

DISCOVER

CELEBRATING NORTHERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY RESEARCH AND CREATIVITY 2011



Cycling research
in high gear

Honors Scholars
connect to
community

Why we value
research:
Q&A with
President Votruba



Dr. Gail Wells

Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

In the early 19th century, Shaker Elder Charles Amery compiled a hymnal of his faith's songs of worship. Not many years later, a young and widowed Henrietta Cleveland founded St. Elizabeth Hospital in Covington.

Flash forward to the 21st century and Northern Kentucky University campus, where these two very different Americans

from a bygone time now have something in common: Elder Amery and the widow Cleveland are both NKU research topics.

In this, our fourth edition of DISCOVER, you can read about both, as well as about more examples of the fascinating, diverse research at NKU, where curiosity and inquiry are valued. You'll find out about cycling research by a professor who may be better known in the biking blogosphere than he is on campus. Or turn the pages to learn about the unlikely cinematic heritage of the "Bromance."

Importantly, our research isn't disconnected from our students, many of whom have the opportunity to partner with faculty on research projects. In this issue of DISCOVER, you will learn about community-connected research by our

Honors Program students, one of whom is advancing preschool public health and another finding nanotechnology benefits to dentistry. Our faculty is guiding that work because, in the end, that's the primary reason we are here – to advance learning.

It's beyond the scope of one magazine to cover all the research happening at Northern, but I'm confident you'll enjoy the sample. As NKU's chief academic officer, I'm proud of our faculty's dynamic, important research. Its work is exemplary when judged against national benchmarks. And, because much of the research is guided by NKU's commitment to stewardship, it is deeply responsive to our region's need to leverage the intellect of the university on behalf of the community.

Dr. Jan Hillard

Associate Provost for Research, Graduate Studies and Regional Stewardship

I hope you enjoy this new issue of DISCOVER, our magazine to highlight the great research being conducted across Northern Kentucky University's campus.

The scholarly work you will read about in this issue represents hundreds of hours of dedication to the research and creative processes. Extensive literature reviews, establishing conceptual foundations, collecting and analyzing data, developing conclusions, preparing manuscripts or shows, and achieving publication characterize faculty investment in research.

For many, the research process is accompanied by grant-seeking. DISCOVER provides an opportunity to acknowledge the hard work of faculty who have submitted and received grants over the past year. Their efforts speak

to the growing importance of grant awards across our faculty community. Correspondingly, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the work of the Office of Research, Grants and Contracts. Its core mission is to support faculty from grant proposal inception through award.

At NKU, research is rarely an end to itself. Instead, research informs teaching and learning, and often provides a pathway to the external community as an expression of regional stewardship. In any given year, our faculty are busy conducting applied research in and about our region, providing new insights on many community issues from public education to invasive plant species. NKU's faculty and their scholarship directly contribute to our region's quality of life. In addition, many faculty members involve undergraduate and graduate students in



their research. This essential involvement prepares students for the world of work and research-related professions.

As I spend time learning about our colleagues' research, the word "wow" keeps coming to mind. In spite of heavy workloads, our colleagues are producing amazing research, routinely publishing in flagship journals, and epitomizing the spirit of discovery.

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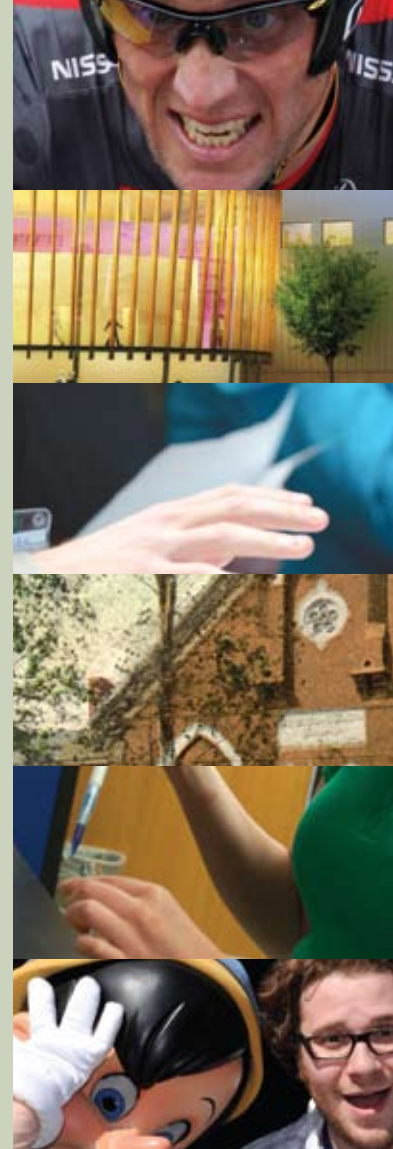
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Dr. Will Peveler, NKU assistant professor of exercise science, with test subject
 NKU Photo/Aly Durrett

BACK COVER PHOTO:

NKU's Griffin Hall, College of Informatics' new home
 NKU Photo/Timothy D. Sofranko



DISCOVER

ABOUT THIS MAGAZINE

This is the fourth edition DISCOVER, a publication dedicated to celebrating the creativity, variety and depth of research by Northern Kentucky University faculty and students. Past editions of DISCOVER are available online at <http://nku.edu/discover>.

This edition of DISCOVER was produced by NKU's Office of Research, Graduate Studies and Regional Stewardship under the direction of Associate Provost Dr. Jan Hillard. It was designed and published by NKU's Office of University Printing, under the direction of JoAnn Fincken and designer Leigh Ober. The editor was Mark Neikirk, director of the Scripps Howard Center for Civic Engagement, and the co-editor was Bob Driehaus, a Cincinnati-based freelance writer. Center for Civic Engagement interns Joseph Graf and Claire Higgins contributed.

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Why research matters to Northern Kentucky University

Q&A with President James C. Votruba

“We cannot teach that which we don’t first know and understand. Basic and applied research has pushed back the frontiers of understanding in every dimension of our lives.”

— President Votruba

Q: By definition, NKU is not a “research” institution but research is valued and encouraged, correct? How do you see the role of NKU vis-à-vis research?

A: It is true that NKU does not fit the profile of a major research university. Our teaching loads don’t reflect the primacy of research. We have far fewer doctoral programs than research intensive universities. And we do not use undergraduate education to fund graduate education and research. However, it is also true that we have many faculty members who are active researchers and scholars. They are doing cutting-edge work in their fields and they are often involving undergraduate students in their work. Research is valued at NKU, but so are other mission dimensions such as teaching and public engagement. In fact, much of our research and scholarly productivity supports and enriches both our teaching and public engagement mission.

Q: A follow-up to the first question: How does research complement NKU’s teaching commitment?

A: Active scholars are often strong teachers. At NKU, we encourage and support the integration of research, teaching, and public engagement in a way that each can support and enrich the other rather than standing alone as academic silos. A tradition

on our campus is for faculty to involve undergraduate students in their research and scholarship as well as their applied work in the community. Consider the growth in our annual Celebration of Undergraduate Research and Scholarly Activity. Last year, over 300 students were involved in supervised research and scholarly initiatives.

Q: You’ve made a point of defining a public engagement mission for NKU. How does that mission dovetail with research initiatives at NKU?

A: Public engagement is one of the university’s core academic missions along with research and teaching. However, public engagement often cross-cuts the other two areas. For example, imagine a faculty member working with an area high school to implement and evaluate a cutting-edge dropout prevention program. Imagine as well that this faculty member involves both undergraduate and graduate students from the College of Education and Human Services in order to give them a real world experience in addressing the dropout prevention challenge.

Such an initiative is simultaneously applied research, teaching, and public engagement. My hope is that public engagement will continue to be seen as a cross cutting rather than a standalone mission dimension. To the extent that faculty members can design

initiatives that enrich all three mission dimensions, we advance the campus and our work in ways that otherwise would be impossible.

Q: This is a public university. We all know that taxpayers are concerned about government spending. Is spending on research a wise investment – why?

A: We cannot teach that which we don't first know and understand. Basic and applied research has pushed back the frontiers of understanding in every dimension of our lives.

Since World War II, the federal government has vested in American universities the responsibility for advancing knowledge through research. Our universities have responded by generating the most powerful research capacity to be found anywhere on the planet. Research is the key to economic and social progress but it's not all that's required. Universities must couple the capacity to produce significant research with the capacity to utilize the results in advancing public progress. This includes such things as commercialization of intellectual property, application of best practices in order to improve public education, healthcare, and a host of other public priorities.

When I think of the unique role that NKU and other similar institutions can play in this process, I focus on what might be called the local application of innovation. That is, taking the research that is discovered in the large research centers and applying it to the needs of schools, small and medium-sized companies, healthcare providers and a host of other entities that must continue to advance if the public is to be well served. This is often called "translational" research because it translates research findings into strategies for improving our lives.

In summary, research is a very wise investment, but it would also be wise to invest in the application of knowledge to advance public progress. Currently, this latter investment is not adequate for the challenge.

