UNC Greensboro faculty are consistently outstanding, in teaching, promoting student success, and carrying out research at the highest levels. This year, twelve faculty members have been recognized with the university-wide awards.

“The excellence embodied in the work of these award recipients distinguishes UNC Greensboro and ensures that our students have an outstanding educational experience,” said Provost Dana Dunn. “We are truly fortunate to have these exceptionally talented individuals as part of our university community.”

Teaching Awards
Winners of UNCG’s Teaching Awards were honored at a luncheon in February and included
below are some descriptions of their accomplishments.

(l-r) Marciche Bayonas, Anna Maria Gove Award for Teaching Excellence recipient Meiging Sun, Roberto Campo, John Kiss, UNC BOG Excellence in Teaching award recipient Carmen Sotomayor

UNC BOG Excellence in Teaching
Carmen Sotomayor, Professor, Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures

Sotomayor is professor of Spanish and associate head of her department. In addition to teaching both the undergraduate and graduate levels, she leads a study abroad program for undergraduates each summer in Spain and has established and supported new exchange opportunities.

Sotomayor is one of 17 award recipients who represent all 16 of North Carolina’s public universities and the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics. The faculty members were nominated by special committees on their home campuses and selected by the Board of Governors Committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs.

She is known as a skilled peer mentor in her department and across the profession. Particularly noteworthy have been her leadership in co-organizing LLC’s Language Learning Series workshops held each semester for department colleagues and in-service K-12 teachers from the Triad and beyond and her mentorship of both the NTT Senior Lecturer
serving as Director of Language Instruction (DLI) for our enormous (25-faculty-member) lower-level Spanish program and the NTT lecturer who serves as program coordinator for the LLC-managed Global Village Living-Learning Community, whose mission is to offer first-year students the opportunity to live, learn, and have fun with fellow students interested in diverse languages and world cultures. She was also instrumental in establishing LLC’s nationally recognized Modified Language Programs for Spanish and French.

Recent master’s students offered the following reflections:

I consider myself very lucky for having had Dr. Sotomayor as professor because of the valuable cultural insight she has provided me with. Her passion for instilling a sense of wonder and discovery of different cultures that she is familiar with, is evident in her classroom.

I decided to switch my major to Spanish because she gave me the confidence to believe that my heritage could be celebrated. She encouraged me continue learning about my heritage to eventually make changes in the community.

(l-r) CVPA’s bruce mcclung, Mary Ashley Barret, Mary Settle Sharp Award for Teaching Excellence recipient Elizabeth Perrill, Janet Lilly, and Ana Paula Hofling

Mary Settle Sharp Award for Teaching Excellence
Elizabeth Perrill, Associate Professor, School of Art

For her courses in art history, Perrill guides students in researching modern and contemporary African artists, completing a social justice-oriented project in which the students research and write about artists’ careers and publish web pages with the information. She has supported students’ preparation for presenting at national-level conferences, as well as at UNCG expos. She is the recipient of teaching awards such as an Open Education Resources (OER) Mini-Grant, a Global Engagement Course Development Award, and a Transforming the Humanities Initiative Award funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Perrill brought her curatorial vision and research experience to the North Carolina Museum of Art’s African Gallery, which opened in 2017 and is three times as large as the prior installation. With NCMA’s education department, she also helped develop activities and interpretive materials to help the museum convey themes and build knowledge and connection with visitors.

A graduate student says of her teaching:

Dr. Perrill is dedicated to teaching her students a range of lifelong research skills. During the sophomore seminar, she brought our class to the library both to receive training from a librarian and to demonstrate the scanning technologies in relationship to creating a research archive. By prioritizing academic and practical methodologies, Dr. Perrill sets the stage for her students’ success and defines the art history program at UNCG as exceptional.

James Y. Joyner Award for Teaching Excellence
Robyn Le Blanc, Assistant Professor, Department of Classical Studies

Le Blanc teaches Classical Mythology, classical civilization, and archaeology courses. She is known by colleagues and students for her approachability, humor, and her innovative courses and material. She is a recipient of an Alumni Teaching Excellence Award (junior) and New Faculty Research Grant.

“What has made Robyn such a successful teacher is both her love of the material and her desire to get students to want to learn it,” says Maura Hehn, head of Classical Studies. “In evaluations of Robyn’s teaching students consistently cite her passion for what she is doing as the reason they like her so much:

I love how passionate Dr. Le Blanc is about the subject. Professor Le Blanc’s passion helps me enjoy the class so much more.
Le Blanc is a great prof and passionate about her job and her students. Her excitement in teaching the material made it more exciting to learn about it.

Anna Maria Gove Award for Teaching Excellence
Meiqing Sun, Senior Lecturer, Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures

Sun has served both LLC’s Chinese Studies program and IGS’s major concentration in Asian Studies, as an administrator of the Chinese Studies program and an active scholar in the pedagogically-related field of applied linguistics for Mandarin Chinese. She facilitates conversation opportunities for Chinese learners with native and heritage-Chinese speakers has played a major role in coordinating the annual Asian Autumn Festival and has led LLC’s annual Chinese Film Series, Chinese New Year Festival, and Chinese Music Concert.

“Like her students, colleagues regularly applaud her superior knowledge of the material, masterful organization, timely return of assignments, stimulating classroom environment, engaging demeanor, and tireless dedication to successful learning,” said head of LLC Robert Campo. “Without question, Dr. Meiqing Sun is an extraordinary teacher who has been and continues to be a lasting inspiration for her students while serving as a model of commitment to teaching excellence for all of her colleagues.

UNCG Online Award for Excellence in Online Education
Vasyl Taras, Associate Professor, Department of Management

Instruction and Education Awards
Outstanding Faculty Mentor Award (Graduate)
Jo Ramsay Leimenstoll, Professor, Dept. of Interior Architecture

Thomas Undergraduate Research Mentor Award, pre-tenured category
Blair Wisco, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology

Thomas Undergraduate Research Mentor Award, post-tenure category
Tyreasa Washington, Associate Professor, Department of Social Work

Student Learning Enhancement Awards
Department of Anthropology
Department of Biology
Department of History

Advising Excellence Award
Cristina Moreira, Lecturer, Department of Biology
Service Leadership Awards
Gladys Strawn Bullard Award (Faculty)
Joanne Murphy, Associate Professor, Department of Classical Studies

Holshouser Award for Excellence in Public Service Award (2019 Nominee)
Ann Somers, Senior Lecturer, Department of Biology

Research Excellence Awards
Senior Research Excellence Award
Olav Rueppell, Florence Schaeffer Distinguished Professor of Science, Department of Biology

Junior Research Excellence Award Joanne Murphy, Associate Professor, Department of Classical Studies

Story by Susan Kirby-Smith, University Communications
Photography courtesy of Elizabeth Perrill, bruce mcclung, and Mariche Bayonas

Next Virtual Town Hall is April 22

On Wednesday, April 22, 3-4 p.m., please join the second virtual Town Hall with Chancellor Gilliam and Provost Dunn. The virtual Town Hall is co-hosted by Faculty and Staff Senates and will precede the General Faculty Meeting.

