Alumna Trooper Tracy has a message for Illinois drivers: "Be safe!"
Greetings from the College of Applied Science and Technology! I am delighted to share this edition of ForeCAST with you. There are so many great things happening in the college; it’s impossible to capture them in just a few pages. We continue to exceed the goals of our fundraising efforts. The college surpassed its goal for the current comprehensive campaign, Redbirds Rising, a year early, and we are working to see how far we can exceed the original goal of $14 million. I am grateful for every single gift to the college as we have pursued much of the recent support directly toward our students through recruitment and retention scholarships. I want to extend a special thank you to our faculty, staff, and annuitants who have donated to the campaign. This past year, more than 50 percent of current and retired CAST employees donated to the University in support of campaign initiatives.

We continue to work on the development of new academic programs to broaden our current inventory of 50 undergraduate and graduate programs of study. Our most recent new major, cybersecurity, now has nearly 300 enrolled students. The next program to be implemented soon is a master of science in computer science, which will enhance our curriculum in the areas of data science and analytics. Our new tenure-track faculty colleagues include Mijin Kim, a year of military science, Lt. Col. Kraig Kline. We also welcomed Cara Rabe-Hemp as our CAST associate dean.

We have so many great achievements and initiatives in CAST, and I consider it an honor and a privilege to serve as your dean. Here’s to a fantastic 2020. We love to hear stories from our alumni so stop by the next time you are on campus, or send updates to Alumni@IllinoisState.edu. Visit us when you can; think of us often; and go Redbirds!
Diane Dahlmann

BY LAURA FREYMAN

Diane Dahlmann, M.S. ’77, first met Illinois State University Professor Emerita Sandy Groves while interning in Park Ridge in 1973. Dahlmann could not have foreseen the long-lasting impact Groves would have on her career. All she knew was that Groves was a pioneer in the field of recreation, and as the recently hired recreation program coordinator of the Park Ridge Park District, she would become Dahlmann’s new boss.

Now, decades after their first meeting, Dahlmann has committed a generous gift during Redbirds Rising: The Campaign for Illinois State to endow the Sandy Little Groves Scholarship in honor of her mentor and friend. From their first meeting, Groves played an important role in Dahlmann’s life.

“She legitimized the field of recreation for myself and for my parents,” Dahlmann said. “When my parents met her, they realized that a career in the field of recreation could be and was a reality.”

At the time, in the 1970s, Groves was considered a trailblazer as a woman and working mother in the field. Groves proved willing to push the envelope, rejecting what had previously been done in recreation.

Dahlmann and Groves both recalled how Groves transformed the cover of the Park Ridge Park District’s 1974 summer program guide. The once black and white booklet with a beige cover received a colorful makeover under Groves’ creative direction. The newly redesigned cover featured two women in bathing suits awash in orange and pink.

“It caused quite a scandal,” recalled Dahlmann.

At the time, in the 1970s, Groves was considered a trailblazer as a woman and working mother in the field. Groves proved willing to push the envelope, rejecting what had previously been done in recreation.

Groves and Dahlmann parted ways after their work together in Park Ridge—Groves to teach in recreation and park administration at Illinois State, including associate dean of the Graduate School, interim associate VP for Research, Grad Studies, and International Education, and director of Graduate Studies. Groves was also recognized as Outstanding University Teacher of the Year in 1989.

Though Dahlmann left Illinois State in 1997 to work as the executive director of MizzouRec Services and Facilities, from which she retired as the executive director of MizzouRec Services and Facilities, from which she retired in 2017, she remembers fondly coming to Illinois State as a graduate student in 1976. “Coming to Illinois State was a big deal, a life goal,” she said. “My high school instructors had graduated from Illinois State, and its faculty had a reputation that preceded everything. I enjoyed getting to know my professors at the graduate level.”

Pennsylvania State University, where she later completed a Ph.D., and Dahlmann for graduate work at Illinois State. It was Groves who pushed Dahlmann to continue her studies, and she was kept on as Illinois State’s director of campus recreation and golf course in 1985. “It turns out that Sandy was a new faculty member in the parks and recreation administration program.”

Groves would go on to serve in many capacities before retiring after 22 years at Illinois State, including associate dean of the Graduate School, interim associate VP for Research, Grad Studies, and International Education, and director of Graduate Studies. Groves was also recognized as Outstanding University Teacher of the Year in 1989.

Groves is also grateful for the help she received early on in her career. “I could write Sandy thank-yous every day for all she’s done for me throughout my career, but I thought, ‘Take action,’” Dahlmann said.

