*Original artwork in the Kaleidoscope masthead was created by interdisciplinary studies major Rebecca Soltis.

Since 1996, the interdisciplinary studies degree has offered ASU students an opportunity to apply knowledge in new ways to meet the challenges of an ever-changing world — by either focusing on two subject-area concentrations or by pursuing the organizational studies option. In 2009, the College of Letters and Sciences also welcomed the liberal studies degree to its offerings and, in 2013, added organizational leadership. As one of the largest and fastest growing programs at ASU, we currently have 3,656 interdisciplinary studies majors, 1,085 liberal studies majors, 1,514 organizational leadership majors and 12,086 combined graduates as of December 2015.

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NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

Passion, it lies in all of us, sleeping... waiting... and though unwanted... unbiden... it will stir... open its jaws and howl. It speaks to us... guides us... passion rules us all, and we obey.... If we could live without passion maybe we’d know some kind of peace... but we would be hollow... Empty rooms shuttered and dank. Without passion we’d be truly dead. — Joss Whedon

On the heels of spring’s inspiring graduation ceremonies, we anticipate a future filled with opportunity and adventure. Whether you’ve just graduated or only recently declared a major in our college, I invite you to take a minute to think about what has enabled you to succeed this far (ideally with a sense of gratitude) and ponder what you will need to succeed in the next stage of your life (ideally with a sense of awe).

You have certainly gained skills, knowledge, experience—the stuff of any good education. And a college degree is a credential that can open many doors. But it’s up to each of us to discover the deep passions that lie, still dormant, within us.

Communities thrive on passionate citizens. Humanity needs passionate humanitarians. Organizations crave passionate volunteers, employees, public servants, and leaders. If you have not already begun to discover your passions, now is the time. Now is the time to discover, embrace, and live your passions in your home, in your community, in your career, in your life.

Wishing you the very best,

Dr. Kevin Ellsworth
Faculty Head, Leadership & Interdisciplinary Studies

WE HAVE A NEW HOME

By Lindsey Allemang

For ASU Interdisciplinary Studies faculty and staff, it’s hard to believe that almost a full semester has passed since the program settled into its new home in the Urban Systems Engineering (USE) building on Tempe campus. The Undergraduate Academic Services Building (UASB), with its quirky staircase and central location, housed the Interdisciplinary Studies/Liberal Studies/Organizational Leadership programs on ASU’s Tempe campus for more than 20 years. However, in late November, the staff, faculty, and student workers alike all worked together on the major transition from Orange Street to University Drive.
The UASB is undoubtedly missed, given the decades of comradery established there. With its location just across from the ASU Memorial Union, UASB received countless student visitors simply wanting to stop in and say hi to their favorite faculty and staff members working inside. Those who got the opportunity to work in that building can attest that it was a special place, never containing a dull moment within its walls. But we feel equally fortunate to have now been relocated to yet another special building on campus. From its abundant foliage outside, to its open and inviting front office, the USE building shows much potential for creating similarly strong memories! Like all transitions, there is an adjustment period to overcome. But as always, the team has risen to the challenge and is excited to continue offering exceptional services and opportunities to ASU students from this new location.

**Interdisciplinary Student Matt Foss Wins Scholarship for Self, College**

*By Vicki Asato*

When Matt Foss started working for Vector Marketing, best known for Cutco knives, he had a goal of not just making money but to be able to attend college debt free. In his efforts, Matt was the top representative during the fall semester out of about 30,000 people and was awarded a scholarship from the company. But Matt is not the only beneficiary, as Vector awards matching scholarship funds to the school. The College of Letters of Sciences was honored to receive $1000 from Vector during a presentation held at the CLS office on April 19.
This achievement has not slowed Matt down. With about a week left in the spring semester, Matt took over the top spot again and, if he stays there, he will receive another scholarship with another matching donation to CLS.

Matt chose the interdisciplinary studies major because he liked how he could study more than one area and integrate his concentrations of marketing and psychology. Those areas have helped him with his job, in which he has developed skills in communication and interaction.

Congratulations and good luck, Matt!

**Taste of Peace Corps experience brings perspective**

*By: Maureen Roen*

*(Reprinted by permission)*

For ASU senior Jack O’Brien, the words of baseball great Jackie Robinson have always been a guiding principle: “A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives.”

The quote by his favorite player, O’Brien said, also perfectly describes his feelings about his recent mid-semester ASU study abroad trip to the Dominican Republic.
“After returning to the States from spending a week in the Dominican Republic, the biggest thing I walked away with is perspective,” O’Brien said. “Witnessing extreme poverty, incalculable amounts of trash and waste, a serious lack of fresh water, and low standard of living made me realize what is important in humanity. Despite the harsh living environment, the people in the DR (Dominican Republic) were the most genuine, caring, passionate, helpful and overall loving people. Their sense of community involvement and ‘take the shirt off your back and give it to someone who needs it’ type of attitude changed my perspective on life.”

O’Brien is one of 17 ASU students who participated in the “Taste of Peace Corps in the Dominican Republic” global intensive experience over spring break. Organized by the College of Letters and Sciences and ASU Career Services, the program was facilitated by Discover Corps, an affiliate of the National Peace Corps Association.

Students visited active or recent Peace Corps volunteer sites, including a chocolate factory run by a women’s cooperative where a business volunteer is currently serving, a site where a past volunteer implemented a stove project, and a site where a past volunteer helped build an aqueduct. Additionally, they lent their muscle to help build a school and a home — using plastic bottle-construction — and a vertical garden.

A few leisure activities were also built into the itinerary: a visit to an ecological park, a mangrove, and snorkeling.

“The program was an excellent way for students to experience what it would be like to serve as a Peace Corps volunteer, prior to making a two-year commitment,” said College of Letters and Sciences senior lecturer Jessica Hirshorn, faculty director for the trip and a former Peace Corps volunteer in the Federated States of Micronesia. “In the end this experience was a success, solidifying for some students that they wanted to join the Peace Corps and for others that the Peace Corps may not be for them.”

At ASU, Hirshorn has served as a past faculty director for the College of Letters and Sciences’ London and Dublin summer internship programs and, in addition to leading this inaugural Dominican Republic spring break experience, is the faculty director of ASU’s new summer internship program in Beijing.

Samantha Spadaro, who graduates in May with interdisciplinary studies concentrations in sociology and communication, chose the Dominican Republic opportunity to complete her internship credits.

“I chose this program because I knew that my time and energy would be valued by the people I was helping and that it was a bone fide program,” said Spadaro.

An unexpected consequence of the trip was the enormous sense of community she experienced.

“I’m incredibly happy that ASU offered this program! I found it very interesting how humble and grateful the people that we helped were. Their warmth was to be unmatched by any experience I have had working with many non-profits in the States,” she observed. “As Americans we often find ourselves out of touch with what it truly
means to have a sense of community, and that was one of my favorite parts of this trip. Not only did we get to be a part of the Dominican communities but also created our own.”

O’Brien will also graduate in May with interdisciplinary studies concentrations in business and communications and a history minor. He is taking a job with a St. Louis-based contracting company Altman Charter. “But I’ll probably be living in San Antonio, Texas, working as a project engineer managing a commercial-grade construction project,” he explained.

He recommends that all students aim for an experience that lets them look at life in the United States from a fresh perspective.

“As Americans we often fabricate and create our problems. We often hate instead of love,” O’Brien reflected. “I would encourage future students to invest some time in traveling to a developing country as I think it would bring about a life-changing experience to all.”

**Important Academic Calendar Dates**

Visit https://students.asu.edu/academic-calendar