Instructions on joining the Town Hall through Zoom are found below, as well as instructions for participating by phone. The chancellor and provost will spend the first half of the forum addressing the most pressing questions and then open it up for general Q&A. The session will be recorded and posted on both senate websites.

Submit questions here: https://forms.gle/nxaHziZdzZjo2X9K8 by Monday, April 20, at 9 a.m.

To join the meeting, login at:
https://uncg.zoom.us/j/96928366430?pwd=ZUo2VVdqbTNUdDRWTd2UnFtTC90QT09
Meeting ID: 969-2836-6430
Password: 713503

Or join by phone:
Dial (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):
US: +1 312 626 6799 or +1 646 558 8656 or +1 346 248 7799 or +1 669 900 9128 or +1
An Earth Day unlike any other

This week, Earth Day turns 50. The celebration, which takes place each year on April 22, marks the anniversary of the birth of the modern environmental movement. But that milestone isn’t the only highlight for this year’s event. Earth Day is taking place during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has disrupted and upended life around the globe.

Sustainability is a concept at the heart of Earth Day. It’s a mindset and an approach that applies to all aspects of life. And it is a subject/theme that is studied in practically every academic discipline.
At UNCG, we’ve highlighted some of our faculty and staff who engage students and the campus in sustainability, through research and environmentally conscious efforts. This brief cross-section of disciplines and research is just a teaser of all the work in sustainability by our faculty, staff, and students.

**Etsuko Kinefuchi**  
Communication Studies

“As a communication scholar, I am interested in the relationship between the environment, culture, and identity and how communication shapes their relationship. My current research investigates this relationship in the context of two different areas. One is the discourses of energy, and the other is the discourses of veganism and carnism. These affairs may seem to have little in common, but both are deeply central to our culture and who we are and have profound environmental implications.

“If we, modern humans, lived in accordance with the laws of ecology, every day is Earth Day. But, because we don’t, we need a special day to remember that we are an integral part of this amazing planet. The term, ‘Mother Earth,’ is not simply metaphorical; humans were derived from Earth and are connected to everything else. We forget this simple fact, so we need a day like Earth Day to remember that kinship and the responsibilities that come with it.”

**Aaron Allen**  
Geography, Environment and Sustainability; Ecomusicology
“I’m of two minds on Earth Day,” he says. “On the one hand, I think it’s a great way to draw attention to the fundamental importance of our planet, its many wonders, and the many challenges we humans have caused for ourselves and other life forms. However, I find it regrettable that we conscribe our focused attention to a day or week of the year when it should be continuous. There’s also too much greenwashing that goes on around Earth Day, which dilutes its importance and trivializes otherwise important messages. Nevertheless, I think it’s a useful way to generate more attention for such a series of really important issues.”

Allen is director of the Environment & Sustainability Program in the Department of Geography, Environment, and Sustainability as well as associate professor of musicology. His research is primarily in the interdisciplinary field of ecomusicology, which considers the relationships between music, culture, and nature. Dr. Allen has been involved in the campus sustainability movement since the mid-1990s, and he’s even built an off-grid solar-powered cabin in rural Appalachia.

Chanelle James
Marketing, Entrepreneurship, Hospitality, and Tourism
“Sustainability is so deeply complex and my research rests in examining that complexity. I am interested in the intersection of entrepreneurship and a sustainable community. Entrepreneurship is a vehicle for moving the design and intent of sustainability into the lived experiences of the larger community and I study how that happens. Sustainable entrepreneurship uses the efficiencies learned through business practices to create sustainability-focused value chains in society. The caveat is that value must be balanced. Sustainability says that the value we create must include and balance: a reduction in environmental degradation, advocacy for social justice, and a focus on economic development and not just growth.

“Earth Day is important because it focuses on the power that people have in creating something better. Earth Day says that no matter where pockets of power exist in Society, the power of the Earth is strong. Earth Day says we had better recognize the power of the Earth before it is too late. It’s a Spiritual day for me. Earth Day makes me say ‘Hallelujah’ and then ‘Namaste.’”

Ethan W. Taylor
Chemistry & Biochemistry
Earth Day reminds us of what we should worry about every day. COVID-19 is a wake up call, and a manifestation of Earth’s immune system in action – against us. Because most emerging viral diseases like SARS, COVID-19, HIV/AIDS, and Ebola all entered the human population because of our environmental encroachment and predation on animal species for food, it follows that we need to hugely decrease global livestock production. A plant-based food future will enable us to maintain vastly more wild earth habitats, eliminate the need for deforestation, and decrease greenhouse gas production. To quote my daughter Astra and others: ‘Eating meat, it seems, is a socially acceptable form of science denial.’

Taylor’s work focuses on two areas of research: 1) The role of selenium (a dietary mineral found in soil) and how its increasing depletion contributes to the virulence of emerging viral diseases, and 2) the impacts of eating animals on climate change, antibiotic resistance, and increased frequency of new pandemics from emerging diseases. He and his wife Maria Dormandy Taylor are cofounders of the Triad Vegan Society and the Dharma Farm Animal Refuge in Archdale, NC.

Taylor’s presentation, “How eating animals comes back to bite us: from Antibiotic resistance to Zoonotic diseases,” was recently highlighted in an article in The Guardian. Written by his daughter Astra, who is a writer, activist, and filmmaker, the article argues for the need to change our global food system in response to COVID-19.

Gwen Hunnicutt
Sociology
“The coronavirus pandemic reminds us that humans are connected to animal health and to the environment...Deforestation creates opportunities for animal microbes to transform into deadly human pathogens and the practice of factory farming also provides a thriving environment for deadly pathogens.

“We might also take note of how coronavirus has encouraged pro-climate behaviors. This is also a chance for us to learn about digital activism. Since we have more time on our hands, we can become citizen scientists. Learn about the science behind climate change, take it seriously, and demand that our political leaders are advised by the scientific community because our current pandemic demonstrates that governments absolutely must be attentive to science.”

Associate Professor of Sociology Dr. Gwen Hunnicutt teaches both ecofeminism and green criminology. She volunteers at farm animal sanctuaries and does educational outreach for animal emancipation. This past fall, Hunnicutt published the book “Gender Violence in Ecofeminist Perspective: Intersections of Animal Oppression, Patriarchy and Domination of the Earth” through the Routledge Research in Gender and Society series. (Available as an e-book through UNCG’s Jackson Library.) Read more about Hunnicutt’s book and perspective in this interview.

Sarah Dorsey
University Libraries
She calls herself “Sarah ‘we’re all on this spaceship together’ Dorsey.” She’s director of the Harold Schiffman Music Library but sustainability is also a big part of her work at UNCG and in the world at large. She co-founded the UNCG Sustainability Film and Discussion Series, a free series that, at 14 years, is the longest running program of its kind in the region. Dorsey also helped initiate University Libraries’ Green Library Group which supports the Green Office Program and twice each year cleans a tributary of Buffalo Creek on Walker Avenue and has two plots in the campus garden on McIver Street.