With the help of University Advancement staff, Dahlmann crafted the perfect thank you for a lifetime of career success and enjoyment—a visionary gift to support the Sandy Little Groves Scholarship, which provides for promising students enrolled in the recreation management major. The gift lifts up scholarship, a pillar of the Redbirds Rising campaign.

Brittany Bender ’19 was the first student to receive the new scholarship. Bender had just taken an unpaid internship, a requirement of her parks and recreation administration major, when she learned that she’d received the scholarship. “My event planning internship with the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum in Nashville was an amazing experience, but I had to find my own living arrangements and support myself,” Bender said. “Receiving this scholarship felt like a weight lifted off my shoulders. I would have struggled to get back on my feet after graduation, so I am very thankful for Diane Dahlmann’s support.”

Groves is also grateful for the help she received early on in her career. “I could write Sandy thank-yous every day for all she’s done for me throughout my career, but I thought, ‘Take action,’” Dahlmann said.

With the help of University Advancement staff, Dahlmann crafted the perfect thank you for a lifetime of career success and enjoyment—a visionary gift to support the Sandy Little Groves Scholarship, which provides for promising students enrolled in the recreation management major. The gift lifts up scholarship, a pillar of the Redbirds Rising campaign.

“Giving a scholarship is a seed planter,” Groves said. “If you start small, you’ll be amazed at what it can grow into.”

“Giving a scholarship is a seed planter... if you start small, you’ll be amazed at what it can grow into.”

This gift for scholarships is part of the University’s $150 million comprehensive campaign, Redbirds Rising: The Campaign for Illinois State. The most ambitious campaign in the University’s history, Redbirds Rising supports scholarship, leadership, and innovation. More than $4,000 donors have contributed over $170 million in outright gifts and commitments to enhance and make possible the Illinois State experience. The Redbirds Rising campaign will continue raising funds for the University’s critical priorities through June 30, 2020.

Those interested in supporting the campaign can visit RedbirdsRising.IllinoisState.edu for additional information.

“Giving a scholarship is a seed planter... if you start small, you’ll be amazed at what it can grow into.”

This gift for scholarships is part of the University’s $150 million comprehensive campaign, Redbirds Rising: The Campaign for Illinois State. The most ambitious campaign in the University’s history, Redbirds Rising supports scholarship, leadership, and innovation. More than $4,000 donors have contributed over $170 million in outright gifts and commitments to enhance and make possible the Illinois State experience. The Redbirds Rising campaign will continue raising funds for the University’s critical priorities through June 30, 2020.

Those interested in supporting the campaign can visit RedbirdsRising.IllinoisState.edu for additional information.
Career paths for graduates of Illinois State University’s College of Applied Science and Technology (CAST) are like a wide open highway—to use the appropriate metaphor—that can take you anywhere you want to go. But Sgt. Tracy Lillard ’99, or “Trooper Tracy” as she’s widely known for her active and often entertaining presence as statewide social media coordinator for the Illinois State Police (ISP), recommends following the posted speed limit when traveling the state’s real roadways.

Lillard, who earned her bachelor’s degree in criminal justice sciences, has made good use of her Illinois State education by carving out a career in law enforcement. She graduated from the Illinois State Police Academy on August 31, 2001, two weeks before 9/11. She spent the first few years in District 15 patrolling the Illinois Tollway north of Chicago.

“That was by choice,” she said. “I wanted to get as much experience as I could in a short time. I came from a town with no stoplights. Prior to that I had driven in Chicago two or three times.” She met her husband, Tom, an ISP sergeant and K-9 handler, while working in Northern Illinois. They moved the same day in 2004 to ISP’s District 10 in Pesotum. How does a nice girl who grew up on the farm in Central Illinois get into police work?

“I always wanted to be a cop,” Lillard said. “I was nerdy smart in high school, and as a child I was observant, a people watcher. I read murder mysteries and non-fiction books on crime.”

As a student at Illinois State, Lillard said she learned a lot about time management, responsibility, and accountability.

“Be safe!”

For Illinois drivers:

By John Moody, Photos by Lyndsie Schlink
"PRESS RELEASES ARE BORING, BUT POSTING A STORY GETS PEOPLE’S ATTENTION"

"CONFIDENCE AND COMPASSION ARE GREAT ASSETS TO HAVE AS A FEMALE IN THIS LINE OF WORK."

“All of those qualities are needed in life, but especially in law enforcement,” she said. “The course material in my criminal justice classes provided an overview of what I would later study intensely at the Illinois State Police Academy!”

Lillard credits the preparation at Illinois State for making her better prepared than others going through the academy with her. As an undergraduate, she also learned independence and how to stay on task. All these years later she still maintains a fondness for the place.

