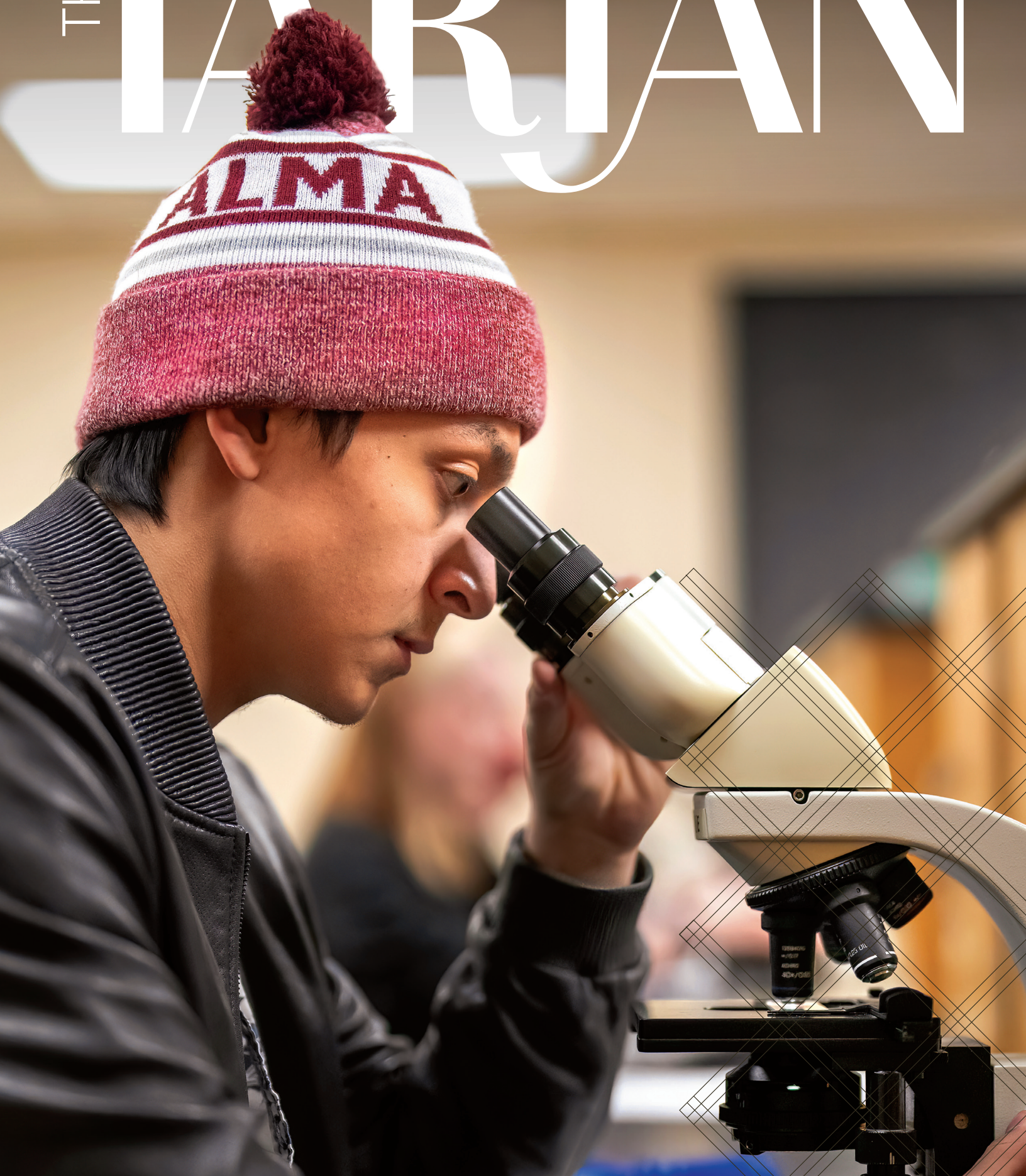


THE TARTAN



The Tartan

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FALL 2023 ISSUE

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OUR MISSION

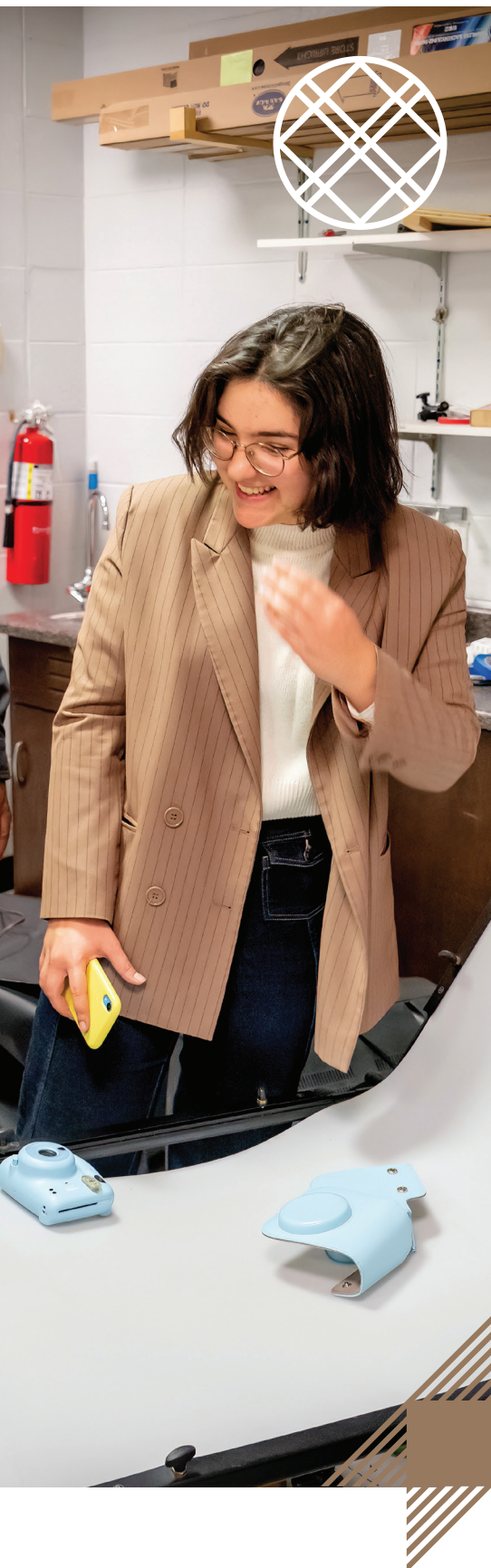
Alma College's mission is to prepare
graduates who think critically, serve
generously, lead purposefully and live
responsibly as stewards of the world
they bequeath to future generations.

ON THE COVER

Hemlock senior and biochemistry
major Jacob Kelley studies in a
biology lab.



