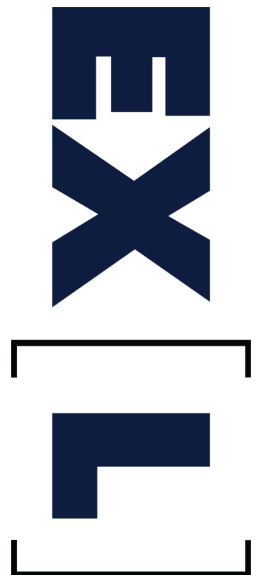




Experiential Learning Awards Ceremony

May 3, 2019 | 10am | Bierce Library



Award Winners

ADMINISTRATIVE CHAMPION

Dr. Maria A. Zanetta



Dr. Zanetta, chair and distinguished professor of Modern Languages and chair of the English Department, has been a patron of hands-on community-based learning for many years. She has been exceptionally supportive of Unclass development. Her passion for teaching and research has led her to build strong interdisciplinary partners and connect students to communities beyond the university.

COMMUNITY CHAMPION

CADA Center for Applied Drama and Autism



CADA makes meaningful contributions to individuals, organization and local/regional community using drama and play to “create personal, emotional and social awareness.” Run by **Wendy Duke** and **Laura Velendza**, CADA has partnered with UA faculty and students in a multi-semester exploration of the implications of eugenics in Akron and American culture. Together they are a dynamic duo exemplifying EXL principles of “hands-on, team-based, interdisciplinary” (their work draws from education, theatre, special education and psychology). Laura and Wendy travel to conferences to teach about their drama- play approach that is designed to “help [students] recognize their own abilities and gifts through empowerment and making connections.”

FACULTY-COMMUNITY PARTNER

Lost Voices of the Great War Film Partnership



UA faculty and staff, **Vic Fleischer**, **Kevin Kern**, **Kathleen Endres**, and **Jamie Newhall**, along with community partners including **Toivo Motter**, moved a two-year, cross-institution partnership into new territory modeling collaboration and experiential learning that engaged university students, high school student and elementary students in the creation of this documentary film which recounts the story of Summit County residents’ experiences at home and overseas during the war. This project continues to reverberate as screenings and broadcasts take it far beyond Akron.

FACULTY CHAMPIONS

Dr. Evi Gorogianni



As a Classical Studies faculty member, Dr. Gorogianni offers her students hands-on learning through archaeological field research. But this semester, she challenged herself by creating the Unclass "Migrating Home." Quoting a student in the class, it "helped students learn empathy and understanding. Dr. Gorogianni provided an eye-opening experience for her students as she worked towards inviting them into the experience and struggles of immigration." For the Unclass, Dr. Gorogianni engaged professional in immigration, immigration law, and refugee resettlement, to help her students get a better understanding.

Dr. Mira Mohsini



Dr. Mira Mohsini's classes are always well conceived and challenging. Her expertise in teaching methods for conducting anthropological and ethnographic research give students vital skills. She built these skills into the Unclass she led in Fall 2017 and this year she played a supporting role in "Migrating Home" Unclass enriching everyone's experience.

SPIRIT OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

The Interdisciplinary Symposium



This event, which was truly motivated by a love and dedication to goals and educational mission of The University of Akron, was designed to build bridges across disciplines and to become UA tradition. Doctoral students **Scott Swiatek** and **Matt Williamson** were determined to build professionalizing opportunities for students to present their research. Reaching across campus and engaging more than 130 students, UAIS was highly successful. It celebrated students' mentored research and individual achievement, sharpened organizational and leadership skills of those involved in creating the event and showcased the best of the experiential learning that takes place on our campus every day. Deans, chairs, and a large and diverse group of staff and faculty supported this work. Special recognition goes to **Rob Peralta**, **Stef Shatrich**, and **Marilia Antunez**.

STAFF CHAMPION

Dr. Jodi Kearns



Dr. Kearns, of UA's Cummings Center for the History of Psychology, helps UA students gain hands-on experience in museums and archives work. She has been a strong partner to EXL for several years. Working with Dr. Hillary Nunn of the English Department, she helped develop the UnClass, "Digital Humanities in the Archives." Dr. Kearns' interactions with students help them articulate their own identities as researchers, and she helps them understand how those identities dovetail with the interests of others from a wide array of disciplines.

STUDENT COMMUNITY PARTNERHSIPS

PCC Airfoils & Zips to Industry



The University of Akron's Zip to Industry job-shadowing program offers first-year STEM majors opportunities to shadow upper-class UA students already on cooperative education and internship assignments. Through these shadowing experiences, first-year students discover what people employed in their areas of interest do on a typical workday. Connect their UA coursework with real-world exposure, students can better identify the skills they will need to succeed. Of the 63 partners Zips to Industry works with, PCC Airfoils, a leading manufacturer of airfoil casting for aerospace and industrial gas turbine applications, has made critical contributions to the development and success of the Zip to Industry program. PCC Airfoils wrote support letters to secure program funding, and they have provided many quality job-shadowing experiences for first-year students during this, the program's pilot year (2018-2019).

Akron Community Foundation & Zachary Eldred



Zachary Eldred (Sociology student), working with UA faculty mentors, partnered with *The On the Table Greater Akron* (OTTGA) to assist a project that seeks to improve communication and quality of life in Akron. OTTGA is an annual event that brings thousands of Akronites from all over the city together to share food while exploring the issues and concerns of our overlapping neighborhoods and communities. Every year participants complete surveys which are analyzed to help citizens, civic leaders, and community organizations understand more about the fabric of Akron as they plan and undertake their work. In 2018, OTTGA, which is sponsored by the Akron Community Foundation, decided to gather more detailed qualitative data regarding ideas for specific community-based actions. These new data would offer a richer sense of what Akron can do together moving forward. OTTGA reached out to UA and EXL's Akron Community Internship Program for help capturing themes and ideas from this large new data set. Responding to this need, faculty members from Sociology saw an opportunity for a student to get a unique, real-world experience applying the skills of his field to aid a great cause. Zach applied and was a clear match. He took on the task of managing and analyzing these data and producing a report. Praising both Zach and the faculty who supported him, OTTGA emphasized his professionalism, his diligence, his ability to define and then overcome barriers, and his fine work.

STUDENT CHAMPION

Megan Delong



Megan Delong exemplifies Student Champion in every way. Her enthusiasm and passion for experiential learning are infectious. She worked as a student assistant and managed the Akron Community Internship Program until her graduation this past December. This work included working with partners to frame internships, recruiting students, shepherding the set-up paperwork through the bureaucratic system, and creating reports for the program. She co-wrote handbook for her successors in this work. Megan channeled her passion for the EXL mission into effective tools which future EXL employees will continue to leverage. And she influenced countless students who came to EXL with her commitment to experiential learning. Megan took her community-based volunteering as a student and made it a career choice by accepting a job with the Battered Women's.

