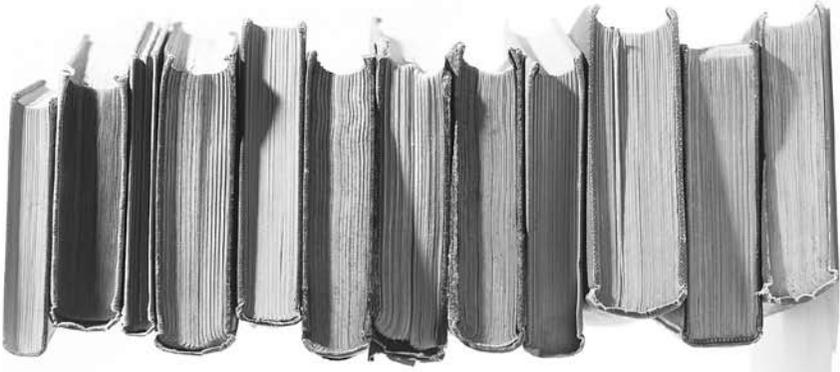




FAIRMOUNT COLLEGE OF  
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# FAIRMOUNT COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

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WICHITA STATE  
UNIVERSITY



## CERTIFICATE ENCOURAGES STUDY OF MIEVEAL AND RENAISSANCE PERIODS

Professor **William Woods**, English, enjoys studying the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. He also enjoys sharing his knowledge and appreciation of the subject with others.

One outcome of his enthusiasm is the Medieval and Renaissance Studies Certificate, an 18-credit-hour interdisciplinary program. Students participate for many reasons.

**Alisa Cotter**, graduate student in liberal studies, takes a serious, academic approach in her coursework.

"I am mostly interested in church history, particularly the political and economic relationships of various popes and emperors or kings throughout these two periods," she explains. "My focus has generally been to examine the use of the Bible in such contexts or relationships."

"Another reason people come into the program is that they're looking forward to graduate school, and they think it will strengthen their record, and they're right," says Woods. "It means that they've thought seriously about medieval and Renaissance studies and that they've taken a cluster of related courses. There's *bona fide* evidence of real interest and work done."

Cotter agrees. She is applying to Ph.D. programs in early Christian history and the development of canon law, and is completing the certificate to enhance her resume.

"We thought the certificate would help students constellate their thinking," says Woods. "Also, having a certificate on their transcript might mean something both to them and graduate schools."

However, others take more of a hobbyist approach.

"Some people are interested in art history or literature, medieval fencing or medieval cloth-making and medieval clothing," says Woods. "They like the style, they've developed an interest and they want to continue it."

He points to the influence of popular social activities such as fairs and role-playing games such as Dungeons and Dragons or the Society of Creative Anachronism. These interests provide enjoyment and meaning outside of the classroom.

Discussion about programs in medieval and Renaissance studies came about when **Robert Kindrick**, former vice president for academic affairs and research, arrived on campus. A medieval scholar and professor of English, he believed in the importance of furthering the study of the era. After he died in 2004, Woods met with **David Duncan**, Ablah Library reference librarian and medieval historian, and **Kristie Bixby**, editorial colleague and assistant, to put together the program proposal. Two years later, it became a reality.

The program crosses disciplines and colleges, and requires students to take courses in at least three of these five departments: art history; English, French or Spanish literature; history; musicology and political science. Each student must also take a medieval language course, such as Old Norse, and write a 20-page capstone paper. Future classes may include medieval and Renaissance music.

- continued inside

Dear alumni and friends,

I am pleased to announce the establishment of the Dr. Lawrence M. Jones Distinguished Professorship in the Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. **Larry and Anita Jones'** generosity have made it possible for us to recognize another one of our gifted faculty members whose scholarship and teaching skills enrich the lives of students and of the college. We are developing a selection process and plan to announce the Jones professor during the Spring 2009 semester. You may read more about the Jones' gift in this newsletter.

To date there are 10 faculty of distinction and two faculty fellows in Fairmount College. Although funded differently, the faculty of distinction and faculty fellows are recognized for their outstanding scholarship and teaching.

