



the Collage

Kutztown University's College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Nov. 2018

Faculty highlight

Dr. Thomas Robinson III followed in his father's footsteps, but he didn't plan on it. He's currently a member of the Psychology Department, teaching his students about perspective and understanding others' views.

Robinson's interest in psychology began at a young age. He was always curious as to why people do what they do. He was a painfully shy child, but when he went to college, he spent more time with extroverted friends. Analyzing their forms of communication, he overcame some of his shy ways. "I began to adopt their techniques, and now...I'm more outgoing."

Robinson's fascination with psychology peaked when a professor at Howard University spoke about early psychological studies done on African American children. "When they would conduct studies on black people [in the 1940s], they would screw the studies up because they didn't have a personal investment in getting it right." In psychology, Robinson found

a way to merge personal interests with understanding his roots. His parents always said, "We need to have more black folks in science and education where our contributions will be more meaningful and long lasting." Robinson took his parents' advice and is now doing just that—making long-lasting impressions on students at KU.

Robinson enjoys talking about controversial topics in his classes. His main goal in discussing them is to share the scientific origin of, for instance, sexual orientation. He educates students on the subject and shows them that there are various empirically supported perspectives to consider.

One of his favorite topics to discuss is racism, which he explores in his Psychology of the Black Experience course. The purpose of this class is to teach students about the American experience through the eyes of African Americans.

The American flag, for example, may be considered a symbol of liberty, but some African Americans see it differently because of the history of slavery and ongoing social injustice issues. "Psychology can explain how two people raised in the same country, but



Dr. Thomas Robinson III | Psychology

with different cultural experiences, can see the same symbol differently."

Robinson exposes students to information they may have never heard before. He comments on students who've taken his class, "They have been transformed in terms of understanding themselves regardless of their own [sense of identity]... [students always] get something personally relevant out of my class."

Robinson hopes to broaden his students' perspectives on important issues. He's not here to tell students how to think but to show them that there are other angles to consider.

The New Public Relations Major

This semester, Kutztown University introduced the BS in Public Relations, which is housed in the English Department. The PR major is a mixture of newly created PR classes, and courses from the professional writing and communication programs. Some of the courses include: Personal Public Relations, Integrated Marketing Communication, Crisis Communication, and Social Media Writing. In addition to the PR-focused classes, PR majors will complete a three-credit internship and are required to take a two-part agency course. For this course, students will communicate with a real client and do public relations work for them in the new PR lab, now under renovation in Old Main. This space will look like a "New York coffee house" with a laptop bar, display monitors, a poster printer, and a lounge for meeting new clients. The lab is currently in the architectural stages, but it should be up and running in spring 2019.

In terms of employability, Public Relations advertised jobs have grown by nearly 45% between January and February 2016 alone, according to the Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI). The demand for qualified PR specialists is expected to rise in the near future and the PR program will prepare our students to take these positions.



Arlin Salazar | Political Science

Graduating in December, political science major Arlin Salazar is currently working under the House Democratic Leader, Frank Dermody and his legislative staff. She's interning in Harrisburg, experiencing what it's like to pass bills, attend caucus, and communicate with the public.

Salazar's interest in political science started when she would tag along with her mother to vote. "I thought it was the most exciting thing—standing in line, waiting to go into the booth..." With her parents being from the Dominican Republic, Salazar also had an interest in international relations. "I've always been interested in other countries and how the US interacts with them." These interests guided her to become a political science major at Kutztown.

Before Kutztown, Salazar attended Reading Area Community College. She heard about the political science program at Kutztown and came to campus for orientation. Talking with the political science faculty solidified her decision to study here. "[The faculty] really ignited a fire in me," Salazar comments. She knew she loved political science but coming to Kutztown and experiencing what the major entailed only enhanced her desire to be a part of the political world.

Salazar desperately wanted real-world experience before she graduated. One of her professors, Dr. Holoviak from the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, told her to apply for the Harrisburg internship with the State System of Pennsylvania. She got the internship and loves it.

Student highlight

bill just passed by the House that would require people convicted of domestic abuse to quickly surrender guns.

Salazar is proud of being awarded the internship and what she has achieved in the position. She has also participated in the process of law-making and comments, "I never knew that so many people had to view a bill and so many people can change it, and then they have to vote on the changes. It's not as easy as people think."

Salazar continues to pursue her passion in political science and plans to work

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Every day is different for Salazar. She does a lot of research writing, interacts with the citizens affected by the proposed bills, and has face-to-face interaction with Frank Dermody. Salazar attends meetings, responds to constituent issues, and helps his legislative staff deal with problems within his district. She recently worked on a

in a federal agency. She encourages fellow students to think about what they want and remember why they're in school. "Your experience is what you make it. I just encourage everyone to really find what it is they like. [Don't] follow what other people do, just be clear with yourself. The sacrifices are worth it in the end."

DEAN'S CORNER

DR. DAVID BEOUGHER



It is an exciting time to be part of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences! Faculty are deeply engaged with students in the classrooms and labs, and through advising and grading. Many members of our community are presenting their research, engaging their scholarly communities as well as serving our local community in a variety of ways. Students are learning more about their world – and themselves in the process. We are implementing the new Gen Ed 2018, new programs (like the BS in Public Relations), and new classes, all combining with our tradition of excellence that has served students so well for so long.

November seems to be the time for developing our talents and understanding as we determine how each of us will unleash our potential. The most exciting life journeys involve twists and turns, ups and downs, challenges and change. Our features in this edition of *The Collage* show you two ways that others have travelled. I encourage you to discover the opportunity to leave the defined trails as you find your path in life.

The November 2018 edition of *The Collage* was designed, edited and written by Cassandra Bartos '19, Professional Writing major, under the supervision of the CLAS Dean's Office.