Q: What's your vision for research at NKU for the next five to ten years? Dream a little.

A: Over the next five to ten years, I would like to see the university continue to expand its research and scholarly activity, particularly around work that is translational in nature and enriches both our teaching and public engagement missions. In my view, it would be an enormous mistake for NKU to either set its sights on becoming a major research intensive university or to assert that it will be only a teaching institution with little or no value placed on research. I like the phrase "multidimensional excellence" as a descriptor of our unique mission and role as a public metropolitan university.

There is no reason why NKU cannot become the national leader in demonstrating how a comprehensive university can move beyond the traditional mission silos to demonstrate how all three mission dimensions can enrich and inform each other as we work to advance the progress of our students and the public whom we serve.

What encourages me is that we seem to currently have a healthy balance between these various mission dimensions and we are seeing the next generation of faculty embracing excellence across the breadth of our mission. This is best summarized by a recent comment by one of our new associate professors who told me that her goal is to be an outstanding researcher who uses her work to both advance her undergraduate students as well as the teachers of science in the public schools. This is multidimensional excellence!

New book underscores NKU commitment to community-based research

Northern Kentucky University's commitment to research, linked both to community stewardship and student learning, is underscored in a new book, "Becoming an Engaged Campus: A Practical Guide for Institutionalizing Public Engagement."

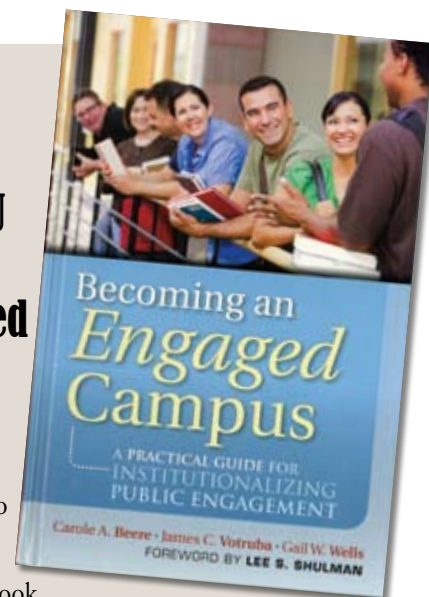
Citing successful examples at NKU and other campuses, the book is designed as a roadmap for universities around the nation to effect change on campus, in the community and in the policy arena.

Three members of the NKU leadership team, President James C. Votruba, Provost Gail Wells and retired associate provost Carole Beere, are the authors of the book, which was published this year by Jossey-Bass. This excerpt is from Chapter 8, "Aligning for Student Engagement," and it is focused on community-based research:

Community-Based Research

"By definition, CBR involves the institution with the community in a reciprocal relationship to address a local problem or issue. Much of what has been discussed in other chapters of this book relates to CBR, which, at its best, involves students. The array of CBR projects is basically limitless. Generally, faculty work with students to complete CBR projects, but in some cases the work is largely the responsibility of the students, and faculty serve only in a supervisory capacity. When the department has a strong graduate program, a special effort must be made to include undergraduates, especially because the services that undergraduates can contribute and their ability to work independently are more limited than that of graduate students. One way to ensure that all students have a CBR experience is to require it as part of a capstone course, which is the case in some institutions."

This excerpt reprinted by permission from Jossey-Bass. You can order this book at www.josseybass.com. Proceeds from the sales go to NKU's Scripps Howard Center for Civic Engagement, which supports stewardship initiatives involving the NKU faculty and students.



HOT OFF THE PRESS

A sampler of NKU's newest grant-supported research

Much of the research at NKU is, by intent, reflective of the university's commitment to regional stewardship — that is, to applying the university's intellectual resources to support regional economic, educational and social progress. Often this research is supported by external grants. Here's a sample of some recently acquired grants and the research supported by them.

SEPTEMBER 2010: Human genetics education

The American Society of Human Genetics awarded Dr. Bethany Bowling, an assistant professor of biology, a grant under its new Genetics Education Research Program. The program's goal is to promote genetic literacy among teachers and students by supporting research related to genetics education in U.S. schools.

Dr. Bowling will use the grant — which consists of \$10,000 distributed over two years — to test the effectiveness of various educational strategies that will prevent students from developing common misconceptions about genetics.

FEBRUARY 2011: Students with developmental disabilities

NKU and the Human Development Institute at the University of Kentucky are partnering to develop a program called Supported Higher Education Project. The project is receiving a \$2.2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

The partnership's goal is the inclusion of young adults with intellectual disabilities in all aspects of college life.

NKU, through the leadership of Dr. Melissa Jones in the Department of Teacher Education, will develop student mentors and faculty training materials.

MARCH 2011: Benchmarking nonprofits in our region

NKU's Center for Economic Analysis and Development released a new study, "Holding Our Community Together: The Nonprofits of Greater Cincinnati."

Sponsored by the Procter & Gamble Fund, the study compared the types, sizes and revenues of nonprofits here against those in Columbus, Indianapolis, Louisville, Kansas City and St. Louis.

The percentages are similar. For example, education nonprofits make up about 15 percent of nonprofits in each city and human services nonprofits roughly 26 percent.

Revenues differ, however. Cincinnati ranked lowest in revenue for education nonprofits, almost \$100 million less than either Indianapolis or Kansas City.

Grants awarded to NKU

Grants fuel faculty research at NKU. The total dollar value of grants has averaged over \$9.5 million per year since 2003. The average grant over that time frame has been \$75,000.

Year	Number of grants	Total awarded
2003	76	\$6,913,291
2004	88	\$7,557,702
2005	98	\$10,939,120
2006	110	\$12,519,693
2007	106	\$8,666,903
2008	106	\$8,019,828
2009	99	\$9,687,955
2010	131	\$11,800,039
Average	102	\$9,513,066
Total	814	\$76,104,531

SOURCE:
NKU Office of
Research, Grants
and Contracts

APRIL 2011: Landslide detection

The National Science Foundation awarded a \$64,997 grant to NKU's Department of Physics and Geology, in conjunction with the NKU Center for Integrative Natural Science and Mathematics.

The grant will enable the Laboratory for Applied Geophysics to acquire instrumentation for field surveys focused on landslides and subsurface void detection.

The Laboratory for Applied Geophysics allows students to move into graduate research and/or the job market, where their skills developed at NKU can be put to use.

JUNE 2011: Nanotechnology

The National Institutes of Health awarded a \$405,000 grant to NKU's Dr. Heather Bullen (Chemistry) and Dr. Kristi Haik (Biological Science) for their research titled "Nanotechnology: Advancing Toxicity Testing."

"More than one billion people worldwide suffer with brain diseases, disorders or injuries," Dr. Haik said. "Researchers have been working to develop potential therapies using nanotechnology, which has shown promise in delivering drugs to the brain."

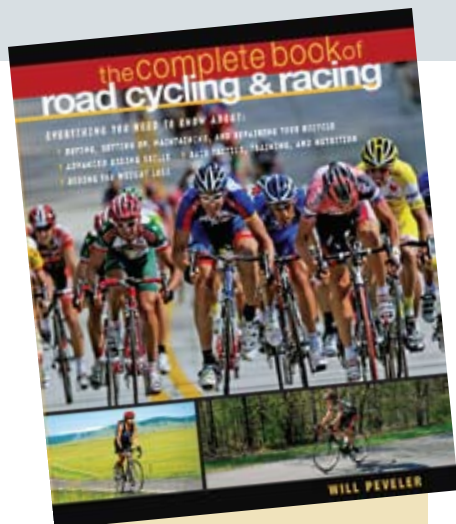
Dr. Bullen emphasized the interdisciplinary nature of the work being done at NKU and the student component: "Undergraduates will work with us to develop a standardized procedure to assess the potential toxicity of promising nano-drug delivery vehicles. And," she added, "they'll have the opportunity to present their findings at national and international scientific meetings."

A steady stream of cyclists passes through Will Peveler's NKU lab for performance assessments that allow Dr. Peveler to build a database for his research.

His research is in high gear

NKU Photo/Aly Durrett

Will Peveler is well known in cycling circles for applying science to exercise, and his lab at NKU has enabled him to accelerate his research.



One amazon.com reviewer wrote of Dr. Peveler's popular book on cycling: "Whether you are just getting started in the sport or you've been riding and racing for 20+ years, this is a tremendous guide to all things cycling."

By Bob Driehaus

It doesn't take a scientist to tell a bicycle rider how to go fast. Get in shape, get on the bike and pedal hard.

But going faster than the competition or avoiding injuries? Well, that's where precision testing comes in, courtesy of researchers like Dr. Will Peveler, NKU assistant professor of exercise science.

In a lab fit for the Six Million Dollar Man, Peveler employs an array of stationary bikes beside machines on which road bikes are mounted. Nearby, two- and three-dimensional imaging equipment and biomonitors work to precisely measure metabolic activity and the efficiency of each test subject's performance.