“In these coronavirus times, the interconnectedness of us all on this ‘spaceship’ could not be more clear,” says Dorsey. “And there is no Planet B. My optimistic self hopes we will finally learn this lesson in ways that will help us honor and care for our Mother Earth and each other. This Earth Day is unlike any other in our lifetimes. I’ve been wondering what I can do to celebrate and have decided to start a victory garden. I will cut back some of my backyard jungle, and plant food and flowers to feed the body and spirit. In addition, I will do what I can so we can address climate justice issues, feed everyone, and put the EPA back where it belongs – as a driver of motion forward to healthier and more equitable times.”

Justin Harmon
Community & Therapeutic Recreation
Harmon, left, leads a group of cancer survivors on the “Celebrate the Trail to Recovery” event at Owl's Roost trail in Bur-Mill Park.

“Earth Day is a reminder to me of the beauty, fragility, and power of the natural environment, and how each one of us who lives here is responsible for its care,” says Harmon. “Earth Day should be an everyday celebration; we should all make a commitment to reducing our consumption, waste, and pollution, reusing as many of the resources we already have, and recycling, giving away, and composting the resources that we no longer want or need. Do one positive thing every day for the Earth – the future thanks you!”

Harmon looks at the use of nature trails as a healing resource for people with cancer. Greensboro and Guilford County are blessed with an abundance of open green spaces, including several lakes and hundreds of miles of trails. While these resources give us great natural beauty and a wide-open playground, they also serve as places of healing. Physical activity in nature has been shown to decrease anxiety and depression, lower blood pressure, reduce cortisol levels (stress), positively impact the senses, and allow for restorative experiences that cannot be obtained in the built environment.

In Justin’s work with survivors of cancer, every week, twice a week, they go out to hike for roughly two hours; this habitual physical exercise in wilderness environments shows a clear complementary link to medicalized treatment for those in treatment for cancer, as well as after as survivors work to establish their “new normal.” Without these resources, we would have less holistic health in Greensboro – reason enough to advocate for our green spaces as an essential part of this community.

Ann Somers
Biology and Geography, Environment, and Sustainability
“I am reminded of an article by Donella Meadows that reports that since the first Earth Day, the global vehicle population had gone from 246 to 730 million. Now that number is 1.3 billion. In 1970, about 10% of the world’s fish stocks were overexploited. Now that number is closer to 35%. And so we just fish deeper.

“‘Earth Day, Shmearth Day,’ the planet must be thinking as its fever mounts.

“The coronavirus shutdown has given us a chance to see the skies clear and the noise dim. It gives us a chance to organize our comeback in a way that is less brutal and more respectful of other life and of beauty. A comeback that gives the oceans a chance, that gives wildlife and soil a chance, and that gives humans a chance to live more meaningfully on the loveliest planet of all.”

Ann Berry Somers spent 23 years serving on the Non-Game Wildlife Advisory Committee of the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission. For decades she has mobilized volunteers for conservation and sustainability programs, such as for the Box Turtle Connection, a 100-year project which now has 32 sites across North Carolina. Through the HERP Project, she developed hands-on herpetology research and citizen science programs for middle and high school students from across North Carolina. At UNCG, Somers developed seven courses that have an environmental service component and provided more than 21,000 hours of public service. She is also known for her hands-on study abroad courses in Costa Rica with the Sea Turtle Conservancy and at Little Cayman Island with the Central Caribbean Marine Institute.

Interviews by Alyssa Bedrosian, Matthew Bryant, and Susan Kirby-Smith, University Communications
Feature photography by Martin W. Kane, University Communications
At UNC Greensboro, undergraduate research has proven to be a transformative experience for students.

The close faculty mentorship is second to none – for freshmen and sophomores as well as for juniors and seniors. Students who are passionate about research have the opportunity to work alongside faculty while also developing their own projects.

And often, these projects result in conference presentations, co-authored papers in academic journals, and an opportunity for students to make a real impact in their fields.

Each year, UNCG’s Carolyn & Norwood Thomas Undergraduate Research and Creativity Expo provides an opportunity for students to present their work to their peers and community members right here on campus. But due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year’s expo, along with all instruction, has launched virtually.

Despite the challenge of being away from campus, this year’s undergraduate researchers demonstrated their dedication to their work and innovative projects by swiftly preparing online presentations so that the academic and scholarly community could share in their accomplishments.
Nearly 200 research presentations from undergraduate UNCG students are now online and accessible to the public through the online program. These materials have been published online in conjunction with Undergraduate Research Week, which runs April 20-24.

“I am never surprised but always impressed by the creative ways our students adjust to new conditions,” said Lee Phillips, Director of UNCG’s Undergraduate Research, Scholarship and Creativity Office (URSCO), which hosted the event. “We have received several enthusiast emails of appreciation for this virtual expo option, and we are thrilled to be able to celebrate research, scholarship and creative inquiry at UNCG.”

Among the array of student research topics presented are:

- face recognition “superpowers”
- the costume design for a UNCG Theatre production
- glucose metabolism regulation in Type 2 Diabetes and breast cancer
- factors in whether or not Hispanic people seek and receive medical care
- artificial intelligence in music
- oxygen supply in the brain stem of bull frogs
- the work of Disney animator Mary Blair
- hidden racial inequality in special education

Find the full list of projects with their abstracts and links to presentation videos on this year's program. URSCO is dedicated to promoting and supporting student success through mentored undergraduate research, creative inquiry, and other scholarly experiences for the UNCG community.

Additionally, the office helps faculty become increasingly effective with mentoring undergraduate research and integrating research skills into courses and curricula.

This year’s winners of UNCG undergraduate research mentor awards are Dr. Tyreasa Washington from the Department of Social Work and Dr. Blair Wisco Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology.

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Story by Susan Kirby-Smith and Alyssa Bedrosian, University Communications
Graphic by Kayla Timpson

**Supporting student success during COVID-19**
Dr. Andrew Hamilton is associate vice provost of student success and dean of undergraduate studies.

Student success has become a buzzword in higher education. But at UNC Greensboro, it’s really at the core of what we do.

It’s not just about getting students to campus – it’s about retaining students, helping them find academic success, ensuring they graduate on time, and supporting them in their professional aspirations.

Last year, UNCG made some big changes to better support student success efforts. The University created a new Division of Student Success. It opened a new Student Success Commons right in the heart of campus. And it welcomed a new leader: Dr. Andrew Hamilton, associate vice provost of student success and dean of undergraduate studies.

With the vast majority of University operations now online due to COVID-19, what does this mean for student success programs and initiatives? How can students still make sure they are getting the support they need?

In the Q&A below, Hamilton answers these questions and offers words of encouragement to students.

**Broadly speaking, how is COVID-19 impacting student success?**
When COVID-19 was recognized as a pandemic in March, we couldn’t just declare the semester over. We’re mandated to deliver a certain number of instructional minutes per term in every course. So, we had to find some way to finish the term, even though we knew that many students were not going to be in learning environments that were conducive to their best performance.

