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## Story Idea?

Send story and noteworthy ideas and items to Allyson Roberts, [alroberts@widener.edu](mailto:alroberts@widener.edu)

## French Students Take on Service-Based Summer Research Project

Djene Sylla took a moment to stop and think. She shifted her weight from side to side and then quickly pushed up on the frame of her glasses; inside her rectangle lenses appeared a sharp reflection of three people nodding their heads as she proceeded to answer their question in French.

"I'm afraid of public speaking, but this has helped me to overcome that fear," said Sylla, a junior, who recently embarked on a summer research project that helps [French](#) students from Widener connect with French-speaking immigrants in the area.

"I never saw myself teaching a class, but I'm doing it, and I love it because we are actually helping people."

The project began last spring when fellow classmate Tom Herrera, a junior environmental science major, used data from the U.S. Census Bureau to identify a localized hot spot of French speakers in Upper Darby.

Based on that data, Sylla and Ndobolo Bukasa, a sophomore double major in French and nursing, were able to locate a community partner in the Upper Darby Welcome Center. The center helps immigrants from all over the world with their transition into the United States.

Sylla and Bukasa have been using both English and French to teach the center's French-speakers about healthy eating, scheduling doctor appointments, and describing symptoms; they even helped one young woman enroll into a local high school.

"In English classes, you understand 20-25%," said Emmanuel Louis, his



*Junior Djene Sylla helps French-speakers at the Upper Darby Welcome Center.*

words translated from French. "Here I understand 100%."

"They help us a lot...they have a lot of patience and they're nice," added Louis, a native of Haiti.

But French Professor Stephanie Schechner said the project has been a two-way street with the students learning just as much by practicing their conversational French.

"The goal is to provide a specialized community service," said Schechner. "But getting my students in front of native speakers helps them learn more about Francophone culture."

During the fall semester, Schechner plans to take additional students to the Welcome Center every other week for informal English/French conversational practice.

### Learn More at the Summer Research Symposium

Those involved in the summer project at the Welcome Center will share their experience at the Summer Research Symposium scheduled for Friday, Oct. 2. Check forthcoming issues of *What's Up* for details.

## Widener Partnership Charter School STEM Camp Students Learn Valuable Lessons Beyond the Curriculum

How do you release a helium-filled balloon? Ask students in the [Widener Partnership Charter School](#) PECO STEM Camp, and their answers would probably include dominoes, candles, string, duct tape, Match Box cars, and other assorted objects.

That's because the 18 rising sixth through eighth graders participating in the camp were challenged with building a Rube Goldberg machine to do the ordinarily simple task of releasing a balloon. A Rube Goldberg machine is a contraption that is deliberately over-engineered to perform a very simple task in a very complicated fashion.

Students in the STEM Camp got the opportunity to demonstrate their creative and complex machines to their parents at the closing ceremony of the camp on July 31. Jess Dykes, the lead teacher for STEM instruction for the camp, said creating a Rube Goldberg machine teaches students about the concepts of reverse engineering in a creative and fun way.

"The only limits were their creativity, the materials available, and what they could make work," Dykes said. "It's an opportunity for the students to really stretch themselves and do something they thought they couldn't do. I love watching the kids work and seeing them grow."

The goal of the STEM Camp is to increase student interest in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The camp is in its



*Widener Partnership Charter School STEM Camp students prepare their Rube Goldberg machine for demonstration.*

final year of funding from a \$1 million grant from the Exelon Foundation.

The 18 students split into teams to create their machines, receiving an hour of science instruction, an hour of math instruction, and an hour to work on their machines each day of the two-week camp. During the demonstration, some of the machines worked, some didn't. All of the teams, however, had a video to show their parents of their machines working properly.

Even if their yellow balloons weren't released to rise to the ceiling of University Center at Widener, the students learned a valuable lesson. "The most important thing they learned is that they don't give up and that they take on a challenge they think is beyond them," Dykes said.

