



newsletter

CAMPBELL UNIVERSITY FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

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History in the Making

BY HOLLEY LONG, METADATA AND DIGITAL INITIATIVES LIBRARIAN

In early February 2025, word spread throughout North Carolina that Dr. William M. Downs had been chosen to lead Campbell University in its next era. Newspapers throughout the state reported the story, including The (Raleigh) News and Observer, The Fayetteville Observer, The (Dunn) Daily Record, and Greater Fayetteville Business Journal, to name just a few.

Dr. Downs officially took office on July 1, 2025, and on March 27, 2026, Campbell University officially invested him. Only the 6th president in the institution's 139-year history, his investiture ceremony took place during Founder's Week, a tradition that dates all the way back to the 1935 ceremony for Leslie H. Campbell, son of founder James Archibald Campbell.

To commemorate the occasion, Wiggins Memorial Library collaborated with General Counsel Gina Calabro, Paralegal Amy Rutledge, and Vice

President for Student Life and Christian Mission Faithe Beam to curate an exhibit of archival material documenting the institution's six presidents

and their inaugural festivities. The exhibit was on display twice in the Oscar N. Harris Student Union; the first time for the Wednesday, March 25th dedication of the 90-foot-tall willow oak on the Academic Circle, aged at 275- to 300-years-old by the North Carolina Forestry Service.

About 50 yards away, a new Legacy Tree was planted that day as well; Rev. Dr. Beam noted that this new sugar maple, fittingly, will turn bright orange each fall.

The archival display was set up again in the Union for a

reception after the Friday investiture. Turnout for both days was terrific.

In the brief time that Dr. Downs has been in office he already has implemented several important initiatives, including waiving tuition for Harnett County residents and creating a bold, new strategic



Three legacies: (From left) Dr. J. Bradley Creed, fifth President of Campbell University; newly inaugurated Dr. William Downs, sixth President; and Dr. Jerry Wallace, fourth President.



Dr. and Mrs. Downs celebrated inauguration week during Founder's Week. Students celebrated by getting a souvenir Founder's Oak sweatshirt!

Continued on page 4

from the president



Dr. Lin Coker

*Friends President;
Chairman, Department
of Chemistry & Physics;
Associate Professor of
Chemistry*

Greetings Friends of the Library Members:

I know the library staff will fill this issue of Newslite with lots of interesting information about the great things happening at the Library. I do want to mention that the Wiggins Memorial Library Academic Symposium this year was made part of the weeklong celebration of Dr. Downs as Campbell University's 6th President. This was a great way to showcase our student's work, and gave me pause that since 1887 this University has had only six presidents.

Please permit me to brag about my daughters and their love of reading. This past Saturday we went shopping at the warehouse club, and Leah wanted to get a big bag of candy; so she hid it underneath a book, "Bloodsinger," that she also wanted. There seems to be a Coker family tradition that books can hide bags of candy, as she got the book. Leah is also a speed reader. She could probably read the entire book in less than a day with great comprehension. I truly envy her that talent.

As this academic year is fast winding down, I know that Dean Bahnman and the entire library staff are busy preparing for the upcoming academic year, and I look forward to seeing what they have in store for the Friends of the Library.

Dr. Lin Coker

More Than Mugs: Ceramics Sale Returns

BY HANNAH HOLMES, REFERENCE & INSTRUCTION LIBRARIAN

Wiggins Library partnered once again with Studio Art Professor Ray Im to bring a ceramics cup sale back to the Student Art Gallery space. Following the success of a Fall 2025 event, this semester's sale returned with an even broader selection of student-made work, drawing members of the campus community to browse and purchase unique, hand-crafted pieces.

Held at the Student Art Gallery on the second floor of the Library, the sale featured more than just cups. Students showcased a variety of functional ceramics, including plates, dishes, and even full tea sets, offering something for every taste and use. Each piece reflected the individuality of its maker while maintaining a focus on craftsmanship and

usability. Expanding the offerings further, Symposium High Merit artist Coral Burke contributed a collection of ceramic jewelry, highlighting her style and artistry.

