Dear Alumni and Friends:

Greetings from K-State’s College of Arts and Sciences. I’ve just spent a busy week that culminated in a day-long meeting with our recently formed Alumni Advisory Council. Terry Cupps, a Wichita attorney and graduate of our speech program, is this year’s chair. As one of K-State’s most dedicated supporters, he did an outstanding job moderating our meeting. Doug Blackwood serves as our chair-elect. He is retired from a long career with Hewlett Packard and lives in Olathe.

I feel tremendous gratitude for the group’s willingness to come to campus to share their time and experience. Our discussions ranged from College priorities and alumni outreach to reminiscesses about what made earlier years at K-State so memorable. We heard from a group of our top students and focused on how Arts and Sciences can most effectively meet the needs of its students, alumni, faculty and supporters. Later, everyone took a tour of the James R. Macdonald Laboratory, the Physics Department’s state-of-the-art atomic research facility. The day was capped off with a memorable production of Metamorphoses, put on by our award-winning theatre program.

It’s apparent that there’s something special about K-State that makes such successful — and busy — people willing to put their lives aside for a day and address issues that are important to the College.

Rex Beach heard about K-State’s tremendous success in winning nationally prestigious scholarships and said it was fun to see what was happening 45 years after he graduated. Rex, an economics major who has provided credit and risk assessment training for financial institutions around the globe, remembers K-State’s emphasis on excellent teaching: “It offered the very best learning experience I had as a student. I felt welcomed in the classroom.”

Helen Dupre, an attorney, mother and K-State English major from Dallas, said that coming back after decades away, she’s surprised at how resonant her four years at K-State remain for her. Reconnecting through the Alumni Advisory Council has been more than a personal odyssey back to a cherished time; it’s an opportunity to pass her passion for education on to another generation.

Other members present included Kent Glasscock, who turned his K-State English degree into a stint as Kansas Speaker of the House. He now heads NISTAC, the National Institute for Strategic Technology Acquisition and Commercialization, which works to turn K-State innovations into revenue for the University. Chris Steincamp, from Wichita, turned his geology degree into a career in law. Connie Stamets is a Dallas attorney. And as an emeritus professor of physics, Jim Legg brought an insider’s perspective to things.

“It’s apparent that there’s something special about K-State that makes such successful — and busy — people willing to put their lives aside for a day and address issues that are important to the College.”

Like these supporters of K-State’s College of Arts and Sciences, we thank you, our friends and alumni, for your continuing interest and support of your university. Enjoy this issue of Connections.

Best wishes,

Stephen E. White, dean
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The Start of Something

BIG

Award-winning young playwright ponders his future, relishes his present

by Lisa Sisley ’92
There's no telling if this will turn out to be the best time of Nathan Jackson's life or not, but it's got to rank right up there. Jackson, B.A. '03 theatre, is one of the hottest young playwrights in the country. Within the last few years, he's won back-to-back national forensics championships, earned numerous playwriting honors, and gotten married to boot. Jackson has combined his talent and hard work with an ability to get the most out of every opportunity that comes his way.

A career in the theatre has been Jackson's lifelong goal, but circumstances required the Kansas City, Kan., native to channel his talents into competitive forensics at first, which he didn't expect to enjoy as much as he has.

"I love forensics! I caught onto it in high school," Jackson said. "We really didn't have a theatre department so I did forensics instead. Forensics isn't theatre. They're two different things. But forensics is great for auditioning and presenting yourself."

After Jackson earned his associate's degree at Kansas City Kansas Community College, Dr. Charles Leader, coordinator of KCKCC's theatre program, steered him to K-State, telling him that he would be working with "great people." Jackson was also swayed by the Ebony Theatre's status as the only playhouse in the Midwest devoted to showcasing the work of African Americans, and a forensics scholarship offer didn't hurt. And when he got to know some of the people in the Department of Speech Communication, Theatre and Dance, Jackson was sold.

"Craig Brown (instructor of speech and forensics coach) is like a father figure for a lot of people. And Kate Anderson (associate professor and director of the theatre program) is the mom!" Jackson laughed. "There are three reasons I came to K-State: forensics, Ebony Theatre and Kate Anderson. I met her when I auditioned. She greeted me at the door and was so warm and welcoming. She's this little lady with a huge smile."

