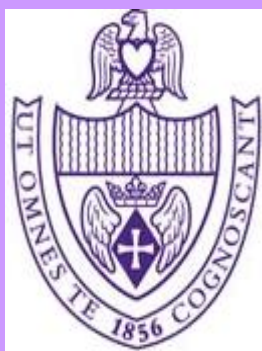


# THE COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES NEWSLETTER

NIAGARA'S OLDEST COLLEGE

VOLUME 1

November 2008



**Inside this issue:**

Meet the New Faculty	2
Alumni Weekend	3
Our History	3
Golisano Visits Niagara	3
Honor Societies & Faculty Awards	4
"The Bug"	4
Summer Research	4

## MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

This first newsletter from the College of Arts and Sciences is a challenge to write. So many wonderful things have happened in my 11 years as dean, a book would be easier to compose. Selecting a few items to tell you about means I have to leave out so much, but in future newsletters I will be able to give you more of the "good news."

Perhaps the biggest change in my time as dean has been the hiring of so many talented and dedicated new faculty. Today two-thirds of the arts and sciences faculty have been at Niagara 10 or fewer years. The new professors profiled here are just a few of the talented scholars in the college. Because I get to see all the faculty in action in the classroom, I can report that they are also dynamic teachers with a real passion for introducing Niagara students to the subjects they teach. Our survey of graduating seniors confirms my impression. Students overwhelmingly agree that their professors are knowledgeable, the quality of teaching is excellent, their courses are interesting, and their academic program is of high quality.



Another change in my time as dean has been the growth in the number of students in the college. Since the fall of 1997, undergraduate enrollment has increased 27 percent to almost 1,200 students. Enrollment in our graduate programs, criminal justice administration and interdisciplinary studies, is also strong. While the biggest undergraduate majors are criminal justice, psychology, biology, communication studies, and theater, all of the college programs have seen increases in majors. There has also been an explosion in the percentage of students who earn a second major or a minor. Seventy-two percent of the Class of 2008 had either a double major or a minor with many students completing more than one minor. Collectively students had minors in 40 fields.

Active, integrative learning is also now a hallmark of the college. Students have many opportunities to integrate, or apply, what they learn in the classroom to real life. Internships, acting in plays and community service are examples of how students apply what they learn and many students participate in these activities every year. Another model of active, integrated learning is student research. Working with faculty, students conduct research on a wide variety of problems. Many present their results at professional and student research conferences. Last year several students in chemistry and psychology were co-authors with their professors of published articles. The notes on student summer research and "Active Learning and the Bug" let you see in more detail the new way of learning by doing.

I hope I have given you some insight into why I am so proud to be the dean. In our next issues, I promise to tell you more about the exciting things happening in the college.

**Dr. Nancy McGlen**

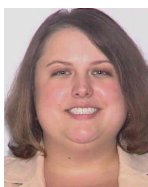
## MEET THE NEW FACULTY



**Dr. Michael Barg**, department of mathematics, received his doctoral degree from George Washington University, Washington, D.C., in August 2007. Dr. Barg is teaching Intro to Statistics and Calculus. He and his wife, Amy, are originally from Seneca Falls, N.Y. They have a one-year old son, Jackson. Dr. Barg's father-in-law is a graduate of Niagara and his brother-in-law is currently a freshman here. "I look forward to growing as a teacher, a mathematician, and a person at Niagara University. Also, I look forward to establishing a research program and igniting student interest in applied mathematics and the calculus of variations, my field."



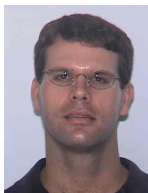
**Dr. Sherri Brown**, department of religious studies, received her doctoral degree from Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., in the fall of 2007. She is teaching Intro to Religion and First Christians & the New Testament. Dr. Brown was born in Charlotte, N.C., and grew up in Charleston, W.V. Following a stint in the United States Peace Corps and several years working in the international development field, Dr. Brown returned to graduate school in 2001 to pursue a Doctor of Philosophy in biblical studies. Dr. Brown also teaches a variety of scripture courses around the country through the permanent deacon formation program at St. Meinrad School of Theology. She currently lives with her dog, Gracie in Lewiston, and is "loving the Niagara community and the beauty of Western New York."