“I loved ISU!” she said. “I want my kids to go there.” After college, Lillard, now 42, did an internship with the Illinois Conservation Police and was subsequently hired, but she failed the bench press during training at the academy.

“I thought life was over, and I cried,” Lillard said.

What she thought was the end turned out to be the beginning of a fulfilling and important career. She’s in many ways the face of ISP as she reaches tens of thousands of people with her educational, thoughtful, and fun (when appropriate) posts designed to get the attention of the public. Her mission is to use her personality in person and online “to promote the ISP’s safety messages regarding speeding, DUI, seatbelts, and distracted driving,” as her Trooper Tracy Facebook page reads.

She’s easy to find on social media and has multiple accounts on some platforms. She’s on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat, which she uses to reach young drivers. She’s also pretty popular, with 270,000 followers on Instagram, and Snapchat, which she uses to reach young drivers.

Her messages are creative and always purposeful. She’s forceful but in a non-threatening way. She recently spoke to members of the Illinois Public Works Mutual Aid Network who were attending an annual conference at a Bloomington hotel.

“I’m not afraid of getting shot,” she told attendees as she moved from the podium and then up and down the center aisle. “I have a gun and another one hidden and a Taser. I am afraid of stupid, careless drivers.”

Her comfortableness in front of an audience, knows how to hold their attention, is humorous (Lillard, her brother, and her mother and father were all voted class clowns back in high school), and can be deadpan sarcastic. It all works and compels people to listen. But don’t be fooled by her fun-loving nature, she’s very serious about communicating her message of safety.

“The most important part of my job is education,” Lillard said to the group. “I write tickets because people are dying on these roads, and I’m tired of it. Education and enforcement go hand in hand.”

What’s it been like to work all these years in a traditionally male-dominated field? It has been a positive, Lillard said, noting that she brings a different dynamic to the scene of a crash or an arrest.

“Females typically can be very calming in stressful situations, and sometimes victims feel more comfortable speaking to a female. I think utilizing my gift of communication has helped immensely in my career during traffic stops, motorist assists, crashes, and arrests.”

Lillard offers some advice for females considering a career in law enforcement. “Take public speaking or communication classes because confidence and compassion are great assets to have as a female in this line of work.”

She spent 12 years on patrol for ISP and changed a lot during her talk she offers tips for aspiring social media coordinators. During her talk she offers tips for aspiring social media coordinators.

She then became District 10’s safety education officer for six years and has been ISP’s statewide social media coordinator since 2018.

“When they asked me to do this, it was: ‘Train, how would you like to be yourself?’” Lillard said of taking on her current job.

When she started the position she knew she wanted to get information out fast in real time, especially important when the subject matter is travel delays, hazardous road conditions, and crashes. It’s information the public and media need and want; she quickly saw her followers rise to 50,000. She tries to educate all segments of the driving public, including new drivers, semi drivers, motorcyclists, and farmers.

In many of her posts she tries to humanize the badge by showing what the public and law enforcement have in common like being married, having kids, and friends and family. She thrives on human interaction, she said.

“I never used to share info about my family on social media, but the more I share about me the more response I get from the public, and they trust me,” Lillard said. “I show my family to show we are human.”

Her goal is to build familiarity, credibility, and ultimately trust.

“If Trooper Tracy says the roads are too bad to drive on then I’m not driving,” she said. “I have school superintendents who follow me.”

At home she and her husband try to leave their stressful work lives behind.

“When I go home at the end of the day we briefly talk work, and then we’re Mom and Dad,” she said, adding that their three girls thought everybody’s parents wear uniforms to work.

They live a rural lifestyle that suits both their farm childhoods. They have 38 chickens, three goats, two dogs (that includes Tom’s K-9 partner, Yadi, a Dutch Shepherd), and a cat. They even have 11 beeshives that produce honey they jar up and sell as a way to teach their kids about work and productivity.

During her talk she offers tips for aspiring social media coordinators.
“Be funny. Be engaging. Be complimentary,” she said. “Share what people are doing right.”

She’s been known to post complimentary messages to bus drivers, motorcycle riders, and others for practicing safe driving: She signs them “Sincerely, Mama Bear.”

“Press releases are boring, but posting a story gets people’s attention,” Lillard told her audience. “Make education not seem like education.”

For example, when a heroin addict was caught driving impaired while using a needle, Lillard’s post about the incident went viral and was seen by 80,000 followers. Not everyone was happy though, some seeing it as being critical of a vulnerable person. Lillard used the opportunity to post a toll-free phone number for a drug rehabilitation program. Another time she posted a photo of a car that had rolled over off the road. Her reason was to show that a 16-year-old had survived the awful crash by wearing a seatbelt.