## Nursing and PT Partner for Interprofessional Conference on Simulation

Widener's [Institute for Physical Therapy Education](#) and [School of Nursing](#) cohosted in July the first Widener University Interprofessional Conference on Simulation. Led by Dawn Ferry, director for the [Center of Simulation and Computerized Testing](#) for the School of Nursing, and Dr. Kristin Lefebvre, associate professor in the Institute for Physical Therapy Education, this was the first conference of its kind focused on the use of high fidelity simulation, standardized patients, and interprofessional collaborations.

More than 50 faculty and clinicians from all over the country attended to both network and learn about the interprofessional high fidelity simulations that are occurring right here at Widener with the nursing and physical therapy students.

Highlights of the conference included presentations by Widener University alumnae Dr. Mary Francis (PhD in Nursing Class of 2014) and Dr. Maureen Francis (Doctor of Physical Therapy Class of 2012).

The Second Annual Interprofessional Conference on Simulation is already in the works for next summer.



*Conference attendees spend time in the School of Nursing's simulation labs.*

## Faces of Widener: George Thompson

By Khalil Williams, '16, communication studies



**George Thompson,**  
**Web Content Manager**

A genuine creative by trade and nature, George Thompson is a vital member of the Widener University Relations family.

Working as web content manager since 2005, Thompson oversees the technical, design, and editorial aspects of the university's multimedia content. Thompson acts as administrator for the database that contains all webpages for [widener.edu](http://widener.edu), Widener's institutional website. He also trains the database's users on updating the webpages in their individual departments.

The Wilmington, DE, native applies his 10 years of experience in the trade magazine business, as well as a background in mobile technology, to his work. "Not long after I started working at Widener, the smartphone trend came along," Thompson said. "So I saw value in having Widener's website be mobile-friendly."

Thompson enjoys working with people across campus who, he says, help build the webpages to what they are. He also enjoys the students, staff, and faculty of the university.

As a member of the greater Widener community, he has served as a big brother to students at Stetser Elementary School, as well as a volunteer during Move-In Day and the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service.

Thompson took pictures and interacted with the public at the first Community Tech Day, sponsored last year by the Computer Science Department. "What I enjoyed about Community Tech Day was the community," said Thompson. "Meeting people and engaging with them in a meaningful way is always the

best experience."

According to Thompson, the Computer Science Department should be commended for aiding the people of Chester. "They provided a great pro-bono service; not only were computers fixed, but the greater good was served," said Thompson. He plans to return as a volunteer for the second event this fall.

When Thompson is not at Widener, he likes to read. He describes himself as a "voracious reader" and mostly reads nonfiction titles. He also takes walks and hikes through the woods in his spare time. In addition, he enjoys playing songs on his guitar and listening to many different kinds of music. His all-time favorite band is 1960s rock band Creedence Clearwater Revival. The band's 1970 rendition of the classic Marvin Gaye single "I Heard It Through the Grapevine" is one of Thompson's favorites. He also enjoys artists such as Peter Gabriel and Rush, as well as jazz and instrumental compositions played through the saxophone and guitar.

## Follow the Middle States Blog

The Middle States Steering Committee has created a WordPress site to serve as a hub for all communication related to the progress of our Middle States self-study and re-accreditation process over the next two years. The goals of the site are

- to provide a home for useful information like working group

members, Middle States standards, and the self-study design

- to share news, updates, progress, and deadlines with the campus community
- to make the process of re-accreditation as transparent as possible
- to provide opportunities for feedback and dialogue—members of the campus community are free to comment (comments will be moderated)

Subscribe to the blog, or check back regularly.

Visit <https://widenermiddlestates.wordpress.com>—your stop for all things Middle States at Widener. The latest post details our intended outcomes of the self-study and re-accreditation process.

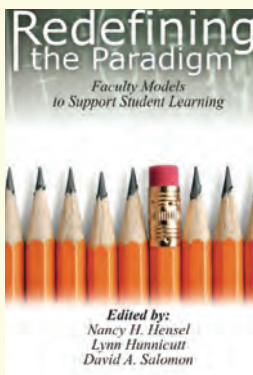
We'll continue to provide Middle States updates as well in forthcoming issues of *What's Up @ Widener*.

