When Shippensburg University alumni graduate, there are many who fly back to nest where their education was nurtured, their passion sparked, and their careers launched. Welcome Home

Alison Fedrow, assistant professor of biology and new faculty member, said that her first few months have been like returning to family. Fedrow graduated in 2004 from Ship with a master's degree in biology and rejoined the university as a professor this past August.

Fedrow said that what she learned as a student at Ship, she hopes to pass on as a professor. She said the part of her experience that impacted her most as a student was the interaction with professors. This encouraged her to continue learning and gave her the foundation that propelled her to the next level—her doctoral degree in biology from Kansas State University.

“My whole intent with coming back to Shippensburg was to provide the same sort of formulation of success that I received from the people here.”

Fedrow said she loves being in the classroom and having the opportunity to impact students who are making decisions about their careers and futures. She makes herself available for whatever her students need. “I hope that they see me as a good professor, someone who instilled in them the desire to keep learning about whatever the subject was that I was teaching.”

Inspired to Teach

After graduating from Ship in 2005, Kathryn Shirk maintained contact with her professors, who encouraged her to attend graduate school and taught her lessons that left a lasting impact.
In the College of Arts and Sciences and across the Shippensburg University campus, there are many who refer to the Ship family when talking about our university. To me, this phrase euphemistically refers to the fact that there is (and, as far as I can tell, there has been for quite some time) a strong community vibe on our campus that exists between our faculty, staff, and students. One of the most interesting aspects of the Ship family is that the relationship extends beyond the campus and includes community members and, most importantly, our alumni.

There also is, I believe, a strong educational component to the Ship family because it drives one of the most important aspects of the residential educational experience at which we excel—the building of a vibrant educational community that supports meaningful interactions between our faculty and students, hallmarks of a high-impact educational experience.

The College of Arts and Sciences has a long tradition of providing opportunities for engaging in and delivering educational excellence and high-impact experiences for our students. As a result, we believe that our graduates leave us with an educational background and skills that help them to pursue productive careers and fulfilled lives.

Often, as they make their way in the working world, our alumni find themselves in a position where they can provide important engagement opportunities for our current students. Examples of such opportunities include internships, mentor/mentee experiences, and returning to the university to speak and provide inspiration. Many of our alumni also provide tangible support in the form of gifts to the Shippensburg University Foundation. These gifts help to support current students in the college through scholarships, promotion of signature programs like undergraduate student/faculty mentored research, and study abroad, and they help to support initiatives that give value-added experiences such as the Shippensburg University Fashion Archives and Museum.

A few of our alumni leave us and discover their passion for teaching, scholarship, and service—returning to us as members of our faculty, paying it forward in their own unique and special ways for our current students.

This issue of our newsletter focuses on our alumni and the many significant ways that they give back to support our continuing legacy of educational excellence in the College of Arts and Sciences at Shippensburg University, allowing us to continue the legacy of the Ship family. To our alumni, and to our many friends, we say, “Thank you” for your continuing engagement and support. We couldn’t do it without you!

James H. Mike, Ph.D.
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
The Joint Undergraduate Student/Faculty Research Program pairs an undergraduate student with a faculty member for a one-on-one, hands-on learning experience outside of the classroom. Thanks to the tremendous support from SU alumni, members of the campus community, friends, parents, and corporations, Charting the Course, Lighting the Way—the Campaign for Shippensburg University, has secured over $750,000 for the Joint Undergraduate Student/Faculty Research Program (JUS/FR) in the form of new endowments and future commitments. In addition to the existing $60,000 grant funds provided by the SU Foundation for the JUS/FR program, this activity is now supplemented by eleven new endowments that were secured during the Charting the Course, Lighting the Way comprehensive campaign.

The benefits of this program are twofold: The faculty member remains engaged in his or her field of research, bringing new knowledge to the university, and the student is mentored in research that, at most universities, only happens at the graduate level, which launches them ahead of other students in today’s competitive environment.

The funds raised for this program go toward research, travel, and the fees and costs associated with exhibitions and conferences. Student research is peer reviewed, which helps our students by giving them the practice to present their findings. These activities also increase their self-confidence as they become more comfortable making presentations to other students and scholars.

“Minds@Work: Engaging in Research and Creative Works Across All Disciplines” is an all-day student recognition conference dedicated to showcasing, celebrating, and sharing SU students’ excellence in academic research. It is an excellent opportunity for our alumni to return to campus to see firsthand the research projects in which our students are engaged and provide guidance to help build the students’ presentation skills. This year’s conference will be held at the Ceddia Union Building on Tuesday, April 19, 2016, from 2:00-8:30 pm.

Support for student/faculty research provides engaged students of Shippensburg University with the tools and transportation they need to have these types of life-changing experiences. If you are interested in supporting this signature program and would like to explore establishing an endowment for Joint Undergraduate Student/Faculty Research Program, please contact Cindy Yeiser at (717) 477-1377 or clyeis@sufoundation.org.