“News outlets will post that (immediately), but we won’t post for several days because the kid’s mom might see it while she’s getting ready for work,” Lillard said of the caution she takes with her posts.

For fun, but to make a point, she also posted a photo of a “hot” trooper that went viral (it was taken by the man’s wife as he left for work) because it showed him wearing his seatbelt.

One of her favorite comments from a follower on Facebook came from someone named Alex who wrote: “Bruh, whoever runs the state police account is a savage.”

“So funny, I love it,” Lillard said.

Some of the craziest things she’s seen include a guy who got caught with an iPad Velcroed to his air bag so he could watch a movie while he was driving. Another is one of the ISP’s records for speeding where a motorist was clocked doing 161 mph in a 55 mph zone.

One of her pet peeves: When drivers are impatient about a road being closed and ask why there’s a delay. She has to hide her anger: “Because there’s a human being lying on the pavement. Sorry you’re late.”

And, what she described as the worst driving conditions might surprise you: “A trace of snow as opposed to a foot of snow is the worst nightmare because people drive terrible in those conditions.”

She gets it that some people are convinced that cops are “just jerks driving around writing tickets,” but that’s not how Trooper Tracy sees it.

“We’re not here to bother people,” she said. “We’re here to help keep people safe.”
A Day in the Life of a CAST Information Technology Student

BY KARA SNYDER

SOME THINGS CHANGE WHILE SOME STAY THE SAME: WHAT IS CAMPUS LIFE LIKE FOR AN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY STUDENT IN 1980 VS. 2019? READ ON...

MEET BARB (KALSCHEUR) O’MALLEY, a freshman in the Honors program from Geneseo. O’Malley is majoring in applied computer science and is a member of the second class of freshman in ACS. Today, the computer science major can be found in the School of Information Technology, and O’Malley is a 1984 graduate from Illinois State University. Read on to learn about a day in her life as a student:

9 A.M. Alarm goes off. Debate whether or not I need breakfast and decide that the answer is no (sleep always wins). I hit snooze.

9:09 A.M. Hit snooze again.

9:18 A.M. Snooze goes off again, and I decide to get out of bed.

10 A.M. Class in Stevenson Hall. I take lots of business and computer classes and spend a lot of time in both Stevenson and Julian Halls, so I’m happy that they are relatively close together.

MEET CASEY JOHNSON, a junior majoring in cybersecurity in the School of Information Technology. A go-getter who believes that “free time is for wimps,” Johnson serves as president of two registered student organizations: Women in Technology and Association for Information Technology Professionals. She also holds down three jobs while being a student full-time. Here’s a peek at how she does it:

6 A.M. My first alarm goes off. I know I don’t have to get up quite yet, so I hit snooze. Then I hit snooze two more times.

6:40 A.M. Emergency alarm goes off. I get up for real now.

6:50 A.M. Drive to work. Listen to 103.3 WZND on the way since it’s one of the only radio stations in the area not playing commercials at that time.

7 A.M. I’m at my desk at State Farm, checking emails while eating breakfast. My breakfast is always an applesauce pouch—yes, like the kind kids eat! My coworkers give me a hard time about it, but I love that I can eat it on the go.

7:15 A.M. I’m deep into email investigations by this point. At State Farm, I work in cybersecurity. I spend my time looking at malicious email, and it is super interesting.

Every email is something new to investigate; it’s basically like being a computer detective. I analyze emails that are suspected to be malicious, looking for
11 A.M. Stay in Stevenson and head to the computer lab. It’s great that it is right in the building—it’s where we print the punch cards needed to run the computer programs. A lot of times, the students in the computer lab will collaborate, and it will allow us into an informal debugging session. I always learn something when I’m in the lab.

(Alum’s note: At the end of the semester, students would take the cards to the top of Watterson Towers and fling them off, and it would basically snow punch cards! By the time I was a teaching assistant senior year, everything was on terminals, and students would hand in green bar print-outs of their programs.)

NOON Grab a quick lunch at the Vrooman Center, the Hewett-Manchester food court.

(Editor’s note: The Vrooman Center was a dining center from 1966-2008. It now serves as the main entrance to Hewett/Manchester Halls and home to the Julia N. Vior Academic Center.)

The entry worker slides the tab on my ID card from “out” to “in” for this meal. Lunch is typically a debate between a sandwich and a salad. I eat and head back “out” to “in” for this meal. Lunch is typically a debate between a sandwich and a salad. I eat and head back “out” to “in” for this meal. Lunch is typically a debate between a sandwich and a salad. I eat and head back “out” to “in” for this meal. Lunch is typically a debate between a sandwich and a salad. I eat and head back “out” to “in” for this meal.