Although he mainly saw forensics as a tool to enhance his future in theatre, Jackson nevertheless excelled in the craft, winning national championships in 2002 and 2003 in prose interpretation of selections from a play he wrote himself, "The Mancherios." And as a bonus, Jackson met his wife, Megan Mascorro-Jackson, senior in stage management and drama therapy, at a 2003 forensics meet in Iowa.

"Neither of us made it to the semi-finals at this meet. I was horribly upset by that," Jackson recalled. "But if I had made it, we probably wouldn't have met because we were both in the ‘talk-backs,’ where everybody hears why they didn't make it to the next round. I wouldn't have been there if I had advanced!"

After finishing up his theatre degree in 2003, Jackson could finally focus completely on his long-term goal, playwriting. "The Last Black Play" is the result. It's a satire about Isaiah Cantrell, a young playwright and actor who doesn't want to be labeled a "black performer" so he writes a play that deliberately incorporates stereotypes of African Americans. He fully expects the play to fail. However, when it turns out to be a smash, Isaiah tries to sabotage his own work.

"We wanted a show that's in people's faces. We wanted to change people's thinking. We want them to walk away and do something. We want them to be involved, at least emotionally," Jackson said with his typical intensity.

Jackson and K-State's Ebony Theatre have been winning some big-time collegiate theatre contests with "The Last Black Play," culminating in their performance of it on April 22 and 23 at the Kennedy Center's American College Theatre Festival in Washington, D.C. K-State was the only university in the country invited to stage an entire production with the complete cast.

Along the way to Washington, Jackson has picked up the Lorraine Hansberry National Playwriting Award (twice), the 2006 Mark Twain Comedy Playwriting Award from the American College Theatre Festival, a fellowship to attend the Sundance Institute Theatre Laboratory and a paid membership in the Writer's Guild.

"We wanted a show that's in people's faces. We wanted to change people's thinking. We want them to walk away and do something. We want them to be involved, at least emotionally."
After graduation, most K-Staters believe our education will prepare us for whatever life has in store. But many of us don’t think about how staying connected to our professors and University can be beneficial throughout our careers.

But perhaps we should.

Consider the case of Shell Oil president John Hofmeister, ’71 B.S. political science, ’73 M.S. political science and 2006 Arts and Sciences Alumni Fellow. Over the years, Hofmeister has stayed connected with faculty members in the Department of Political Science, and he credits them with preparing him well for a future as one of the most powerful figures in U.S. business.

“The first 15 years of my career, I was with General Electric. I was with peers from schools all over the United States, including the Ivy League schools,” Hofmeister said. “I held my own in every setting. I always felt quite proud of what I acquired at K-State including my study habits, discipline and better-than-average curiosity.”

Hofmeister, who has lived and worked all over the world, has been with Royal Dutch Shell since 1997, serving as director of human resources before becoming president of Shell Oil Company in 2005. Hofmeister believes his K-State education directly contributed to his business achievements, and he particularly acknowledges Michael Suleiman, distinguished professor of political science, with influencing his future path.

“Political science helped teach me to think, to appreciate, to discover. Part of that is due to the attention I got from faculty. I give Michael Suleiman great credit for opening up my thinking.”

In turn, Suleiman remembers Hofmeister as an exceptionally motivated student, one who put out the extra effort in classes and reaped the extra rewards.

“He was very diligent, hard-working and bright. He learned the material a lot more thoroughly than perhaps many students do,” Suleiman said. “He could take an idea and say ‘this is applicable to this, or this, or this.’ I think that ability to apply ideas has stood him in good stead.”

Hofmeister also credits Suleiman with helping him with a difficult problem years after he graduated. In the mid-1990’s, Hofmeister had trouble recruiting workers who could function effectively in the Middle East. He was faced with a dilemma: hire local workers or recruit from the United States?

“Local workers could be looked down upon by their peers if they worked for a U.S. company. I needed help with how to come to terms with that. So that’s when I got in touch with Michael Suleiman,” Hofmeister said.