## Widener Contributes to NAC&U Publication Aiming to Increase Student Learning

Faculty and administrators from Widener University contributed to “[Redefining the Paradigm: Faculty Models to Support Student Learning](#)”—a monograph that encourages colleges and universities to more effectively structure departments to address changes in higher education and better support student learning.

Over the past two years, seven Widener faculty and administrators worked with colleagues throughout the New American Colleges and Universities (NAC&U) consortium on this Teagle Foundation-funded project to study and make recommendations on holistic departments and faculty evaluation methods.

Widener faculty and administrators involved in the initiative include **Dr. Stephen W. Wilhite**, interim president; **Dr. Mary Baumberger-**



**Henry**, professor of nursing; **Dr. Joy Dickerson**, associate professor of hospitality management; **Dr. Becky Jones**, associate professor of political science; **Dr. Dennis Laker**, associate professor of business administration; **Dr. Susan Schaming**, associate professor of education; and **Dr. Robert Wellmon**, associate professor of physical therapy.

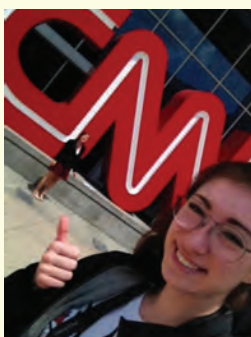
“Colleges and universities haven’t really changed the way departments are structured and the way faculty are evaluated despite major shifts in pedagogy and faculty responsibilities over the past few decades,” said the monograph’s co-editor Dr. David Salomon, professor of English and director of undergraduate research at The Sage Colleges. “We need to move away from viewing professors as the ‘sage on the stage’ and instead focus on the various activities—inside and outside of the classroom—that they do to foster student learning and advance

the institutional mission.”

In the monograph, NAC&U outlines a new way of organizing departments and programs as “holistic departments” and recommends a new process for faculty evaluation called “the learning-centered paradigm.” Traditionally faculty have been evaluated on scholarship, teaching, and service, but this monograph addresses the reality that faculty are engaged in many activities that cannot be easily separated into those categories. Instead, it argues for a holistic view of a department’s collective workload and seeks to achieve fluid, equitable workloads that can change as the department’s and faculty members’ needs change.

“Redefining the Paradigm: Faculty Models to Support Student Learning,” is available on the NAC&U website at [www.newamericancolleges.org](http://www.newamericancolleges.org). Working to support and strengthen liberal arts education, The Teagle Foundation supports projects to improve student learning in the arts and sciences.

## Styles Attends National Managing Editors Seminar



The top editor for the *Blue & Gold*, Widener’s student media site, attended the Management Seminar for College News Editors (MSCNE) in

July. Kelsey Styles, editor-in-chief, joined 60 editors from 58 schools at the weeklong seminar at the Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Georgia in Athens. While there, she discovered new ways to produce content and deliver stories to the public.

She and fellow managing editors shared their college media sites and exchanged printed papers, but also teamed together to participate in mock reporting exercises and create brand new sites on which they practiced their skills.

Styles and the group of students also visited the Cox Media Group in Atlanta and the CNN World Headquarters where they sat in on a conference with Paul Crum, CNN’s vice president of U.S. news operations, as well as participated in a Q&A with CNN reporters. Styles wrote of her experience: “The conference was one of those experiences that almost didn’t seem real—‘am I actually in a room with the best of the best in this business?’

I asked—until the head of internships came out and students began asking questions about how to apply. I know I have a lot to improve upon, and I may never be accepted to work for CNN, but the opportunity to be in that room and have the head of CNN’s internship program offer insider information about how to get involved there made me feel worthy—like I could actually do this for a living one day.”

Styles, a junior from New Castle, DE, is a double major in [creative writing](#) and [communication studies](#). She became editor-in-chief of the *Blue & Gold* in the spring semester. Follow her work and the work of Widener students at [www.theblueandgold.com](http://www.theblueandgold.com).

## Widener Law Commonwealth Students Begin Journey to Becoming Lawyers

See page 6 for a story on Delaware Law's welcome event

First year [Widener University Commonwealth Law School](#) student Cassie Semler wants to focus on advocacy, especially prisoner reform. Her husband, Tyler, has a passion for environmental issues. The husband and wife team chose to attend Widener Law Commonwealth after graduating from the University of West Virginia for the same reason—the school's focus on the common good.