1 P.M. Class in Stevenson. We have a test today, but it is open book, like many of our tests are.

2 P.M. Watch General Hospital in the commons on my residence hall floor (Hewett 6). VCR technology is open book, like many of our tests are.

3 P.M. Flip the television channel over to MTV—a brand new network. The concept of music videos is mind-blowing. Adam Ant and Duran Duran are some of our favorites.

4 P.M. Head to aerobics class in McCormick Hall. (Editor’s note: ISU is nine years away from opening the recreation center on Beech Street, and 31 years away from opening the current Student Fitness Center.) Jane Fonda is super popular right now, so aerobics is the current go-to workout.

5 P.M. Dinner at Vrooman with friends from my floor. I grab a salad. We tend to eat small dinners to save room for dessert: vanilla ice cream with peanut butter (try it! It’s revolutionary).

6 P.M. We discuss our plans for our Hewett floor dance. We are all working to organize it, and we’re going to hold it in the Brown Ballroom. We’re expecting about 200 people to attend.

(Alum’s note: There were not as many registered student organizations when I was on campus. I would eventually become a member of the student chapter of the Association for Computing Machinery, but activities like planning floor dances were other ways to get involved.)

7 P.M. Head to the Center for Visual Arts (the only place on campus with PCs!) to do some homework. I’m currently working on a computer program that will be able to calculate odds and accept bets. I save my homework using the latest technology—a floppy disc (yes, it is actually floppy).

10 P.M. Back to Hewett in time to watch David Letterman with my floor.

Fun fact: O’Malley completed her required internship at Northern Trust in Chicago and considered herself to be the “intern that never went home.” Flash forward to 2020, and she is still at Northern Trust, serving as senior vice president of data and digital product. She says that while the technology has evolved, the concepts and discipline of the information technology industry are the same as they were in 1980.

Everyone secretly hates group projects, but I know they are good learning experiences—the more you interact in a team environment, the more you learn what works. I definitely work to take on a leadership role in a group. Stereotypically, IT students might not have the best communication skills, so that is something that I consciously work at when I’m in a group. I want to transcend the label to provide a better outcome for everyone involved.

6:30 P.M. I’m back at my apartment after class, and it’s time to cook dinner. I love to cook and bake—it definitely de-stresses me. I often cook for my roommate; I think it helps to establish a family setting, making campus feel more like a home away from home. When we decided to live together, I told her that my only stipulation for our apartment was that I wanted it to have a big kitchen! Tonight, I’m making shrimp stir fry. I go through flash cards while I cook, using the app Quizlet on my phone.

8 P.M. I’m on the couch with the television on in the background (football—Go Bears!). After sitting at a desk all day, I’m ready to relax. I’m catching up on emails that I didn’t have a chance to get to throughout the day.

Most are related to the registered student organizations I’m a part of—Women in Technology and Association for Information Technology Professionals. Right now, Women in Technology is partnering with some other RSOs on campus (Women in Business, Women in Science and Technology, Student Health Information Management Association) to host a women’s social event. Having an opportunity to get together and network will be really beneficial.

MIDNIGHT I’m a night owl, and I’ve finally wound down enough to go to bed. I take a shower and fall asleep almost instantly after flipping through some flashcards on my phone.

3 P.M. I’m back at my apartment after class, and it’s time to cook dinner. I love to cook and bake—it definitely de-stresses me. I often cook for my roommate; I think it helps to establish a family setting, making campus feel more like a home away from home. When we decided to live together, I told her that my only stipulation for our apartment was that I wanted it to have a big kitchen! Tonight, I’m making shrimp stir fry. I go through flash cards while I cook, using the app Quizlet on my phone.
CHARLES BELL
CRIMINAL JUSTICE SCIENCES

BACKGROUND: Originally from Detroit, Bell navigated the local public school system and received his undergraduate degree from Wayne State University. A pivot from medical school to social science research was sparked when he noticed the lack of representation of black students in higher education. At Michigan State University, Bell pursued a master's degree in school psychology and a doctoral degree in sociology at Wayne State University.

CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECT: Bell is interested in the school-to-prison pipeline. His previous research showed that students who were suspended from schools for violent reasons became more popular when they returned to school. Suspension created an incentive for kids to engage in violent acts. Bell also found that engaging in verbal or physical altercations with teachers attracted the highest level of popularity for students. He continued to conduct research in this area. Currently, he is interested in the effect of students’ violent activities on teachers. Bell’s research is asking new questions, and teachers are grateful for the opportunity to be involved in these conversations.

