on visual search and big data analysis.

## *Emergency Management*

Ekong Peters, Assistant Professor of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, received his doctorate in August, 2014 from the University of North Texas. In addition to studying organizational response to extreme events, his research interests include community preparedness, risk and vulnerability reduction, social and economic impact of disasters, disaster response, and international disasters. His academic background includes public administration, organizational theory, urban and regional planning, and architecture. While working on a Ph.D. in Public Administration, his research focused on comparative emergency management, addressing vulnerability, earthquake damage assessment, and local smoking ban ordinances.



Wilson Short is an Instructor of Emergency Management and Homeland Security at Arkansas Tech University. Short joined Arkansas Tech University as a full time instructor in the fall of 2015. He holds a Bachelor's of Science in Emergency Management from Arkansas Tech University, a Master's of Science in Homeland Security Management from the University of Maryland University College, and is currently working on his Doctorate of Management in Homeland Security from Colorado Technical University. His research for the dissertation will be focused on comparing the capabilities of unmanned aerial vehicles versus those of manned aircraft. Short was an Arkansas State Trooper, Russellville police officer, and a Pope County deputy sheriff prior to beginning his career at ATU. After 18 years of law enforcement, he wanted to pursue his doctorate and become an educator.





## *Mechanical Engineering*



Amir Ghazanfari is an Assistant Professor in Mechanical Engineering Department. He obtained his Ph.D. degree in 2017 from the Missouri University of Science and Technology, his M.S. degree in 2012 from the Sharif University of Technology, and his B.S. degree in 2009 from the Sharif University of Technology, all in Mechanical Engineering. His research has been centered on additive manufacturing, structural ceramics, functionally graded materials, smart structures, and sheet metal forming. He is the author/co-author of one book, one U.S. patent, and 28 peer-reviewed articles.

Victor Agubra, Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering, received his Ph.D. in Materials Engineering from Auburn University, and an M.S. and B.S. in mechanical engineering from Tuskegee University and The University of Science and Technology-Ghana respectively. Prior to joining Arkansas Tech, Agubra held a post-doctoral Fellow position at the University of Texas Rio Grande and took on a teaching position in the fall of 2015. He has experience working in industry with British American Tobacco, where he held positions as a production logistics planning engineer and trade marketing executive. His research mainly focuses on the design and development of nanophased materials for energy storage: lithium ion batteries and sodium ion batteries. Notable projects Agubra has worked on include work on General Motors large format lithium ion batteries for the Chevy Volt vehicle, characterizing the interfacial kinetics at the electrode/electrolyte interface to improve battery safety, metal oxides composite nanofibers for anode materials, and blended cathode materials for lithium ion batteries. Other areas of interest include nanocomposite polymers, ceramics of thermal barrier coatings, and thin film materials for advanced applications



Seyed Ehsan Hosseini, Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering, was a postdoctoral research fellow in Combustion and Solar Energy Laboratory with the Department of Mechanical Engineering at San Diego State University, working on a hybrid solar thermal energy generation system funded by Department of Energy (DOE). He received the Ph.D. and M.Sc. degrees in mechanical engineering from University Technology Malaysia. His research interests are clean combustion technologies, flameless combustion, micro/meso scale combustion, propulsion, detonation, alternative fuels, renewable and sustainable energy, hybrid energy systems and optimization. He developed flameless combustion of low calorific value gaseous fuels experimentally and numerically. The results of his research can be used for achieving stable biogas flameless combustion in industrial furnaces. Hosseini has published more than 60 scientific papers in the energy and combustion fields in high ranked international journals.

## *Parks, Recreation, and Hospitality Administration*



Jay Post, Assistant Professor of Recreation and Park Administration, is the newest faculty member for the Parks, Recreation, and Hospitality Administration. He taught as an adjunct faculty at the University of Central Oklahoma for the past seven years. Last December, he completed his doctorate from Oklahoma State University with a Ph.D. in Health, Leisure, and Human Performance. He is a board member for the Wilderness Education Association (WEA), where he co-chairs the research committee and international committee.