Lee Vander Kooi, assistant professor of art and design, works with students on a photography project in class. Vander Kooi is one of this year's winners of the Anderson Awards for Excellence in Teaching. Read more on page 20.



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Kristen Dubenion-Smith '02 performed with a group of seven other singers at the wedding of Peter Neal and Naomi Biden, the granddaughter of U.S. President Joe Biden.



Meeting the needs of our students

Alma College is proud of its long and storied history of training students to be inquisitive, adaptable learners, especially in the fields of humanities and social sciences. However – in accordance with growing career opportunities nationwide – we have made tremendous strides with our offerings in natural sciences and engineering in recent years.

According to a 2022 report by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment in science and engineering fields is expected to increase by more than 10 percent from 2021-31, compared to a 4.9 percentage-point increase in other fields. In 2021, according to the same report, median annual wages for these science and engineering employees was more than double that of workers in other fields.

As you'll read in this issue of *The Tartan*, Alma College is now and long has been a wonderful place to study engineering, biology, Earth science, chemistry, physics and other disciplines of science. I'm proud of the work of our faculty and staff to help students learn and gain entry into their preferred graduate school or begin their careers in the field.

As I've long said, an Alma College education can help these students in ways that other schools simply can't. Thanks in large part to our new core curriculum (featured in the Spring 2023 edition of *The Tartan*) our students excel in areas beyond their majors. In their time here, they learn to learn – as well as think, adapt and solve problems – in ways that benefit their entire lives after college, and not just their bottom lines.

You'll also read in this issue about the dedication of the Greg Hatcher Learning Commons. Avid readers of *The Tartan* will know the concept of a redesigned Alma College Library has been written about before in these pages, going back to 2018, when we discussed a place "where students can access information and create content in a variety of ways ... an 'information concourse,' if you will."



What a pleasure it has been to see this project evolve since then and now come to life. We saw students, staff and faculty gravitate to the Hatcher Learning Commons immediately after opening its doors this past winter and welcomed so many friends, alumni and community members back to campus for our dedication event.

My special thanks to the Learning Commons Steering Committee and the building's namesake, Greg Hatcher '83, for helping make this dream become a reality.

I am so proud of the work we are doing together at Alma College and I hope you'll find something in this issue to inspire you to join in the momentum. Check out our newly redesigned college website, alma.edu, for information about academics, student life, athletics and more. Follow the college's social media channels, including Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. Come back to campus for our annual homecoming and alumni award events, Sept. 29 through Oct. 1.

We would love to show you all of the good work that's happening here. Go Scots!

– JEFF ABERNATHY
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The Tartan has a new look

You might notice this edition of *The Tartan* magazine looks a little different. Across campus, other things look a little different, too.

We are a little more modern. Bolder. Stylish.

Coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic and fully into the 2020s, the time seemed right to ask ourselves: "What is Alma all about?"

The question led to an update of our visual branding and website. Unveiled gradually over the spring and summer, the updated look is the result of more than a year's work and many discussions and reflections by very dedicated alumni, students, faculty and staff.

A strong message surfaced after many conversations with stakeholders about who we are. Alma embodies the idea of "highly personalized exploration for transformative success." Our new branding captures this concept in a vivid new way.

Let's be clear. The college tartan will endure as a symbol of our history and heritage. Our logo and Alma maroon will continue to be a consistent touchstone of academic excellence. We take seriously making changes to a beloved brand whose history spans 137 years.

So, what has changed? Our fonts and complementary colors have been refreshed. Our new magazine layout provides more space for text and photos to breathe. And you'll find a new website at alma.edu that features design and navigational changes that highlight the incredible opportunities that await prospective students at Alma College.

What hasn't changed? We are still *The Tartan* magazine. We are all Scots, and Scotty — with his traditional Highland kilt — continues to cheer us on.

"Highly personalized exploration for transformative success" resonates with me. My first memories on campus as a first-year student contained lots of nervous excitement and some uncertainty about where I was headed. Alma College helped me explore my interests and the world around me. It's where I had my first study abroad experience, where I made new and exciting friendships and where I received a liberal arts education that taught me to love learning and ask thoughtful questions about the world around me. Alma transformed who I was and the opportunities ahead.

It's an honor to introduce our new look to our beloved community and the next generation of Alma students. To all who participated in our "refresh" efforts, on behalf of all at Alma College, we appreciate your work.

We've always been proud of who we are and where we come from. We embrace the opportunity and take seriously our mission to prepare graduates who think critically, serve generously, lead purposefully and live responsibly as stewards of the world they pass on to future generations.

Now, more than ever, we look forward to the future and what's to come. I hope you'll join us.

— **MELINDA BOOTH '02**
VICE PRESIDENT FOR
COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING



We welcome your feedback. Please send comments to:
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Building a *Foundation* for Tomorrow

Science and engineering classes are preparing students for future careers in growing fields, with a steady footing in the liberal arts tradition and mission of Alma College.

Great Lakes Watershed Institute formed

Alma College announced in April the formation of a water quality laboratory on campus that will connect students and faculty members with opportunities to serve watersheds and rural communities in the Lower Peninsula of Michigan.

The Great Lakes Watershed Institute (GLWI) opens in fall 2023, serving as the first laboratory that is devoted specifically to the waterways that feed into the Great Lakes.

Issues with water quality in the state of Michigan, specifically the mid-Michigan area, are long-lasting and well-documented. The city of Alma and Gratiot County are impacted by these issues, due to their confluent location on watersheds that meet Lake Michigan and Lake Huron, as well as the history of agriculture and industry in the area and other factors.

Climate change is only expected to exacerbate these issues. A study done by Alma College and the University of Edinburgh concluded that algal blooms and bacterial loading

in the upper stretches of the Saginaw River Watershed have lasted longer and increased in intensity over the past 17 years due to general warming of the waters.

"The focus of the GLWI is to provide a sound science foundation to inform smart policy decisions," said Murray Borrello, instructor of geology and environmental studies at Alma College and head of the GLWI. "This will allow us to not only define current problems, but also anticipate future problems."

Through the GLWI, students at Alma College will work with faculty and community members to define, address, and solve problems through multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary work. There are also opportunities to expand into engagement for K-12 students through the GLWI.

The GLWI also hopes to connect the work of disparate small villages, townships and cities in the region, in order to address the disproportionately high impacts of environmental issues on areas with lower socioeconomic and minority populations, like Gratiot County.



Students learn about traditional medicine in the Amazon

In the Ecuadorian Amazon rainforest, Alma College students learn about topics in anthropology, language and botany, while helping indigenous people preserve their tradition of using medicinal plants.

Brian Doyle, associate professor of biology and biotechnology, has for more than a decade taught a Spring Term course, "Ethnobotany in the Amazon," in which students speak with members of the Kichwa community of San Jose de Payamino in order to learn how they have used traditional medicine for thousands of years.

