

## November newsletter, 2016

- Robust and innovative student research
- Pulitzer-prize winning author and Vietnam veteran to speak
- Dr. Liutkus-Pierce's Tanzania research lauded nationally
- Alumni and Honorary Alumni Awards

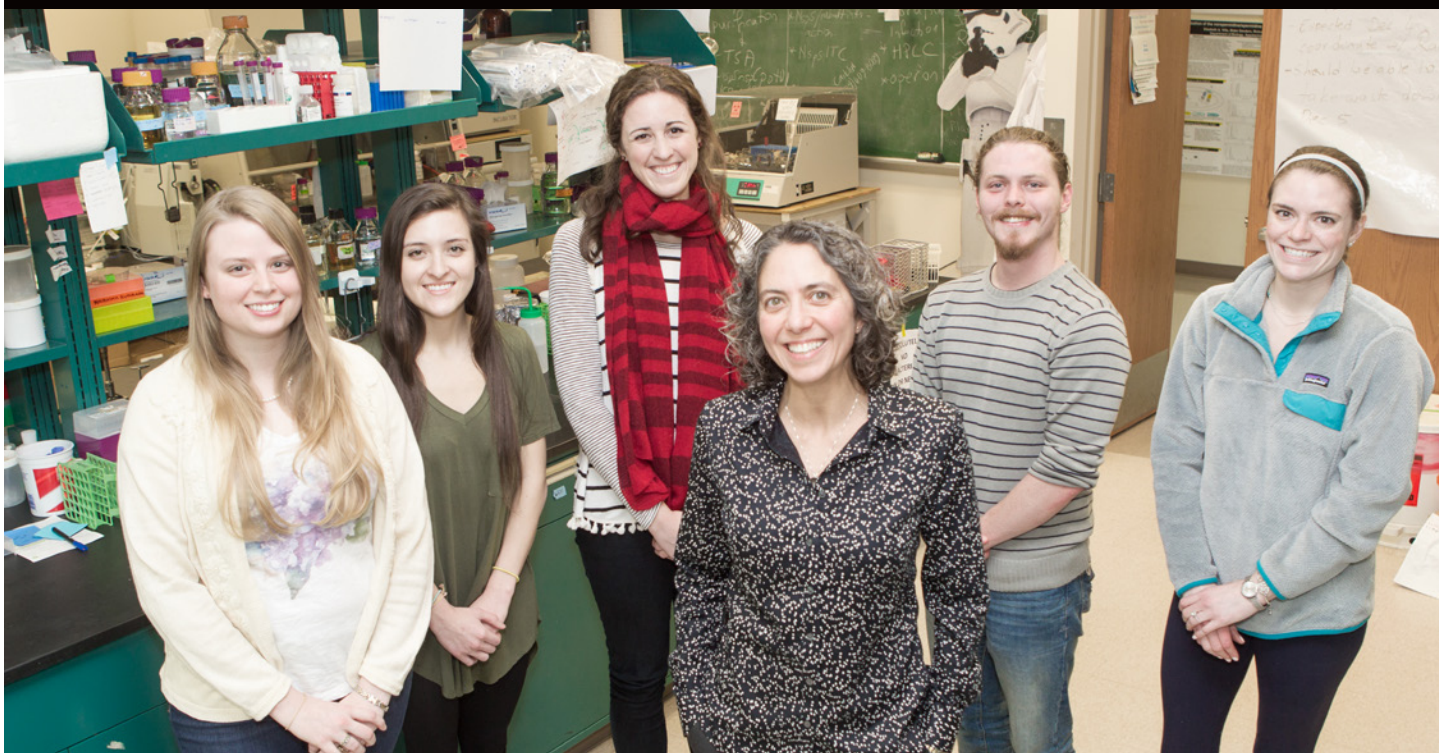


Sheri N. Everts, Chancellor

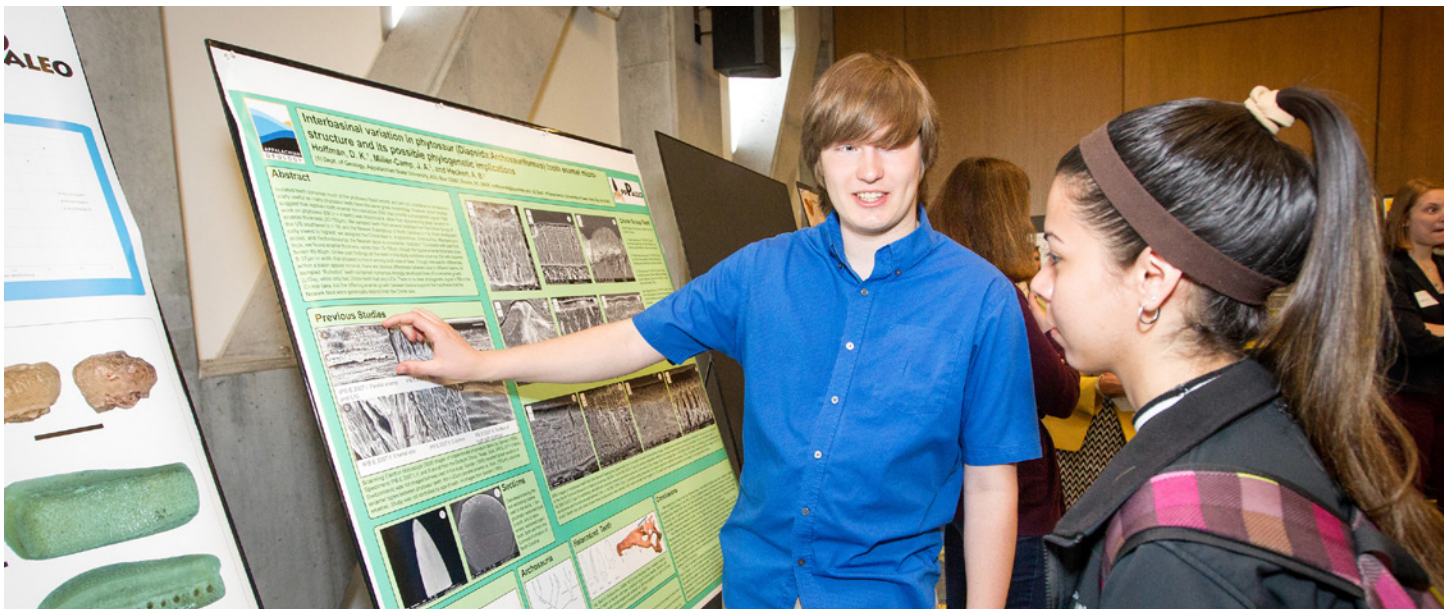
# Inside Appalachian

news and notes from the university

At Appalachian, we put students first, always, and together we are building a bright future. Ultimately, the reason Appalachian's stellar faculty and staff come to work every day is to realize this vision.



Ece Karatan, an associate professor in the College of Arts and Sciences' Department of Biology, was awarded her second National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant for her research in cholera and microbial biofilms in 2015-16. She is one of many Appalachian professors dedicated to helping students advance their own research.



*Devin Hoffman explains a poster on phytosaur tooth structure to a fellow student during the 19th Annual Celebration of Student Research and Creative Endeavors in the Plemmons Student Union in April 2016. Hoffman is now a senior and will present research at the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology this academic year.*

*From the desk of Chancellor Everts*

### **Commitment to sponsored student research and funding opportunities**

The options for student research at Appalachian State University are robust and include opportunities within the university's colleges as well as community-based research projects designed around student interest and community needs. In keeping with the strategic plan for the university, we are committed to a more intense research profile, particularly in environmental issues and health-related initiatives. On the innovation front, we are proud of the work being conducted in AppLab, an interdisciplinary design-thinking approach to finding real-world solutions; and ongoing research in renewable transportation, most notably our solar vehicle project and the student and faculty members of Team Sunergy.

Since the university opened an institutional Office of Student Research (OSR) 11 years ago, it has funded 4,700 student projects. Appalachian's acceptance rate to the two main student research conferences – the State of North Carolina Undergraduate Research and Creativity Symposium, and the National Conference on Undergraduate Research – is usually first or second among UNC system institutions. During 2015-16, OSR administered 678 student research grant applications – a record for the office. OSR funded 648 student grants (266 research and 382 travel) totaling \$134,969; of these grants, 412 were for undergraduate research.

Recently, two undergraduate research students were highlighted in university news: Eric Burton, a senior geography major and recent winner of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Ernest F. Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship, and Devin K. Hoffman, recipient of the Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship. Both young men stated they chose Appalachian because of our undergraduate research program. Both agreed Appalachian faculty are not focused on Ph.D. students and can provide a richer, more meaningful undergraduate experience. "The focus on undergraduates here is good," Burton said. "I'm not doing busy work, but working on my own project. Professors have the time and freedom to work with the students..." Promoting scholarship is a key component of Appalachian's strategic plan, and the university is committed to increasing sponsored research programs and funding opportunities for both faculty and students.

