

# DINS ENGAGED

*Furman's Community-Engaged Learning Newsletter*

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## BENJAMIN FRANKLIN EXPERIENCE: INTRODUCING GREENVILLE'S YOUTH TO CONSERVATION & LAND MANAGEMENT



Camille Lasley '18 (left), Sarina Basile '18 (second from left) instruct three Benjamin Franklin Experience students at Jones Gap State Park.

Last fall, Furman students, faculty and staff had the opportunity to participate in a unique partnership with the Benjamin Franklin Experience (BFE), a new summer program in Greenville. The program, designed for ages 14 to 18, offers a two-week course of full-day experiences that introduce teens to careers in the Greenville area. Fields highlighted include law, medicine, arts and math. The Benjamin Franklin Experience is operated by the local non-profit AidJoy.

Professor of Environmental Science Bill Ranson was contacted by a former student in May 2017 about the opportunity to work with AidJoy. Ryan Richardson '13 had been talking with his friend and AidJoy's founder and executive director Jonathan Shanin about the new summer program. Shanin was looking for experts to lead the full-day experiences and was interested in connecting with Ranson to organize an environmental science-themed course. Ranson says he has always believed that the role of the university is to be a resource to the community, so he was happy to lend his expertise.

After brainstorming for several weeks, Shanin and Ranson had planned an experience for the students with lessons in geology, ecosystem services, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and more. "What we envisioned was that they would be environmental scientists for the day," Ranson said.

Ranson recruited his summer research fellows to help lead the course. Furman students Sarina Basile, CJ Lane, Camille Lasley and Emily Anderson (all '18), were eager to connect with the BFE students. Basile thought the program was a wonderful opportunity to interact with bright high school students who are looking toward their own futures. "I was able to share with them what I love to study and talk about what I am currently doing and will be able to do in the future with my earth and environmental sciences degree."

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## STUDENTS SHOW SUPPORT FOR REFUGEES WITH NEW TASK FORCE

Fall 2017 was a busy semester for Natalie Tikhonovsky '20. She founded the Furman Refugee Task Force, a group dedicated to humanizing the global refugee crisis and raising campus discussions about the complex issues associated with refugees.

The Task Force hosted several CLPs in the fall including "Every Campus a Refuge" which featured Diya Abdo from Guilford College in Greensboro, North Carolina. Abdo challenged attendees to reconsider the higher education implications of the refugee crisis and shared her own initiative, Every Campus a Refuge (ECAR), which calls on every college and university around the world to host one refugee family on campus grounds and assist them in resettlement. The program is highly acclaimed, existing at seven universities and winning a number of national awards. More CLPs like Abdo's will be on the schedule in the spring.

In addition to organizing CLPs, the Task Force partnered with students in Introduction to Geographic Information Systems (EES 201). The team worked to establish a database of Furman alumni and students involved in refugee relief work across the globe and create a digital map displaying these connections. Tikhonovsky spent months reaching out to members of the Furman community and collecting their personal statements. The Task Force hopes to build this database and map in the future, tracking more alumni and students as they continue to work with refugees all over the world.

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## FROM THE DIRECTOR



Mike Winiski, Interim Executive Director of Community-Engaged Learning (CEL)

### WE'RE LIVE!

Go check out CEL's new page at [www.furman.edu/academics/community-engaged-learning/](http://www.furman.edu/academics/community-engaged-learning/)

I hope your 2018 is off to a great start!

Since the Collaborative for Community-Engaged Learning was established in July, we've been working with faculty, staff and students to implement elements of the strategic plan for community engagement (Engaged Furman). Thanks to Angela Halfacre for her leadership, overseeing the various committees and teams that documented Furman's rich history, the breadth of existing activity, and opportunities for new and deepening community partnerships. As part of that implementation, 13 faculty gathered for an intensive four-day workshop to share best practices, challenges, and opportunities for integrating community-based work into classes and research. We were joined by 11 leaders from various organizations to discuss pressing local and regional issues and explore opportunities for future collaboration.

As the stories in this newsletter indicate, our role has been to facilitate campus-community partnerships. In each case, either faculty, students or staff took the lead. While we're not able to highlight all of the partnerships and activities from the past summer and fall, we hope the newsletter provides a sense of how Furman continues to forward a long-held value of building partnerships for the public good. For an especially compelling and detailed discussion of one particularly active period from our history (1930s), I highly recommend reading Scott Henderson's article below.