"It seemed like the right fit for us," said Cassie at the Welcome to the Profession event last week, kicking off the 2015-16 academic year. The school welcomed 75 new students from nine different states and Jamaica. They hold degrees from 49 different colleges and universities and range in age from 21 to 40.

"The word 'commonwealth' in our name was chosen carefully. The name is symbolic of our historical connection with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania," Dean Christian Johnson said. "The word commonwealth is probably even more important because its historical meaning connotes individuals coming together for the common good of society. At Widener Law Commonwealth, students, faculty, staff, and alumni all come together united in serving the common good of our local community, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the United States of America."

Eric Kniskern, director of admissions for the school, said he has a really good feeling about this class. "The vibe is extraordinarily positive," Kniskern said. "They are all very excited about what's coming."



**Alumna Rachel Hadrick, '13, welcomes the incoming class at the Commonwealth Law School.**

Alumna Rachel Hadrick, '13, an associate with the Harrisburg-based law firm of McNees Wallace and Nurick, LLC, welcomed the class and imparted words of wisdom to the eager students. One of the most important suggestions was to take advantage of the opportunities the school has to offer.

"I took every opportunity that was presented to me," Hadrick said. "The more opportunities you take, the more opportunities that will be presented to you in the future."

The Hon. Susan E. Schwab, U.S. magistrate judge for the Middle District of Pennsylvania and a graduate of the first class of the school in 1992, administered the Affirmation of Professionalism to the class, and spoke about her own experiences as a law student at Widener. She pointed out several faculty members in the audience who were her professors as a student.

"When you graduate, you will leave this place feeling connected to the people in this room," Judge Schwab said, "and you will be better lawyers for having known them."

View all of the photos from the event on [Flickr](#).

## Widener and Cabrini Partner on Law School Early and Express Admissions Programs

Cabrini College students can now receive express admission to law school or earn their undergraduate and law degrees in just six years thanks to agreements Cabrini recently signed with Widener University and its two law schools.

Jeff Gingerich, provost and vice president for academic affairs at Cabrini College, signed the agreements at a ceremony at Widener joined by Widener representatives Dr. Stephen C. Wilhite, interim president; Christian Johnson, dean of Widener University Commonwealth Law School in Harrisburg, PA, and Rodney Smolla, dean of Widener University Delaware Law School in Wilmington, DE.

The 3+3 Early Admission Program allows qualified Cabrini students to begin their studies at either Commonwealth Law School or Delaware Law School in what would normally be their senior year of undergraduate studies. Students must complete all major and core courses and 75 percent of their bachelor's degree with a 3.0 grade point average before enrolling at Widener. They must also fulfill all other admissions requirements.

Through the Express Admission Program, Cabrini students with a 3.0 grade point average will be admitted to Widener upon completion of all undergraduate degree requirements. Students must also meet or exceed the median LSAT score of the current law school entering class and fulfill other admissions requirements.

Since 2008, 19 Cabrini graduates have matriculated at Widener for law school. Cabrini also has articulation agreements with Widener for graduate studies in human sexuality and social work, and tourism and hospitality. Widener has similar articulation agreements for its law schools with The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, Elizabethtown College, and for its [own undergraduate students](#).

## Delaware Law School Entering Class Told 'This is Your Family'



*Alumnus Charles M. Gibbs, '10, addresses the incoming class at the Delaware Law School.*

The newest students at [Delaware Law School](#) were officially welcomed last week with a program and reception on the eve of their first orientation classes. The annual “Welcome to the Profession” event featured remarks from Dean Rod Smolla and a keynote address from alumnus Charles M. Gibbs, '10.

“I love this profession. I love what it means to society,” Smolla told them. “It is a sacred calling. It is a noble trust.”

The class is comprised of 157 students—a 25 percent increase over last year’s incoming class. Seventy two percent of them are first-generation law students. Students studying in the full-time division hailed from 63 colleges and universities while the students in the part-time division came from 25 different undergraduate schools.