“He wanted advice on what kind of [U.S. worker] would do a good job working in a foreign culture,” Suleiman said. “These people would need some
understanding of that culture so they wouldn't be going in blind. This is typical of John's methodical way of doing things. He studies a question well before making a decision.”

Hofmeister spent most of his childhood in Pennsylvania. His family moved to Overland Park at about the same time he arrived as a transferring sophomore at K-State. Originally, Hofmeister began his Wildcat career as an economics major, but he took Political Science 101 as an elective and was fascinated by what it offered. And his required economics courses convinced Hofmeister that he might want to consider a field that was, as he put it, less “numerate” than economics. So he switched majors to political science, believing it would meet this requirement. However....

“After I switched completely to political science, I discovered that when I worked on my master's research, I would still have to be numerate! And now I’m in business and I’m surrounded by a need for numeracy!”

Hofmeister’s wife Karen is an international management consultant in executive coaching and the author of two books. Although they live in Houston, the Hofmeisters are absorbed in renovating an old mill and farm on 120 acres in Hofmeister’s native Pennsylvania.

Of all the things he took away from K-State, Hofmeister says the gift of pragmatism has been the most valuable.

“There was no intellectual arrogance here. I went to school with a bunch of farmers, who I learned from, and they had a sense of realism. K-State is practical. There is no sense of a ‘utopian tomorrow.’ That pragmatism has affected my career because I don’t have an unrealistic sense of the world.”

“I held my own in every setting. I always felt quite proud of what I acquired at K-State including my study habits, discipline and better-than-average curiosity.”
DID YOU KNOW...?
that K-Staters use their electronic gear for more than just entertainment? Take a look at how today’s students use the latest technology to get the most out of their education. With a little fun thrown in, too.

Jump drive
Jump drives — aka keychain drives, thumb drives, flash drives and lipstick drives — are small, portable storage devices that let users carry around a whole lot of data on a tiny piece of hardware that can easily be toted in a pocket, tucked into a wallet or attached to a keychain. And when students go to Hale Library to do some research, they can plug in the drive and access their files. No matter what you call them, jump drives are a nifty tool.

iPod and MP3 player
Your favorite K-Stater may not just be rocking out to a favorite tune when she’s got her iPod buds in her ears. By fall 2006, many classes will be available as “podcasts.” K-Staters will be able to download a lecture or watch a lab experiment on the iPod or MP3 player screen. If a student doesn’t quite “get it” the first time, he or she can listen and watch again — in between rocking out to favorite tunes, of course.

Cell phone
Not just for voices anymore, cell phones now take pictures, surf the Internet, store data, and send text messages. In fact, “texting” is a new shorthand of abbreviations and acronyms. Here’s a hypothetical message sent across a crowded lecture hall: IM SETE CUZ IC UR A QT. (Translation: I’m smiling ear to ear because I see you are a cutie.) When you have to type with two thumbs, you learn to skimp on letters.

Laptop
K-State is one of the “hottest” universities in the Big 12, according to Intel’s “Most Unwired College Campuses” survey. About 90% of the buildings and many outdoor areas on campus have wireless access to the Internet. K-Staters can take their laptops just about anywhere and enroll in a class, email a professor or research a paper. Hmmm…wonder if the tunnels are “hot”? All that steam....
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Techno’ Cats
Rachel Gerk and Loren Canady, employees of the K-State Student Union Computer Store

Today’s students integrate technology into everyday life
Exceptional students appreciate exceptional support

by Kristin Boyd Kemerling ’00
and Lisa Sisley ’92

Jaci Boydston and Caleb Knepper
College graduation is a time to look forward to new prospects. The possibilities seem limitless. Unfortunately, many students today also graduate with seemingly limitless debt. However, thanks to the generosity and foresight of Arts and Sciences benefactors, many students are able to graduate sooner and with less in the debit column. For outstanding recent K-State graduates Jacklyn “Jaci” Boydston and Caleb Knepper, scholarship support is definitely helping them graduate ahead of the game.