The faculty with either of these distinctions are:

- **Deborah Ballard-Reisch**, Kansas Health Foundation Distinguished Chair in Strategic Communication
- **Pat Dooley**, Betty and Oliver Elliott Professor of Communication
- **Albert Goldbarth**, Adele B. Davis Distinguished Professor of Humanities
- **William Groutas**, WSU Foundation Distinguished Professor of Chemistry
- **W. Bartley Hildreth**, Regents Distinguished Professor of Public Finance
- **Kevin Hager**, Kansas Health Foundation Faculty Fellow
- **James Ho**, WSU Trustees Distinguished Professor of Physics
- **Victor Isakov**, Emylou Keith and Betty Dutcher Distinguished Professor of Mathematics
- **Craig Miner**, Willard W. Garvey Distinguished Professor in Business History
- **Niall Shanks**, Curtis D. Gridley Distinguished Professor in the History and Philosophy of Science
- **James Snyder**, Katherine and Edith Erker Distinguished Professor of Psychology
- **Wan Yang**, Berg Fellow in Geology

I am also pleased to introduce my newest staff member. You may recall the dean's office underwent considerable turnover this past year with staff leaving for promotions or retirement. In January, our accounting specialist **Stephen McCann** decided to take a position closer to his home in Winfield. Although we were disappointed to lose Steve, it allowed us to hire an equally impressive and gifted accountant, **Shaunda Jones**. She is a native Wichitan and attended Wichita State, completing her degree in accounting. She aspires to obtain a master of business administration degree and a bachelor's degree in economics. I am grateful she has joined our staff.

Sincerely,



William D. Bischoff, dean

We hope you like our new design.

Let us know what you think. Send your comments to [cheryl.miller@wichita.edu](mailto:cheryl.miller@wichita.edu).

The Fairmount College newsletter is published two times a year. For information, contact Cheryl K. Miller, coordinating editor, (316) 978-6659 or [cheryl.miller@wichita.edu](mailto:cheryl.miller@wichita.edu)

Donald Beggs, president, Wichita State University  
William Bischoff, dean, Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
Photos: Cheryl K. Miller and Barbara Chaparro

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Produced by University Relations 4/08

## FACULTY & STAFF

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**Albert Goldbarth**, Adele B. Davis Distinguished Professor in the Humanities, English, published *The Kitchen Sink: New and Selected Poems: 1972-2007*, with Graywolf Press.

**Kevin Hager**, Elliott School of Communication, was named the 2008 Kansas Health Foundation Faculty Fellow. Hager also won two first-place Broadcast Educators Association awards: one for hard news reporting on the Greensburg tornado and another in feature reporting.

**Brigitte Rousset**, MCLL-French, received the President's Distinguished Service Award

**Robert Rozzelle**, LAS Advising Center, received the Wayne Carlisle Award

Fairmount College faculty winning university or college awards this spring based on their teaching and research include: **Louis Medvene**, psychology, Community Research Award; **Deborah Soles**, philosophy, Effective Teaching Award; and **William Woods**, English, John R. Barrier Award for Distinguished Teaching in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

## STUDENTS

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Political science students received recognition for their work at the recent Midwest Model United Nations meeting. **Matt Agnew**, representing Switzerland in the First Committee, and **Lizzie Bernhart**, representing Switzerland in the Human Rights Council, won outstanding delegate awards. **Drew Steadman**, representing South Africa in the First Committee, and **Spencer Ward**, representing the Philippines in the Commission on Population and Development, earned honorable mentions.

The debate team of **Matt Coleman**, business administration with a minor in Spanish, and **Eric Robinson**, political science, earned an automatic bid to the National Debate Tournament. Coleman is the first WSU debater in three decades to qualify for the national tournament three years in a row. **Jeffrey Jarman**, Elliott School of Communication, is the debate coach.

Two biological sciences students were speakers at the 2008 Kansas IDEA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence symposium. **Lindsay Hatfield**, undergraduate, presented

## NEW FACULTY & STAFF

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**Elizabeth M. Filson**, peer educator, Center for Community Research and Support  
**Lou Heldman**, distinguished senior fellow in media management and journalism, a shared appointment with the Elliott School of Communication and the Barton School of Business

**Mary Liz Jameson**, research associate, biological sciences

**Patricia Kelly**, visiting instructor, English  
**Angela Krummel-Buzard**, public affairs

associate, Hugo Wall School  
**Jill Walker**, academic advisor,

LAS Advising Center

## RETIRING FACULTY

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**Anna Chandler**, School of Community Affairs

**Shang-Ching Chou**, computer science

**David Ericson**, political science

**Wendell Leavitt**, biological sciences

**Keith Williamson**, Elliott School of Communication

**Art Youngman**, biological sciences

"Determining appropriate baseline measures of behavior in *Bufo Woodhouseii*," and **Megan Simpson**, graduate, presented "Differential analysis of gene expression in brain tissue of mice with PKU." Hatfield won an oral presentation award for her skills.