Peveler has used the lab and his test subjects to determine the optimal position that a rider should assume on a bike relative to the seat height. His research has determined that a cyclist's knee should be bent at a 25 degree

angle when it is at the bottom of its pedal stroke. Any variance in that angle results in more work, more injuries or both.

"We look for that optimum angle so that we can increase performance and for injury reduction," he said.

His evaluations can aid elite athletes and recreational bikers alike. He regularly tests both.

Results of Peveler's research have been published extensively in scholarly venues, including Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research, Journal of Exercise Physiology, Journal of Sports Medicine and Physical Fitness, and Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise.

But he reaches beyond academic circles to cycling enthusiasts by regularly contributing articles to www.livestrong.com, Lance Armstrong's fitness and health web site, and

Will Peveler blogs for Livestrong.com, Lance Armstrong's site that combines exercise and nutrition information with the cycling champion's campaign to raise money to fight cancer. Here are some samples of Peveler's blog:

On protein bars:

Your body uses protein primarily for anabolic processes; use as an energy source is very limited. The human body does not store excess protein and must convert and store it as either glycogen or triacylglycerol. Protein bars are commonly utilized as a dietary supplement to increase daily protein consumption. Many athletes ingest large amounts of protein without consideration to timing, which can have a negative impact on health and performance.

On heart rate:

Measuring heart rate/pulse rate can provide valuable information on current health status and fitness level. What would be considered a *normal* resting heart rate varies greatly among individuals. This variation is due primarily to genetics, current fitness level or any disease status. The first step in understanding resting heart rate is to obtain an accurate measurement.

...The best time to measure resting heart rate is the first thing in the morning, before getting out of bed. After the alarm sounds, hit snooze just in case you fall asleep during this process.

On bodybuilding and biking:

Cyclists always look for ways to improve their performance. Off-season resistance training is one method that is often overlooked by most cyclists. Resistance training in the off-season has been shown to be an effective way to improve cycling performance in the upcoming season. Research supports faster times and decreased exhaustion after supplementing a portion of normal off-season training with endurance training. Resistance training does not increase aerobic capacity. Instead, improved performance is a result of improved economy of motion and positive neuromuscular adaptations leading to a decrease in fatigue and faster performance times.



Seven-time Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong is captured during the Tour's prologue last summer. Dr. Peveler blogs on cycling, health and nutrition for Armstrong's Livestrong website www.livestrong.com.

Associated Press Photo



NKU Photo/Aly Durrett

Dr. Peveler's lab is set up to allow him to measure athletic performance by simulating actual riding conditions while measuring breathing, heart rate and other critical functions. The goal is to optimize a rider's transfer of energy from body to bike.

through articles he has written for Men's Health, Women's Health and Cycling Plus magazines.

He has worked with two undergraduate students, Samantha Johnson and Brandy Shew, to be second authors on a paper due to be published next year entitled, "Alterations to knee angle during the pedal cycle."

Peveler has also written one book, "The Complete Book of Road Cycling and Racing," published by McGraw Hill, which is meant to be a cover-all guide to training principles, physiological and biomechanical principles of biking, nutritional advice and injury prevention for beginning and intermediate bikers.

He does not approach the subject from a disinterested distance. "I've coached collegiately, I've raced, I've run a bike shop and have been a bike mechanic," he said.

Dr. William J. Kraemer, editor of the *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research*, said Peveler's multiple

contributions to the journal have fit well with his publication's mission.

"Dr. Peveler's research in the sport of cycling has made many important contributions to several dimensions of the sport," he said. "(The Journal's) mission is directed toward bridging the gap between laboratory practice and practical applications for the coach and athlete. Dr. Peveler's work has helped to advance the sport science of cycling from the recreational athlete to the advanced competitor."

Bicycling is a passion for the indefatigable professor, a transition into a high-energy sport from a military career that included service in the first Iraq war as a Navy diver and stateside service as an Army Reserve diver and drill sergeant. His stints earned him 10 medals and commendations.

While serving in the Navy's Individual Ready Reserves, he earned his bachelor's degree in mass communication from Western Kentucky University, where

he founded and coached the university cycling team. As an Army Reservist, he earned a Master of Science at WKU. Three years later, he finished his Ph.D. at the University of Alabama in human performance, exercise physiology. In his spare time there, he restarted and coached the university's cycling team.

At both universities, he was a teaching assistant.

"Sometimes I have a tendency to do too much," he said.

Peveler uses three kinds of bikes or bike mounts for research in his lab. The CompuTrainer allows riders to mount their own bikes onto a platform that uses interactive 3-D graphics to chart the efficiency of pedal strokes, identifying flat or dead spots in the rotation of an individual rider.

A Monarch stationary bike monitors heart rate and adjusts seat height and resistance for evaluation of the rider.

The Velotron, an \$8,000 piece of equipment, does the best job of his current machines of simulating road conditions.

"If you can use your own bike, that's really good. The Velotron is more accurate because there's no slippage and you can adjust the frame to be like your bike," he said.

Peveler hopes to secure funding for the granddaddy of all test bikes, the H/P/Cosmos treadmill, to take his research to a new level of precision. The \$175,000 high-tech treadmill allows for bikes to safely be ridden on it and to simulate road conditions with varying heights and speeds, among other variables.

He plans to apply for a highly competitive external grant that is awarded in January.

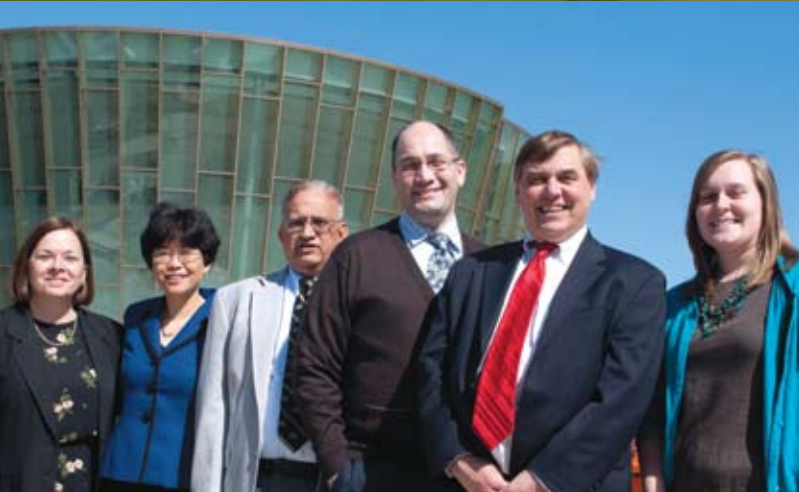
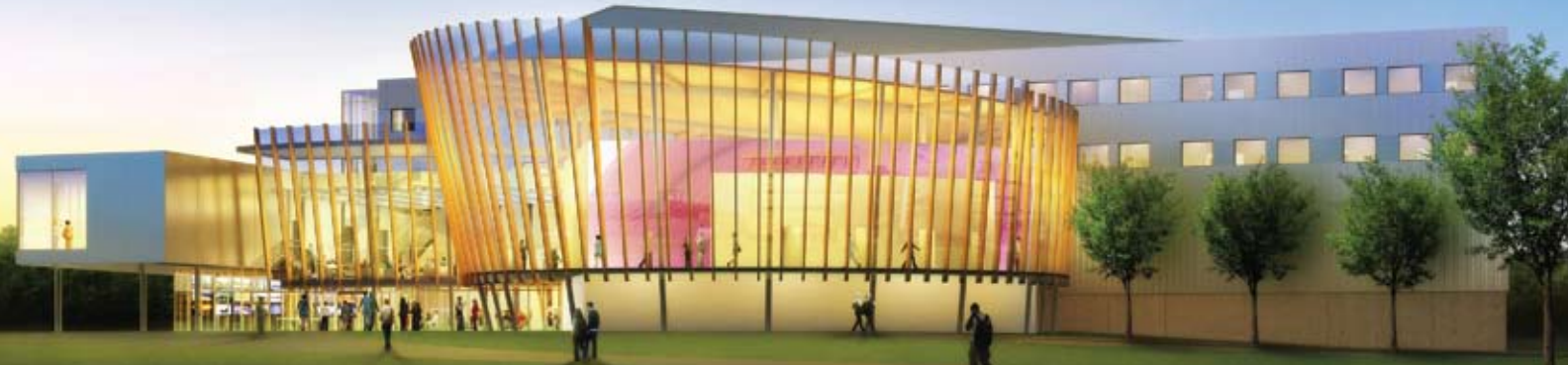
Peveler said that any initial misgivings he had about coming to NKU after working in a large university's lab were quickly erased by the school's facilities, which he said rival his alma mater's. He is entering his third year of teaching at NKU in the fall.

"I really like NKU. I get the same support I would have had at a larger university, as nice a lab as I had at the University of Alabama," he said. "I think I've found a home. It has a really nice small university feel but a lot of benefits of a larger university."