JACK BRENIZER ’72

With a master’s degree in engineering science and a doctorate in nuclear engineering, Jack Brenizer has been a university professor for thirty-seven years—a career that he said would not have been possible without Shippensburg University. Brenizer graduated from then-Shippensburg State College in 1972 with a Bachelor of Arts in Physics. He taught at the University of Virginia for seventeen years, and has taught mechanical and nuclear engineering at Penn State for the past sixteen years. He was the program chair of nuclear engineering at Penn State for eleven years and holds several awards for his work in nuclear engineering.

He also is a member of SU’s College of Arts and Sciences Advisory Board, where he contributes his time and generosity to give back the school that gave him the foundation for his advanced degrees and career.

What keeps him committed to Shippensburg University is simple: “There’s only one reason. The reason is that I appreciate everything I got from Shippensburg, and I want to give back. I want to give back for all that Ship gave me and enabled me to do throughout my career.”

Brenizer said he was nervous when he began his master’s degree at Penn State because he thought he might be behind his peers. “It turned out I was probably ahead of many of those guys in class. So, my Shippensburg education was pivotal in my career. Without that, I couldn’t have accomplished what I did,” he said.

Brenizer said it was not until after he graduated from Shippensburg that he realized the value of what he learned from his classes. He said the breadth of the courses and the engagement of the faculty at SU prepared him for everything that followed graduation. “I think Shippensburg does an excellent job preparing its students and it provides a lot of opportunities that a lot of other state universities don’t come close to providing.”

Every aspect of his education and career was built upon his foundation at SU. “You’ll hear many of our alumni, successful alumni, say that their Shippensburg education has served them very well.”

“Shippensburg does an excellent job preparing its students.”
Ashley Oldham’s connections at Ship have come full circle—she has been a student, teacher, and now mentor for aspiring educators at Ship. Oldham, a Spanish teacher at Big Spring High School who graduated from Ship in 2013, was asked by the university to open her doors to SU student teachers. “Ship is like a big, giant family,” she said. “Even seven years down the road, they still remember you and care.”

By accepting the offer, she was then able to work with Dr. José Ricardo Osorio, associate professor of modern languages, who was her student teaching supervisor before she graduated. Together, they supervised a current Shippensburg student teacher in her classroom throughout the spring 2015 semester.

Osorio said that it was interesting to observe Oldham as a mentor to the student, just as he had guided her a few years prior. He said he is proud of the progress she has made in both her education and her career. “It was good to see she was still doing some things we trained her to do here,” he said. “She’s really appreciative of what we did here for her.”

Oldham said that the time she spent working toward her degrees provided her with the confidence she needed to pursue her career and to aid others as a mentor. “Because I was prepared, I knew I could do it and that I could do it well.”

Looking back on these experiences with her professor and her student teacher, she said she feels that this connection has been worthwhile. “Knowing that I helped guide someone down this same path is very personally satisfying,” she said.

Alumni Professors continued from page 1

“One of the things that stuck with me is that the out-of-classroom experience can be just as important as understanding content and becoming an overall, lifelong learner who fosters that curiosity,” she said.

As assistant professor of physics, Shirk said she sees this in the classroom as well. “I think my best students are not the ones who find it easy; I think they’re the ones who are curious.”

When Shirk realized how much she loved teaching during her graduate studies, she said that she knew she wanted to work at a university like Shippensburg, and received an opportunity to apply to her alma mater.

“Because we’re not a very large university, I get to see students from all different departments. I get to learn my students’ names. I get to learn other professors from other departments, too,” she said.

When Dolbin attended Shippensburg University, he said the Art and Design Department only had six art majors because it was the first year an art major was offered. Though the department was still developing, he said that its small size allowed him the freedom to explore his field.

According to Dolbin, his father wanted him to be a teacher, but he had no interest in it. It was only later, after his student teaching experience, that he discovered a new passion at the front of the classroom. After he graduated, he taught art at the middle school and high school levels as well as at several different universities before returning to teach at Ship. “Shippensburg University was the right decision,” he said. “I love it. I think it’s great.”

“There is a very strong camaraderie here.”

Throughout his life, Dolbin also has cultivated his own work as an artist and has lived the advice that he has given his students.

“Follow your passion, because that’s what’s going to provide for you... Once you have the passion, you have to go about it the right way. It’s not just going to fall in your lap. You have to work.”

a circle of education
SU Professor, Alumna, and Student Teach Together

Dr. José Ricardo Osorio

“My best students ARE NOT THE ONES WHO FIND IT EASY; THEY’RE THE ONES WHO ARE curious.”