**Sara Hoyt**, social work and international relations, founded and serves as president of the new WSU chapter of UNICEF. The group focuses on education, advocacy and fund raising to benefit the activities of the United Nations Children's Fund on behalf of the world's children.

Several English graduate students placed in the New Voice Award competition, a statewide contest hosted by the Salina Arts and Humanities Commission.

**Kyle Little**, **Alex Arcone** and **Lindsey Ayres** placed first, second and third, respectively.

**Taunya Rutenbeck**, social work, president of the Student Organization of Social Work, collaborated with the Wichita mayor's office to enact a proclamation making March 28, 2008, Professional Social Work Day.



**BILL WOODS**

A native of New England, **William Woods** arrived at Wichita State in 1974. Although he thought his job as assistant professor might be for the short-term, he found the environment to be good for scholarship and teaching.

"I made my way, and it became a better and better job. After a certain point, I no longer wanted to leave," he says. "I stayed because this is a good teaching school with multiple teaching assignments. We weren't forced to teach the same thing for 30 years."

An internationally recognized Chaucer scholar, Woods also likes teaching courses on the Greek dramatists, Homer and Virgil. Students and colleagues recognized his teaching skills this spring when they successfully nominated him for the John R. Barrier Award for Distinguished Teaching in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

Woods also enjoys Spanish literature, no doubt influenced by his wife, **Anne**, a Spanish teacher in local high schools and at Wichita State. Together they enjoy travel in Mexico and Spain, and they have plans to visit his brother in France. They also make frequent visits to New York City to see their daughters and grandson. Away from scholarly and family pursuits, Woods is a runner. He runs for relaxation and sometimes enters races in middle-distance competitions.

Woods completed his bachelor's and master's degrees in English literature from Dartmouth College and the University of Chicago, respectively, and his doctorate in medieval English literature from Indiana University.

- continued from front page

Not all of the learning takes place in the classroom, though. The Medieval and Renaissance Student Guild is an active organization and supports many on-campus events related to the era.

For example, guild students have attended a workshop on 17th century movement and manners where they learned how people stood, sat, bowed and curtsied, and then performed these gestures. They have also attended a lecture on Renaissance medicine and the scientific revolution presented by **Niall Shanks**, Curtis D. Gridley Professor in the History and Philosophy of Science, and heard a recitation of "Battle of Maldon" by students in Engl 580, Old English, taught by **Michael McGlynn**, MCLL-Spanish. Last fall, they attended the premiere of "Beowulf" at the Warren Theater and discussed the movie afterward. Events such as these are open to the public.

"I couldn't have been more pleased when the students formed the guild," says Woods. "In some ways they are the strongest part of the program. They're great students."

For more information about the Medieval and Renaissance certificate, contact William Woods at (316) 978-3130 or visit [www.wichita.edu/medren](http://www.wichita.edu/medren).

## THE SHORT COURSE ON THE RENAISSANCE

The Renaissance period began in Italy with its early rebound in letter writing, rhetoric, essays and the arts. Its influence arrived in France and England in the mid- to late 1500s, and flourished in England until the middle to late 17th century. During this era, England was becoming a great sea power, and trade and commerce burgeoned with France, Italy and other countries. Scholarship exploded. Scholars discovered old manuscripts in Italy, and books on ancient rhetoric, philosophy, mathematics and medicine found their way to England in translations from Arabic, Latin and French. Ariosto and Tasso, the Italian romance epic writers, influenced English poetry, and Petrarch inspired the English sonnet.

The English theater also acquired an enthusiastic public, which allowed artists such as Shakespeare to write and produce many plays. This rebirth of learning reflected the growth of commerce, the growth of relationships with other, older cultures, and the beginning of a national identity for England as a world power.

# LAB HELPS BUSINESSES CREATE USABLE WEB PAGES

Companies have come to rely on Wichita State's Software Usability Research Laboratory to tell them how easy consumers find their Web sites to use. **Barbara Chaparro**, assistant professor of psychology and SURL director, and doctoral students in the human factors program perform expert reviews and usability studies of their sites to help them attract and retain more online customers.