**Read more:** [news.appstate.edu/2016/07/18/external-funding](http://news.appstate.edu/2016/07/18/external-funding)  
[news.appstate.edu/2016/09/19/eric-burton](http://news.appstate.edu/2016/09/19/eric-burton), [news.appstate.edu/2016/05/04/devin-k-hoffman](http://news.appstate.edu/2016/05/04/devin-k-hoffman)





*Left to right: John and Faye Cooper, Appalachian State University Chancellor Sheri N. Everts and Mayor Roy James Maness. The Coopers and Maness were recently named honorary alumni by the university's alumni association. Photo by Marie Freeman*

## Advancement Corner

*News from Randy Edwards, interim vice chancellor for advancement*

At a recent celebration on campus at the Appalachian House, the Alumni Association's Honorary Alumni Award was presented to Faye and John Cooper of Valle Crucis and The Honorable Roy James Maness of Troy. This award was established in 1992 to recognize individuals who have given unselfishly of themselves to Appalachian but never graduated from nor attended the university. We are indebted to the Coopers and Mayor Maness for their strong commitment to the university's mission and outstanding service to the university. **Read more:** [news.appstate.edu/2016/10/11/honorary-alumni-awards-2016](http://news.appstate.edu/2016/10/11/honorary-alumni-awards-2016)

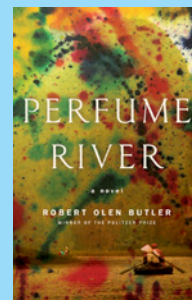
During the Homecoming 2016 celebrations, Appalachian presented the Outstanding Service Award to D. Kenan Smith '84 and E. Hayes Smith '82, the Distinguished Alumni Award to James M. Deal Jr. '71, and the Young Alumni Award to Susan M. Branch '99. The considerable contributions made to the university by these honorees have impacted our students, the Appalachian Community and the State of North Carolina in countless ways. We are very proud to bestow these honors on such loyal and deserving alumni. **Read more:** [appalachianmagazine.org/stories/id/668](http://appalachianmagazine.org/stories/id/668)

## University bookshelf

Veterans Day is November 11. Fittingly, Pulitzer Prize-winning fiction writer and Vietnam veteran Robert Olen Butler will offer a craft talk and a reading on Thursday, Nov. 10 as part of the fall Hughlene Bostian Frank Visiting Writers Series. The fall series, unintentionally, featured three writers whose work has explored war and its effects on soldiers and their families. Still, Joseph Bathanti, the series director and professor of creative writing in Appalachian's Department of English, explained: "This gathering of writers within a single semester does underscore Appalachian's commitment to veterans and their families, and it also underscores the work that the university's Appalachian Veterans Arts and Humanities Collective is embarking on."

Butler's novel, "Perfume River," examines family ties and the legacy of the Vietnam War through the portrait of a single North Florida family.

**Read more:** [news.appstate.edu/2016/10/20/visiting-writers-series-7](http://news.appstate.edu/2016/10/20/visiting-writers-series-7)



## On the Mountain

We were honored to host so many loyal and enthusiastic alumni, fans and friends over the course of the week of Homecoming 2016 – Oct. 17-22. We salute the International Business Student Association, in partnership with the Office of Sustainability and the Physical Plant, for keeping the stadium clean and for helping make our football games Zero Waste events. Kudos, too, for the thousands of dollars in scholarship money the association has contributed toward study abroad opportunities.

**Read more:** [news.appstate.edu/2016/10/25/homecoming-2016-recap](http://news.appstate.edu/2016/10/25/homecoming-2016-recap)



## 100th anniversary of the National Park Service

This August, the National Park Service celebrated its 100th anniversary. Today more than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America's 400-plus national parks, monuments, battlefields, scenic rivers and similar areas, and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Appalachian alumni Marinell Chandler '13, a sustainable development major with a concentration in environmental studies; Tim Federal, a 2012 graduate of Appalachian's master's program in geographic information science (GIS); and Dan McLendon '12, who earned his bachelor's degree in geography and planning, have all become rangers within the NPS – no easy task by all accounts.

**Read more:** [appalachianmagazine.org/stories/id/664](http://appalachianmagazine.org/stories/id/664)



**Ranger Daniel McLendon '12** – Passionate about the outdoors, McLendon came to Boone to escape city life. He became a biological-science technician after a trip to Peru with Appalachian's Dr. Baker Perry. Headquartered in Boulder City Nevada, he works several desert regions. Automotive experience prior to college comes in handy in the backcountry where he maintains a fleet of service vehicles.