What we did was try to maintain academic rigor, while giving students a lot more control over their academic options. They now have a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grading option which protects their GPAs. They also have the option to withdraw without academic penalty until June 1. We did what we could to put them in control of their immediate academic futures, while at the same time meeting the requirements of the UNC System and our accreditors.

We knew that a lot of our students were going to have connectivity problems. Many didn’t have internet access that would facilitate the viewing of a lot of video content. We did what we could to alleviate those situations, and our team in ITS did a great job. I don’t know of even one case in which a student told us about a problem with access to the internet or a suitable device that we were not able to solve.

My main concern is that this disruption may be a nudge off the trajectory toward completion for a lot of students. Why? Uncertainty, stress, problems at home, and a hundred other little, but important, things. For students who already come from disadvantaged backgrounds, it doesn’t take a lot of nudges to move them off the pathway. Students now have new ways to manage their academic loads and their GPAs, but they still have to find the motivation to complete courses at a distance.

What are we doing to help students stay on track? What resources are still available?

That’s just it: We’re really delivering emergency remote instruction. These are not fully-developed online courses. We’re delivering instruction at a distance – that we built very quickly – because we didn’t want students’ academic progress to be disrupted by the pandemic any more than was absolutely necessary.

Do we have all the bells and whistles and supports that we need? No. But what we’ve been doing in my shop is supporting faculty and students as best we can as they make the transition.

The Academic Achievement Center is offering online tutoring and supplemental instruction. We still have academic recovery for students who were struggling in prior terms. The Writing Center, the Speaking Center, and the Digital ACT Studio are all operating virtually.
And academic advising is going along as planned; students are currently enrolling for the summer and fall terms.

Financial Aid has set up a call center. They’ve rerouted their phones to their houses and are fielding hundreds of calls a week. Money is even tighter now, and some students have financial situations that have changed just in the last few weeks in ways that are not reflected in the current year’s or prior year’s taxes.

As we transition to the summer term, we’re hoping to have a much better footing for supporting students in an online environment. If we have to be online in the fall, or for part of the fall, I’m determined to be out of crisis mode and into high quality service-delivery mode for student success support.

Students can learn more about these resources at success.uncg.edu.

What’s your message to students?

We have asked and strongly encouraged instructors to be flexible and forgiving. At the same time, we’re asking students to be flexible and forgiving with their instructors. It has to go both ways. We’re all in this together.

Hang in there. We’re hearing that students are having a lot of trouble with motivation. They don’t have the academic structure they’re used to. I get it. But if they hang in there and do their best to get the work done, and if they exercise the new options they have, we’re hoping they can use this term to make all the academic progress they hoped for.

I also want to make a pitch for summer. Students who dropped hours in the spring should know that summer is a great time to make them up. The vast majority of summer courses were designed from the start to be online. They are fully formed and ready to go!

Extra: Listen to Hamilton’s interview on supporting student (and faculty) success during the pandemic on the recent “Yes, and Cafe” podcast.

Interview by Alyssa Bedrosian, University Communications
Photography by Martin W. Kane, University Communications

Dr. Gwen Hunnicutt: Ecofeminism and ethics of care
Dr. Gwen Hunnicutt is a longtime advocate for animals and the environment. At UNC Greensboro, the associate professor of sociology teaches a course on ecofeminism and another on green criminology, where students learn about harms and crimes against the environment and how inequalities are reproduced through earth injustices.

She has also been involved in the animal emancipation movement for many years, volunteering at farm animal sanctuaries and doing educational outreach. For her, advocating for the environment involves a commitment to nonviolence.

“To generate a shared sense of well-being among all Earth’s inhabitants, to appreciate the inherent dignity of all life in the biosphere, and to recognize the land as a benevolent host, will require caring and respect,” she says.

This past fall, Hunnicutt published the book “Gender Violence in Ecofeminist Perspective: Intersections of Animal Oppression, Patriarchy and Domination of the Earth” through the Routledge Research in Gender and Society series. (Available as an e-book through UNCG’s Jackson Library.)

The book not only builds on her interest in the environment but also her rich background in the study of gender violence. The result is an eco-centered, ecofeminist discussion of humans’ relationship with nature and how it is tied to gender, patriarchy, and human violence.
It is meant to be a resource for scholars, activists, and students in sociology, gender violence and interdisciplinary violence studies, critical animal studies, environmental studies, and feminist and ecofeminist studies. She has spoken about her research internationally, including for the Department for Security, Strategy & Leadership at Försvarshögskolan / Swedish Defence University in Stockholm, Sweden.

Read more about Hunnicutt’s perspective and work in the interview below.

**Could you define “ecofeminism”?**

“Ecofeminism is a branch of scholarship that explores the interconnections of dominance between humans and between humans and the earth. It foregrounds all sorts of social problems within a larger field of domination toward nature.

In the 1960s and 70s, there were feminists who pointed out that the way in which we inhabit the earth is very gendered, and this system of mastery over nature is closely bound to patriarchal structures. This is also a gendered master discourse which justifies how we dominate the earth: with subjugation, with control, with superiority, and with entitlement. Notice how we think of the Earth as female, reflecting a familiar gender hierarchy. We conflate violent metaphors of harming the earth with women’s bodies when we say ‘rape of the earth’ or the ‘Mother Nature is conquered.’ We have all these common discursive constructions that reveal the joint subjugation of women and the environment.

Ecofeminists began to point out that our neutral way of interpreting our domination of the Earth doesn’t get at some of these very powerful gender ideologies. And this includes tackling the patriarchal underpinnings of this whole hierarchical order. They look at human-nature links behind the scenes in exploring all sorts of social problems. They look at global politics, cultural discourse, poverty, and water issues and violence – it’s a framework you can use to examine all sorts of aspects of social life.”

**Could you explain a phrase mentioned in your book: “logic of domination”?**

“I study gender violence and have been studying it for my entire career and have done a lot of empirical studies of various kinds – ranging from the global to the local, mostly looking at marginal groups. And in my research, I ended up running into theoretical walls. The existing theoretical explanations – the story lines that help us understand and interpret gender violence – are sort of lacking, or not as satisfying as a researcher might like. So, over time, I started thinking about how we might come up with other helpful narratives to help explain gender violence.
My own nonprofessional work in the animal emancipation movement and my professional
work studying gender violence got me thinking about the ways in which these two worlds
are connected. This is a key piece of my argument. What I try to do in the book is unearth
these ‘logics of domination’ or we might call them ‘blueprints of oppression’. If we look at
our hierarchical relationship with the earth – the way that humans subjugate the
environment to the disastrous consequences as we are living through right now – it’s a
relationship of domination that really involves exploitation: taking what we please, doing
what we like, with a real profound disrespect for the natural world, which is often violently
rendered into something that we desire.