**Dr. Kalen Churcher**, department of communication studies, received her doctoral degree from Pennsylvania State University, State College, Pa. in August 2008. Dr. Churcher is teaching Stereotyping in the Media and Politics & Media. She chose to come to Niagara because of the social justice component in the communication studies department. "I'm getting to teach what I'm passionate about and hopefully opening students' minds to new ways of looking at mass media." Prior to coming to NU, Dr. Churcher taught full time for a year at Penn State University while she completed her Ph.D. Her background also includes being a newspaper reporter at the Times Leader in Wilkes-Barre, Pa. Originally from Ithaca, N.Y., Dr. Churcher has spent most of her life in Northeastern Pennsylvania. She currently lives in Lewiston.



**Dr. Diana Falco**, department of criminal justice and criminology, recently completed her doctoral studies at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, Pa. In addition, she is an alumna of Niagara University's political science and criminal justice departments and the NU master's program in criminal justice administration. Dr. Falco is teaching Research Thesis, Criminology, Drugs & Crime and Policy Paper. She is currently a member of the American Society of Criminology and the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences. Her main research interests involve punitiveness, criminal justice policy, illicit drugs and substance abuse, public opinion, capital punishment, sentencing and corrections. Dr. Falco is happy to be back in Western New York and working at her alma mater.



**Dr. Robert St. Hilaire**, department of religious studies, recently received his doctorate in theology from Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, Mass. Dr. St. Hilaire is teaching Intro to Christianity and Contemporary Catholic Theology. On a personal note about Niagara, Dr. St. Hilaire states: "Since coming from Boston to Niagara University, I have been impressed both by the administration's emphasis on teaching and the enthusiasm of my students. I am very excited by the atmosphere here."

***WELCOME!***

## ALUMNI WEEKEND OCTOBER 10-12, 2008

One of the many ceremonies taking place during alumni weekend 2008 was the presentation of the Dean's Awards. Two distinguished alumni from the College of Arts and Sciences, George A. Wiegiers, '58, and John F. Riordan, '58, were recognized for their lifetime achievements and their commitment to Niagara University.

Wiegiers is a retired partner and managing director of several major securities and investment banking companies. For more than 30 years he was active in the financing and corporate development of major industrial, natural resource, media and communications companies. He is currently a resident of Vail, Colo.

In May, Wiegiers generously gave the Niagara capital campaign a commitment of \$850,000 toward the renovation of the Leary Theatre. He was also honored by Niagara in 1993 when he was presented with the university's highest honor, the President's Medal.

Riordan received a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Niagara in 1958, and went to work for Durez Chemical. He eventually became executive vice president of the industrial and specialty chemicals division of Occidental Chemical in Niagara Falls at a time when OxyChem was dealing with the Love Canal crisis. His cooperative leadership helped move the company and the community through a very difficult time.

In 1988 Riordan became president and chief executive officer of Mid-Con Corp., a natural gas pipeline company headquartered in Chicago. He was recognized in the industry when he was named president and CEO of Gas Technology Institute, a research and development organization for the natural gas industry. Sadly, he passed away in August of this year. Accepting the award on his behalf were his wife and daughter.

## OUR HISTORY

When the Seminary of Our Lady of Angels was founded in 1856 with the purpose of preparing young men for the priesthood, a selected number of young men were also accepted for entrance into "the college." Our Lady of Angels Seminary would later become Niagara University and in 1923 "the college" became the College of Arts and Sciences.

In 1908, the three-year program leading to a Bachelor of Science degree was extended to four years. College of Arts and Sciences degree programs continued to be added: chemistry, physics and biology in the 1940s; English, Latin, history, mathematics, modern languages and sociology in the 1950s; political science in the early 1960s; social work, criminal justice and communication arts in 1973; psychology, biochemistry and biotechnology in the late 1970s; computing in 1980 and theater studies in 1988. The most recent degree programs include liberal arts, a degree completion program for registered nurses and a Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies. At present, the College of Arts and Sciences includes 18 academic departments and more than 30 undergraduate courses of study.

## B. THOMAS GOLISANO GENEROUSLY DONATES

B. Thomas Golisano recently visited the campus to announce a commitment of \$10 million dollars to Niagara, the largest gift in the history of the university. The donation will be applied to the capital campaign "The Promise of Niagara" and will help to fund a new science building named the **B. Thomas Golisano Center for Integrated Sciences**.

The Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, C.M., addressed Golisano saying, "Clearly, the support you are providing for the science building is an expression of great confidence in the direction our program is taking."



NIAGARA  
UNIVERSITY

NIAGARA UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

VISIT US ON THE WEB  
[WWW.NIAGARA.EDU/COAS](http://WWW.NIAGARA.EDU/COAS)

Alumni Site  
[www.niagara.edu/coas/alumni.htm](http://www.niagara.edu/coas/alumni.htm)

Reconnect with Faculty  
[www.niagara.edu/coas/faculty.htm](http://www.niagara.edu/coas/faculty.htm)

A&S News & Events  
[www.niagara.edu/coas/news\\_events.htm](http://www.niagara.edu/coas/news_events.htm)

FIND US ON FACEBOOK  
"NU Arts.and.Sciences"

Join us on Facebook by friending "NU Arts.and.Sciences" or by visiting the link below. Reconnect with friends and faculty or check out some of the newly developed departmental pages.

[www.facebook.com/people/NU-ArtsandSciences/1170540181](http://www.facebook.com/people/NU-ArtsandSciences/1170540181)

NIAGARA UNIVERSITY  
THEATER PRODUCTION SEASON

Check out this season's productions:

[www.niagara.edu/theatre/season.htm](http://www.niagara.edu/theatre/season.htm)

## NEW HONOR SOCIETIES & FACULTY AWARDS

The College of Arts and Sciences added two new honor societies this past year to the 17 already represented. They are:

**Phi Sigma Tau** – Philosophy honor society moderated by faculty member Dr. Alexander Bertland.

**Gamma Sigma Epsilon** – Chemistry honor society moderated by faculty member Dr. Ronny Priefer.

At our Day of Recognition in May 2008, faculty awards were presented to:

Dr. Todd Schoepflin, department of sociology—*Excellence in Teaching*

Dr. Brian Bennett, department of religious studies—*Excellence in Scholarship*

Dr. Suzanne Wagner, department of computer and information science—*Excellence in Service*

Professor Darren MacDougall, department of religious studies—*Excellence in Part-time Teaching*

## ACTIVE LEARNING AND "THE BUG"

"Max Streicher: Metamorphosis" runs Oct. 3, 2008, through Jan. 25, 2009, at the Castellani Art Museum. The centerpiece of the exhibition is a monumental inflatable sculpture of a dung beetle, based on the transformation of man to insect in Franz Kafka's 1915 existentialist novella, "Metamorphosis." Recognizing the possibility for working across academic disciplines, the museum partnered with Niagara University faculty members from biology, English, philosophy and theater and fine arts in planning integrative learning projects using "Metamorphosis" as a starting point. Projects included philosophical panel discussions, scale models of insects, writing analysis papers and a reader's theater production of the play based on Kafka's "Metamorphosis."

## HOW OUR STUDENTS SPENT THEIR SUMMER

This past summer several of our students collaborated with arts and sciences faculty on research projects. Those students and faculty that worked on summer research projects were: Jonathan Haseley and Dr. Robert Kane, history department; DiAndra Rudzinski and Dr. Ronny Priefer, chemistry department; Emily Darnell and Dr. Susan Mason, psychology department; Ashley Bantelman and Dr. William Edwards, biology department; Richard Myers and Dr. Mark Gallo, biology department; Matthew Stein and Dr. Suzanne Wagner, computer and information science department; Marissa Christman and professor Mustafa Gokcek, history department; Michael Gallagher and Dr. Michael Kotarski, biology department; Lindsay Atkins and Dr. Timothy Osberg, psychology department; Victoria Derby and Dr. Donna Thompson, psychology department; Corey Kalinowski and Dr. Walter Steiner, biology department; Joshua Coyne and Dr. Jamie Pimlott, political science department, and Leeanna Owens and Dr. Paul Schupp, criminal justice department.

We are very proud of the hard work and dedication of these arts and sciences students and the faculty who worked with them.

You can read more about the individual research projects and "the bug" integrative learning projects on the arts and sciences Web site — [www.niagara.edu/coas](http://www.niagara.edu/coas).