PASSION: Mentoring first-generation students and helping them navigate the intricacies of academia

FAVORITE BOOK: Richard Preston’s Hot Zone, which addresses the evolution of the Ebola virus, and Elijah Anderson’s Code of the Street, which he believes connects to his school-to-prison pipeline research

DESK MUST-HAVE: Laptop, headphones, and telephone

FUN FACT: Loves to stay plugged into music
JENNIFER EARING
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

BACKGROUND: Jennifer Earing is a long-time Redbird. She received her undergraduate degree from the Department of Agriculture at Illinois State, with the goal of being a veterinarian. During her time here, she worked with a professor on nutrition research before going on to receive her master’s degree in animal science at the University of Kentucky and a Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota. Taking a break from academia, Earing accepted an industry position as a nutritionist for a feed company where she worked for five years in different capacities from product development, to marketing and technical support. With family in Bloomington-Normal, she accepted an opportunity to return to town and join Illinois State as a professor.

CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECT: Earing’s research interests have evolved over time around fiber and forage digestion in equine. As a post doc, she worked on equine extension programming which lay between the lines of agronomy, plant, and animal science. Currently, her research is aimed at providing insights into how to effectively feed horses and she is co-working on detecting pregnancy early in ewes.

PASSION: Earing is passionate about helping students along their career paths. She brings to class her wealth of experience and encourages students to be well-rounded as academics and professionals.

FAVORITE BOOK: Growing up, her favorite book was Anne of Green Gables.

DESK MUST-HAVE: A calculator, a physical calendar, a photo of her kids

FUN FACT: If Earing could choose any other time to be born, it would be in the settings of Coke Zero.

MARY HENNINGER
SCHOOL OF KINESIOLOGY AND RECREATION

BACKGROUND: Mary Henninger received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees at Ohio State University before going to University of Massachusetts-Amherst for her doctorate. At Illinois State, she has served in different capacities within the School of Kinesiology and Recreation (KNR). From 2010 to 2016, she was program director, making her familiar with all Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) classes. In Henninger’s 18 years at Illinois State, she has achieved various successes, with the most recent being the creation of the Jon’s Heroes in Training program. The program, named after Jon Miskulin, began in the fall of 2018. Miskulin, diagnosed with Asperger’s syndrome, died at the age of 20 from a traumatic brain injury. His difficulty with physical education inspired Henninger to create the campus program for children with autism. The program pairs children with physical education teacher education majors.

CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECT: Henninger is constantly focused on growing as a teacher and researcher and has found that students typically want to approach their teaching careers with the same approaches their professors did. One of her goals is ensuring students embrace their differences and discover the best ways to connect with their future PK students. Before starting her career journey at Illinois State, Henninger taught in a much bigger city and experienced the intricacies of urban life. This has impacted her research interests surrounding the lives and careers of urban physical education teachers, dissecting the difficulties and factors that make them stay.

PASSION: Henninger is committed to creating an inclusive space for children living with autism.

FAVORITE BOOK: Jonathan Kabat’s Amazing Grace

DESK MUST-HAVE: Papers to grade and Ohio State paraphernalia

FUN FACT: If she had to pick a favorite drink, it would be Coke Zero.

ELAHE JAVADI
SCHOOL OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

BACKGROUND: After her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Sharif University of Technology and Amirkabir University of Technologiy, Javadi completed her Ph.D. at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where she fell in love with the friendly Midwestern culture. After spending one school year in Arkansas as a visiting professor, she returned to Illinois for a tenure-track assistant professor position here at Illinois State University. She describes Illinois as her true second home as she enjoys working in an environment where the culture and values are aligned with her personal values.

CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECT: Javadi is interested in how technology designs can help harness the creative capacity of the collective. She has been exploring research and curriculum development of Artificial Intelligence Education for pre-service teachers and middle-school underrepresented minority groups, a research project in collaboration with Dr. Darnier and Dr. Antink-Meyere from CenMaST and the School of Teaching and Learning. They recently submitted a proposal for an NSF grant and have an upcoming talk titled “Design and Implementation of AI Learning Cycles for AI Education in K-12” at the Teaching AI in K-12 Symposium. The symposium is part of the Association for Advancement of Artificial Intelligence 2019 Fall Symposium Series.

PASSION: Javadi is passionate about engaging students in their own learning process in more autonomous and meaningful ways. She is involved in community development and service and continuously challenges herself to grow.

FAVORITE BOOK: Immanuel Kant’s Die Metaphysik der Sitten (The Metaphysical Elements of Ethics)

DESK MUST-HAVE: Tea mug, physical calendar, note pad

FUN FACT: Loves watching comedy specials on Netflix and believes she belongs to a micro-generation called Xennials (1977-2000s).