Ultimately I conclude that there is no nonviolent future without work towards a green
future, that there is no social justice without eco justice - that these two fates are
intertwined. And the antiviolence movement and the environmental movement - you know,
they really have similar aims and objectives. And they're also looking to dismantle similar
ideologies and structures to get to a more just social world.”

**What counts as gender violence or how is that defined?**

“Yes, that’s a great question. So, it’s articulated differently in the literature. There’s not one
agreed upon, coherent definition. But for my purposes in my work, I’m really interested in
the gender dynamics of violent scenarios. I’m less interested in gender violence in terms of
difference, like the perpetration of one gender against another, such as, say, a man
committing violence against a woman. I’m most interested in how gendered social processes
shape violent outcomes. All violence is gendered. For instance, two men in a violent
confrontation is gendered because there is a whole set of ideologically-infused performances
and gendered expectations that influence this scenario. It shows the extent to which we
believe that a particular masculine performance includes aggression. We know that in many
cases with violence, there’s some deep-seated notions about aggressive masculinities -
towards animals, in the case of hunting, or towards other men in the case of, say, football.
And all of these violent rituals are deeply embedded in our gender ideologies, and they come
to the fore when we are interacting with other humans and nonhumans. Of course, gender is
not the only dimension of social life that impacts our experience, which is why
intersectionality must be taken up as an indispensable tool. Moreover, there is no singular
‘masculinity’ and it is not possible to make any universal claims about masculinity in a
singular way. But we can detect themes of virility and prowess in various expressions of
violent masculinity and even the construction of a violent masculinity through killing.”

**Tell us more about your book and how it relates to recent and current events?**

“The first half of the book, I spend establishing my argument and exploring the ways in
which patriarchy is foregrounded by another hierarchy – human domination over ‘nature’. I
argue that gender violence stems from a logic of domination that is built on the domination of nature and the domination of the Other ‘as nature.’ I ultimately connect these oppressions by showing the inextricable bind of violence against humans and the more-than-human-life-world.

In chapter four, I look at the back end of this, considering what sort of gender violence results from our domination of the natural world, and in particular, the fallout from climate change and how that’s affecting particular vulnerable populations. There is a body of literature that looks at intimate partner violence that occurs in the wake of climate-related disasters. During and after ecological catastrophe you see a surge in intimate partner violence. And there’s such a thing as climate-related conflict. Climate change has resulted in an advance of the Saharan desert and subsequently violence in Darfur. Darfur was considered the first climate-related conflict and sparked a whole body of literature that looks at this phenomenon. The war in Syria is a complicated political situation, but one of the key elements involved in that conflict was an extensive climate-related drought. What you tend to see is that women suffer the worst effects of climate change, in different ways, depending on their social location and context, not because of any innate qualities, but because of their social status, discrimination, and poverty – inequalities manufactured through gendered social roles. Existing gender inequalities are then aggravated in the wake of disaster.”

**How does the book relate to various disciplines?**

“It draws on feminist studies and within feminist studies, a lot of subdisciplines, including international relations and ecofeminism. And then it also draws on interdisciplinary violence studies, which spans a wide range of disciplines, such as economics and ‘green criminology,’ which looks at harms and crimes against the environment as on par with harms or crimes against your person or your property.

Whether you study math, or sociology or economics or business, the climate crisis is something that will affect every area of scholarship – if not now, in the very near future. For a long time, this was sort of one feature of life that we could sort of just ignore. And it’s clear that this is no longer the case. Everything we do will be affected by ecological impacts: extreme weather, the increased frequency of disasters, disappearing green spaces, and overpopulation. Everything we study is ultimately impacted and disrupted, so I think that scholars in the future will all have to be environmental scholars to some extent. They will really be forced to include this other previously ignored part of how our relationship with the Earth impacts, really, everything.”

**What kind of perspective do you feel is helpful to try to pass on to readers and students about these issues?**
“I try to discourage, in my scholarship, an attitude of hopelessness, but it’s obviously something that’s on everybody’s mind – a sense of doom and apocalyptic sentiment. The United Nations published a report on climate change in October of 2018 that included dire warnings and communicated that it is absolutely essential that we act now. Nothing happened after that 2018 report, which was really discouraging. Subsequently, the United Nations published another report in 2019 saying that the window to intervene in climate change is closing really quickly. And again, there was no meaningful response from world leaders. So, it’s certainly discouraging, but I think it’s important to guard against hopelessness and to continue to open dialogues and work on whatever change we can in our own backyard in our own classrooms.

In the conclusion in my book I consider certain things we might do. I don’t have all the answers, but I try to open a dialogue about some ways we might proceed. And one of them is to embrace an ethic of care. And, you know, this is also very gendered. We don’t typically talk about ‘care’ in academic or professional circles of any kind, because we associate care with femininity. In hierarchical spaces where individuals are trying to achieve dominance or superiority, they won’t want to be perceived as weak. And care is often associated with weakness rather than being regarded as a meaningful trait that humans should embrace. But proceeding with an ethic of care, in all of our relations is one kind of ideological switch that can help us be more sensitive, nonviolent, and kind. And we can also apply that towards the Earth, to the land, to the rivers, to animals. And it’s possible anywhere, but it takes courage to use the word ‘care.’”

Finally, what does it mean to celebrate Earth Day during COVID-19?

“I’m concerned that the consciousness-raising about Earth politics that usually happens on Earth Day will be eclipsed by the coronavirus, but this Earth Day is also an opportunity to remind us what is at stake for our planet and future. The coronavirus pandemic reminds us that humans are connected to animal health and to the environment, and if we don’t take this seriously, we will continue to live in a world where pandemics and extreme weather events reoccur.

On this Earth Day, we need to draw attention to the need to urgently halt deforestation and demand a shift in cultural norms toward respect and protection toward nonhuman animals. If we don’t, we will continue to face deadly diseases, as well as the harmful effects of climate change. Deforestation creates opportunities for animal microbes to transform into deadly human pathogens. The cruel practice of factory farming also provides a thriving environment for deadly pathogens where hundreds of thousands of animals are packed closely together awaiting their deaths.

But on a positive note, we might also take note of how coronavirus has encouraged pro-
climate behaviors. This is also a chance for us to learn about digital activism. Environmental groups and climate activists around the world have shifted protests and activism from the streets to online because of the pandemic.

Since we have more time on our hands, we can become citizen scientists. Learn about the science behind climate change, take it seriously, and demand that our political leaders are advised by the scientific community because our current pandemic demonstrates that governments absolutely must be attentive to science.”

*Interview by Susan Kirby-Smith, University Communications*
*Photography courtesy of Gwen Hunnicutt*

**UNCG announces new leader of international programs**

UNC Greensboro recently announced that Dr. Maria Anastasiou will become the University’s new Associate Provost for [International Programs](#) beginning July 1.