Over time, Doyle said, these discussions have been documented, while samples of medicinal plants have been taken and screened for their pharmacological properties. Those documents were recently compiled into two separate books, which have been published in Spanish for use by the Kichwa people – both in the present and long into the future.

"One of the books is a scientific document, containing information that is catalogued in a database maintained by the Ecuadorian Institute of Intellectual Property. Having that document is something the Kichwa people appreciate having in order to pass on their oral traditions – and it also helps stake their claim to potentially valuable information," Doyle said.

"The second book is a children's book, which is something I'm particularly proud of. It contains some history of the community, myths and legends, and fun activities. I think publishing something like this is key to continuing these traditions of using medicinal plants."

Students who take the course gain experiences unlike most others at Alma College, Doyle said. They hike through narrow paths in the rainforest and ford rivers to reach their destination. They meet traditional healers in their homes to talk about the plants. They collect samples of the plants and conduct various tests on them.

It's an adventurous course – one that tests the physical, emotional and mental endurance of its students. But its popularity has endured through the years, Doyle said – possibly for the benefits it offers the Kichwa people.

"I think it's a particularly valuable opportunity for our students because of the interdisciplinary nature of it," Doyle said. "This is not just for students in the natural science disciplines, it extends into the social sciences and humanities as well. The project actually benefits when students from different disciplines are involved."



'Plagues and Peoples' course combines epidemics and history

"Plagues and Peoples," a Spring Term course taught by Patrick Furlong and Karen Ball '87, starkly demonstrates the interdisciplinary education provided by a liberal arts institute like Alma College.

Through the use of case studies like COVID-19, HIV/AIDS, cholera and influenza, "Plagues and Peoples" is an examination of the times in which major epidemics arose, the responses to those epidemics and how they impacted society.

With Furlong's expertise in world history and Ball's in biomedical sciences, students are able to understand the full scope of how viruses and diseases spread, and how that spread affects more than just sick individuals.

"To really understand the full impact of these issues that have confronted humanity over time, you have to bring a multidisciplinary approach. At Alma College, this is exactly what we preach," said Ball, the Charles A. Dana Professor of Integrative Physiology and Health Science. "For instance, as a scientist, I think it is important for our students to see there is critique and constant evaluation of the evidence that supports the orthodox view of the time period."

For source material, the professors largely pull from William McNeil's 1976 text, "Plagues and Peoples," which takes



students all over the world, from Asia to North America to Europe. They also use scholarly articles analyzing the connections between the pandemics and their historical contexts, which lends a unique perspective to students' understanding of events.

"The materials we use are dated, in some cases, but it's important to use them because they are dated," Ball said. "It helps our students understand the biases that shaped the views of these scholars and how those biases changed over time."

Hyde wins Kapp Prize for rocket engine project

A crowd of students from across campus gathered behind Stone Recreation Center on Dec. 1 to see Ann Arbor junior Stevie Hyde test his physics project in spectacular fashion.

The first test didn't produce an ignition. But the second resulted in a loud roar – one that measured 150 decibels, or as loud as a gunshot, and lasted for 10 seconds.

"It was really cool to see the rocket engine ignite – hearing the incredibly loud noise and seeing my friends and I standing around with shocked looks on our faces after watching it fail to ignite the first time," Hyde said. "It made me even happier to present at Honors Day and seeing so many students engaged in what I was saying and asking questions."

Hyde began his project as a first-year student. It continued through an engineering workshop course supervised by Victor Argueta-Diaz, associate professor of physics and pre-engineering coordinator, as well as through an independent study course.

In his project, Hyde designed, constructed and tested a small rocket engine, in order to understand "the science behind traditional rocket engines, as well as the numerous other systems that must work together to ensure that the engine runs properly."

For his efforts, this past spring, he was awarded the Ronald O. Kapp Honors Day Prize in the natural sciences category.

"I'm really grateful to Alma College for giving me the freedom to do this kind of project and earn credit on it, but I also feel like this is the kind of thing that could only be done at Alma," Hyde said.

"If I had gone to a larger state university, I don't think that I could go from one building to another whenever I felt like it to ask a question of a faculty member from another discipline. But whether it was Dr. Argueta-Diaz, Dr. (Steward) Jensen, Dr. (Morgan) Fonley, everyone was very supportive and helpful."

Hyde added: "When you do something as potentially dangerous as this, it requires a lot of trust. So, I'm grateful that faculty had an opportunity to get to know me and let me earn their trust."

Hyde plans to continue his studies of engineering and physics before moving on to graduate school to study rocket science.

Pre-Health Professions Committee works together across disciplines

The Pre-Health Professions Committee (PHPC) helps ensure students don't merely succeed at and graduate from Alma College – but that they're able to take the next step and proceed to medical school.

The committee includes eight members from across a variety of disciplines, ranging across the STEM fields as well as members of the college Admissions and Student Life Offices. It's co-chaired by Associate Professor of Chemistry Nancy Dopke and Associate Professor of Integrative Physiology and Health Science Brianna Harfmann '11, who agree that the interdisciplinary, comprehensive approach of the group has yielded positive results for Alma students.

"Something that we wanted to do when we started the committee was to create a holistic advising process," Dopke said. "As an adviser, I may only have a student in one or two classes. But if I can have other faculty members in the room with me when planning a letter of evaluation, along with staff from other departments, we can share information to provide a more comprehensive view of the student."

The committee helps students in three distinct ways. It offers supplementary advising for any student who is considering or has decided to pursue a pre-health field. It offers a wide range of workshops and information sessions on study strategies, applying to graduate school and more. Finally, it writes letters of evaluation and helps in preparing graduate school applications.

"Applying to medical school is an expensive, involved process," Harfmann said. "It takes a lot of work over a long period of time. So, if we're able to give our students as much preparation as we can before they make that leap, we'll have done great work."

"These services we offer are based entirely on where the student is in the process individually. The workshops we offer, for example, are different for first-year and senior students. Letters are often written in conjunction with other people the student might know across campus, such as a coach or a performing arts instructor."

The committee is a relatively young body, so information on its effectiveness in seeing students graduate from medical school is not available yet. But anecdotally speaking, Dopke and Harfmann say, it appears the committee approach is working.



Faculty research

Science and engineering faculty at Alma College have been published in scholarly journals recently. Here's a look at some of their work.



Steuard Jensen, associate professor and chair of the Alma College physics and engineering department, working together with student Jack Poling '22, has a paper accepted for publication at the American Journal of Physics. Jensen and Poling presented an alternative approach to the way that rotational physics is commonly taught.

The concept of bivectors, corresponding to oriented surfaces with a given area, provides a more “fundamental” definition for angular momentum than the traditional description using vectors, the pair argue. Jensen is currently working on a follow-up paper to apply the same bivector formalism to magnetism.

Jennifer Vranish, assistant professor of integrative physiology and health science, served as part of a team of researchers from the University of Arizona and the University of Colorado-Boulder whose work was published in the Journal of Applied Physiology in October 2022.