"Dr. Peveler's work has helped to advance the sport science of cycling from the recreational athlete to the advanced competitor."

— Dr. William J. Kraemer, editor of the *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research*

Healthcare reform we can all agree on



An artist's rendering of NKU's now nearly complete Griffin Hall, the new home of the College of Informatics.

Dr. Gary Ozanich, a visiting professor in NKU's College of Informatics, is leading a team of faculty and student researchers who are evaluating Kentucky's effort to nudge doctors and hospitals toward wider use of electronic medical records. Standing outside NKU's new state-of-the-art College of Informatics building are, from left to right, professors Pam Davis, Xiaoni Zhang, Vijay Raghavan, Hasan Sapci, Ozanich and graduate assistant Kelly Hammer. Professor Davis teaches in the College of Health Professions; the others on the team are in the College of Informatics.

NKU Photo/Aly Durrett

College of Informatics is a natural for electronic medical records research

By Greg Paeth

There is at least an acre of common ground in the bitterly acrimonious debate over national healthcare reform.

Even the most ardent critics of the plan pushed through Congress by President Barack Obama in early 2010 might find it difficult to argue with fundamental goals of providing better healthcare while reducing costs.

Now the state of Kentucky, with some help from Northern Kentucky University, is trying to determine whether those goals are attainable, more than a utopian pipe dream or, at worst, a politician's empty promise.

Over the last several years, Kentucky has emerged as a national leader in an effort to convince doctors and hospitals about the critical importance of keeping electronic records, so that a patient's

medical history is easily accessible, even if the primary care doctor is in Pikeville and a medical emergency has surfaced in Paducah.

The bottom line is that medicine in Kentucky and elsewhere in the country is making an effort to catch up with MasterCard.

"You can look at any other industry — banking, automobile manufacturing, you name it, carpet layers, anything — and they have adopted it," said Jeff Brady, executive director of the Governor's Office of Electronic Health Information, referring to the widespread use of electronic data by virtually every industry in the United States. "Healthcare has just been the segment of the country that has refused or been too slow to adopt it, and the government has stepped in," said Brady, pointing out that all U.S. healthcare providers are now required to implement electronic medical records systems.

“Healthcare is about 30 years behind the finance industry,” said Dr. Gary Ozanich, visiting associate professor in NKU’s College of Informatics and director of strategic advancement for the Master of Health Information program. “As recently as three years ago, just 18 percent of the physicians and 10 percent of the hospitals in the country used electronic medical records,” said Ozanich.

In Kentucky, the percentages are on a dramatic upswing. As of April, nearly half of the state’s approximately 100 hospitals and about 40 of the major physician groups have begun using electronic records technology. Ozanich said those figures represent about 30 percent of the healthcare providers in the state.

Both a carrot and a stick are being used to drive the program forward. Doctors and hospitals are now eligible for what is, in effect, seed money to cover some of the costs of setting up the electronic medical record systems. But looming over doctors and hospitals that don’t participate is the threat of reduced Medicaid payments four years down the road.

The electronic records program — step one in creating a statewide medical records network — dovetails nicely with but is not part of the controversial Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Prior to Obama’s election, the state had received a \$4.9 million grant through the Medicaid Transformation program to encourage doctors and hospitals to adopt electronic medical records systems as a means of improving the efficiency of Medicaid. That grant and a second \$9.75 million grant through the Obama administration’s Stabilization and Recovery Act allowed the state to get more doctors and hospitals to participate in a medical records program that will be the basis for the statewide network: the Kentucky Health Information Exchange.

“The idea is that we’re going to see better outcomes (of patient care) if we have more timely information and a more complete picture of the patient,” Ozanich said.

Working with NKU graduate students in the business and health informatics programs as well as NKU’s College of Health Professions, Ozanich played a key



NKU’s monitoring of electronic medical record keeping in Kentucky parallels President Obama’s effort to institute electronic records nationwide.

Associated Press Photo

role in landing a \$200,000 grant from the state to assess whether the original grant was actually having an impact on patient outcomes and medical care costs. Earlier this year, that contract was extended for another four years so that Ozanich and NKU could play the same role in assessing the effectiveness of the second grant.

Brady said Ozanich’s first report on the Medicaid grant, which was completed in March, established benchmarks and spelled out what doctors, hospitals and the state must do to satisfy those requirements. “He did set the stage for what we can accomplish in the next few years. Gary did a very nice job of setting up the model of what it was going to do, the metrics he was going to use, the mechanism that he will use for this evaluation and set the stage for some rapid adoption, which we’re currently experiencing now,” Brady said.

Brady also said Ozanich’s work is getting attention outside of Kentucky. Brady and Ozanich recently made a presentation about the work that has been completed in Kentucky to representatives of 13 states that are in the process of setting up medical records systems. “We took the work that has been done at NKU and presented it as a framework that can be duplicated by the other states,” Ozanich said.

Although Kentucky isn’t generally recognized as a high-tech innovator, Ozanich and other state officials stressed that Kentucky is among the leaders in electronic medical records. “It’s one of those times that Kentucky is leading. We’re about three years ahead of everyone else,” Ozanich said.

Polly Mullins-Bentley, deputy executive director of the governor’s Office of Electronic Health Information, said the state was the first in the country to issue incentive checks to hospitals that participate in the program. Back in January, University of Kentucky HealthCare received \$2.86 million from the federal Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services while Central Baptist Hospital in Lexington received \$1.3 million, she said.

Ozanich dismissed any notion that NKU’s work might prove to be controversial with people who cringe at the prospect of the federal government running a healthcare system. “We’re providing more information in a more timely fashion and increasing efficiency. How can you argue with that? What’s not to like?” he asked.



Learning that lasts

Students of Dr. Julie Olberding, including Nick Coorey, above, evaluated 10 grant proposals from local nonprofits and presented their findings last fall to Toyota Motor Engineering and Manufacturing North America's contributions committee, below, which donated \$42,000 to the charities.

By Feoshia Henderson

Northern Kentucky University's Mayerson Student Philanthropy Project has grown into a national model for student engagement in surrounding communities.

The 11-year-old program has engaged thousands of students who've directed nearly \$600,000 to area nonprofits through classroom research. In the process, they've learned about needs across Northern Kentucky and Greater Cincinnati, and found they personally can help meet those needs.

But what happens to those students once they leave campus? Do the lessons of student philanthropy stick? Do students continue to give back to the communities where eventually they get jobs, start a family and settle down?

The answer for many is "yes," according to follow-up research by Dr. Julie Olberding, former faculty director of the Mayerson project and associate professor in the Department of Political Science and Criminal Justice. The research project



NKU Photos

A professor who taught student philanthropy classes and saw the immediate impact wondered if the impacts continued after graduation.

has been accepted for publication in early 2012 by Innovative Higher Education, a refereed scholarly journal that focuses on innovations and new ideas in higher education.

“We had been collecting data from students after each semester, but the main funder and co-creator, the Mayerson Foundation, was interested in longer-term impacts of the program,” Olberding said.

NKU President James Votruba and Neal Mayerson, chairman of the Cincinnati-based Mayerson Foundation and president of the Mayerson Co., developed the Mayerson Student Philanthropy Project in 2000 to foster civic responsibility and engagement among students. Faculty from any discipline can participate and include the philanthropy project as part of regular coursework. Each selected class is given from \$1,000 to several thousand dollars to invest in area nonprofits.

The nonprofit selection process is hands-on, including researching and interviewing various organization representatives, and is done by group consensus. The nonprofits generally are related to the course. For example, one

music appreciation class invested in a nonprofit that offers music education to underserved youth.

“The idea behind the Mayerson project is to make students aware of nonprofits and needs in the community so eventually they become involved, and help solve problems,” Olberding explained. “We wanted to see if that happened.”

The first thing Olberding had to do was track down alumni who’d participated in student philanthropy classes — across academic disciplines — from the spring of 2000 to the spring of 2009. With help from the Office of Advancement Services and Office of the Registrar, she identified 1,300 Mayerson alumni. Using the online survey tool Survey Monkey, she contacted the 430 alumni whose email addresses were on file.

“We sent out an email explaining the project and its importance. We let them know it was the first long-term study of student philanthropy,” Olberding said.

The two-part survey inquired about philanthropy they completed while attending NKU and philanthropy or volunteer work they’d done since graduation and specifically during the previous 12 months.

The first set of questions was similar to those they were asked as students at the completion of their philanthropy project. Those included a self-assessment of the impact of the Mayerson project on their awareness of needs in the community, their responsibility to help others in need, and their interest in volunteering and giving money to charity.

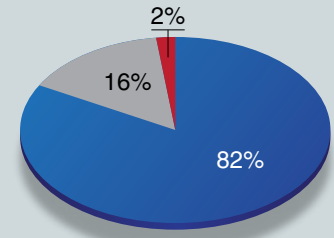
The second set of questions asked alumni about specific actions they’d taken since graduating, tying student philanthropy to actions today. They were asked if they’d volunteered or made financial contributions to a charity in the past 12 months, how many hours they’d volunteered and whether they’d served on a board of directors for a nonprofit.