Since March 2015, Anastasiou has served as Executive Director of the Office of International Education and Development at Appalachian State University (ASU). Her previous administrative appointments include Director of International Student and Scholar Services and Outreach at ASU, Director of International Programs at the University of South Carolina-Aiken, Institutional Lifelong Learning Programme/ERASMUS Coordinator at Frederick University (Nicosia, Cyprus), and Administrative Program Director and Research Fellow at the Walker Institute of International and Area Studies at University of South Carolina.

Anastasiou holds a BS degree from UNC Chapel Hill and MA and PhD degrees in international studies from University of South Carolina.
Anastasiou succeeds Dr. Nell Pynes, who will retire from UNCG on June 30.

Celebrate National Library Week Virtually with University Libraries

Every year, National Library Week celebrates the transformative power of libraries to educate and build community. This year’s theme is “Find your place at the library,” and you can still find your place during the week with UNCG Libraries’ online collections and several exciting web-based events.

This year’s National Library Week will be April 19-25. To join in, email libmkt@uncg about your favorite comfort literature or post it on social media with the hashtag ComfortLit4Spartans. Your selections may be featured in a future UNCG Libraries newsletter! Also make sure to follow UNCG Libraries on their Blog, Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr, and Twitter and say #ThankYouLibraries on social media.

Virtual events as part of National Library Week will be:

- **4/21**: UNCG Alumni & Friends Virtual Book Club: Join the alumni & friends network for a virtual discussion of the book “Range”. Tune in at 3 p.m. via Zoom. [Join the club here](#).
- **4/22**: Books, Bots, and Everything In Between: Librarians Jenny Dale and Melody Root will discuss how technology has changed the way they serve students at UNCG. [Watch the video here](#).
- **4/24**: Virtual Story Hour with Donna Washington: Donna Washington is an acclaimed storyteller known for her highly animated all-ages performances. On April 24, visit the [UNCG Libraries website](#) to access a special storyteller program by Washington that will be available until May 8.

For more information, contact University Libraries at libmkt@uncg.

‘50 for 50’ challenge inspires sustainability awareness

For the first 22 days of April, UNCG employees participated with hundreds of employees from 40 other institutions and companies across North Carolina in the “50 Actions for 50 Years Earth Day Challenge” sponsored by Earth Share North Carolina, a conglomerate of 70+ nonprofits in the state who share the goal of connecting people and resources to the conservation movement.

The “50for50 Challenge” encouraged participants to track their sustainable actions via the
Joulebug mobile app, created by a Raleigh-based tech firm of the same name, that is designed “To make sustainable living social, simple, and actually fun.” For each of the 50 different sustainable actions a participant logged, like recycling or turning off the lights, the app provides energy use comparisons and reports the amount of water saved, waste diverted, and CO2 kept from entering the atmosphere.

“I have really enjoyed participating in this challenge,” said Dr. Courtney Harrington, director of the B.S. in Integrated Professional Studies (BIPS) and the Master in Applied Arts & Sciences (MAAS), both part of UNCG Online. “It’s been fascinating to see how little everyday things can add up to making an impact. I’ve made some new habits and cemented some old ones and this is great evidence that everything you do counts.”

In less than one month, just one dozen UNCG employees alone kept one ton of CO2 from entering the atmosphere, diverted 300 pounds of waste from the landfill, and saved over 3,500 gallons of water. All participants in the challenge combined to divert 48 tons of CO2 from the atmosphere, 4 tons of waste from the landfill, and saved over 120,000 gallons of water. According to the app, that’s equivalent to powering 63 homes for a month, eliminating 550 bags of garbage, and filling over 2,400 bathtubs.

“It is a good reminder that a lot of small choices can make a big impact,” said Melanie Carrico, associate professor in the Department of Consumer, Apparel, and Retail Studies. “And I learned things like selecting native plants for the garden can cut water use, equivalent to 530 five-minute showers a year!”

For those interested in tracking and measuring their own impact, the Joulebug app is available for free download in both the Apple and Google Play stores.

“I hope I can maintain some of the good habits I was not following but knew that I should have been following,” said Thomas Hefner, science teacher in Middle College at UNCG. “There are lots of little things I was not doing but have started that are easy to maintain with little effort. I have saved a lot of water and that in turn is also saving me money.”

Be sure to visit the UNCG Office of Sustainability’s website to learn more about the University’s environmental initiatives and follow the office on social media @SustainableUNCG.

Story by Sean MacInnes, UNCG Office of Sustainability

International sustainability film festival goes online
The 11th annual International Shorts Film Competition incorporates and addresses the elements of UNCG’s definition of sustainability: social equity, the environment, the economy, and aesthetics.

As part of the annual UNCG Sustainability Film & Discussion Series, the competition is an opportunity to share new artistic works in the international community that address the urgency of the climate crisis and acknowledge the power of film to connect, communicate, and convince.

The films are judged by Marisol Maddox, a graduate student in the International Security MA program at George Mason University and a research contractor at the Woodrow Wilson Center’s Polar Institute. And by Jean Michel Rolland, a long time musician, painter, and filmmaker (and previous competition winner) based in France.

Winners receive a cash prize ($500, $300, $200), sponsored by a grant from the UNCG Green Fund, and will be announced on the website the week of May 4th. Viewers can vote for the Audience Choice Award via the website. Parental advisory: Some films deal with adult themes and contain mild nudity.
Stay home and stay fit

*By Kyle Anderson, assistant director for the Department of Recreation and Wellness*

I’ll say it. I miss the gym. I am that guy pumping out a workout in the weight room or drowning a spin bike in sweat. But since COVID-19 hit, I’ve been spending more time in slippers than a pair of running shoes. It has messed up my balance of exercise and relaxation. I love the gym, and being at home is the hardest challenge I’ve faced to stay fit.

We all are all trying to stay safe during the pandemic. It’s where our focus should be. But by being stuck in our house (or our parents’ house), our physical health is struggling to maintain any type of normalcy, and there are major benefits to staying active. Beyond the obvious benefit of burning calories, physical activity fortifies the immune system and improves mood and energy while boosting concentration.

So kick off those slippers and lace up the sneakers. Here are six tips to help keep you physically active:

**Just Move!**

Being cooped up may hurt your step count, especially if you walk or bike to classes, but it
doesn’t have to. Use that time you would normally spend in transit to walk, run, or just move before your Zoom class or virtual meeting. During this pandemic, the great outdoors is one of the safest places – as long as you maintain your social-distancing six-foot radius. Not only will you get fresh air and some exercise benefits, you will be more awake and attentive in class (and patient when a classmate doesn’t mute their microphone).

**Take advantage of online resources.**

“Okay, okay, fine – I’ll exercise! But I am not running, and I don’t have any equipment. What do I do?”

Do what we always do when we don’t have an answer – Google it. The fitness world knows the struggle we are having, and they have really stepped up to help by offering free home workouts that use little or no equipment. I recommend [Wellbeats](https://www.wellbeats.com), a streaming service that has more than 500 workout classes, from kickboxing to yoga. This service is now free for the entire UNCG community.

**Don’t take exercise too seriously.**

For many, there may already be multiple stressors in this new reality, and the idea of exercise as a “hard” or “painful” task doesn’t need to be one. You only need 10 minutes of moderate exercise for it to have a benefit on your health. It increases heart strength, general fitness, and brain activity.