In this study, the researchers explored antihypertensive effects of high-resistance, low-volume inspiratory muscle strength training – a workout for the respiratory muscles with a handheld device that has the potential to lower blood pressure. This publication was the third-most mentioned manuscript of all those published in American Physiological Society journals in 2022.



Alexander Montoya '10, associate professor of integrative physiology and health science, served as part of a team of researchers who explored methods of improving accuracy in determining energy expenditure and physical activity intensity from hip- and wrist-worn activity monitors.

In two subsequent studies, the researchers found that a “consensus approach” – taking a pooled average from several estimation algorithms – markedly improved accuracy and reliability for hip-worn monitors, and improved reliability, but not accuracy, for wrist-worn accelerometers. One paper was published in November 2022 in the Journal of Sports Sciences and a second paper is currently under review at the Journal for the Measurement of Physical Behaviour.





Assistant Director of Transfer Recruitment Jacob McPhail speaks with a student.

Making the Switch to Alma

Departments work together to welcome a growing group of incoming students

Thanks to coordinated efforts across multiple campus departments, transferring to Alma College from another college or university has never been easier – or more prevalent.

Transfer students today maximize their credits from other institutions, are able to find a living situation that meets their needs and discover a network of support much more effectively than they did in years past.

The proof is in the numbers: Alma College welcomed 30 transfer students in the Fall Term of 2022, compared to 15 transfer students in the Fall Term of 2008. And more growth in the area is expected.

"Transfer students have unique needs. They come in with a different range of experiences than a typical first-year student, but it's important to meet every student where they're at," said Shelly Buschle, Alma's senior director of recruitment.

"I think what we've tried to be much more intentional about is to make transfer students feel welcome here. We don't simply say, 'You can come here.' We say, 'We want you here, and when you're here, we're going to do all we can to help you succeed.'"

Among the policy changes in recent years that have made the transfer process easier is that transfer students do not have to live on campus. This allows students with pre-established living situations to commute to Alma, Buschle said.

Transfer credit policies have also been amended to be more student-friendly. It used to be the case that students transferring to Alma were required to take a First-Year Seminar (FYS) course. But now, Buschle said, as long as students come to Alma with more than 25 credits from a previous institution, they no longer have to take an FYS course.

De'Quan Powell, who transferred to Alma from Macomb (Mich.) Community College, said he didn't waste credits while making the switch.

Organizations like the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) provide transfer students with direct access to financial counseling, academic advising and career development, among other forms of assistance. The Transfer Living Learning Community offers a residency-based academic support program for any transfer student who needs it.

Finally, recruitment of transfer students has become much more intentional in recent years. Admissions representatives now specifically schedule time to visit community colleges, whereas in previous years they focused more on high schools. When Finlandia University, in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, announced plans to close in 2023, Alma was ready with scholarships and support for Finlandia's students.

The success of these efforts has been reflected in the experiences of transfer students at Alma.

De'Quan Powell, who is now a senior at Alma, came to the college after earning an associate's degree at Macomb (Mich.) Community College. He said he largely made the move in order to play for the Scots' basketball team, and study with its excellent faculty in his chosen field, which is business.

"I'm going to be able to graduate after only two years at Alma because I didn't waste any credits," Powell said. "It saved a lot of money for me to go to community college before I came here and it prepared me well academically."

Samuel Bjordahl, a member of the graduating class of 2023, decided after his first year at a small college in Pennsylvania that it wasn't a good fit for him.

Alma's psychology and neuroscience programs were a better match for Bjordahl's career ambitions and he didn't lose a single credit he had previously earned when he made the move.

"I really think Alma has a lot of qualities that help transfer students in unique ways," Bjordahl said. "The academic programs I'm in are very flexible and the transfer adviser I had worked with me through every step of the process."

Outside organizations recognize the effectiveness of Alma's transfer policies as well. In 2022, the college was named to the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society (PTK) 2022 Transfer Honor Roll, which "recognizes the development and support of pathways created for the success of community college transfer students."

Samuel Bjordahl transferred to Alma from a small college in Pennsylvania. He said Alma's academic programs were a better fit for his career ambitions than his previous institution.





— Our New — 'Heart of Campus'

Greg Hatcher Learning Commons officially dedicated, open to students

Before a crowd of faculty, staff, alumni, friends, members of the public and its Board of Trustees, Alma College on May 5 cut the ceremonial ribbon on its new heart of campus, the Greg Hatcher Learning Commons.

Located on the site of the college's library, the new, 60,000-square-foot Hatcher Learning Commons is designed to serve as a hub of student activity — a place for students to gather and collaborate, centered on community, in a liberal arts environment. The \$14-million project, guided by Michigan-based firms Granger Construction and The Collaborative, formally broke ground in May 2022 and opened to students in January 2023.

"It's an honor and a privilege to welcome the Alma College community to our new Hatcher Learning Commons, one of the most significant construction projects to come to our campus," President Jeff Abernathy said. "A tremendous amount of work has gone into this space since our groundbreaking and the vision and dedication to see it through to completion has been remarkable.

"What we have established is effectively the new heart of campus. How wonderful to see students, faculty and staff already using this space for so much. We look forward to many, many years of the Hatcher Learning Commons being used to advance the mission of Alma College and improve educational outcomes for our students."



Dignitaries from Alma College cut the ceremonial ribbon at the Hatcher Learning Commons in May.

The Hatcher Learning Commons now features a cafe, open performance area, classrooms and study rooms, digital media center and book collections, as well as other offices and amenities. The exterior design blends the college's traditional red-brick Prairie School architectural style with glass, to help the community see what's happening, inside and out. The interior design is built around vibrancy and collaboration, featuring both well-lit, open spaces and smaller conference and study rooms with a variety of furniture arrangements.

Among the new amenities are the Loch Lomond Café featuring a Qdoba Mexican Eats restaurant, a display called "Our Stories, Our Mission," which serves as a celebration of Alma College's 137-year academic history, and the Anderson Center for Teaching Excellence, named after the late trustee Thomas K. Anderson, which supports faculty collaboration and development.

*“As a student, I never could have imagined something like this at Alma College. I'm so pleased that future generations will be able to socialize, study, collaborate, learn and create in this space. — **Greg Hatcher '83**”*

Opposite page: Students Mia Bacigalupo '23, left, and Gracie Oven '23 are pictured in the staircase of the Hatcher Learning Commons.

Right: Greg Hatcher '83 speaks to a crowd of faculty, staff, alumni, friends, members of the public and the Board of Trustees.

“The Hatcher Learning Commons serves as a symbol of our academic excellence,” said Darryl Schimeck '82, chairman of the Alma College Board of Trustees. “It's a space to facilitate interactions, collaboration and community-building. It's a celebration of Alma's uniquely personalized and engaging educational approach, something that will bring students to campus and help ensure our viability for many years to come.”