“The last set of questions came from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. They ask people all over the country about certain behaviors, and we selected those most relevant to nonprofit engagement,” Olberding said.

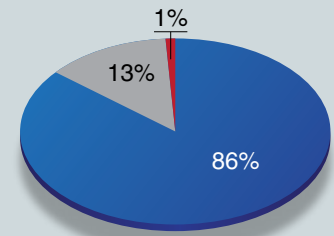
Positive impacts

The immediate impact of student philanthropy classes on student stewardship is captured with end-of-the-semester surveys. These charts are a sample of the results for nine classes during the Spring 2011 semester.

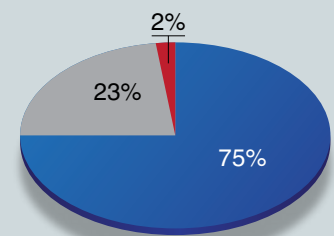
■ Positive
■ No effect
■ Negative



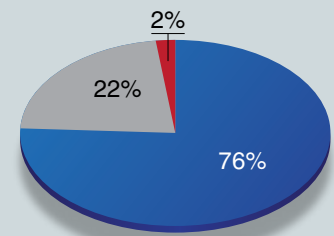
Effect on your awareness of needs and problems addressed in this class



Effect on your awareness of nonprofit organizations in the community

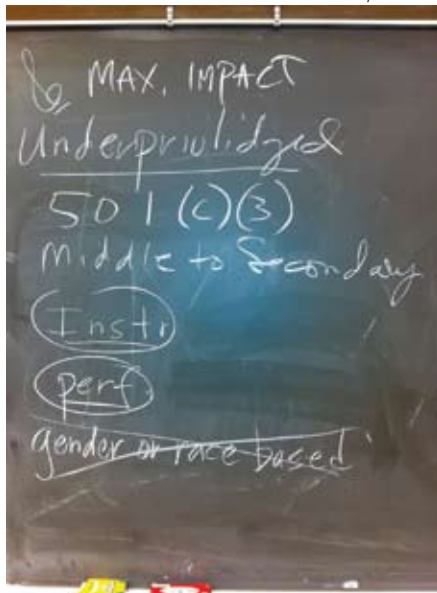


Effect on your intention to do volunteer work



Effect on your intention to give money to charity

NKU Photo/Gary Johnston



Students in Professor Gary Johnston’s music appreciation (MUS 100) class in the Spring 2011 semester used the classroom chalkboard to analyze needs and nonprofits.



Julie Olberding

The results allowed for a comparison of students' perceptions immediately following their philanthropy experience to alumni's perceptions years later, and

a comparison of philanthropic behaviors by Mayerson alumni to those of the general public.

"What we found was surprising. Ninety-five percent (of alumni respondents) said the Mayerson project had a positive impact on them, and 95 percent (of students) have indicated that immediately after the program," Olberding said. "This finding provides evidence that years after the experience, an overwhelming percentage felt like it changed them for the better."

In addition, 90 percent of respondents said the project had a positive impact on their awareness of area nonprofits, the same percentage that agreed shortly after finishing the program.

More striking were the comparisons between Mayerson alumni and national averages in contributing to nonprofits in various ways.

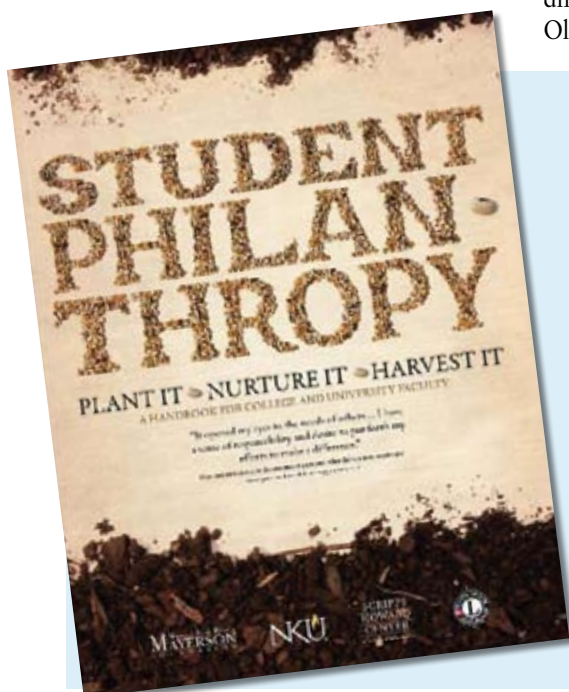
A high percentage of Mayerson alumni donated to a nonprofit during the past 12 months and were far more likely to have volunteered and served on a nonprofit board than the average American, the study found.

"Eighty-six percent of Mayerson alumni during that year (in 2009) made a financial contribution to a nonprofit. That's 15 to 20 percent above the general population," Olberding said.

Also, 71 percent volunteered for a nonprofit or other organization that year compared to 27 percent of Americans in the general population. Fifteen percent of Mayerson alumni served on a nonprofit that year, compared to an estimated 5 percent of the general population.

The survey results show student philanthropy is having an impact far beyond a single classroom experience, a key long-term goal of the Mayerson project, Olberding said.

"I think those percentages are due to alumni becoming more aware of nonprofits and social problems in their Mayerson classes, and that led them to donating and volunteering more and serving on boards. I think it has empowered individuals who may have thought that the world's problems were too big and beyond them. But once they engage locally and see they can make a difference, then they want to do more," Olberding said.



Faculty handbook in demand nationally

NKU's decade of experience with the incorporation of student philanthropy pedagogy in the college classroom is assembled in a faculty handbook distributed in 2010-2011 to other universities around the nation. A second printing is planned.

STUDENT PHILANTHROPY CLASSES AT NKU

NKU had 14 student philanthropy classes in 12 different disciplines during the 2010-2011 academic year, accounting for the distribution of \$78,773 to 32 nonprofits.

FALL 2010 CLASSES

Professional Sales

Professor Doris Shaw

Intro to Public History

Professor Rebecca Bailey

Protecting Water Resources

Professor Becky Kelley

The Arts for Social Change

Professor Daryl Harris

Resource Acquisition & Mgmt.

Professor Julie Olberding

SPRING 2011 CLASSES

Strategies of Persuasion

Professor Jeffrey Fox

Exhibits in Museums and Historic Sites

Professor Brian Hackett

Regional Stewardship

Professor Paul Wirtz

Music Appreciation

Professor Gary Johnston

Reading & Writing Across the Curriculum

Professors Kelly Gunn/
Brandelyn Tosolt

Grant Writing

Professor Janel Bloch

Organizational Leadership Capstone

Professor Rick Brockmeier

Alternatives to Incarceration

Professor Danielle McDonald

Intro to Public History

Professor Brian Hackett

The Center for Public History is capturing our region's past with research-based storytelling for exhibits at local museums and other institutions.



Nurses work a ward of Booth Hospital in the old Shinkle Mansion on East Second Street in Covington. Booth Hospital's successor institution, St. Luke West in Florence, would eventually come to be owned by St. Elizabeth Healthcare.

Research revives hospital's history

Sorting through 80 dusty boxes where a local institution's heritage was stored, three NKU professors worked with students to identify the right combination of documents and photographs to tell St. Elizabeth Medical Center's story from its humble founding through 150 years of growth to become a healthcare giant in Greater Cincinnati.

By Bob Driehaus

Over the course of 150 years, St. Elizabeth hospitals have weaved more than a few fascinating stories:

- A dying slave secreted into the hospital to pray and be comforted in defiance of the law.
- Nuns in full habit begging door to door for beer to serve convalescing Union soldiers.
- A century later, striking nurses returning to work without a contract to tend to victims of a plane crash.

The challenge was gathering those stories and then fleshing them out to show how St. Elizabeth, founded in Covington in 1861, and the hospitals that have joined its network are woven inextricably into the fabric of Northern Kentucky.

That's where Northern Kentucky University's Center for Public History entered. Three professors — Drs. Paul Tenkotte, Brian Hackett and Rebecca Bailey — with a big assist from students Karia Simmons and Cierra Earl, assembled 80 large boxes worth of dusty records and gleaned the most important or interesting ones for an exhibit that tells the hospital's story. The exhibit debuted at the Behringer Crawford Museum in Covington and then moved to St. Elizabeth in Edgewood. The exhibit was one of the first major projects of the new Center, which got started in 2010 in conjunction with new initiatives to teach public history at NKU. A Master of Public History with a rigorous curriculum was launched in January 2010 and now has more than 40 students enrolled.

The hospital history exhibit has been augmented with “For the

Centuries: St. Elizabeth Healthcare and Northern Kentucky, 1861-2011,” written by Hackett with assistance from Tenkotte and Bailey, published this spring.