JULIE SCHUMACHER
DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

BACKGROUND: Julie Schumacher received her undergraduate degree in food nutrition and dietetics at South Dakota State University and was matched to Illinois State for her dietetic internship/master’s degree. She stayed to work in a non-tenure-track appointment while completing a doctorate degree at Illinois State. Now an Associate Professor and Director of the Dietetic Internship, Schumacher has taught a variety of classes from food service management to nutrition and assessment and currently teaches food science with a lab component.

CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECT: Schumacher’s work with the McLean County Wellness Coalition has allowed her to establish deep relationships with community members, which has been useful for her research interests in community nutrition. She is leading some of her students on qualitative research on the School Street Food Pantry at Illinois State. They are observing the successes and challenges of the pantry, and how these can be applied to help campuses that want to create food pantries. Schumacher has traveled to Kenya and Tanzania with the Midwest Food Bank to investigate food security and identify opportunities to conduct nutrition education there. This qualitative study supported by partnering universities in Kenya and Tanzania exposes the challenges of nutrition and future opportunities to make a difference.

PASSION: Schumacher is passionate about developing experiences that benefit students as they proceed in their careers.

FAVORITE PODCAST: Organize 365

DESK MUST-HAVE: A schedule of where her interns are and pictures of her family

FUN FACT: Schumacher likes her coffee with lots of cream, or as she describes it: cream with some coffee.
ALICIA WODIKA  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SCIENCES

BACKGROUND: Alicia Wodika received her undergraduate degree at Aurora University, where she studied biological sciences. She received a master's in biology at Western Illinois University. She received a doctorate in climate change and the environment at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

PASSION: Alicia is passionate about global health, climate change, and sustainability.

FAVORITE BOOK: Tracy Kidder’s Mountains Beyond Mountains, which tells the story of an American physician working in Haiti to bridge the gap between medicine and public health.

DESK MUST-HAVE: Post-it notes, a pen, and a folder with schedules, and plans for each of her classes

FUN FACT: Alicia enjoys doing yoga and pranayama, which helps to keep her mind and body balanced.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

DANIELLE D’AMATO

BY KARA SNYDER

Danielle D’Amato, a senior physical education teacher education major from Genoa, IL, doesn’t have a lot of downtime. She is a student performer in Gamma Phi Circus, a member of the Physical Education Teacher Education Club, a resident advisor, a teaching assistant, and holds two jobs for Campus Recreation: group fitness instructor and member services associate.

Q: You are busy! How do you balance it all? Are there any time-management tips you’d like to share with other students?

A: That’s a great question. Sometimes I have no idea how I balance it all. For me, I need to write everything down. I have a planner, use sticky notes on my laptop, have a dry erase calendar on my wall. I color code events, use lists of all my different jobs, and miscellaneous items each a different color so it’s easy for me to distinguish. Other time-management techniques I like to use include making lists, scheduling free time, and making self-care a priority.

Q: Why do you think it is important to be involved on campus?

A: It’s fun to fully incorporate yourself within the ISU community. Meeting new people, establishing connections, and participating in something you’re passionate about are fulfilling in both you and the school.

Q: Your presentation at Midwest FitFest. That’s a big deal and you should be very proud. What made you step out of your comfort zone and decide to go the extra mile and present instead of just attending?

A: I presented two formats called Hip-Hop Step and Barre to the Beat, which I co-created. Hip-Hop Step is a fun and upbeat class that utilizes an elevated platform to enhance cardiovascular endurance and strengthen the muscles of the lower body. Various hip-hop dance techniques are added in addition to step movements to give the class a unique and fun twist while adding upper body strengthening/toning. Barre to the Beat is inspired by ballet, pilates, and strength training. This class is designed to sculpt long, lean muscles. You’ll move to the beat of fun, engaging music while improving your muscular endurance, balance, and flexibility. My passion for teaching and performing pushed me to want to present at a prestigious conference such as Midwest FitFest. I wanted other instructors to experience something new and unique to the fitness industry.

Q: What excites you most about your future career as a PE teacher?

A: I am excited to be a positive influence for my future students and make a difference in their lives. I want to contribute to the reason why they should choose to live a healthy and active lifestyle. Student teaching is great! It’s mentally and physically exhausting but at the end of the day it’s 100% worth it and I love every minute of it. Both of my cooperating teachers have been so helpful. They’ve given me great advice that will help me a lot when I enter the “real teaching world.” It’s nice to be able to teach the same students every week and watch them improve and get to know them and their interests.