Henderson, A. (2005). "Building Intelligent and Active Public Minds": Education and Social Reform in Greenville County during the 1930s. *The South Carolina Historical Magazine*, 106(1), 34-58. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27570728>

## 2017-2018 COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING FELLOWS

### FACULTY AND STAFF FELLOWS

Matt Cohen, Earth & Environmental Sciences  
Shaniece Criss, Health Sciences  
Melissa Fair, Institute for the Advancement of Community Health  
Geoffrey Habron, Earth & Environmental Sciences  
Casey Hawthorne, Mathematics  
Amy Jonason, Sociology  
Cecilia Kang, Music  
Ken Kolb, Sociology  
Maria Rippon, Modern Languages & Literatures  
Meghan Slining, Health Sciences  
Tom Smythe, Business & Accounting  
Jeanine Stratton, Business & Accounting  
Andrea Tartaro, Computer Science

### STUDENT FELLOWS

Madeline Bauer '17, Computing in the Community  
Hunter Dixon '20, iMAP Intern  
Jason Moore '18, Computing in the Community  
Lauren Prunkl '18, Geographic Information Systems  
Chandler Smith '18, Strategic Planning & Communications

### POST-BACCALAUREATE FELLOWS

Melanie Brown '17, CEL Coordinator & Quantitative Analysis  
Emilee O'Brien '17, CEL and Social Justice  
Hannah Wheeler '16, CEL Coordinator & Qualitative Analysis



NEWSLETTER EDITORS  
Hannah Wheeler & Chandler Smith

## CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS

**BRIDGES TO A BRIGHTER FUTURE** has selected its next class. The Phi Class includes 26 high school sophomores who were chosen from a pool of 97 applicants.

Students from **CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL** visited Furman to present proposals for the development of an urban farm site. Community partners Thrive Upstate, Generous Garden and Sustaining Way judged the proposals, planned for the historic Judson neighborhood.

Harlan Beckley from **THE SHEPHERD HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIUM ON POVERTY** traveled to campus last semester to talk about the consortium's internship program.

**GREENVILLE COUNTY iMAP** was launched in June 2017. Furman collaborated with multiple community partners to create the map which identifies essential services available throughout Greenville County.

### COMMUNITY GUEST MEAL TICKETS

CEL has started a new program to help faculty and staff as they host community partners and guests on campus. If you're inviting a community partner to campus for lunch, apply for a dining hall meal ticket! To access the form, go to the [Qualtrics form](#) or email [hannah.wheeler@furman.edu](mailto:hannah.wheeler@furman.edu)

BFE's day at Furman started at Jones Gap State Park, a 30-minute drive north of campus. "One of my goals was to show them this beautiful place," Ranson said. Many of the students had never hiked before. At Jones Gap, the group split into four teams to look at a stream running through the park, the geology and mineralogy of the area, the potential for landslides, and regional flora and fauna. Ultimately, the students learned about different properties that give land its value.

Ranson also recruited Furman GIS experts Mike Winiski and Melanie Brown to help lead the second part of the program. After visiting Jones Gap, students traveled back to Furman to the GIS lab where they explored how environmental and economic data can be combined to make choices about land conservation. Winiski and Brown helped students navigate a web-based mapping program and a hands-on

simulation. Students were shown five properties, given \$5 million hypothetical dollars, and asked to select a property to preserve using these funds. "They were able to experience how maps can be used to help people make difficult decisions," Brown said.

Ranson says he hopes to continue the partnership in the future. "The Furman students really enjoyed it. It's a nice break from the fieldwork during the summer, and they get a chance to give back to their community."

"Hearing what these students are doing and plan to do in college and beyond is inspiring," said Basile. "I think the Ben Franklin Experience is an amazing way to let these students foster their passions and grow into young leaders."



Pictures from Jones Gap State Park.

Participation in Furman's Refugee Task Force has been personal for Tikhonovsky. "My ties to the refugee crisis stretch back to before I was even born." Her grandmother, a Holocaust refugee, and her parents' immigration has inspired her to advocate on the behalf of all refugees. Tikhonovsky hopes to further her involvement in refugee relief efforts by volunteering at a refugee camp in Lebanon during summer 2018.



ABOVE: Natalie Tikhonovsky (far left), Diya Abdo (third from right), and other members of Furman's Refugee Task Force.

BELOW: Dr. Diya Abdo speaking at the CLP.



## ALTERNATIVE SPRING BREAKS AMASS STUDENT INTEREST

This semester the Office of Student Involvement and Inclusion is offering three alternative spring breaks for the Furman student body through the Alternative Spring Break program. Emilee O'Brien '17, the post baccalaureate fellow for Social Justice and Community-Engaged Learning, is spearheading the effort to give students a spring break experience with a community impact.

O'Brien worked with Assistant Vice President for Student Development Neil Jamerson, the Office of the Chaplains, and the Institute for the Advancement of Community Health (IACH) to develop two local trips, "Barriers to Health in Greenville" and "Theology and Social Justice in Greenville." Students on the "Barriers to Health" trip will study issues that Greenville citizens face when accessing health care including homelessness, transportation and legal advocacy. "Theology and Justice" will introduce students to the ways Greenville organizations use theology to understand and address justice issues like gentrification and job training for formerly incarcerated individuals. Students on both trips will have the opportunity to meet

with numerous nonprofit and faith-oriented community partners.