## NATURAL AND HEALTH SCIENCES

### *Mathematics*



Wenyi Li, Visiting Instructor of Mathematics, is originally from Suzhou, China. He has been in the United States for 8 years, and he graduated from Arkansas State University with both a B.S. and M.S. in Mathematics and a minor in Statistics. He worked as a graduate assistant and instructor at Arkansas State University-Jonesboro, as well as at Jonesboro High School during the past three years.

### *Nursing*



Lisa DuBose, Assistant Professor Nursing, has been a registered nurse since 1988. DuBose graduated from UALR with an associate degree in nursing in 1988, completed her RN-BSN at Arkansas Tech University in 2014, earned her Master's of Science in Nursing Administration from Arkansas Tech in 2016, and is currently working on her Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) at American Sentinel University. She will graduate with her DNP in April 2019. Dubose teaches Level 1 Clinicals, Nursing Skills 1, and Pharmacology 1.

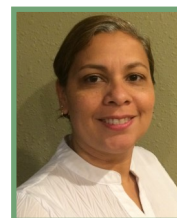
### *Physical Sciences*



Deborah Leslie, Assistant Professor of Geology, has expertise in low-temperature geochemistry and groundwater management. Before starting at Arkansas Tech University, Leslie was a Postdoctoral Research Hydrologist with the USDA-Agricultural Research Service Delta Water Management Research Unit in Jonesboro, Arkansas. Leslie received her M.S. in Environmental Sciences from Arkansas State University and her Ph.D. in Geological Sciences from Ohio State University.



A native of Colombia, Juliette Rivero, Visiting Instructor of Chemistry, joined the Physical Sciences Department at ATU in August 2017 as an instructor of chemistry. After successfully completing her Ph.D. in Organic Chemistry at the University of Arkansas, she worked as a researcher and instructor at the same university. Her research was focused on developing practical and scalable synthetic routes to build small libraries of azole derivatives as possible anti-fungal agents. Rivero has taught Organic Chemistry I and II, Organic Physiological Chemistry, College General Chemistry I and II; her current teaching responsibilities at ATU include Survey of Chemistry and Organic Physiological Chemistry.



Lacie Cupani, Visiting Instructor of Chemistry, received her MD (1990) and Ph.D. (1998) in Medical Sciences (Immunology, Microbiology, and Infectious Diseases) from Kyrgyz State Medical Academy and her M.S. in International Health from University of Tokyo (2001). She published over 70 research articles in leading scientific journals, and the results of her scientific investigations in “sugar-based compounds and immune response” made their way into federal and state grants, as well as patents. Currently, she is teaching Survey of Chemistry and Anatomy and Physiology. She would like to teach Immunology, Microbiology, Infectious Diseases, Undergraduate/ Graduate Research, and continue her research.

Kevin Lyon, Visiting Assistant Professor of Physics, earned his B.S. at Arkansas State University and both his M.S. and Ph.D. from UA Fayetteville, where he served as a Visiting Assistant Professor. His research interests include high pressure condensed matter physics as it pertains to glass forming systems. His research involves investigation into the fundamental nature of the glass transition.



Kevin Schoelz, Visiting Instructor of Physics, received his B.S from Truman State University and both his M.S. and Ph.D. from UA Fayetteville. For his graduate school studies, he looked at electromechanical properties of graphene (a single atomic layer of carbon atoms, arranged in a honeycomb lattice) using a technique called scanning tunneling microscopy (STM). Using STM he could both image and manipulate free-standing graphene sheets. After graduating, Schoelz went to work at Picasolar, a photovoltaics startup in based in Northwest Arkansas. At Picasolar, he worked to commercialize a technology that would improve the ability of silicon solar cells to harvest blue light. His current research interests include looking at ways to manufacture and characterize organic photovoltaic (OPV) devices. Organic photovoltaics use carbon atoms as a base material instead of silicon. OPV devices are currently less efficient and less stable than silicon technologies, however, due to low material processing costs they hold the promise of quicker energy payback. Additionally, OPV devices could be used in flexible solar modules.