Boydston, of Spring Hill, Kan., was the first person from her family to attend K-State and the first in her immediate family to graduate from college. She was awarded the prestigious four-year Putnam Scholarship, which covered her tuition and fees.

“It’s a very substantial scholarship and was very nice to have,” she said.

Boydston, May 2006 summa cum laude graduate in print journalism with a French minor, didn’t originally have any plans to attend K-State.

“My parents always had been huge KU basketball fans. I thought I was going to KU my whole life,” she said. “I ended up applying to K-State kind of by accident, but I’m glad I did. I came here and K-State was so friendly, and I liked everyone. I could see myself here and could tell this is where I’d be the most comfortable.”

Boydston has written a weekly column for the Kansas State Collegian and worked for the Royal Purple. She was involved in Phi Beta Kappa honorary, Pi Delta Phi and Golden Key honorary. She also worked for a law office, taught a Law School Admission Test (LSAT) preparatory class and will attend Georgetown University Law Center this fall. She said it was wonderful to not worry about finances while attending college.

“A lot of people graduate with all kinds of student debt and loans,” she said. “I’ve been very fortunate to be able to avoid that. That wouldn’t have been possible without alumni support and contributions for student scholarships.”

“College is so stressful as it is. I’ve been able to take jobs I’ve wanted to take for the experience to benefit my major and help me learn more, instead of taking jobs to make as much money as possible,” she said. “It’s allowed me to build up my résumé and portfolio and to get new experiences.”

Boydston said receiving a Putnam scholarship has made thinking about her future less worrisome.

“A lot of people graduate with all kinds of student debt and loans,” she said. “I’ve been very fortunate to be able to avoid that. That wouldn’t have been possible without alumni support and contributions for student scholarships.”

Caleb Knepper graduated in May 2006 with dual degrees in biology and microbiology. This native of Clay Center will enter graduate school at Michigan State University in the fall, working for the U.S. Department of Energy Plant Research Lab and pursuing his Ph.D. in genetics.

“Lots of people don’t know exactly what they want to do, but I know I want to run a lab, doing research and development for a company,” Knepper said. “I decided to combine my master’s and Ph.D. programs and do it all together (at Michigan State). Hopefully it will save me a year of grad school.”

Winner of the 2006 H. Henley Haymaker Award for Excellence in Biology, Knepper has been awarded several scholarships, including the Arts and Sciences Fund for Excellence, the Mark A. Chapman Scholarship Fund, the Kelce Foundation Scholarship, the Kansas State University Alumni Association License Plate Educational Scholarship, and the June D. Hull Sherrid Cancer Center Scholarship and Education Fund. Having this support allowed Knepper to devote his time to his studies and actively pursue his goal of lab research.

“Since I was a freshman, I’ve worked for Dr. Jyoti Shah, doing research on how plants defend themselves against aphids. I’m the first freshman he took on in his lab. He said maybe he’d find another freshman next fall, and I asked him, ‘Haven’t you learned your lesson?’” Knepper recalls with a smile.

One of Knepper’s brothers graduated from K-State in 2004 with a degree in chemical engineering and his younger brother is a K-State sophomore in agricultural education.

“My brothers and I have all paid for our own education. And I don’t have any student loans. Having the scholarship money really lets me spend time working in the lab, and I’m there a lot. If I hadn’t had the funding, I couldn’t have done that, I would have had to get another job.”

Knepper clearly understands the connection between the generosity of benefactors and his academic accomplishments.

“It’s really important to provide funding for students, especially in the sciences. We need to get a lot of experience and it’s tough to find a position where you can get hours to get that experience. I was lucky enough to not need to get another job. I could shadow researchers who are doing what I want to do. I got into research much quicker this way.”

If you’re interested in supporting scholarships for K-State students, please contact Mike Harders at 800-432-1578 or mikeh@found.ksu.edu.
Great people change the world with their actions. Husband-and-wife team Adam and Stephanie Springer did just that by serving as Peace Corps volunteers for two years in the African nation of Lesotho. They worked with people who struggled every day against the ravages of HIV/AIDS. When they returned, the Springers continued to commit themselves to bettering the lot of their fellow human beings.