The Ship Life

Steve Dolbin ’83, professor of art and design, has been part of university life since he was a child. He grew up in Shippensburg and also was often on SU’s campus because his father, Dave, was the dean of men. Dolbin graduated from Ship with his bachelor’s degree in art, earned his master’s degree in fine arts from Pratt Institute, and returned to Ship to teach in 2000.
For some Ship alumni, the university is more than just a pleasant memory. The loyalty they have to their alma mater has moved them to give back to Ship. In some cases, their collaboration with the university has led to internships for current students.

In the College of Arts and Sciences, it is not uncommon for alumni to approach academic departments in hopes of establishing internships. Often, they are successful, as these opportunities are an asset to both the university and its students.

Dr. Claire Jantz, professor and director of the Geography/Earth Science Department Internship Program, explained that these internships provide an opportunity for the departments to grow. “Our connections with alumni help us to keep on top of the skills and knowledge our majors need to know in order to be competitive in the workforce.”

Students have a chance to develop skills with people who are professionals in their fields and also Ship graduates. According to Dr. Kim Weikel, associate professor and director of the Psychology Department Internship Program, this connection is evident in alumni’s efforts as internship supervisors. She said that they are “extra-invested because they care about our university and want to assist with the high-quality education we offer.”

Justin Atkins ’10M, district conservationist of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and Tammy Piper ’02, Franklin County Conservation District watershed specialist, both provided summer internships for geography/earth science students to gain practical experience with the NRCS and the Franklin County Conservation District. They hope to prepare future graduates with the knowledge to face the challenges in their field. “I feel happy to be able to help Ship students out, since Ship always helped me,” Atkins said.

Jeff Rudy ’98-’01M, supervisor of the Partial Hospitalization Program at Holy Spirit Hospital, has offered internships for psychology students. Graduate and undergraduate students can partake in shadowing and placement opportunities for real-life experiences in a professional environment. “I feel it is important to do my part to provide opportunities that promote learning and growth in our future counselors and therapists,” he explained.

Having earned his BA and MS at Shippensburg, he feels connected to the university and hopes to encourage future graduates of his alma mater. “I learned so much about how to help myself and others while at Ship, and I vowed to help current students do the same,” he said. “Now I have a chance to do so.”

Like many Ship students, Jordan Potthoff ’16 has had the chance to extend her education beyond the classroom. In fact, she had the extraordinary opportunity to obtain a psychology internship under the guidance of Matt Wilkin, a seasoned professional who attended Ship and understands the ins and outs of the field.

This internship allowed her to gain experience as a therapeutic support staff worker (TSS) at Momentum Services, a human services organization. She worked with a number of clients and enjoyed providing them with one-on-one help. Although she said it can be challenging to perform these mental health services, she explained that it is “extremely rewarding at the same time.”

Under the tutelage of Wilkins, she became more confident in her abilities as a TSS and more comfortable in the professional environment. They often discussed their experiences and education at the university. “It’s great to be a part of the Ship family even when you’re not on campus,” she said.

According to Potthoff, both the internship and Wilkins’ mentorship provided her with valuable insight that she will take with her once she graduates. Looking at her training at Momentum Services, she said, “The information that I’ve learned and the experiences I’ve gained will be something that I will take and keep with me forever.”

It’s great to be part of the Ship family.”
It is not only the professors who are teaching Ship students how to succeed in their respective fields, but also professionals who have the careers that students are trying to obtain. These professionals all share one commonality—a Shippensburg University education. Across disciplines, many alumni return to share their expertise and professional advice.

**Reconnecting in Communication/Journalism**

In many communication/journalism classes, alumni return as guest speakers. Including alumni as a part of the curriculum and as a part of students’ experiences at Ship is a tradition that existed before Dr. Ted Carlin began working in the department as a professor twenty years ago, he said.

According to Carlin, the department is unique in that students become involved with student media where they create bonds with each other and the school in a way that supersedes the classroom. These deeper relationships lead to a surplus of alumni who are willing to return to speak with the communication/journalism classes. “I think a lot of (alumni) like the chance to connect because they had alumni here who helped them,” Carlin said. It is tremendous that alumni are willing to return to share their experiences, show students what to expect after graduation, and offer themselves as resources, he added.

Bill Morgal ’06, SU’s sports information director, serves as a mentor for students just as much inside the classroom as outside. Morgal has spoken to students in Carlin’s sports journalism class and also works alongside students as they learn skills in the field.

Morgal has about seven work-study students who work for him each semester. These students have responsibilities like gathering statistics from games, writing stories and press releases, and creating video.

“As someone who knows the professors and understands the workload that current students are undergoing, Morgal said that he might not have all the answers, but he can relate to students and share his own experiences. “We’re always going to be learning how to do what we do better.”