"We do the evaluation from a user and a task perspective," Chaparro explains. "The bottom line is that if you want people to use the site, it's got to be usable to everybody. It's a big deal in e-commerce because usability can make the difference between making a sale or not."



THIS HEAT MAP SUPPORTS RESEARCH SHOWING THAT WEB PAGE USERS READ IN AN F PATTERN.

One way to show the eye tracking results is with heat maps.

"Heat maps provide a visualization of where users' eyes are fixating on a page and the pattern of where they are looking," Chaparro says.

"This information is helpful for Web designers to determine the most effective way to organize Web pages."

A third method of evaluation involves what Chaparro calls an "expert review," a detailed evaluation of a Web site based on research-based guidelines for Web design. Companies can learn what areas of their Web site may be violating usability standards or are inaccessible to users with disabilities.

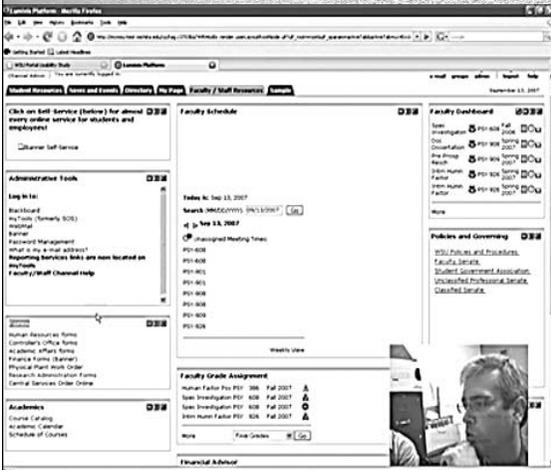
## COMMON ERRORS IN WEB DESIGN

No matter how experienced the Web designer, it's likely he or she will make mistakes when creating a Web site.

"It's always surprising to me, when we've been doing this for so many years, that we've never evaluated a Web site that was flawless," Chaparro says. "We always find something that can be improved."

The most common Web site usability errors impact time, efficiency and satisfaction. How long does it take the page to load? Do people have to dig for the information or are they able to find it up front? How easy is it to place an online order?

Not surprisingly, Chaparro's team has found that the longer it takes to find information or the more difficult it is to conduct business through the Web site, the more likely a user is to click on the red X at the top right corner and exit the site.



## SPECIALIZED SOFTWARE ALLOWS SURL RESEARCHERS TO VIEW REMOTELY WEB SITE USERS.

One method of evaluation involves usability testing with actual end users of the Web site. Specialized software allows Chaparro and her team to view remotely from another computer on the network a user working with the Web site. This allows them to monitor what the user is doing, where he or she is looking on the screen, and his or her reaction to the Web site. In addition, they are able to collect objective data such as time spent on a task, successful completion of a task and efficiency.

Another way the lab evaluates Web sites is through eye-tracking. A camera at the base of a computer monitor tracks where a viewer is looking on the screen. This allows observers to determine how frequently users view images, text or any element on the screen.

"Research has shown that users tend to follow an F pattern when they read a Web page," Chaparro says. "This means that critical information needs to be at the top (of a page) because people don't scroll. And if they do, they only look at it quickly."

## WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR WEB PAGE

Although the information gleaned from these evaluations may be helpful, businesses don't always implement suggestions by SURL researchers. This may be because of time commitments, the timing of product releases or the cost justification.

"We can show businesses based on number of key presses and number of mouse clicks how much more efficient their site could be," Chaparro explains. "Multiply that by the number of users they have, and how many times they'll be using the site, and we can compute the monetary benefits of implementing the changes. It is ultimately up to the company whether they want to absorb the costs to make the changes."

For more information about the lab and some of the research, visit [www.surl.org](http://www.surl.org) or e-mail Chaparro at [barbara.chaparro@wichita.edu](mailto:barbara.chaparro@wichita.edu).

- **Limit the amount of text.** Eye-tracking data shows that people don't read on the Web and are much more likely to scan information.
- **Convey a strong message on the home page.** Users have been shown to form a first impression based on colors, images and text in as early as 50 milliseconds.
- **Use a clear navigational model.** Make information easy to find.
- **Employ a decent search engine.** Allow it to make suggestions to correct for misspelling or similar words.