Gibbs regaled the crowd with humorous and poignant stories of moot court victories, memorable professor interactions, and lifelong friendships formed in the trenches of academic rigor. He called Delaware Law a family, and the Ruby R. Vale Moot Courtroom, where the event was held, the

school’s “living room.” It is a place where big things will happen and memories will be made, he said.

“This is your family. It means you will grow together,” he said. “Put everything you have into it.”

Alumni Association President Renae Axelrod, '91, encouraged the new class to reach out and get involved.

“Your dedication to the profession starts here and starts now,” she said. “We welcome you with open arms.”

Students also heard from their Student Bar Association President Brian Panella, a third-year law student elected to the top leadership post in the spring. He introduced the association executive board and advised the new law students to be active but not to let that stretch their studies thin.

“You can do this,” Panella said. “You have made the absolutely correct choice by coming here.”

See additional photos from the event on Delaware Law’s [Flickr page](#).

## Apogee Scholars Named

Seven Widener freshmen have been named Apogee Scholars by the [Oskin Leadership Institute](#) for their high potential for leading change on campus and in their communities. The students are also recipients of the Widener High School Leadership Award and received a \$20,000 scholarship to attend Widener.

The incoming Apogee Scholars include:

- **Iman Elkhashab** of Broomall, PA, who will study biology
- **Kaylee Horchak** of Mullica Hill, NJ, who will study nursing
- **Alyssa Horton** of Pemberton, NJ, who will study management/marketing
- **Theresa Kash** of Malvern, PA, who will study biochemistry
- **Anthony Marano** of Aston, PA, who will study management
- **David McCann** of Springfield, PA, who will study exploratory studies
- **Samantha Robinson** of Maple Glen, PA, who will study social work

“Widener and the Oskin Leadership Institute are excited to welcome the incoming class of Apogee Scholars to campus,” said Dr. Arthur J. Schwartz, executive director of the Oskin Leadership Institute. “They have already proved themselves to be leaders in their high schools and in their communities, and we look forward to helping them reach their leadership potential.”

As Apogee Scholars, the students will be asked to complete the 18 workshops required for a Widener Leadership Certificate by the end of their sophomore year. Once they earn their certificate, the Apogee Scholars will be involved in all aspects of the Oskin Leadership Institute, including serving as leadership coaches for new students and designing and facilitating their own leadership workshops.

## Noteworthy

**Dr. Kathryn Healey**, professor of psychology, has been awarded a Trainer Faculty Fellowship by the Oskin Leadership Institute. The fellowship provides Healey with funding to continue her research on the nature of moral injury and its relationship to ethical leadership. It also offers opportunities for several undergraduate psychology students to participate in all aspects of the research project. Read the full [news release](#).

**Dr. Marcine Pickron-Davis**, chief community engagement and diversity officer, has been named to the board of directors for the Delaware County Community Foundation, which supports charitable giving in the county through grant making, charitable vehicles, fund management, and community resources

Several faculty members of the School of Nursing presented

at the Sigma Theta Tau 26th International Research *Question Locally, Engage Regionally, Apply Globally* Conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico, July 23-27. **Dr. Laura Dzurec**, dean; **Dr. Mary Francis**, lecturer; **Dr. Stephanie Jeffers**, assistant professor; **Dr. Susan Mills**, assistant professor; **Dr. Rose Schwartz**, assistant professor; and **Dr. Pamela Williams**, assistant professor; all presented. All are pictured below.



## Widener-Crozer Graduates First Radiologic Technology Class



**The first class of the Widener-Crozer Radiologic Technology program graduated on June 18 in the Clark Auditorium at Crozer-Chester Medical Center. The members of the class began their journey in July 2013 and developed close friendships. They helped one another succeed.**



## Spotlight on Sports: Follow Your Widener Pride on Social Media

For the first time in department history, there is a Facebook page and an Instagram account designated specifically to highlight and promote your Widener Pride and the student-athletes' accomplishments throughout the year.

These accounts will be used solely for the promotion of our 21 athletic programs, with emphasis on each team's successes along with individual moments of excellence and standout performances. Please help get these accounts rolling by liking the pages and sharing with your friends, coworkers, teammates, etc.