“We went looking for good stories, things that could make this 150th anniversary have meaning to people,” Hackett said. “You look for little pieces of information that you can build on, incidents that were part of bigger stories, that really reflected well on the hospital and on the development of Northern Kentucky.”

The team discovered how difficult St. Elizabeth’s early years began, with thinly veiled hostility toward Catholics in what was then a predominantly Protestant region.

The hospital was founded by three German nuns summoned by Bishop George Carrell after a fervent campaign for its creation was launched by Henrietta Cleveland. At 21, she had lost her husband and young son and wanted to dedicate her life to helping others after converting to Catholicism, a vision not universally shared.

When Covington sought to buy a new building to house St. Elizabeth for \$5,000, a prominent citizen obtained an injunction through a lawsuit. That man, William Ernst, went on to become mayor of Covington and was a prominent member of the Nativist Know Nothing movement that chafed against the heavy immigration of Germans and Catholics to Northern Kentucky in the late 1800s.

“It’s not too far of a leap that he was doing this because he didn’t like Catholics,” Hackett said.

St. Elizabeth overcame early prejudices and has expanded to include hospitals or medical centers in Covington, Edgewood, Falmouth, Florence, Fort Thomas and Grant County, along with specialized service centers elsewhere.



Still young in 1909, St. Elizabeth Hospital had grown considerably since its founding in 1861, as this postcard of the hospital in the early 20th century, then on 11th Street in Covington, shows.

Photo courtesy of Paul A. Tenkotte, Ph.D.

Its story is of keen interest within Northern Kentucky but lacks the broad appeal that a major museum or publisher would fund, making it a perfect project for the center.

“This is for Northern Kentucky because our premise is that many of us were born at St. Elizabeth or our loved ones have died there. How many babies has the institution delivered? It’s part of the fabric of our lives, and that’s the story we wanted to tell,” Tenkotte said. “That’s what we specialize in at the Center for Public History, helping people celebrate their lives and institutions.”

Tenkotte said the research that the center completed found an uplifting theme running through the hospital’s long history.

“There’s a bigger story of the dedication of people to a cause greater than themselves, and that’s where the story relates to all of us who want to do something for the greater good. The 7,000 associates at St. Elizabeth are carrying on that same sense of mission,” he said.

A sizeable piece of the hospital’s history has been made by Terry M. Foster, a critical-care clinical nurse specialist, who joined the hospital as a volunteer in 1973 and has lectured in all 50 states, becoming an unofficial ambassador for the hospital. He joined a committee of hospital staff that helped NKU’s team gather and sort information.

“They were great,” he said of the professors and students. “We lived some of that history, but we didn’t know how to put it together. They knew how to extrapolate what was real from what was anecdotal. We pored through tons of pictures from the hospital, scrapbooks. You would go in there and four hours would fly by.”

One gem that stands out in his mind was the discovery of a handwritten diary shoved into a non-descript envelope in a box. It turned out to have a nun’s daily log of the hospital’s fight to move patients above the raging Ohio River flood of 1937, the worst in the region’s recorded history.

“A lot of people went through that exhibit,” he said. “The hospital had a strong presence in the area. The plane crashes, the floods, the hospital stood through it all.”

Bailey said working with people and other institutions on local history is gratifying. “It’s easy for academic historians to stand on the side and pontificate, but it’s quite a different thing to partner with people and help them to tell their story,” she said. “It was really amazing to me to see the commitment from the president to the volunteers. You could really tell that healthcare was a passion for them and not just a job.”

The center won’t sit on its laurels, having already launched efforts to tell the stories

“We went looking for good stories, things that could make this 150th anniversary have meaning to people.”

— NKU History Professor Brian Hackett

of Fort Mitchell on the occasion of its 100th anniversary and of Cincinnati’s West End, which was once a thriving middle-class and working-class African-American neighborhood that was literally torn apart by the construction of Interstate 75.

“About 80,000 people lived in the West End in an amazingly diverse area,” Tenkotte said. “The story is how do you, over the course of many years, literally decimate an area, and what happens to the black doctors, lawyers, shopkeepers and churches and schools when you break up that community from the 1940s through the 1960s?”

These projects aren’t purely academic exercises, he said. Instead, they offer the wisdom of past successes and failures that are applicable today. “I think we feel like we’re a nation in decline, but if you would have polled people from virtually any era, they would have said the same thing. It’s sort of a theme that repeats itself, and I think we’ve also done a very poor job of understanding that,” Tenkotte said.

The center is out to change that.

The Center for Public History

- The Center for Public History supports the civic engagement and community outreach activities of the faculty and students of the history and geography department. In the center, students can learn about internship opportunities with community partners and work on projects alongside engaged faculty and public history graduate students.
- This work provides students with an exciting glimpse into the *real* work world of museums and cultural heritage organizations such as local historical societies, archives, and libraries. Students who work on public history sponsored projects are acknowledged contributors and are encouraged to include project products in their employment portfolios.

Paul Tenkotte, director

Landrum Academic Center 415 | 859-572-6186 |
tenkottep@nku.edu | <http://publichistory.nku.edu>



Dr. Paul Tenkotte, left, chair of the Department of History and Geography, and history professors Dr. Brian Hackett and Dr. Rebecca Bailey collaborated on the St. Elizabeth exhibit as a project of NKU’s new Center for Public History.

NKU Photo/Aly Durrett

Dr. Paul Tenkotte

Paul Tenkotte is chair of the Department of History, Geography at NKU, which includes black studies and women’s and gender studies. He is the co-editor of *The Encyclopedia of Northern Kentucky* (2009). His involvement in regional history ranges from publications to exhibits to public television documentaries, including the Emmy Award-winning “Where the River Bends.” Currently, he is completing a book for the centennial of the City of Fort Mitchell, Kentucky.

Dr. Brian Hackett

After nearly 20 years in the museum business in curatorial and executive director positions, Brian Hackett returned to academia to complete his Ph.D. in public history from Middle Tennessee State University. He joined the public history program at NKU in fall 2010. Brian teaches courses on museum management, material culture, collections management, interpretation, and exhibits. He has recently completed a book commemorating the 150th anniversary of St. Elizabeth Healthcare in Northern Kentucky.

Dr. Rebecca Bailey

Rebecca “Becky” Bailey is the director of the NKU public history program. In addition to coordinating the program, she teaches courses in local & regional research methodology, oral history, Appalachian history, the Gilded Age, and Progressive Era history. A graduate of the College of William & Mary and West Virginia University, she has been a faculty member at NKU since August 2006.

Shaker music

It's not as simple as you think

*'Tis the gift to be simple, 'Tis the gift to be free,
'Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be,
And when we find ourselves in the place just right,
'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.*

By Feoshia Henderson

The concise, poetic words of “Simple Gifts” combine with its elegant melody to form the most famous hymn of the United Society of Believers in Christ’s Second Appearing. For many people, the song comprises their entire knowledge of the Society, whose members danced as they sang and worshipped — thus becoming known in their time and evermore as the Shakers.

For Dr. Carol Medlicott, Northern Kentucky University associate professor of history and geography, studying the religion and its surrounding culture is a vocation. She is well-versed in all things Shaker, and noted regionally as an expert through several articles, essays and books. Most recently she co-authored “Richard McNemar and the Music of the Shaker West: Branches of one living tree.” It’s set to be published in 2012 through Kent State University Press.

So imagine her delight when a series of happenstance events led her to being part of discovering and preserving a Shaker hymnal full of songs and music that the world had never seen. The nearly 100-page book belongs to the descendants of Charles Amery, a Shaker Elder who lived in White Water Shaker Village, the Cincinnati-area communal village which is one of the 24 founded in the United States from the late 1700s through 1824. The book contains 200 to 250 songs, hymns and dance tunes.

“It’s a major connection to the Shaker world,” Medlicott explained.



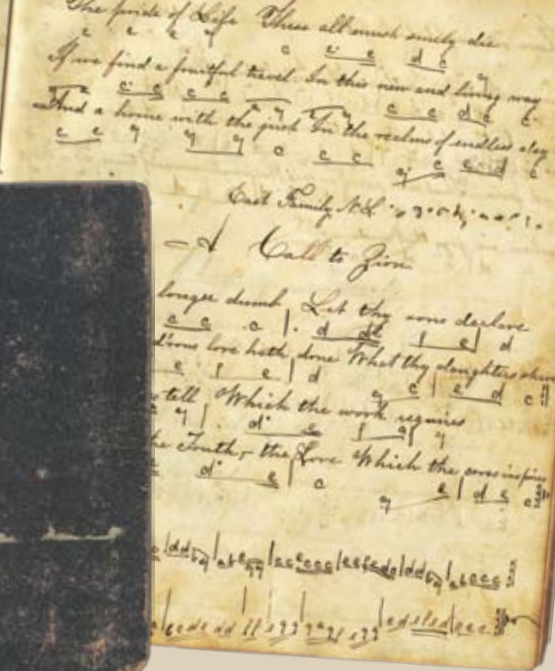
A Shaker hymnal with historical songs has been preserved and digitized through the efforts of Dr. Carol Medlicott, left, the cooperation of the hymnal’s owner, Kathryn Amery Hagemeier, center, and the assistance of NKU graduate Cori Munro.



