To the moon and back
From dusty Pullman to outer space

John Bussey, one of the awardees of the SURCA 2021 Undergraduate Research Award is a student at WSU Pullman. As a chemical engineering and materials science major, John has been working on an out-of-this-world project. Along with mentor John McCloy, Bussey has been researching quality analogs (simulants) in high quantities that can be used for testing lunar equipment. John comments that lunar regolith (or dust) is hazardous for humans and harmful for equipment.

In his research, John is working to develop a cleaning system for the suits astronauts would wear during the moon mission which, according to NASA, will be launched in 2024. In order to test the equipment, Bussey is making use of the ash that landed in Pullman after the volcanic eruption of Mt. St. Helens in 1980. He explains that St. Helens’ ash is a relatively high-quality, medium-fidelity simulant that can replicate moon dust. Hence, it is being used to test lunar-bound products.

John’s presentation at SURCA 2021, titled “Characterization of Mt. St. Helens Ash for Use as a Lunar Regolith Simulant,” was highly acclaimed. If you missed his presentation at the Showcase poster session and were not able to attend last month’s winter luncheon (where he also presented), You can see his poster presentation at this link.

SURCA 2022
The Emeritus Society Undergraduate Research Awards and Humanities grant

The Showcase for Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities, SURCA, is a WSU-wide event that brings faculty, undergraduates and other participants together. In this event, intellectual or creative contribution is recognized, and the Emeritus Society takes part in it with two different types of awards.

The first is the Undergraduate Research Award, which consists of five $500 dollars awards in the areas of physical sciences and mathematics; biosciences, engineering and applied sciences; arts, humanities, and creative activities; and social, economic, and behavioral sciences. The second is the Undergraduate Research Grant in Arts and Humanities, which consists of two $1000 dollar grants.

For the former award, all research should be completed whereas for the latter, the project can be at different stages of development.

The SURCA 2022 will be an in-person event this year and will take place on March 28. You can read more information about it at this link.

What happens now?
The Emeritus Society’s Fall meeting of 2021

Last October, Tom Brigham publicly announced that his duties as the Society’s secretary were coming to an end in Fall 2022. To ease the transition, Charley Gaskins and Larry Fox are working with Tom in running the Society.

It is expected that Larry and Charley will continue their duties once Tom has stepped down, but they welcome any who wants to join them and help them run the group.

While it is true that we all miss Tom greatly after over a decade of service, we all wish him well in his retirement from the Society.

Guest speakers
The new trend at the Society

The new trend at the Society is duties as the Emeritus Society traveling around the world while working as a flight attendant after graduating with a degree in foreign language and holds a master’s in Ministry of Foreign Affairs, diplomatic division, teaching English to diplomats of the country. Because of the pandemic situation, she has continued working for Chile remotely.

Estephanie, the new graduate assistant for the 2021-22 academic year. She is from Santiago, Chile, and is now pursuing a Ph. D. in Language, Literacy, and Technology at WSU. Before coming to Pullman, Estephany was a teacher in the English teaching training program at Universidad de Santiago de Chile (USACH) and worked for the Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, diplomatic division, teaching English to the future diplomats of the country. Because of the pandemic situation, she has continued working for Chile remotely.

Estephanie S. López Contreras

The new kid from the block
Meet your new GA

Estephanie is the new graduate assistant for the 2021-22 academic year. She is from Santiago, Chile, and is now pursuing a Ph. D. in Language, Literacy, and Technology at WSU. Before coming to Pullman, Estephany was a teacher in the English teaching training program at Universidad de Santiago de Chile (USACH) and worked for the Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, diplomatic division, teaching English to the future diplomats of the country. Because of the pandemic situation, she has continued working for Chile remotely.

Although she is a teacher of English as a foreign language and holds a master’s in education, she spent the first few years after graduation traveling around the world while working as a flight attendant for a Middle Eastern airline and the Chilean flag carrier. These jobs were another type of education, and the skills she learned during those years have been highly valuable and helpful for life.

On a more personal note, Estephany married Alvaro, a flight attendant, in 2015 in the Museum of Flight in Seattle, WA. A year later, they rescued a stray dog, Rebecca, and has been a family member ever since. Estephany and her family love life in the Palouse and really enjoy the small-town feeling of Pullman. When they are not caught up with school or work, they usually spend their afternoons at Pooch Park and weekends exploring eastern Washington or visiting Estephany’s sister in Seattle. As a couple, Alvaro and Estephany enjoy traveling, going out for dinners, and attending concerts, and a glass of good wine (preferably Chilean).

They have adjusted really well to the slowed-down pace in Pullman; commuting times is what they love the most! And while the winters are certainly colder than in Santiago, they hope they can stay here for a long time.

Our last presentation of the semester was led by Dr. Aurora Clark, who presented about developing innovative methods to advance the study of complex chemical solutions and their interfaces using molecular simulation and integrating methods from graph theory, topology, and geometry. Undoubtedly, her presentation was stellar.

Most of these presentations were recorded and shared with the Society; however, they will soon become available on our website (provided we obtain permission from the presenters). For this spring, our first speaker will be Dr. Mathew Sutton. He will talk to us about his recent publication titled Double Crossed: The Missionaries Who Spied for the United States During the Second World War. His presentation will be on Wednesday, February 2nd.