Throughout the year, posts will include game recaps, "Athletes of the Week", conference news, standings, outstanding performances, etc. Do not hesitate to like these pages. This will give you a quick and easy way to interact with your Widener Pride and to keep up to date with the student-athletes as they go out and compete day-in and day-out.

**Twitter:** "Widener Athletics" @WidenerSports

**Facebook:** "Widener University Athletics" [www.facebook.com/WidenerSports](http://www.facebook.com/WidenerSports)

**Instagram:** "Widener University Athletics" @WidenerSports

# Two-Week Peek

*A Look at the Next Two Weeks  
in Widener Events*

## Wednesday, August 19

Classes begin for all JD and MJ students at Delaware Law (Second Day of Class for Commonwealth Law students)

## Thursday, August 20

**3–7 p.m.** Community Day; Delaware Law, Campus Lawn

## Monday, August 24

Classes begin at the Legal Education Institute; Delaware Law

**12 p.m.** Legal Delegation from Liberia begins four-day program in Delaware with welcome luncheon; Delaware Law, Barristers' Club

## Wednesday, August 26

New Student Move-in Day; Main Campus

## Friday, August 28

**9:30 a.m.** Freshman Convocation; Memorial Field

## Saturday, August 29

**10 a.m.** Women's and Men's Cross Country in the Alumni Invitational; Home

## Sunday, August 30

Upperclassmen Move-in Day; Main Campus

**3 p.m.** Welcome Back Bash; Kapelski Portico

## Monday, August 31

First Day of Class; Main Campus

## Tuesday, Sept. 1

**10 a.m.** [“Explorations in Printmaking” art exhibit opens](#); Widener Art Gallery

**5 p.m.** Women's Soccer vs. Swarthmore College; Home

**7 p.m.** Women's Volleyball vs. Swarthmore College; Home

**7:30 p.m.** Men's Soccer vs. Stockton University; Home

## Widener Art Gallery Presents Explorations in Printmaking

The Widener University Art Gallery's first exhibit of the academic year, *Explorations in Printmaking*, comes from the Cheltenham Printmakers Guild and features the work of 27 area printmakers.

Printmaking techniques featured in the exhibit include monoprints, collagraphs, dry point, digital, and silk screen, among others.

**When:** Sept. 1 through Oct. 24 (The Art Gallery is open on Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Wednesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) It is closed Sept. 5 and 26.

**Where:** Widener University Art Gallery, University Center

\*Meet the artists at a special reception on Sept. 19 at 1 p.m. in the Art Gallery.



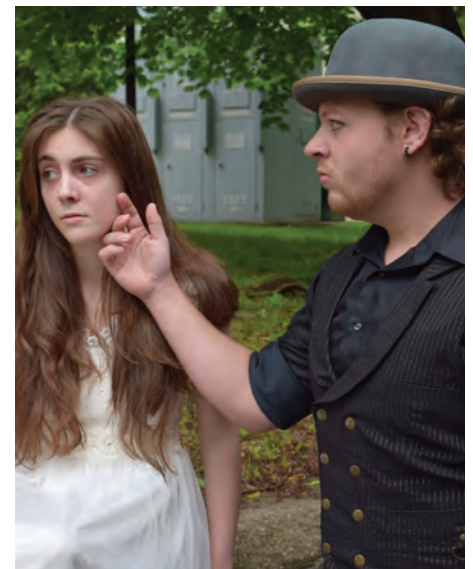
*Image: Untitled by Stephen Kennedy, monotype, 18"x24"*

## Save the Date:

Get your tickets now to see Widener's Lone Brick Theatre Company participate in the Philadelphia Fringe Festival with the original play, "Dissever My Soul."

The first show is Sept. 4 at 9 p.m. at Historic Rittenhouse Town. You'll have 10 opportunities to catch the performance.

For more information, please see the [full news release](#) about the show.



## Campus Kudos

Kudos to **Candi Caporale** for helping her colleagues in the Office of Development while the office was "between" administrative assistants. Her help was much appreciated by the development staff.

If you know of someone or a group deserving of recognition for an act of kindness, e-mail Allyson Roberts at [alroberts@widener.edu](mailto:alroberts@widener.edu)