Professor Medlicott frequently lectures publicly on Shaker settlements in the Ohio River Valley, as she did in March as part of NKU's new Six@Six community lecture series at Covington's Behringer-Crawford Museum.



Early photo of George Amery.



Original cover and digital sample pages from a rare Shaker hymnal belonging to the descendants of Elder Charles Amery, who lived in White Water Shaker Village.



Dr. Carol Medlicott

“There have been a few scholars who have devoted themselves to Shaker music. One of them, Daniel Patterson, emeritus music professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, in early 2000

incorporated in his study every known Shaker music manuscript (about 800). (The discovered hymnal) represents a completely unknown music manuscript. It really is a very rare find,” she said.

This songbook is currently being preserved in digital form with the aid of an \$8,000 grant from The Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation, a New York-based nonprofit that supports research and scholarship that transmits worldwide cultural heritage.

Its journey from deteriorating family heirloom to uncovered treasure was accidental. It started several years ago when a board member of the preservation organization, Friends of White Water Shaker Village, discovered the names of Amery’s descendants during a shot-in-the-dark, online genealogical search of White Water Shakers known to have left the community. The names of all Shakers at White Water were part of the records the Friends organization preserves.

The board member tracked down the Amery descendants in Texas and asked if they knew about their rare family history (Shakers practiced celibacy so family lines are unusual.) Not only did the Amery descendants know of their religious past but had several materials related to it.

“They had a section of a diary, and what they believed was a hymnal. It appeared to be a songbook of some sort,” Medlicott said.

By then, Medlicott, also a board member of the Friend’s organization, had become involved with getting access to the materials.

“We asked the family if we could at least look at the materials to examine them. Once we saw what they were, and that one was a hymnal, we started a dialogue with the family to impress upon them that this was an unknown Shaker music manuscript that should be studied and analyzed,” she said.

The Amery descendants are permitting the Friends of White Water to retain the hymnal for research purposes. Since securing the grant funding, Medlicott has pursued a project to digitally preserve the book and transcribe the music into standard notation.

“We produced digital images of the entire book, and are having some replica copies bound,” she said, adding, “The Shakers developed their own music notation, so we’re expending some effort to translate it.”

Supported by funds from the Delmas Foundation grant, an NKU graduate student has been meticulously handling and scanning each page of the hymnal, making the high-resolution digital copy that eventually will be part of the NKU digital library catalog for others to peruse and study.

“The Shakers were tremendously creative and productive in their music. That’s one of the major parts of Shaker culture. Second to their distinctive theology was the music that underpinned their worship,” Medlicott said.

There are well-known Shaker settlements in both Ohio and Kentucky. The Shakers were a small, tightly knit religious group that came to the United States from 18th century England. Regarded as one of the first “Charismatic” Christian groups, they lived in communes, were celibate and grew the sect by conversion. Men and women lived as brothers and sisters and the sexes were generally separated, even in worship services where they sat on different sides of the room. The Shakers were first known as “Shaking Quakers” because they were known to sing, dance and move enthusiastically during the worship services.

“The dance separated them from other denominations, and the Shakers wrote each and every one of their own hymns. The output of Shaker music is tremendous, with 10,000 or more songs,” Medlicott said.

That catalog just became a little richer.

Their research is as much at home in the community as it is in the lab

By Bob Driehaus

Honors student Meryl Sams worked with Head Start, a program that focuses on improving the health and education of low-income children. Her goal was to improve communication between the medical community and the parents of young children in the area.



NKU Photo/Aly Durrett

The Honors Program's new research fellows are partnered with the Scripps Howard Center for Civic Engagement and Vision 2015 to focus on research that is both academically rigorous and of direct value to the real world around them.

Billy Crystal's classic "Saturday Night Live" character, Fernando, always insisted, "It's better to look good than to feel good." But if Marilyn Henry's research bears fruit, tooth decay victims can do both on their way out of the dentist's chair.

Henry, a biochemistry major entering her senior year this fall, is experimenting with new compounds used for cavity fillings that would be tooth-colored and also anti-microbial. Current fillings don't have both, either being metallic and full of anti-microbial material or tooth-colored and more prone to bacterial infections.

Henry is one of three inaugural recipients of fellowships that support undergraduate research that addresses community needs and issues. The students received \$2,500 each to support their research in the 2010-11 academic year. The Scripps Howard Center for Civic Engagement

and the Northern Kentucky University Honors Program partnered to create the competitive fellowship program that emphasizes research to help the surrounding community.

It was funded in its first year by an NKU/Community Partnership grant, which is awarded jointly by NKU Provost Gail Wells and Associate Provost for Research, Graduate Studies and Regional Stewardship Jan Hillard.

"The initiative behind the fellowships is to support undergraduate research, which is a trend around the country," said Dr. Ernest Smith, who directed the Honors Program in the last academic year and is moving on to become a full-time English professor at NKU in the fall.

Henry started her research by altering two widely used tooth-colored polymers

by introducing nano-particles of silver, which is naturally anti-microbial. In lab experiments, she added a common bacterium to the new compound and compared it with the unaltered polymers.

As with most innovators, her initial experiments have not produced a Eureka! moment. Yet.

"This is an image of one of the nano-flowers I made," she explained to an audience gathered in a Student Union conference room at the spring Honors Capstone Presentations. "My nano-particles were kind of weird because they ended up being really small in height but really wide."

Despite their irregular forms, there was a slight decrease in bacterial infection around her silver-laced polymers, enough to encourage Henry to keep plugging

away this summer and into the fall.

“I really want to further my research by synthesizing new nano-particles of different shapes and sizes and to see how well they do killing bacteria,” she said.

The notion of patenting a marketable formula appeals to Henry, but that process is expensive and time-consuming, she said. Even if her research doesn’t lead to a revolutionary product, it will still serve a purpose.

“I want to go to dental school, and I hope that people see this and say, wow, she’s really dedicated to this,” Henry said.

The seed that sprouted into this multi-year project was planted in a chemistry writing class taught by Dr. Heather Bullen. All the students were asked to develop research proposals as an academic exercise, but Henry grew interested in taking the proposal much farther.

“Normally, students don’t take the proposal any farther, but she really wanted to pursue it. We started thinking about different funding sources and found the Scripps Howard fellowship,” Bullen said.

She has followed Henry’s progress and attended the Capstone presentation. “I’ve been really impressed with her work,” she said.

Henry augmented the civic engagement aspect of her project by showing school children at six local libraries how tooth decay occurs, using a giant model tooth, Play Doh as filling and jaw breakers and sprinkles to represent bacteria and anti-microbial particles. She gave all the children toothbrushes to practice what she preached.

Smith said the fellowships were a natural progression from the Honors program’s tradition of a 21-credit-hour minor that culminates in a Capstone research project. The fellowships were created after NKU officials talked with Bill Scheyer and Kara Clark, leaders of Vision 2015 — the Northern Kentucky quality of life improvement project — about the most effective way to utilize the funds that went into the grants and to partner with the group to achieve goals of education and engagement improvements.

“Because of NKU’s strong emphasis on civic engagement, the fact that we have an associate provost for regional stewardship ... we felt the research grants might facilitate some communications and have a potentially longer shelf life than an academic year, something that would benefit the community in a long-term way,” Smith said.

About 15 students applied for the three grants in the inaugural year. “I think we chose well given the end products,” Smith said, noting that the three recipients gave a panel presentation summarizing their work at the Southern Regional Honors Conference in Little Rock, Ark., last spring. The serendipitous theme of the conference? Bridging scholarship with civic engagement.

Meryl A. Sams, a 2011 graduate from Lakeside Park, worked last year in Newport with Head Start, a program that focuses on improving the health and education of low-income children. Her goal was to improve communication between the medical community and the parents of young children in the area.

Sams, a nursing major, found a communication breakdown between Head Start staff members and the parents of participating children, leading to medical forms being left incomplete.

Her goal was to develop a training session for parents that emphasized the importance of being involved in their children’s activities and healthcare.

Austin Lee Brown, an incoming senior integrative studies major from Elizabethtown, organized a film festival that explored diversity issues associated with the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) people. He examined the importance of media portrayals of GLBT communities and how they are portrayed in modern cinema.

The film festival examined pop culture with a focus on diversity and the inclusion of GLBT in the larger community. “Equality is the root of a prosperous community,” he said.

Smith said the fellowships are meant to spark more undergraduate research, especially projects that engage Northern



NKU Photo

Marilyn Henry, a biochemistry major entering her senior year this fall, is experimenting with new compounds used for cavity fillings that would be tooth-colored and also anti-microbial.