To keep you informed about upcoming presentations, Estephany, the GA, will send email invitations. In addition, you can visit our website for an updated calendar of events. What is more, if you would like to propose a topic or a speaker, please send your recommendations our way. We would be glad to receive your recommendations for future presentations!
Coffee meetings and events are (partially) back
Past and upcoming events

Considering the uncertainties of the last 20 months, the Emeritus Society suspended their usual gatherings on Tuesday mornings. However, with the COVID19 vaccine and booster shots, the Society decided to return to some group activities.

On November 16, 2021, we had our first socially distant coffee meeting after two years. Attendance was limited, but conversation was great.

We are planning on more coffee meetings during the spring semester; however, these will be subject to change considering the developments with the new COVID19 variant, Omicron. For now, the Society is planning on having coffee meetings twice a month.

Regarding events, we held a winter luncheon on Tuesday, December 14 at the Lewis Alumni Center. During this event, emeriti were able to listen to two presentations by our Undergraduate Research Scholarship Award recipients: Randi Richards and John Bossey. Randi talked about her current research on Rhizobium bacteria, and John presented about his fascinating project concerning the space suits astronauts will use in the future mission to the moon.

The Society is also planning an in-person event for the Legacy of Excellence lecture. The lecture will be on March 24 at Todd Hall 220. More information about this event will be sent closer to the date.

If you have suggestions for other type of activities either in person or online, do not hesitate to let us know. You can communicate your ideas at emeritussociety@wsu.edu.

Vaccination record cards.

Workday and vaccination verification
It has come to stay

In an effort to modernize different administrative processes, WSU has implemented Workday as the “primary finance and administration, human resources, post-award grants management, and payroll system” (https://modernization.wsu.edu). While Workday has presented challenges for some faculty and staff, it has certainly proved to be an efficient technology for university administration.

Last year, most emeriti experienced Workday first-hand with the vaccination verification requirement. This verification consists of two steps, the first one is to complete a simple form on the system, and the second requires that you show your vaccination card to your department chair. Although the deadline to complete the verification on Workday has passed, WSU encourages all faculty, staff, and retirees to comply with this state mandate, especially if you make use of campus facilities, such as an office or the library.

If able and willing to comply with this verification, emeriti should go to https://modernization.wsu.edu to access Workday. Then, they should verify if their status reads “affiliate” next to their name. If it does, you can continue with your verification by typing “request” in the search box and selecting COVID19. The verification form should appear, and you would be able to complete it in less than two minutes. However, if next to your name you read “retired” instead of “affiliate”, contact the Emeritus Society GA at emeritussociety@wsu.edu. She will contact your former department and have you added to the new system. The change of status in the system is necessary to move forward with the verification.

Workday is not only necessary for the vaccine verification, if you are still advising students or have some work affiliation with WSU you will need to use Workday.
The scoop of the day
A conversation with Sally

In a male-dominated group, Dr. Sally Horton, discusses her experience with WSU and the Emeritus Society. Originally from Scotland, Sally came to the United States a few decades ago. When she arrived at WSU, she was a family economics specialist, but later became part of the Human Development Department. While she never taught in the department, she did conduct research and with extension programs.

Sally at a Christmas market in Europe.

As part of the extension program, her job was to take research from the university and other sources and make that available to the people of the state. Among the topics she mainly taught people in the community were home economics, human development, and economics. She also worked with families in teaching them about food preservation and budgeting.

When asked about the imbalance between men and women in her field, she did mention that she was one of the few back then. However, she states she never felt discriminated because of that. When discussing how women’s role has change over the years, she expresses that the main changes are seen in that they now occupy higher-rank positions, and the number of female faculty has enlarged.

The Emeritus society and the Provost Office
An interview with vice provost Dr. Laura Hill

Dr. Hill expressed in her interview that the role of all vice provost and our newly appointed chancellor, Dr. Elizabeth Chilton, have changed over the last two years with the demands the COVID-19 pandemic has brought. Dr. Hill explained that the administrative burden has increased among all in the Provost Office; and this has sometimes meant that implementation of certain projects is delayed in order to prioritize other issues. She also addresses that this is a situation not only the Provost Office experience, but other departments at WSU too.

Regarding the connection between the Emeritus Society and the Office of the Provost, Dr. Hill states that while resources, especially time, are limited, the emeriti will always find support and help in the office. She especially addresses the importance of scholarship and mentorship the emeriti can provide to younger scholars and students since, in her words, the Emeritus Society is a group with many talents, interests, and values.

The vice provost also remarks the significance of the different awards the Society offers to WSU students, and that these should be further promoted. However, she does point out that the Provost Office does not have a revenue, thus, budget toward funding more opportunities should come, primarily, from the Society itself. Concerning this, she suggests the Society could organize more events as a means to obtain more funding.

“"The Emeritus Society is a group of people with many talents, interests, and values”" - Laura Hill

In addition, she states that contacting other organizations of retired faculty could also inform decisions within the WSU Emeritus Society. What is more, she also indicates that affiliations with organizations such as AROHE are considerably beneficial, and that these types of consultations such be maintained.

On a concluding note, vice provost Hill invites all emeriti to maintain their involvement with WSU since their personal, professional, and research experience is valuable the university and the people that conform it.