Stephanie and Adam met while at K-State. Stephanie graduated from the College of Arts and Sciences in 2002 in speech communication and anthropology, and Adam earned degrees in 2002 in horticulture and natural resource management and environmental science.

Stephanie now serves as the Peace Corps coordinator for K-State’s Office of International Programs, and Adam is an extension assistant for Sustainable Agricultural Research and Education at K-State. Stephanie and Adam share their international experiences with others by giving lectures and presentations at K-State.

“It’s been wonderful having the support of K-State. K-State has been very receptive and interested in our experience.”

When Adam and Stephanie received their assignment from the Peace Corps, neither of them had even heard of Lesotho, a small mountainous country about 1/7 the size of Kansas in the middle of South Africa. They arrived in June 2003, and before being sworn in as Peace Corps volunteers, Adam and Stephanie received three months of language training for four to six hours a day from Lesotho native speakers.

Adam said that once they arrived in the small village that would be their home for the next two years, the people were very excited to have them there.

“When we arrived, they were very welcoming. We instantly felt like we were a part of the community,” he said.

Stephanie and Adam’s primary work in Lesotho was to help with the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Stephanie served as the youth development adviser to local women. She taught a local woman in the village how to develop skills to empower youth.

“About 27 percent of the adult population in Lesotho is suffering from HIV/AIDS, and less than 1 percent have been tested and know they are positive,” she said. “Since the rate is
so high over there, we found that all of our work came back to HIV/AIDS education and prevention.”

Adam also used his K-State preparation to combat the AIDS epidemic by serving as an agricultural expert in the village. He devised a network of gardens to provide food security for children.

“I was able to help orphans learn the skills to grow vegetables. Since they were kids who had lost their parents because of AIDS, they did not know how to garden and raise crops by themselves,” he said. “By building greenhouses, made with locally available materials, I helped them realize plants could grow in the winter, which was a huge accomplishment for increasing food security and improving nutrition.”

While they were in Lesotho, the Peace Corps paid them a living allowance, their travel expenses and their medical and dental insurance. They also received $6,075 when they came home as a thank-you for their service. During their two years in Africa, Adam and Stephanie were not allowed to drive a car.

“This was for safety reasons and also because they wanted us to live at the same level as the people we were serving,” said Stephanie.

The Peace Corps had an emergency plan in place for Stephanie and Adam in case of natural disaster or political uprising, so they could get out of the country and to a safe place. Adam and Stephanie, though, both agreed they were never afraid while living in Lesotho.

“Lesotho is a very peaceful country,” said Stephanie. “I felt safer in our village in Lesotho than in Manhattan just because people knew me and were always looking out for us.”

Stephanie said there are so many aspects of life in Lesotho that she and Adam miss every day.

“In Lesotho, I saw how generous people were, and I was working with the poorest of the poor,” she said. “They were the most generous and joyful people. They were always laughing and always sharing. It speaks to me that maybe they’re doing something right and we’re not.”

Even though they both miss Lesotho, they both agreed there were definitely things about the U.S. they missed such as going through the drive-thru at Dairy Queen or just using a washing machine.

“In the next five years, we would like to go back to Lesotho,” said Stephanie. “We would like to visit with our friends who we consider family. I really feel like people took us into their families there.”

Stephanie and Adam have both applied to go to graduate school out of state. Stephanie would like to earn a master’s degree in public health, and Adam is interested in environmental sciences. However, they can see themselves joining the Peace Corps again after they retire.

“Peace Corps has opened our eyes to different cultures. The personal growth we’ve experienced has definitely changed our lives,” said Stephanie. “We’re better citizens of the world because of our experience. It’s a great opportunity for Americans to reach out to other people.”
He is a retired obstetrician and gynecologist, and currently teaches medicine at Southern Illinois University. Paul is married to Jill and has a son, Daniel, and a daughter, Aleza.

**1970s**

Janelle (Larson) Womack, Lakewood, Colorado, ’74 B.A. social work and correctional administration, also earned her M.A. in community counseling from the University of Northern Colorado.

