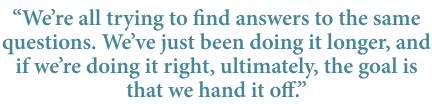# Faculty highlight

"I knew I wanted to work in idea-saturated environments, where curious and energetic people shared ideas—taught each other things—shared their interests."

Dr. Andrew Vogel, Professor and Department Chair of English at Kutztown University, a man who studies stories of the American road, has devoted himself to community. He knew when he started school that he loved the campus environment, and he chose to pursue a career that would place him on a college campus, though this path wasn't always clear.

In his second year of graduate school, his fellowship transitioned into an assistantship. He began teaching composition and there he met a difficult student, but according to Dr. Vogel, "That's not a bad thing."

"He had a lot of questions and wanted clear explanations…" said Dr. Vogel. "[One day] he asks me exactly the question that I had spent the last six months trying to find an answer for, and I laughed… For me, that was the moment when the light bulb came on. It's why a scholar works so hard to find answers to questions; it's that they're the questions we all have… That's what makes teaching matter, that's what makes scholarship matter, that's what ties it together."

Dr. Andrew Vogel | English

Dr. Vogel believes collective participation is critical to building roads between communities, and he sees the importance of facilitating an environment in which new scholars yearn to gather. He's committed to participating in education; English is his vehicle.

"Being an educator is the greatest, most rewarding job I can possibly imagine, and that is because my work feeds other people's ambitions and achievements. I have the honor every day to ride along on all manner of research and creative projects. I have the privilege of being a person who functionally serves people who are challenging themselves so that they may grow in some way that they have conceived for themselves. When they shine, I get to reflect their light."

Dr. Andrew Vogel is currently co-creating a study abroad program to Ireland.

> ## "We're all trying to find answers to the same questions. We've just been doing it longer, and if we're doing it right, ultimately, the goal is that we hand it off."

While working on his Master's degree at The Ohio State University, Dr. Vogel found himself at a crossroad, doubting his research and struggling with place. He saw himself as a lonely person in a library without a community. He wanted to drop out.

"I didn't see the point in trying to answer these obscure questions that nobody, in the supposed real world, cared about. My family, though, talked me into seeing it through. "'You only have one more year, finish your Master's degree and move on.' And I said, 'Ok.'"

The questions raised by students in Dr. Vogel's classroom inform his curriculum; his teaching always seems to connect back to his own research—helping him to describe the texts and both their historical and rhetorical influences.

"It's not like professors or teachers have access to some secret decoders or esoteric knowledge," said Dr. Vogel. "We're all trying to find answers to the same questions. We've just been doing it longer, and if we're doing it right, ultimately, the goal is that we hand it off."

Braden Luancing | Computer Science

Over the summer, Braden Luancing, a Computer Science major and participant in the KU BEARS program at Kutztown University, began designing a video game.

Luancing's research project, *Kutztown University: The Game*, is a day-in-the-life simulation of a KU student. The intention is to help prospective students understand both the responsibilities and structure of college life, and to ultimately help them settle into their home at KU. The game begins by placing the player in a dorm and assigning a class schedule based on the selected major, but it doesn't end there. When you perform better as a student, the game offers additional content.

"I intend for it to be an entire simulation of a Bachelor's degree," said Luancing. "As you're moving up, you gain 'student experience' from going to events and doing well on exams… We want to have mini games. If your student chooses, say, Professional Writing, there will be a mini game for that major."

If that sounds like a lot, it's because it is. The project is a massive endeavor that's going to take a community to finish. "My goal is to bring in other programmers from the Computer Science Department [and] artists from Communication Design—people who like and play games," said Luancing. "Working together, we'll knock out each thing we want to do. And when we have a product that's good enough, we can put it onto the app store and the Kutztown website so everyone can access it."

It's not only Luancing's peers contributing to his project. Professors from the Computer Science Department have also been pivotal in moving the game forward.

"I got to do this project by maintaining a good relationship with my professors, by being active in class, seeing them for office hours if

Research highlight

I didn't understand something and just going to events and talking with them," said Luancing. "Professor Pham, who led the project, helped develop the idea. And Dr. Frye, the Department Chair, has been instrumental in moving the project forward."

While *Kutztown University: The Game* seems to be what Luancing will be working on for the foreseeable future, upon graduating he looks to pursue a Master's degree in Computer Science and one day work for one of the big gaming companies.

"Bethesda, Blizzard, Valve, those are the three I've enjoyed the most, and I thought it would be really cool to work for them."

Braden Luancing, class of 2019, is also the lighting designer for ACT (Actors Creating Theatre) and Schaeffer Auditorium, and a Board of Governor's Scholar.

Science, Technology, and Math Open House

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences hosted an open house last month for prospective students interested in science, technology and math. Students from across the Northeast, some from as far as Connecticut and Delaware, gathered inside Boehm. Prospective students talked with faculty, current students, alumni and other members of the KU community. After a morning meet-and-greet and an open forum, parents and students were provided an in-depth look at our research and teaching facilities. Students participated in lab exercises and viewed faculty research such as Dr. Towne's work on honey bee communication and orientation.

Parents and prospective students discuss the Pre-Med major with Dr. Richard Heineman and current students.