Find something that you’ll have fun with. While I love a hard HIIT workout, I cannot help but laugh at myself trying to dance with Nina Dobrev in the free [BODYJAM dance class from Les Mills](https://www.lesmills.com/en/home/workout-videos/free-bodyjam.html).

If you’re social distancing, you might as well dance like no one is watching.

**Set a schedule.**

If I don’t work out in the morning, it’s not happening. This was true well before this pandemic, and it will be true well after. Set a schedule for yourself and stick to it. Put it in your calendar that you will exercise right after lunch, after breakfast, or after schoolwork. It’s like my fortune cookie from dinner last night: “A goal without a plan is just a wish. Your lucky numbers are 7, 14, 35.”

**Stay social by staying connected.**

If there is one thing I miss about hitting the gym, it’s the people. If I am next to you on a treadmill, we’re racing. I just didn’t tell you yet. It’s a motivator. A gym is an escape from
the stressors of school and work. It’s a community of like minded people with the shared goal of becoming better individuals. We celebrate our successes and support each other on our tough days. We talk to each other.

It really is no wonder that individuals who exercise regularly have a strong social network. It increases adherence and just makes it fun. But during this pandemic, that community is fractured—but not broken. Call up your buddy for a Zoom workout, or call your mom while you are running around the neighborhood. It won’t be the same, but there is a sense of normalcy in working out with another person in earshot.

If that’s not quite scratching the itch, try logging your activity to Facebook, Strava, Instagram, or anywhere else where your peers can celebrate your activity.

**Cut yourself some slack.**

We are in a pandemic, so don’t be so hard on yourself. You won’t suddenly lose all the hard work you put in. It takes a good three to four weeks of very little activity to decrease strength gains and cardio fitness. Use this time to recover and recharge. Your body will thank you when you are able to get back to your normal routine.

We have a lot of new challenges in these new circumstances. Exercise, online learning, remote work—even finding toilet paper. But we are all in this together.

You can also check out UNCG Recreation and Wellness’ list of resources to help stay healthy during this pandemic.

Now if you’ll excuse me, after all this physical activity, I have a date with a pair of slippers.

*Story by Kyle Anderson, UNCG Department of Recreation and Wellness*
*Photography by Martin W. Kane, University Communications*

**UNCG admissions goes virtual**
The spring marks an exciting time for high school seniors. As they make their decisions on where to attend college, the UNC Greensboro community eagerly awaits the class of 2024. This hasn’t changed due to the pandemic, and the Office of Undergraduate Admissions is doing everything possible during these unprecedented times to help students make their decisions and feel welcome into the Spartan family.

If you’re a prospective student, here are some important updates about the admissions process.

**Decision deadline**

To ensure that no application will be penalized as a result of the pandemic, the decision response deadline for admitted students has been extended to June 1. For new and in-progress applications, unofficial transcripts and self-reported test scores will be accepted.

**Financial Aid**

Undergraduate Admissions realizes that this pandemic has brought financial hardship upon many families, and they are working closely with the Financial Aid Office to address any concerns. If your financial situation has changed, you can reach the Financial Aid Office at
Virtual meetings and events

Although all on-campus tours and events have been canceled until further notice, there are still ways future students can connect virtually with UNCG.

Admissions counselors are reaching out to prospective students on a daily basis, and they are just a call or text away for students or parents who have any questions or concerns.

Students and parents can watch a scheduled series of Facebook live streams called “Lunch with the G” where campus experts answer submitted questions. Previously recorded topics have included a Q&A with the Financial Aid Office, a Q&A with Housing and Residence Life, “What it’s like to go to School here” Q&A with current UNCG students, and a Q&A with Campus Activities and Programs. View the recordings of past sessions and see the schedule for upcoming sessions at admissions.uncg.edu and by following Undergraduate Admissions on Facebook.

In addition to the live Facebook “Lunch with the G” sessions, the deans from each college have crafted messages specifically for future Spartans who were unable to attend events like Destination UNCG.

Students can also tour campus virtually.

Advice for future Spartans

When asked what advice can be given to students interested in coming to UNCG, Director of Undergraduate Admissions Christopher Keller said:

“To students, I would say first and foremost take care of yourself and stay healthy. Then, let us know what we can do to help. We know this is uncharted territory, and this is a big decision. We are trying to get you everything that you need virtually, and we are here for you to answer your questions. I’m hoping that you still have that good feeling you had when you applied to UNCG, and I hope that by us being here for you during this process, you are getting the sense that this is a family that you are potentially joining – that this is an environment where people care.”

By the numbers

Here’s a look at undergraduate admissions by the numbers as of April 18:

- 18 admissions counselors are available to students and parents by text or call.
• 3,127 of texts have been received (about 125 texts a day).
• 2,785 one-on-one phone calls have been made by admissions counselors.
• 3,372 unique visitors have visited the new virtual visit resource page.
• 850 students have received personal written notes from Undergraduate Admissions.

Learn more about Undergraduate Admissions at admissions.uncg.edu.

Story by Alexandra McQueen, University Communications
Photography by Grant Evan Gilliard, University Communications

A note from Charlie Leffler

Dear UNCG Community,

It is hard to believe how fast the months have passed since I first set foot on the UNC Greensboro campus at the beginning of October as the Interim Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration. When Chancellor Gilliam asked me to consider assisting with the leadership transition in the Finance and Administration division, I was honored to engage with the Spartan community, given its strong reputation. Having been on the UNCG campus over the years a few times for meetings, I knew enough about UNCG to know it was a place I would find interesting and challenging.

Needless to say, it has been a rewarding experience. My short tenure has been a journey of discovery and appreciation. I discovered what a true asset UNCG is for the State of North Carolina, and I have come to appreciate the dedication, creativity, and expertise of the faculty and staff that make this university unique. These qualities have shined even brighter in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. I have been impressed by the care, commitment, and professionalism I have seen across the university as we have navigated the initial stages of this challenge.

During the past few months, I was impressed with the many initiatives this institution has set in motion. The Strategic Plan and the soon to be updated Campus Master Plan are two guiding documents that will serve UNCG well. Keep Taking Giant Steps!

I want to thank all those on campus that I have come to know as colleagues for their willingness to share their love of the institution. Through this experience and my time here, I have become – and will remain — an enthusiastic advocate for UNC Greensboro.

Go Spartans!
Charlie Leffler
In Memoriam: Herman Middleton

Dr. Herman David Middleton, Senior, died April 12.

In 1956, Middleton came to Woman’s College to serve as head of the Theatre Department, a post he occupied for two decades. He had previously served in the U.S. Navy, earning a BS and MA from Columbia University, and a Ph.D from the University of Florida.

Middleton had a remarkable impact on the department. He expanded programs and curriculum, hired new faculty, and built a strong regional reputation for the University. The department became known as the Department Drama and Speech with the inclusion of formal studies in communication, and in 1970, BFA degrees in acting as well as design and technical theater, and MFA degrees in acting/directing and design were added.