Beyond providing a platform for students to sell their work, the event continues to challenge traditional perceptions of the library as solely a study space. By hosting a lively, hands-on sale within its walls, the library fosters a sense of creativity, entrepreneurship, and connection across disciplines.

With another strong turnout, the ceramics sale continues to grow as a valued campus event, supporting student artists while inviting the community to engage with art in a tangible, meaningful way. ■



Members of the Campbell community browse collections of ceramics, including mugs, plates, tea sets, and even necklaces by student artists. Photos courtesy of Professor Ray Im, [frameimagination.com](https://www.frameimagination.com).

Congratulations!

These accomplished Wiggins Memorial Library Graduate and Undergraduate Student Assistants have reached their higher education milestones while serving the Campbell community with excellence and dedication. Kudos and huzzahs to each!

GRADUATE DEGREES

Alessandra (Aley) Clent
Master of Business, Risk Management
Bachelor of Arts, Finance & Business
Management

Lori Poston
Master of Divinity

UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES

Simon Osbourne
Bachelor of Arts, Graphic Design

Leann (Lea) Politz
Bachelor of Social Work

Liliana Saguilan-Mendoza
Bachelor of Business Administration,
Finance & Management

Cassady Wall
Bachelor of Arts, English



plan to guide the institution in the coming years. The archival exhibit focused on these early accomplishments as well as news coverage of Downs' appointment to the office.

The exhibit, divided into six sections, one for each president, began with founder James Archibald, who stepped from the position of principal of Buies Creek Academy into the role of Campbell Junior College president without an inaugural celebration. Nonetheless, the archive is replete with artifacts that chronicle J. A.'s good works as an educator.



Students view the archival exhibit outlining the timeline of Campbell's history through its presidents.

Just three years before the Academy became a college, he and his wife, Cornelia, travelled from Buies Creek to Stockholm, Sweden, to attend the Third Baptist World Congress. Given the Campbell's calling to educate young people, it was fitting that a major outcome of this Congress was formation of the World Baptist Young People's Union. A letter from J. A. to a friend back home chronicling this trip was on display at the exhibit. The letter stated, "I have seen many strange and wonderful things on this trip." When describing the typical breakfast

in Sweden, he stated, "The coffee is too weak to speak to you and the butter is strong enough to walk around." Clearly, Campbell's founder had a charming sense of humor.

When James Archibald passed away in 1934, his son Leslie Hartwell

was the natural successor. Portions of Leslie's inaugural address were reprinted in the February 2, 1935 edition of *Creek Pebbles*, the official student newspaper from 1925 to 1983. His focus was clearly on making Campbell "the best junior college in the land," remarking that junior colleges were in a unique position to meet the needs of high school graduates of the day. This edition was on display in the exhibit and included an article about the celebratory banquet that followed the ceremony. To learn more, check it out in our digital collections at library.campbell.edu/digital-archives/

The exhibit also contained a congratulatory letter from Dr. Frank Porter Graham, then president of the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. It is a customary practice for presidents at other universities to send letters of well wishes to new presidents, and the Campbell University archive contains collections of such missives for both Drs. Wiggins and Creed.

Dr. Norman Wiggins' selection as the third president of Campbell College made headline news in the April 25, 1967 edition of *Creek Pebbles*. The article describes his many accomplishments, including writing the definitive manual on North Carolina wills and estates, as well as his role in shepherding Campbell to senior college status



Campbell founder and first President, Baptist minister J.A. Campbell.

in 1961. Also on display were his inauguration program and a reprint of his inaugural address. Dr. Wiggins was the only president to attend Campbell as a student (Class of 1948). In his early career, he served as a trust officer, law professor, and university legal counsel. During his presidency, Dr. Wiggins led the institution to become a university, established new professional programs, and expanded Campbell's reach to North Carolina military bases, the RTP, as well as internationally to Malaysia and Wales.