## SOFTWARE USABILITY RESEARCH LABORATORY

Barbara Chaparro's 10 years of experience in the software development industry designing and evaluating user interfaces was the driving force behind SURL's creation. A service division to Wichita State's Human-Computer Interaction Laboratory, SURL opened in 1998 to provide usability services to the software community worldwide. SURL's focus is on Web site usability, information retrieval on the Web, Web site design and Web menu selection techniques. Clients have included Akamai Technologies, Cessna, Coleman, Dean and Deluca, Microsoft and the National Cancer Institute. SURL's work with Microsoft included research on the legibility and personality of new fonts included in Vista.

Although the consulting function is important, the hands-on experience Chaparro's 10 human factors doctoral students get is her primary interest.

"The real-world experience gained by the graduate students helps to open the door to employment opportunities with some of the major software companies, like Google and Microsoft," she says. "The direct experience with industry and usability issues looks great on their resume."

## CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HUMAN HEALTH ACCESSIBLE ONLINE

Approximately three years ago, **Collette Burke**, geology, with help from community members **Bill Howse** and **Jay Barnes**, mapped out a plan to create a center that would serve as a clearinghouse for environmental and community health topics in Kansas.

Now the resources of the Center for Environment and Human Health are accessible online. Burke and **Toni Jackman**, geology, coordinate the Web site.

The center serves Kansas environmental groups, non-profit health and human service organizations and community members. Visitors to the Web site may participate in the CEHH annual survey on Kansas environmental issues, click on links to related external sites, or peruse the Kansas State Project. The latter provides an in-depth look at the state's environmental health in the twelve river basin areas. Project information addresses facts about each region, water quality and management issues, and environmental threats and hazards. Visit the Web site at [webs.wichita.edu/cehh/index.html](http://webs.wichita.edu/cehh/index.html).

## JONES' GIFT TO FUND PROFESSORSHIP OF DISTINCTION

While serving on the board for Union Pacific Corp., **Lawrence M. "Larry" Jones** was able to designate a combined gift of \$500,000 to Wichita State University's Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Wichita Symphony after his death.

Union Pacific had created the Board of Directors' Charitable Contribution Plan to recognize the interest of company and board members in supporting worthy charitable and educational institutions.

"These gifts are available through the generosity of the Union Pacific Corp. to its directors and, of course, from Larry's service to that company," said **Anita Jones**, Jones' widow.

Part of the gift—\$400,000—establishes the Dr. Lawrence M. Jones Distinguished Professorship in the Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Anita Jones' undergraduate degree is in English.

Larry Jones died Nov. 7, 2007. His career included roles as a faculty member at WSU, president and CEO of the Coleman Co. and director for several corporations including Cessna, Bank IV and Union Pacific.

"I am deeply appreciative of Larry and Anita's foresight and support," said **William D. Bischoff**, dean. "Their gift underscores the value of the liberal arts and the skills base it provides."

— compiled by Cheryl K. Miller



LARRY JONES



## COMMUNITY COLLEGE VISITS PROVIDE TRANSFER OF ACADEMIC INFORMATION

**Marché Fleming-Randle**, assistant dean, and **Barbara Mason**, director of the LAS Advising Center, have a two-fold mission in their outreach to community colleges: to create relationships with their counterparts and to brief them on changes in advising and curriculum issues.

"We want to form friendships, and create an atmosphere of collegiality and comity with our peers as a way to benefit students who plan to transfer to Wichita State," said Mason.

As part of a group of representatives from WSU's six undergraduate colleges, Fleming-Randle and Mason meet with advisors, instructors and administrators at community colleges to update information about transfer course equivalencies and changes in program requirements, or to introduce new degrees, such as Fairmount College's program in forensic science. The group, coordinated by **Neal Hoelting**, admissions, travels to Kansas community colleges each semester. They crisscross the state, visiting places as different from one another as Seward County Community College, Colby Community College and Kansas City Kansas Community College.

Although recruitment is not the primary focus of the trips, questions invariably arise about what WSU can offer students. The metropolitan setting is one of strengths Fleming-Randle likes to emphasize.

"We tell our colleagues that WSU is an institution in a large city that has many services to help students succeed," she said. "We have more support services to offer."

"We also have LAS degree plans that are not offered elsewhere, and a strong Cooperative Education program," said Mason.

The meetings also help reinforce the dual advising process with the local community colleges such as Butler County Community College and Cowley College. Many times students take classes at WSU and a community college the same semester. Fleming-Randle and Mason stress the importance of giving students accurate advising information.

Both women look forward to the trips as an opportunity to display Fairmount College programs and WSU services.

"It's an exciting time to be an advisor," Fleming-Randle said.