The Hatcher Learning Commons was the signature element of the “Our Time is Now” fundraising campaign that concluded in 2021 and inspired more than \$125 million in gifts for Alma College. The largest campaign in the history of Alma College, this was the largest capital project within the campaign.



Students Bernardo Flores, left, and Aditya Shankar work together in a study area on the second floor of the Hatcher Learning Commons.







Scott publishes new novel

Sophfronia Scott, director of the Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing program, published “Wild, Beautiful, and Free” in March through Lake Union Publishing. The novel, which is a fresh retelling of “Jane Eyre,” was chosen as an Amazon First Read for the month of February, a designation made for notable titles.



Barlow Trophy winner excels in classroom and community

Audrey Plouffe, an integrative physiology and health science (IPHS) major from Flint, Mich., is the 2023 winner of the Barlow Trophy, Alma College's most prestigious award for a graduating senior. The winner of the Barlow Trophy was announced April 5 at the Wright Leppien Opera House, as the culmination of an event commemorating past Barlow Trophy winners. Plouffe has been admitted to the University of Michigan-Flint's Doctorate of Physical Therapy program.

Partnership program focuses on art and knowledge

The Alma Enrichment Partnership Program, which first took place in fall 2022 and focused on science, returned for the Winter Term, with focuses on art and design and knowledge and persuasion. The program is designed to give students at Donald L. Pavlik Middle School in Alma the opportunity to learn from faculty in a college setting.

Kapp Prize awarded to top student presentations

Students Lainie Ettema '23, Stevie Hyde and Aubrey North '23 were recipients of the Ronald O. Kapp Honors Day Prize, at Alma College's 27th annual Kapp Honors Day, held on April 6. The prize is named for the late Ronald O. Kapp, who was an Alma College biology professor for 32 years and provost and vice president of academic affairs for 20 years.



Model UN extends streak at national conference

The Model United Nations (MUN) team competed at the National MUN conference in New York City in April and received three awards for “outstanding delegation,” the highest award at the conference. 2023 marks the 26th consecutive year that Alma's MUN team has received an “outstanding delegation” award at the National MUN conference, which is the world's largest and most prestigious collegiate MUN competition.

Messing wins award from Phi Mu Alpha

Scott Messing was honored by the Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia Fraternity of America with the Orpheus Award, which is given annually to one person in each of the organization's chapters who has “significantly and lastingly contributed to the cause of music in America.” Messing retired in 2018 as the Charles A. Dana Professor Emeritus of Music after serving at Alma College for 37 years.

Student lands on 'American Idol'

Rachael Dahl, a biology major from Owosso, Mich., successfully auditioned for and competed on the "American Idol" TV show during the show's 21st season. While Dahl did get a few moments of "screen time" on ABC, and appeared in a number of local news outlets, she did not advance in the competition.

Students win M.J.J. Smith History Scholarships

Students Aubrey North, Regina Galeeva and Maxwell VanZant are the 2023 winners of the M.J.J. Smith Society Scholarship, which recognizes Alma College's most outstanding graduating history major. The scholarships provide up to \$25,000 for post-graduate study.



Losie becomes Alma's 29th Fulbright scholar

Luke Losie, a member of the Alma College Class of 2022 from Farmington Hills, Mich., has been awarded the prestigious Fulbright Scholarship to teach English at schools in Indonesia. Losie, who graduated in December 2022 with a bachelor's degree in philosophy and history, becomes Alma's 29th Fulbright Scholar since 2003, the most recent since Alyssa Gibson won in 2022.



Hulme honored for 50 years of running

Derick "Sandy" Hulme, the Arthur L. Russell Professor of Political Science and nationally competitive scholarship adviser at Alma College, successfully completed 50 consecutive years of running at least one mile every day on March 5. Hulme was honored with a gathering of Model United Nations students and college leadership, which was covered in several local news outlets.

Art students paint mural downtown

A 20-foot by 40-foot mural designed to look like a retro-style postcard, reading "Greetings from Alma, Michigan," now greets visitors in downtown Alma, thanks to students in a Spring Term course taught by Jillian Dickson, assistant professor of art and design. Working together, the students designed, pitched and painted the mural over the span of just about a week in early May. The mural was designed by Charlayne-Aye Olegario, a junior from Woodhaven, Mich.

Burke named Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs

Sean Burke, an academic leader with 16 years of teaching and administrative experience, has been named provost and vice president for academic affairs at Alma College. Burke will serve as the senior academic administrator at Alma College with oversight of more than 50 undergraduate and two graduate programs of study, with more on the horizon. Burke last served as associate provost of Luther College, in Decorah, Iowa.

Andison, Barlow Awards recognize faculty excellence

Alma College's top awards for faculty excellence recognize superior teaching in the areas of English, art and design and education.

Lee Vander Kooi and Prathim Maya Dora-Laskey are the 2023 recipients of the Andison Awards for Excellence in Teaching, and Brian Hancock '05 and Jillian Dickson have received this year's Barlow Awards for Faculty Excellence.

The Andison Awards for Excellence in Teaching

The Andison Awards, made possible by a gift from trustee Thomas Andison, recognize excellence in teaching through pedagogical innovation, creative activities with students, and superior teaching. Faculty members nominate their colleagues for the award, and the president selects the recipients, who each receive a \$1,000 cash grant to support their scholarship.

Vander Kooi, who has taught at Alma since 2021, received the Andison Award for untenured faculty. He is an assistant professor of art and design.

Vander Kooi has a master's degree from North Carolina State University. He currently teaches two-dimensional and graphic design and is working to develop a UI/UX curriculum.

Dora-Laskey, who has taught at Alma since 2012, received the Andison Award for tenured faculty. She is an associate professor of English and women's and gender studies.

Dora-Laskey has a D.Phil degree in English literature from the University of Oxford (U.K.). She currently teaches First-Year Seminar courses, as well as courses in world literature, college rhetoric, critical theory, feminist thought and women's studies.

The Barlow Awards for Faculty Excellence

The Faculty Barlow Awards, made possible by a gift from Joel Barlow, a 1929 Alma graduate, recognize faculty members for excellence in teaching, scholarly or creative work, and college and community service. Recipients are nominated by faculty, administrators, alumni and student Barlow Trophy nominees.



Lee Vander Kooi



Prathim Maya Dora-Laskey



Brian Hancock



Jillian Dickson

The president selects the awardees, who receive \$1,000 cash grants.

Dickson, an assistant professor of art and design, has taught at Alma since 2015. She has a Master of Fine Arts degree from Clemson (S.C.) University.

Dickson teaches all levels of drawing and painting and continually works to develop the department's curriculum, as well as the new general education program. Her art can be seen throughout the campus of Alma College as well as in museums, galleries and children's books.