A third trip, "Refugee Resettlement in Atlanta," will immerse students in refugee issues occurring in Clarkston, Georgia. With over 8,000 recently-resettled refugees from around the world, students will engage with refugee children at local schools and help their parents move into their new homes. The trip will also highlight the economic injustices refugees face as they resettle in Clarkston. Furman will work with partners from Refuge Coffee Co., Jolly Avenue Community Garden, Georgia's Coalition of Refugee Service Agencies and Atlanta's Center for Civil and Human Rights.

The Alternative Spring Break program is modeled after Vanderbilt Alternative Spring Break which is student-run and combines direct service, education and reflection. The trips and concurrent programming also pull from Break Away, a national nonprofit that helps campuses develop alternative break programs.

Like Vanderbilt, the Furman trips will be student-led. Each trip will have two student facilitators who showed interest in leading the experience on their applications.

However, the Furman spring breaks will have unique aspects. They are not only service-oriented, but also require pre-trip meetings and post-trip reflections. Faculty will help lead these pre- and post-components. Additionally, Student Involvement and Inclusion recruited a wide variety of students to apply. "We want these trips to be accessible for all types of students," O'Brien said. There was no GPA requirement to apply, and the cost per student is \$25 for each of the trips.

"I think we are well on our way to making this a big program," stated O'Brien. To her delight, 38 students applied for 26 spots, and most applicants were first and second year students. Applications came from student athletes, ROTC cadets and students studying abroad.

"The younger applicants will help the program be sustainable. Next year, they can come back and apply to be the student facilitators." O'Brien also plans to organize a student board next year to help pick trip themes and recruit students.

The amount of applicants is encouraging, said O'Brien. "Their energy makes me even more excited about the trips." Overwhelming interest for the 2018 trips will provide a foundation for the growth of the program. Applicants indicated they were most interested in the Atlanta trip; and O'Brien hopes to offer more out-of-state trips in the future. "We might be able to do 6-8 trips next spring," she says.

The Alternative Spring Break program is designed with The Furman Advantage (TFA) in mind. The trips prepare students for diverse experiences and align with TFA principles of teaching students how to "value community and appreciate difference." The trips will encourage students to become more active citizens and help them understand social issues in a local, regional and global context.

## TONY MCDADE: A PARTNER AND ALUMNUS



Tony McDade, executive director of United Ministries, has been a key partner, alumnus and friend to Furman for many years. The 1979 graduate is deeply engaged with the poverty studies minor, the Collaborative for Community-Engaged Learning, the Riley Institute, as well as several other campus groups.

In his role at United Ministries, the Rev. McDade has a goal "to serve and empower those on the transformative journey to self-sufficiency" by providing services related to education, employment, crisis support and homelessness.

One instance of the close partnership between McDade and his alma mater occurred last April. United Ministries collaborated with the sociology and poverty studies departments to bring Matthew Desmond, author of *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*, to

Greenville on April 20. While in town, Desmond was the keynote speaker at United Ministries' annual "Uniting for Change" luncheon and spoke to Furman students at a CLP event and in the Sociology Qualitative Research Seminar (SOC 475).

"We were delighted that he found time to share his wisdom with the Furman and Greenville communities," says McDade. "A foremost authority on poverty and the effects of eviction on urban communities, Desmond's message is that only by increasing affordable housing will our society reduce poverty and homelessness."

Homelessness is an issue McDade is passionate about. He served as the head of Greenville Homeless Alliance's steering committee. The Alliance, a coalition of over 40 stakeholders, hopes to make homelessness brief and rare in Greenville.

As the conversation surrounding affordable housing, living wage and homelessness continues in Greenville, the community will look to McDade for his leadership, expertise and dedication to local families experiencing financial difficulties.

## CECILIA KANG: CEL FACULTY SPOTLIGHT



Cecilia Kang is assistant professor of clarinet, active performer, adjudicator, clinician and a CEL faculty fellow. Last fall, Kang's engagements took her across the nation and around the world.

Over the course of the semester Kang performed with the Carolina Youth Symphony, co-hosted the Second Annual Single Reed Day at Furman, and gave a clarinet

pedagogy workshop at the Midwest Clinic International Band, Orchestra, and Music Conference in Chicago. She was also recruited to teach music students in South Korea and Hong Kong. These opportunities allowed Kang to pursue her passion of engaging with the community through her work with middle school, high school and university music students around the world.

In addition to traveling and performing with other noted musicians, Kang is dedicated to mentoring her students and connecting them with community members. On October 28, 2017, Kang arranged for the The Mezcla Reed Quintet, a Furman student woodwind chamber group she directs, to perform at the Woodlands. The group recently won first place at the prestigious South Carolina Music Teachers Association Competition.

She hopes to hold similar concerts in the future and further her talented students' involvement in community events.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Leo De La Cruz '19, Melvin Robinson '19, Manny Ventura '20, Matthew Martin '20 and Destiny Meadows '19 perform as the Mezcla Reed Quintet at the Woodlands.