Clark S. Larsen, Columbus, Ohio, ’74 B.A. anthropology, is a distinguished professor and chair with the Department of Anthropology at Ohio State University.

Anthony J. Seals, Jonesboro, Georgia, ’79 B.A. journalism/mass communications and history, also earned a J.D. from Thurgood Marshall School of Law at Texas Southern University. He is currently a senior investigator with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Anthony is married to Bonita and has two daughters, Tanika and Mila.

**1980s**

Randy Crow, Valley Center, Kansas, ’80 B.A. music education, is currently the Maize Middle School band director. He was recently awarded Outstanding Music Educator in south central Kansas.

Elizabeth A. Gowdy, Topeka, Kansas, ’81 B.A. social work, earned an M.S.W. and Ph.D. from the University of Kansas. She has traveled nationally to train mental health staff and also has taught extensively at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Geri L. Nelson-Bachman, Overland Park, Kansas, ’85 B.S. physical education and exercise science, also earned her M.S. in health, sport and exercise sciences at the University of Kansas in 2005. Geri is currently a physical education teacher in Shawnee Mission, Kansas.

Rodney D. Wilson, DePere, Wisconsin, ’88 B.S. economics, also earned an M.B.A. at Wichita State University in 1995. He is currently the director of strategic customer planning with Schneider National, Inc.

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**1930s**

Esther Wiedower, Los Angeles, California, ’33 B.S. journalism, is retired from the U.S. Navy and is currently a church organist.

**1950s**

Rev. Richard C. Fraley, Lawrence, Kansas, ’54 B.S. technical journalism with an emphasis on radio and television, is a retired United Methodist minister. He spent 20 years in radio broadcasting and 12 years as executive director of the Dodge City Chamber of Commerce.

Joan Sargent Sherwood, Wichita, Kansas, ’56 B.S. philosophy, is retired. She also earned her M.A. in English at Wichita State University and her Ph.D. in education policy from the University of Kansas. Joan worked for Americorps from 2001 to 2003.

Robert K. Thom, Derby, Kansas, ’57 B.S. chemistry, is a retired customer services chemist who worked 41 years at Vulcan Chemicals. Robert is a master gardener and a member of the Optimist Club, and he belongs to the First United Methodist Church in Wichita, Kansas.

Richard E. Cooper, Lamar, Missouri, ’59 B.S. speech, is retired after 30 years of teaching history. Richard is currently a feature writer for the Lamar Democrat, and is an endowment member of the National Rifle Association.

Lawrence W. Auchard, Sr., Council Grove, Kansas, ’59 B.S. mathematics, is a retired operations research analyst formerly with the U.S. Army. He also earned his M.S.B.A. in management in 1976 from the University of Northern Colorado.

**1960s**

Donald Janes, Breckenridge, Colorado, ’63 Ph.D. microbiology, is a retired microbiologist, university professor, administrator, consultant and Fulbright Fellow. Donald is married with four children and is the president of the board of the Breckenridge Music Festival and volunteers at Vail music, jazz and dance festivals.

Paul E. Berube, Carbondale, Illinois, ’64 B.A. pre-medicine, earned his P.A. and B.S. in medicine in 1975 from Western Michigan University and his M.D. in 1983 from Chicago Medical School.
Did you have a roommate or friend who just seemed like a “regular person” back in your days at K-State who went on to do something amazing? Maybe he trekked through the Himalayas. Perhaps she’s about to announce a cure for the common cold. We all know K-State Arts and Sciences alumni who’ve made us say “Wow, I didn’t know he had it in him!” Send us your ideas about fascinating, inspiring, and just plain great Arts and Sciences Wildcats, and maybe we’ll feature her or him in an upcoming story. You never know, maybe someone will nominate YOU!

Please send your “Destined for Greatness” nomination to asconnec@ksu.edu. Include the nominee’s name, address, email and phone number. Tell us why this Wildcat deserves to have accolades heaped upon him or her!
THANK YOU
to the 4,000 alumni who collectively gave nearly $300,000 in donations to this year’s Telefund. Your contributions make a huge difference in teaching, learning and research.

Go Cats!