Q: What is your favorite thing about ISU?

A: My favorite thing about ISU is the atmosphere. I love how the campus makes you feel right at home. The Student Fitness Center was my second home at ISU. When I was there I was either working or working out, spending majority of each day at the Rec. My major of study is another favorite of ISU. The PETE faculty members are great, so inspiring, and are extremely good at what they do. They produce great teachers; I’ve been lucky to have been a part of this unique program.

Author’s note: D’Amato graduated in December 2019. We can’t wait to see what’s next for her!
Criminal justice sciences major Taylor Jensen is a stellar example of being a proactive student. Jensen leveraged her passion, previous achievements, high GPA, and participation in the ISU honors program to score a seat at the University of Tennessee Anthropological Research Facility. Over the past summer, she completed an intensive three-week, in-residence course that furthered her knowledge in forensic science.

Jensen is not new to the world of forensic science. “I have always been intrigued by forensic science since I participated on a competitive crime scene investigation team in high school,” she said. “We were successful at the state level competition and had the opportunity to train under Illinois State Police officials to improve our skills for the state level competition and had the opportunity to train under Illinois State Police officials to improve our skills for the state level competition.”

“Since I participated on a competitive crime scene investigation team in high school,” she said. “We were successful at the state level competition and had the opportunity to train outside Body Farm and excavated a decomposing body.”

As a Redbird, Jensen is described by Criminal Justice Sciences Professor Jeffrey Walsh as “a very good student who took a quick and keen interest in the topics we were discussing.”

Although the selection process for the residence course was rigorous and highly competitive, the course was equally demanding. “We attended the academy from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. We were required to be prompt and dress professionally, as well as follow all safety protocols and procedures,” Jensen said. “During this time, we heard numerous lectures from experts in the field and worked on experiments and simulations in topics like forensic photography, fingerprint processing, evidence collection, crime scene management, bloodstain pattern analysis, and shooting incident reconstruction.”

“We also studied clandestine grave recovery and forensic anthropology at the University of Tennessee’s outside Body Farm and excavated a decomposing body. In addition to the in-class practical experience, we took weekly exams as well as created three final projects. At the end of the course, we were given a practical exam that tested our knowledge of crime-scene processing and evidence collection/analysis.”

Walsh described this opportunity as one that “you really have to go into eyes wide open, not only because of the distance away from home and the rigor of the course work and training, but because of the subject matter—the firsthand forensic examination of death and what that often entails from a crime and violence perspective.”

“In his courses Walsh has shown videos of the facility and the research that is conducted there, but he’s had only one other student participate as an intern in the past 10 years or more. “The opportunity is rare, and selection is competitive,” he said. “When Taylor returned to campus this fall, I was thrilled to hear how much she thoroughly enjoyed the experience and how much training and experiential learning she received from leading experts in the field, including a lecture by Dr. Bill Bass, who in 1971 founded the Body Farm in the facility.”

Jensen’s experience did not end at the University of Tennessee. “This program exposed me to the gruesome reality of forensic science, and we were able to study real crime scene case studies which helps us prepare for the profession,” Jensen said.

Back at Illinois State, she is working with Walsh to continue exploring opportunities. “The opportunity is rare, and selection is competitive,” Walsh said. “While the course emphasizes understanding the behavior of the criminal and the role of the victim, the content is more thorough examined with the inclusion of forensics,” Walsh said. “This is an important aspect that Taylor’s project will introduce to the class.”

“The project will bring her experiences to my Criminal Behavior Analysis course in a way that students enrolled in the course can benefit from what she has learned.”

Jensen plans to pursue a master’s degree in forensic science to prepare her for a career as an evidence technician. “I also plan to become a certified crime scene analyst and possibly work toward certifications in specific areas of forensics,” she said.
OUR VALUES

We value:

- Responsibility, honesty, trust, respect for all people, and integrity in all that we do.
- Applied learning.
- Individualized attention that includes recognition of each student as a significant contributor to our collective mission.
- Advancement of knowledge including interdisciplinary, collaborative research.
- Multidisciplinary traditions of our college.
- Shared governance.
- Civic engagement and outreach with our external constituents.
- Diversity, inclusion, and equity for students, faculty, and staff.
- Sustainable practices in our programs and awareness in our students.

MISSION STATEMENT

Through applied learning, we prepare and empower students who will make lasting, positive contributions to their profession and the world. We leverage and celebrate the breadth of programs within the College of Applied Science and Technology that build upon a strong general education foundation.

VISION STATEMENT

CAST: Inspiring innovation, opportunity, and the discovery of knowledge through exceptional academic programs and experiential learning.