Hancock, an assistant professor of education, has taught at Alma since 2018. He has a Ph.D. in curriculum, instruction and teacher education from Michigan State University.

Hancock helped develop a partnership with Alma College and Alma Public Schools to support middle school students' STEM interests. Has also received a grant from the National Science Foundation to help continue his research, which focuses on understanding how to support preservice elementary teachers' science learning.



▶ GO ◀ SCOTS!

Six highlights from Scots' Athletics for the
Winter 2023 season



1 The Scots' bowling team won their second national club championship in program history, and first since 2021, in April at the Collegiate Club National Championships in Indiana. Cassie White was named All-Tournament Team MVP.

2 The Scots' League of Legends eSports team won their conference championship for the first time in program history in March at the Peach Belt Conference League of Legends Championship in South Carolina. The Scots finished their season undefeated at 8-0.

3 Alma College Dance competed at the NDA National Dance Championships, in Daytona Beach, Fla., in April, winning the national title in the Jazz Division III competition. The win marks the seventh national title the team has won in their seven years of existence.

4 Alma College Cheer competed at the NCA Collegiate National Championships, in Daytona Beach, Fla., in April, winning the national title in the Advanced Division competition. This is the team's third consecutive title in the Advanced Division, and their fifth title overall.

5 A women's and men's doubleheader basketball game was played Feb. 18 in honor of the late Tyler Edwards '17, a student-athlete and former coach in the Scots' basketball program. The Tyler Edwards "Be Like Tye" Memorial Scholarship was established to support historically underserved students from Grand Rapids- or Flint-area high schools or community colleges who choose to attend Alma College and who major in business or health administration, Edwards' two favorite subject areas. For more information on the scholarship, visit tinyurl.com/527v7x6u.

6 Avery Carnicom, an infielder on the Scots' baseball team, is Alma's new career home run leader, with 22. Carnicom's slugging broke a 34-year-old record.

Visit almascots.com to stay up-to-date on Athletics action in the fall season.

Helping Students Find Their Footing

Director of Student Success Phil Andre helps students navigate challenges on their journeys in higher education.

There are few employees at Alma College who talk to as many people on a given day as Phil Andre.

As director of student success at Alma, Andre leads a team of three dedicated staff members who help students navigate challenges they face on their journeys in higher education.

In one instance, Andre might be speaking with a faculty member about a student dealing with academic troubles, and connecting that student with a tutor. In another, he might talk to a resident adviser, an athletics coach, a diversity and inclusion specialist ... the list just goes on.

"Selfishly, it's a little bit of fun, because I get to hear from people on campus every day who have different expertises, and the level of talent we have here at Alma is really incredible," Andre said. "Beyond that, I think my schedule really illustrates what we try to do here at Alma, which is to teach the whole person.

"When you teach the whole person, you become more keenly aware of the challenges they face. When you help them overcome those challenges, it's an exhilarating feeling."

Student success and retention has become a major focus of colleges and universities across the nation in recent years, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic. Andre estimates that he works with 5 percent of the total student body every month; on topics ranging from financing college to honing study skills to mental health.

"Being in this role has helped provide me with an appreciation for the diversity of our student population and the different issues they face every day," Andre said. "It has also strengthened my belief in the power of higher education and specifically what we do here at Alma College."

When you walk across that stage at commencement, you'll be in a better position to succeed in life than you would be otherwise, and I want to help you get to that place.

Andre first joined Alma as a staff athletic trainer, after attaining bachelor's and master's degrees in kinesiology. He graduated from Central Michigan University with a doctoral degree in educational leadership in 2019 and has worked in the Student Success Office since 2020.

"What I found during my time as an athletic trainer was that I really liked the relationships I built with students, even more than watching them perform the rehabilitations and get back out on the field," Andre said. "I felt like I was able to have a broader impact on them that way."

Andre has worked at Alma for 16 years and commutes to work daily from his home in Rockford, Mich., which is well over a 60-minute drive. He said the biggest reason for making such a heavy time commitment to Alma College is the commitment that his colleagues put into Alma students.

"It's the people and the relationships," Andre said. "Everyone is all-in and we live our mission. We want students to succeed and become the best versions of themselves, for themselves. I know a lot of small schools will say that, but we live it every day."



Inspired by Oxford Tragedy to Teach

Alma College junior Anne Cobble found her purpose in an education course.

In 2021, following the tragic mass shooting at Oxford (Mich.) High School, Anne Cobble looked around her hometown community and knew what she had to do.

Whenever she returned home, the 21-year-old junior saw examples of teachers and school administrators working to bring their community back to some semblance of normalcy. And then, while sitting in an education class she had taken simply to fill a requirement for graduation, Cobble decided she would change her major and work to become a teacher.

"I felt, sitting in that class and watching a video on helping special education students deal with difficult situations, like a lightbulb went on and I had found my purpose in life. It sounds dramatic, but believe me, it's true," Cobble said. "The teachers and staff in Oxford were people I knew from the time when I was very little and they have become my heroes. If I can make an impact on the lives of students in the same way that they have, I will make the world a better place."

Our classes are like a community. The faculty know my first and middle names and what kind of dog I have at home.

Cobble said she quickly found a home in Alma's nationally-accredited education program, thanks in large part to the college's liberal arts curriculum, which allowed her to seamlessly transition from one course of study to another. She is now majoring in secondary education and special education, with an English endorsement and a Spanish minor. Outside of the classroom, Cobble is gaining real-world experience through placements at Alma High School.

"The faculty we have at Alma have become my role models. I really appreciate that they aren't just professors, they're seasoned professionals. They know what's happening in the field and they pass that first-hand knowledge on to students like me. I'm able to put that feedback to use and see results in real time," Cobble said.

Outside of the education department, Cobble has found community in student groups like the Catholic Student Organization and the cheer and STUNT teams. She said Alma's close, tight-knit community reminds her of her own hometown.

Cobble was in Alma when the shooting took place, but had family members and friends who were in the building at the time. She said if the opportunity to return to her hometown to teach after graduation presents itself, she would welcome it.





COMMENCEMENT 2023





"You graduates, all of you, I guarantee, will be presented over and over in life with the opportunity to mentor others. I hope you do that. I hope you bring to them the kind of mentorship that shows them all the enthusiasm and joy and exploration of things that go above and beyond the task directly at hand."

— Eric Blackhurst '83,
Commencement speaker

Honoring Our Departed Scots

Alma College mourns the loss of alumni, friends, faculty, staff and students who have passed away. This page specifically honors the lives of the college community members whose passing we have become aware of since the last issue of *The Tartan*. To continue paying meaningful tribute to those we have lost, we have created a website where you can view full obituaries for each person. Visit alma.edu/in-memoriam to learn more.