Middleton directed the first Broadway-style musical at UNCG in 1957 (“Oklahoma!”). He hired Tom Behm to develop the North Carolina Theatre for Young People in 1972 and directed the first children’s theater production. He also directed a production of “The Orestia” at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, as part of the 1974 American College Theatre Festival. In the mid-sixties, Middleton facilitated extended residencies for the National Repertory Theatre on campus. He also played a strong role in the initiation of the North Carolina Theatre Conference and the Southeastern Theatre Conference.

“Herman was a trailblazer,” said Robert Hansen, a colleague of Middleton’s who also served as head of the Department of Communication in Theatre. “He always aimed high, raising the prominence and quality of theater at the University, in Greensboro, the State, and across Southeast region of the country.”

Middleton retired from UNCG in 1990, but remained active in state and regional professional organizations, the community, and the department.

To honor his memory, donations can be made to the Herman Middleton Scholarship Endowment. Checks should be made out to UNCG (indicate Herman Middleton Endowment on check). Send to: Advancement Services, P.O. Box 26170, Greensboro, NC 27402. Friends may also go here to make a gift by credit card (scroll to Memorial Gift Information).

Newsmakers: Schwartzman, Nash, Wren, and Debbage

Whether researchers with timely insights or students with outstanding stories, members of the UNCG community appear in print, web, and broadcast media every day. Here is a sampling of UNCG-related stories in the news and media over the week:
• Higher Ed Works featured Dr. Roy Schwartzman’s efforts running the largest Facebook support group for instructors transitioning their courses to online instruction. The piece.
• Dr. Donna Nash was quoted in a Science Magazine article about the rise and fall of the Wari empire in South America. The article.
• A UNCG stage fighting class with Jim Wren was featured in a News & Record article about the UNC system’s transition to online instruction. The piece.
• Dr. Keith Debbage was quoted in a High Point Enterprise piece about the state of COVID-19 in North Carolina. The article.

Dr. Nancy Hodges

Dr. Nancy Hodges (Consumer, Apparel, and Retail Studies) received new funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for the project “Cultivating Applied Technology Competencies among Diverse Undergraduate Populations: Development and Assessment of Course Materials and Teaching Strategies.”

Funding is in support of a three year project focused on understanding how students learn in 3D. The project will be based on collaboration with apparel companies to identify technologies important to the industry workplace. These technologies will be used in research to develop best pedagogical practices within the virtual environment. Nancy Hodges is the Project Director and Co-PI and UNCG is the Lead Institution. Other co-PIs include Kittichai “Tu” Watchravesringkan, CARS department, along with Co-PIs at Colorado State University and Texas Tech University.

Dr. Terri Shelton
Dr. Terri Shelton (Office of Research and Engagement) received new funding from the National Institutes of Health for the project “Research Administration Modernization Program at UNCG (RAMP UNCG).” Dr. Valera T. Francis is co-principal investigator on the project.

Growth in the biomedical research enterprise at UNCG requires robust and efficient research administration infrastructure. A 28% growth in research funding over the last five years has advanced the research mission of NIH and of UNCG, but it has also strained the existing sponsored projects administration (SPA) capabilities which are hampered by three primary issues: a legacy eRA system that creates inefficiencies and errors; inadequate professional training opportunities for SPA staff which includes both centralized and decentralized staff; and a need for additional research development and project startup support for biomedical researchers. Our data on proposal submission and award rates suggests these barriers may especially impact our rapidly growing number of faculty from groups that are underrepresented in biomedical fields.

In order to strengthen UNCG’s sponsored projects administration, specifically in preparation for the planned emphasis on growth in biomedical research, we propose the Research Administration Modernization Program (RAMP UNCG) which includes three aims:

1. Enhance sponsored programs infrastructure to increase regulatory compliance, decrease administrative burden, and provide access to enterprise-wide research administration data through the phased implementation of a commercial eRA system.

2. Facilitate the development of sponsored programs capacity and administration through the implementation of a scaffolded curriculum of competency-based professional development and mentorship for research administration staff to ensure that all research support staff have the requisite knowledge and skills to provide efficient pre- and postaward services.

3. Promote biomedical research and research training through the implementation of targeted strategies in support of faculty from groups that have been traditionally
underrepresented in Biomedical Sciences and NIH funding. The success of RAMP UNCG has enormous potential for attracting and retaining talented scientists and students from diverse backgrounds to UNCG’s biomedical research and training enterprise, ultimately contributing toward the national imperative for a diverse biomedical workforce.

**Dr. Jaclyn Maher**

Dr. Jaclyn Maher (Kinesiology) received new funding from the National Institute on Aging for the project “Microtemporal Motivational Processes Regulating Health Behavior Adoption and Maintenance in Older Adults.” Dr. Jeffrey Labban and Dr. Laurie Kennedy-Malone are co-principal investigators on the project.

There is strong evidence that increasing physical activity (PA), and emerging evidence that reducing sedentary behavior (SB), are important health behaviors for primary prevention, disease management, and preventing mobility declines among older adults. Yet, interventions aiming to increase PA and reduce SB among older adults have only been modestly successful in the short-term and results suggest the long-term maintenance of these behaviors is even more difficult to achieve.

Contemporary health behavior theories rarely model the entire behavioral sequence from adoption to maintenance which may contribute to the lack of sustained behavior change in these interventions. Emerging evidence suggests dual-process theories may help bridge this gap by explaining how differential pathways guide behavioral adoption and maintenance.

According to dual-process theories, reflective processes based on deliberation and rationality are thought to play a greater role in health behavior adoption whereas reactive processes rooted in automaticity and unconscious associations are thought to play a greater role in health behavior maintenance.

This research will use a dual-process theoretical framework combined with an innovative methodology, Ecological Momentary Assessment (EMA), and sensor-based monitoring of behavior to determine the motivational processes that regulate behavior over micro
timescales (e.g., minutes, hours, days) and ultimately drive behavioral adoption and maintenance. One-hundred older adults identified as PA adopters and 100 older adults identified as PA maintainers will be recruited. Participants will complete 3 waves of data collection over 1 year, with each wave lasting 14 days. EMA prompts will be randomly delivered via smartphone 10 times per day on select days within each wave and assess reflective and reactive processes. Specific Aim 1 will determine the extent to which momentary reflective and reactive processes are differentially associated with PA and SB at that moment among behavioral adopters and maintainers.

Specific Aim 2 will determine the extent to which person-level patterns in reflective and reactive processes predict behavioral adoption versus maintenance at each wave and at the end of one year. Specific Aim 3 will explore reflective and reactive motivational processes predicting change in adopter/maintainer status from wave to wave (i.e., adopter to maintainer, maintainer to adopter).

This work is an essential step towards a larger program of research aimed at integrating real-time data from EMA and accelerometers into electronic feedback and self-regulatory systems to promote sustained behavior change among older adults in real-world environments.