**STUDENT spotlight**

**LEQUAN CHAPMAN**

For LeQuan Chapman ’16, a Shippensburg education has provided more than just the tools to build a career—it created an opportunity to gain experience as an intern at ABC27 News. There, Chapman was responsible for recording statistics, filming high school sporting events, and composing news scripts for anchors to read on camera. He said the internship at ABC27 will be valuable as he pursues a career in news media. “I gained so much experience with what goes on during an actual professional newscast.”

Chapman said that Gregg Mace, the sports director at ABC27 News, approached him as a speaker in one of his classes. Mace was impressed by Chapman’s abilities and his TV-ready voice. From there, Chapman sought the internship through Mace’s connections at the news station, having the opportunity to work around SU alums Kendra Nichols ’99, Mike Parker ’00, and Amanda Peterson ’12. “It’s such a blessing to have people who have sat in the same seats as you be able to guide you, teach you, and lend a hand,” he explained.

Chapman has developed a strong sense of gratitude for his valuable experiences at ABC27 News. “Alumni rock,” he said. “It’s my hope that I can be that connection, guide, and aide for someone else when I’m in an established career position.”
to do what we do better,” he said.

Carlin said one lesson that alumni reiterate is the fact that the industry is rapidly changing, so it requires people who are engaged and flexible. Alumni tell students they will be pushed to learn, adapt, grow, and produce content faster in their professional lives than in college.

However, alumni also have told Carlin that Ship was one of the steps that helped them to get where they are in their careers.

“I think the alumni reinforce that message,” he said. “You have good opportunities, you have good faculty, you have good equipment to use that to train. Do that and get out there.”

Morgal tells students to get involved and try new things, because that experience is the only way they will know if they have the passion or skill for a particular career. When Morgal was a student at Ship, he worked on the radio station, WSYC; the newspaper, The Slate; and was involved in the Office of Marketing and Publications.

“I didn’t necessarily know this was where I’d end up, but by putting in the work in various places and trying out the different things that I did, it gave me the opportunity to (be the sports information director),” Morgal said. “So explore. Try new things.”

Seeing Possibilities in the Past
Since October 2014, faculty in the History and Philosophy Department has brought alumni back to speak with current students through the History Mentor Network.

About once a month, a Ship alum of the SU history program returns for a thirty- to forty-five-minute speech and Q&A session, said Dr. Allen Dieterich-Ward, professor of history and one of the founders of the network. He said it provides an opportunity for alumni to discuss their careers and for students to network.

As the professor for the senior capstone class, Dieterich-Ward said that he saw that students need advice from professionals. This need from students, combined with the fact that Shippensburg University alumni want to reconnect with the school, led to the History Mentor Network.

FACULTY focus

Professors Spark Enthusiasm for Math in Local Kids

Childhood is a key time for kids to develop their skills and to understand their interests. According to Dr. Lance Bryant, associate professor of mathematics, and Dr. Sarah Bryant, instructor of mathematics, it’s also the perfect time to “tackle attitudes toward mathematics.”

Together, the Bryants introduced Math Circles, an international mathematics program for youth, to Grace B. Luhrs University Elementary School in 2014. After the success of the pilot program, they moved the meetings to SU’s Mathematics and Computing Technology Center in 2015 and opened its doors to students outside of the Shippensburg Area School District. Doing so, they said, will hopefully “build a bridge between the community and the university.”

The primary goal of Math Circles is to introduce mathematics to fourth and fifth graders in an engaging and educational way. Students have an opportunity to explore the problems they are given and learn at their own pace. “Our philosophy is this: here, we don’t believe that math ability is innate. We believe in constant growth, and hard work will get you there,” Sarah said.

During meetings, the kids are presented with maps, puzzles, and word problems; all involve hands-on learning, observation, and problem solving. Lance believes that the activities produce a healthy amount of “frustration,” that pleasant sense of challenge without feeling overwhelmed. Math Circles also has attracted a group of dedicated SU math majors and mid-level education majors who volunteer with the program and encourage the children’s educational growth.

Looking back at their progress with the children, the Bryants believe that the activities in Math Circles are building upon the foundation for important skills that might not be fully developed in school. Lance said, “In the classroom, it’s necessary to try to build these skills quickly for the sake of time. Here, we have the chance to really focus on the problem solving itself.”

“[Students] have been really enthusiastic, because it opens their eyes to what they could be.”
The College of Arts and Sciences Advisory Board is composed of alumni, friends of Shippensburg University, and faculty emeriti of the college. Its purpose is to share professional and personal perspective on matters relating to academic philosophy and practice, internships and cooperative learning opportunities, and professional development for faculty; to provide financial assistance; and to become involved in the curricular and extracurricular programs of the college. With thanks, we recognize the current members of the board:

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Mr. David Atkinson  
Ms. Tracy Boak  
Dr. Jack Brenizer Jr.  
Ms. Denise Calabrese  
Mr. Paul Dlugolecki  
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