1940s

Veda Crewe Wilson '44
Maxine Miller McLeod '49
William H. Moore '49

1950s

Ella G. Orr Moore '50
James R. Fowler '51
Ruth Lines '51
Donald H. Tacia '52
Donald H. Gordon, Jr. '53
Richard A. Stuckey '53
Margaret Lomas Love '54
Gerald Duncanson '55
John T. Schubel '55
Thomas M. Fraser '56
Cleo Rae (Johnson)
Williams '56
John P. Hobart '58
John M. "Jack" Greenlees '59
Carl C. Large '59
Lloyd E. Sutherland '59

1960s

James Gillig '61
Donna Sweeney
Rowland '61
Terry Robert Strong '61
Thell M. Woods '61
Robert S. Colladay '62
Margot Phelps Dillon '63
Patricia Jo Wellard
Mack '63
Judith Noreen Pierce
Fountain Newberry '63
Jody R. Riddick '63
Lorraine Jessop Davis '64
Linda Magness Osborne '64
Robert F. VanEvery '64
Katherine Johnson
South '65
John W. Braidwood '67
V. Arthur Bova '68
Fred E. Lux '68
Jay Howard Davies '69
Richard S. Gibson '69

1970s

Roger J. Bullard '70
Michael L. Barnes '71
Joan Westgate Leffler '71
Roger Erbaugh '72
Elaine Hoepfner
Buckley '74
Lynn Angove Swanson '75
James L. Warner '75
Terry Heim '77

1980s

Jean Carol Ropp '81
Carol Holmes Layman '88

1990s

Joseph A. Joseph '91
David W. Felicelli '93
Meghan Mary White '95

2020s

Any Wiltse '24

Former Faculty and Staff

Janet Gates Beetley
Beverly Hall Boggs
Ray Lewis Boggs
Gloria Boodt
Connie Eichorn
Sedley Hall
Armin "Paul" Tober
Philip A. Warsop

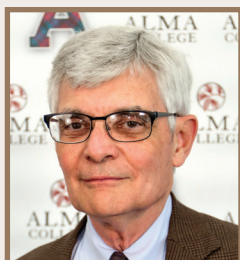
Friends of the College

William A. Buschle
Margaret Gilman Creed
Spencer John Drake
Richard J. Ebert
John Richard Evans
James Graham
Timothy V. Hudecz
Nancy Larner
Ruth Marie Lowe
James B. Mackie
Miki Peace
William K. Shimamura
Betty Jean Switzer
Thomas A. Turner

Thomas K. Anderson, of Marysville, Mich., passed away April 29, 2023.

Anderson served on the Alma College Board of Trustees from 2013-22. He was chair of the Investment Committee and granted emeritus status in fall 2022. In addition to his service on the Board, Anderson supported Alma generously; as a former college professor, he was especially passionate about supporting teaching and learning.

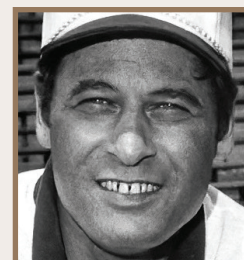
In 2002, Anderson provided funding to create the Anderson Center for Teaching Excellence, in order to ensure support for the work of Alma faculty. Each spring, outstanding faculty work is recognized and honored with the presentation of the Anderson Awards for Teaching Excellence. Anderson's leadership made possible the establishment of the new Greg Hatcher Learning Commons.



Dennis "Denny" E. Stolz '55 passed away on May 25, 2023, in Midland, Mich.

Stolz played football and baseball at Alma College, earning second-team all-MIAA honors at the quarterback position. In 1965, he became the head football coach at Alma. He coached four MIAA championship-winning teams, two of which went undefeated on the year.

After leading the Scots to a 34-16 record over six seasons, he moved on to coach at Michigan State University, where in 1974 he won the Big Ten Coach of the Year award. Stolz retired in 1988 with an overall head coaching record of 125-93-2. He was named to the Alma College Athletic Hall of Fame in 1975.



"There's no better way to have an impact on your alma mater than to make a donation. Some people get concerned that they aren't giving enough, **but every gift helps.**"

— Melinda (Messmer) Leonardo '01

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HOMECOMING



SEPT. 29 - OCT. 1, 2023

alma.edu/homecoming



Kristen Dubenion-Smith '02 performed with a group of seven other singers at the White House in November.

Alma in the White House



Kristen Dubenion-Smith '02 performs at wedding of U.S. President Joe Biden's granddaughter.

Kristen Dubenion-Smith has had the honor of singing at some very high-profile events and nationally known venues, but never anything quite like what she did on Nov. 19, 2022.

Dubenion-Smith, a member of the Class of 2002 who works as a concert soloist and choral singer, performed with a group of seven other singers at the White House wedding of Peter Neal and Naomi Biden, the granddaughter of U.S. President Joe Biden.

Originally from Okemos, Mich., Dubenion-Smith graduated from Alma College with a Bachelor of Music degree and moved on to Baltimore, completing her graduate studies at the Peabody Institute. She has since found a home in Maryland, where she lives with her husband and two children.

Since 2016, Dubenion-Smith has performed with the Choir of Men and Boys/Girls at the Washington National Cathedral – in fact, she's the first woman to be offered a position in the choir. She has performed at the state funerals of President George H.W. Bush and Sen. John McCain, and at Biden's Presidential Inauguration Ceremony and Prayer Service.

But Dubenion-Smith had never set foot inside the White House until she was called to perform there. One of the most memorable aspects of the wedding, she said, was the security of it. For example, she was not allowed to tell people she knew about her performance until it was over.

"In total, I would say that my time in the White House was shorter than the amount of time it took to get inside the White House," Dubenion-Smith said. "They make you jump through all kinds of hoops and even confiscate your phone. It's easy to understand why they do it, but it's still interesting to experience."

She will also long remember meeting Biden and appreciating his keen ear for her Michigan accent.

"I only spoke to the President briefly. I had remarked in passing that I didn't have a black folder, which is what singers carry their music in while they perform. He heard me, stopped and asked, 'Are you from Michigan?' I guess my accent really comes out when I say certain words."

Of course, Dubenion-Smith said she will also remember the ceremony on the White House's South Lawn, and Naomi Biden coming down the aisle to a string quartet rendition of The Verve's "Bittersweet Symphony."

"It was a cool honor to perform at the White House, and overall just a very interesting, utterly unique experience," Dubenion-Smith said. "The ceremony was beautiful and the venue was obviously incredible."

Dubenion-Smith is looking forward to coming back to Alma College this fall and is tentatively planning on performing Handel's "Messiah." Alma, she said, prepared her to interact with people from all walks of life, which has paid off in spades since moving to such a diverse area as Washington, D.C.

"If I had, for example, gone somewhere with a performing arts focus, I think I would be at a disadvantage in this world. I was forced out of my comfort zone at Alma, and I think that's a really good thing for young people to experience."

ALUMNI *notes*

Tell us what's new!

The Tartan and your friends want to know what you are doing these days. Submit your news online at alma.edu/alumni-notes.