“Students at a university like NKU need to appreciate the needs of the community.”

— Dr. Ernest Smith

Kentucky and Greater Cincinnati. “That’s part of the aim of the initiative. I think that students at a university like NKU need to appreciate the needs of the community,” he said.

“Hopefully, we can capitalize on this by training future citizens well-rounded individuals, not just specialists in a particular academic field,” Smith said.

“I’m looking at how our representational genres try to catch up with rapidly evolving social ideas and social realities.”

— Professor John Alberti



Seth Rogen (left) represents a new breed of slacker leading men in “Bromance” movies cast opposite of strong, independent women while Lauren Bacall’s (above right) characters typically followed the lead of Humphrey Bogart’s (above left) dominant roles.

Associated Press Photos

Altered archetypes

Today’s ‘Bromances’ are redefining what it means to be a leading man in the movies, and Professor John Alberti is defining the change from Bogie to Seth.

By Greg Paeth

John Alberti may be one of the few people who can talk straight-faced about *Casablanca* and *I Love You, Man* without coating his observations with a thick layer of irony that indicates he realizes that any comparison is, on its face, laughably absurd.

For many people, particularly those who don’t spend much time dissecting popular culture, the link between the two titles ends somewhere just beyond the conclusion that they are both American movies of the last 70 years that are not animated.

But for Alberti, a professor of English at NKU and the director of the university’s cinema studies program, the movies are important elements of long-running research about how popular culture

reflects the evolution of American society and also help him answer some fundamental questions about what he sees as the changing roles of men in society.

“I’m really asking the question, ‘What use are men?’” said Alberti, explaining that he chose that underlying theme for his research for a variety of reasons, including the fact that this central question provides him with focus and clarity. “I’m looking at how our representational genres — focusing on movies, but the same is also true on television — try to catch up with rapidly evolving social ideas and social realities.”

Alberti’s work has drawn attention from outside the university.

He was on sabbatical for the fall semester of 2010 to work on a book-length project that examines gender and the changing role of men in romantic comedies, action-adventure films and film noir, the moody, dark movies that sometimes shatter the American dream and replace it with the American nightmare. He said one of the book chapters, revised slightly for a periodical, will be published next year in *The Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, a Philadelphia-based journal that publishes articles that have grabby titles such as “Peres Fatales: Character and Style in Postmodern Neo-Noir” or the nearly irresistible “The Aural Point of View in the Early Films of Rolf de Heer.”

“I now have two or three chapters, and what I’m doing with them is I’ve made article versions of them, which is kind of a standard approach in scholarly work,” said Alberti, whose interest in film can be traced, in part, to his formative years growing up in the suburbs of Los Angeles and, by extension, Hollywood. “I have this sort of big idea in mind, but I want to get feedback on component parts to see what the reception is... At the same time, I’m working on a book proposal that would encompass the whole big project.

The articles help me get feedback from reviewers to see if I’m on the right track.”

Alberti, an NKU faculty member since 1991, said he and a number of other film critics and scholars

have been writing about the changing role of men in the movies for many years. “In some ways, the observation started with action-adventure movies, and it’s the idea that the hero often creates more problems than he solves. We know that the rogue cop often finally gets the bad guy after destroying and shooting up half the city and that kind of wasteful behavior. That went along with a similar sort of fracturing and a seesaw back and forth in terms of what does the American hero look like now. Humphrey Bogart and John Wayne were the stable archetypes of American masculinity. But after the 1970s, it went in all sorts of odd directions.”

One of those odd directions is one focus of Alberti’s research, the so-called “Bromance,” a movie in which the relationship between two straight men is at the film’s core. Think Paul Newman and Robert Redford in *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, Mel Gibson and Danny Glover in the *Lethal Weapon* series, or the closing scene in the iconic *Casablanca*, where the beautiful woman has flown away forever and Humphrey Bogart’s character is left behind to establish a “beautiful friendship” with Claude Rains’ Capt. Louis Renault.

“These movies almost seemed to be love stories about these two guys,” said Alberti, whose Bromance article will be published next year. “There would be women involved who had to be rescued to sort of prove that they were straight, but in the end it was Danny Glover and Mel Gibson back together.”

There’s certainly nothing new about the Bromance other than the term that now describes the films, which are a subgroup of traditional romantic comedies. The far more substantive change is how men in the Bromance — unlike Butch and Sundance or the Cisco Kid and Pancho on TV — may be playing more

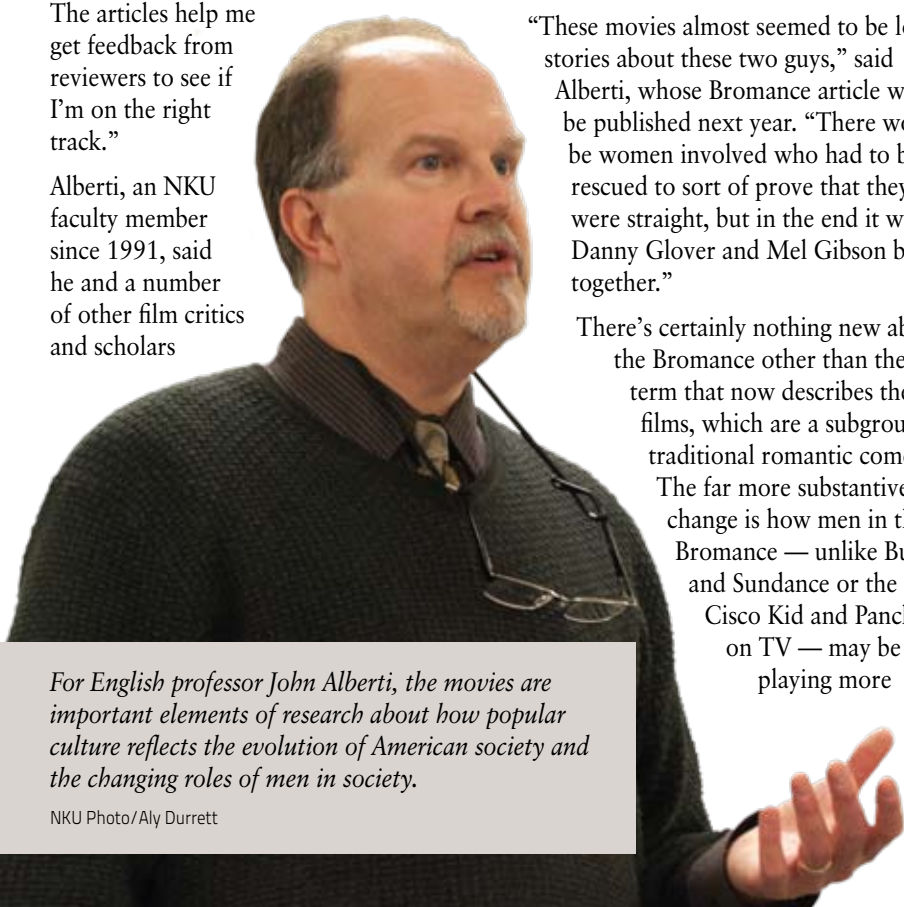
of a supporting role to a strong female character who isn’t dependent on a man.

Alberti, who received his master’s degree and doctorate (1989) in English from UCLA after completing undergrad work at the University of Southern California, is convinced that *I Love You, Man*, from 2009, may be the single best example of recent Bromances. The story revolves around Paul Rudd’s Peter Klaven, a guy who seems to have everything except male friends and a good candidate for best man for his upcoming wedding. Klaven has a series of “man dates” before finally meeting Jason Segel’s Sydney Fife, who eventually becomes Klaven’s best buddy and Bromantic interest. Other recent films that Alberti considers good examples of the form are *There’s Something About Mary*, in which three men who know one another pursue the same successful woman, *The 40-Year-Old Virgin* and *Knocked Up*, which offers ample support for Alberti’s theory that men — at least in some movies — may be little more than excess baggage. “In *Knocked Up* you have a successful TV producer with her own career who winds up with Seth Rogen, a stoner/slacker whose only aspiration is to be an internet pornographer,” Alberti said.

Rogen’s unusual career path may be a perfect illustration of how a changing society has impacted traditional roles that men play on screen and off. “I think we see that because of social changes and because of economic restructuring there really aren’t that many of those career paths that we associated with the ’50s where you go to work for P&G and you’re set until you’re 65,” Alberti said.

Jonathan S. Cullick, who chairs the English department, said films’ central role in popular culture make research like Alberti’s important.

“John Alberti’s unique new research on gender in film is opening a new way of understanding and re-seeing the old and new movies that have become part of our consciousness,” Cullick said. “With the creation of the cinema studies program and his courses in film history and theory, Alberti is sharing the excitement of his research with students and audiences in the community.”



For English professor John Alberti, the movies are important elements of research about how popular culture reflects the evolution of American society and the changing roles of men in society.

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