**Ranger Tim Federal '12 MA** – Earned his master's in geography with a concentration in geographic information science. He worked four seasons in Alaska national parks, starting with an internship in 2010. He now leads the data management crew for Lake Mead Exotic Plant Management Team and hopes to continue in the field of restoration ecology and natural resource management.



**Ranger Marinell Chandler '13** – The BP oil rig explosion in the Gulf of Mexico her senior year of high school piqued an interest in environmental conservation; an alternative service experience in the Virgin Islands led her to the NPS. She worked summers at Denali National Park and Preserve in Alaska since 2014 and two seasons at Denali's Sled Dog Kennels. She now staffs the entire East district of the park.



## Spotlight on: Faculty

Dr. Cynthia Liutkus-Pierce, an associate professor in the Department of Geology, has recently published research around the age and formation of the largest assemblage of Homo sapiens footprints discovered to date, in the shadow of the Ol Doinyo L'engai volcano in Tanzania. The publication of her paper in the journal Palaeogeography, Palaeoclimatology, Palaeoecology led to an Oct. 10 article in National Geographic, which prompted a feature on the front page of The Washington Post and subsequent coverage by The Huffington Post, The Christian Science Monitor, Aussie Network News and the British Broadcasting Company.

We expect to hear more from and about Dr. Liutkus-Pierce and congratulate her on her diligence and remarkable research.

**Read more:** [news.appstate.edu/2016/10/21/cynthia-liutkus-pierce/](https://news.appstate.edu/2016/10/21/cynthia-liutkus-pierce/)



*"Human origins is a huge interest of mine. I've always had an innate curiosity about who we are and what motivates us." – Dr. Cynthia Liutkus-Pierce*

## Spotlight on: Teaching and research farm

The Sustainable Development Teaching and Research Farm at Appalachian State University's Blackburn-Vannoy property is a gem hidden in the hills of Ashe County. The property spans more than 365 acres and provides a 157-acre tract for experiential learning. "The farm is a hallmark for Appalachian, and a resource for both the university and the community," said Dr. Richard Rheingans, chair of the Goodnight Family Department of Sustainable Development. "We aim to address food insecurities in the area, monitor land use practices and ensure our buildings are safe and functional while preserving the historical significance that makes the farm so unique."



# Welcome to Appalachian!

## A warm welcome to our newest staff members:

**Kathleen Blevins**, Building and Environmental Services Technician, University Housing-Operations

**Michael Butts**, Building and Environmental Services Technician, Environmental Services

**Jenny Cancro**, Administrative Support Specialist, Registrar

**Emily Evans**, Accounting Technician, College Awareness Program

**Timothy Futrelle**, Food Services Supervisor, Rivers Street Café

**McKenzie Gillis**, University Program Associate, College Awareness Program

**Leslie Grooms**, Administrative Support Associate, Beaver College of Health Sciences

**Audrey Gurkin**, Public Communications Specialist, Beaver College of Health Sciences

**Dominique Harrison**, Senior Associate Director for Diversity Initiatives, Admissions

**Elizabeth Hinnant**, Staff Physician, Health Services

**Ryan Ingerick**, University Library Specialist, Library-Appalachian Collection

**Audrey Jones**, Administrative Support Associate, Career Development

**William Martin**, Associate Director of Design and Construction, Planning, Design and Construction

**Janelle Shuford**, Administrative Support Specialist, Sociology

**Benjamin Trivette**, Facility Maintenance Technician-Mechanical Trades, HVAC

**Tiffany Trivette**, Administrative Support Specialist, Financial Aid

**Yingqi Wang**, University Program Specialist, Office of Research

**Karen Watson**, Building and Environmental Services Technician, Environmental Services

## Join us

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The next Staff Connect and Faculty Club gatherings – both in Room 220 (Whitewater Lounge) in the Plemmons Student Union from 4-6 p.m. – will be held on Thursday, Nov. 17, and Friday, Nov. 18, respectively. These events provide an excellent opportunity to network with colleagues and build community.



*On Oct. 20, Appalachian's Office of Human Resources hosted its annual staff appreciation breakfast in Roess Dining Hall. All staff employees were invited for a complimentary breakfast, followed by a Service Awards ceremony. See the list of Service Award recipients: [hrs.appstate.edu/sites/hrs.appstate.edu/files/2016%20SA%20Table%20Top%20List.pdf](https://hrs.appstate.edu/sites/hrs.appstate.edu/files/2016%20SA%20Table%20Top%20List.pdf). Photo by Marie Freeman*