The year 2022 was devoted to finishing a book, "The Evolution of the U.S. Healthcare System: A Legacy of Opportunism and Greed in High Places," for **Richard Douglass '68**. The book is currently in the typesetting stage at Cambridge Scholars, in the United Kingdom. He expects it will be published in 2023. Douglass held two memorial services for his late wife, Marian Horowitz, which were postponed due to the pandemic. Video from the services is accessible on YouTube.

After 43 years in public education – 35 of which were spent with Bartholomew Consolidated Schools (BCSC) in Columbus, Ind. – **Dale Nowlin '75** has been elected to serve on the BCSC Board of School Trustees. As a former teacher and administrator, Nowlin looks forward to serving his community, students and teachers in this new role.

***Pictured below:** More than 100 Scots gathered in Lakeland, Fla., on March 1 to watch the Detroit Tigers in spring training baseball action, at an event organized by the Alma College Alumni Association.*

Charles Gross '75 was honored by the Lenawee Community Foundation as the recipient of the Lenawee Leadership Award for 2023. The award recognizes an individual each year for their contributions to the county.

Hal D'Arpini '79 has been living in Munich, Germany, with wife Brigitte for the past five years, where she teaches at the European School. The couple enjoys traveling and occasionally dog-sitting for fellow Theta Chi **David Shontz '83** and his wife. D'Arpini is happily retired; trying his hand at book narration and voice acting.

Jeff Chamberlin '82 is living the quiet life in Detroit, watching plenty of Tigers games. Chamberlin ran Hostel Detroit for a while before returning to teaching. He suffered a head injury while teaching severely emotionally impaired students. He volunteers at the Heidelberg Project, where he has created and displayed art.

Lauren (Marce) Hubert '89 was selected to receive a grant from the Fulbright Distinguished Awards in Teaching research program, sponsored by the U.S. State Department. A science teacher at Camelback High School, in Phoenix, Hubert was one of only 23 teachers from around the country selected to receive the honor.

Dwight Pierson '92 retired July 1, 2022, after teaching math for 30 years at St. Johns High School. Early in his career, Pierson coached baseball and football. More recently, he served two terms as math department chair, six years as his local union's chief negotiator and 26 years as the voice of St. Johns Redwing football on Friday nights. Pierson lives in DeWitt with his wife of 29 years, Anne.

Kymberli (Barrette) Wregglesworth '97 is currently serving as president of the Michigan Council for the Social Studies and on the board of directors for the National Network of State Teachers of the Year. She is still in the classroom, teaching social studies at Onaway High School.



Andrew Pomerville '01 has been named president of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. Pomerville previously served as assistant vice president for community engagement, senior chaplain and founding director of the Center for College and Community Engagement (3CE) at Alma College.

Matt vandenBerg '02 has been named president of Ohio Wesleyan University (OWU), in Delaware, Ohio. He comes to OWU from Presbyterian College, in South Carolina. He previously served as vice president for advancement and external relations at Alma College.

Kat (Lanphear) Hsia '02 and husband Richard welcomed their son, Rhys, on Feb. 18, 2022. Shortly after, Hsia began a new role as a project manager at the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA), where she helps support WHEDA's mission to make housing more affordable.

Nikole L. Canute '02 was recently selected for inclusion in Crain's "Notable West Michigan Lawyers." She was selected as a notable attorney for her impact in the types of cases and clients assisted, serving as a role model and mentor to other attorneys and assuming leadership roles in professional organizations and community service initiatives.

Nicole Stachura '06 and Jordan Olive welcomed their second child, Noa Margot Olive, Dec. 11, 2022. Big

brother Everett is thrilled to have a sister! The family lives in Chicago, where Nicole works as vice president, group account director at TBWA\WorldHealth.

Mel "Sonny" Koch '08 and wife Jacki welcomed their second child, Lincoln James Koch, on Sept. 6, 2022.

Devon Anthony '09 married Rob Ferone on Oct. 30, 2022, in Detroit. They celebrated in an intimate ceremony with friends, family and their dog, Tonka, by their side.

Rachel (Assendelft) Ahlgren '11 and husband Matt welcomed a son, Elliot Russell, on Jan. 6, 2023.

Matthew (Yettaw) Yuill '15 is excited to share that he will be stepping into the new role of chief of staff at Planned Parenthood of Michigan while also continuing to serve in his current role as PPMI's director of diversity, equity and inclusion. From political science to diversity, equity and inclusion, he is continually reminded about the power and enduring value of a liberal arts education from Alma College.

Jared Dennis '16 and Nicole (Green) '17 celebrated their wedding with several alumni in attendance, including **Jack Anderson '26, Austin Bryan '16, Maxx Jolls '16, Brenda Jolls '87, Emily Hinsman '17, Kelsey Dennis '18, Tristan Fox '18 and Hunter Sharrard '17.**

Chelsey Cobb '17 and William Alvord were married on April 22, 2023, in their home parish of St. Francis Xavier, surrounded by friends and family.

Alec Gibson '17 along with mentor, Scott Waldroop have started their own graphic design studio, Crosshook

Creative. The duo has already worked with fellow Alma alumni and departments on various projects, ranging from rebrands to websites to campaigns like the Kiltie Marching Band's 100th anniversary.

Morgan (Stratton) McPhail '17 and Taylor McPhail '18 were married Sept. 17, 2022. They celebrated their marriage on campus, where they first met, with their beloved fellow Scots.

Sam Swem '18 and Paige (Bartkowiak) '18 were married Aug. 13, 2022. The wedding was officiated by former Alma College faculty member Joanne Gilbert and was attended by many other Scots. Sam and Paige live in Lansing with their dog, Lucie, and kitten, Chicha.

Tyler Mrock '19 has completed his studies, culminating in his Doctor of Chiropractic degree. He was hooded as a cum laude graduate on April 22, 2023, and will begin his practice in Tampa, Fla.

Caden Wilson '21 is a park ranger for the U.S. National Park Service. In the wintertime, he serves as an education technician for Rocky Mountain National Park and in the summer, he works as a ranger at Glacier Bay, in Alaska. He and his staff are co-stewards of the land with the Huna Tlingit, and he passes by their totem poles every day while working. A history major during his time at Alma, Wilson works a lot with history and tribal education with NPS, but is also studying emergency medicine.

Sara Lesnesky '22 has been promoted to executive director of Devonshire Retirement Village, an adult foster care community. She has enjoyed every minute of getting her dream job at such an early age and is appreciative of her Alma education.





ALMA COLLEGE

614 W. Superior St., Alma, Mich. 48801



THE TARTAN

The Tartan is published for alumni, students,
parents, families and friends of Alma College.
Please recycle this magazine and pass it
on to a prospective student.

*The exterior of the
Greg Hatcher Learning Commons,
as seen from McIntyre Mall.*