Dr. Jerry Wallace's inauguration was announced in the April 2, 2004 edition of *The Campbell Times*. Wallace had considerable experience as a Campbell faculty member and administrator by the time he was selected as president. Wallace stated in the article, "I have deep pride in the orange and black. I believe that Campbell University was and is an institution that God has willed and blessed for 117 years." Dr. Wallace joined the faculty in 1970, becoming Chairman of the Department of Religion and Philosophy in 1975. He continued to progress through leadership positions reaching the role of Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost in 1984. As President, Dr. Wallace provided innovative leadership. His many accomplishments included the establishment of the Jerry M. Wallace School of Osteopathic Medicine. Artifacts on display included his inaugural program and the 2004 *Campbell Times* article referenced earlier.

The Fayetteville Observer chronicled the ceremony in which Dr. J. Bradley Creed was installed as Campbell president in 2015. Creed's installation program opened with the hymn "Jesus Savior, Pilot Me," and Psalm 1, both of which J. A. Campbell included in the first day of school when Buies Creek Academy opened on January 5, 1887. Dr. Creed's tenure as president included many significant achievements, including the most successful capital campaign in Campbell's history (\$105 million) and the building of the Student Union. Items on display for Dr. Creed included his inaugural program and various newspaper accounts of his investiture ceremony.

As Dr. Downs continues to lead Campbell into a bright future, Wiggins Library looks forward to preserving the documents and artifacts that chronicle his work and the University's faith-filled, dynamic, and ongoing story. ■

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Wiggins Library is fortunate to have a rich collection of documents and artifacts from Campbell's history because our predecessors saved and cared for these treasures. Now it is our turn to preserve history as it is being made. Dr. William Downs' investiture — one such historical moment — yielded a number of artifacts, including the programs, pennant, and token pictured here.

In today's digital era, much of the documentation we wish to preserve for posterity is produced in a digital-only format, such as an investiture schedule of events that was available online. Webpages, emails, social media posts, and the like — termed "born-digital" materials in library lingo — are highly ephemeral and require very different archiving practices from physical items. Wiggins is working behind the scenes to create its first "born-digital" archive of the investiture. Stay tuned for more news on this collection!



2026 Academic Symposium: Library Student Assistants Shine

BY CINDY A. ADAMS, CIRCULATION MANAGER

At Wiggins Memorial Library, the Annual Academic Symposium is always a big deal. Librarians and staff have nurtured its growth in size and stature since its 2011 inception, and each spring, they see a campus abuzz with excitement as the date approaches. They see student presenters abuzz with prep work and, often, nervous energy. And no sooner does the event end than the Symposium Planning Committee begins work on the next year's event.

The 16th annual Symposium, held on March 24 and 25, 2026, was especially meaningful at the Library, as seven library student assistants, a record number, presented their outstanding work in Oral, Poster, and Art categories. Projects ranged from topics in the schools of Arts & Sciences, Business, and Social Work to Study Abroad and a special session about a pilot CUC (Campbell University Connections) course.

Library student assistants' reflections on their experiences are a microcosm of those of their student body peers. Collectively, they agree that participation boosted their confidence and honed skills they will use in the future.



Cassady Wall is all smiles during her first presentation of the day.

Returns on Investment

Graduating English major Cassady Wall upped her game from presenting one oral session last year to two this year, one on Mark Twain's "Pudd'nhead Wilson" and one on her cross-cultural Study Abroad experience in England last summer. She said, "Symposium has given me a lot of experience putting together professional presentations. I feel I can create a high-quality presentation faster now, and present it with more confidence than I could when I started college at Campbell."



Emma Hodge (second from right) poses with classmates and friends along with project mentor, Professor Dejan Mraović (third from left).

Emma Hodge, a sophomore Graphic Design major, expanded on a Design I photomontage project in an Independent Study to create "Destruction of Ketchup: A Social Montage." She said: "The overall Academic Symposium experience was exceptional. ... I feel that my presentation prepared me for the real world. In my career as a graphic designer I will need to communicate and stand up for my designs to my clients and co-workers. Presenting has contributed to my success as a Campbell Student."

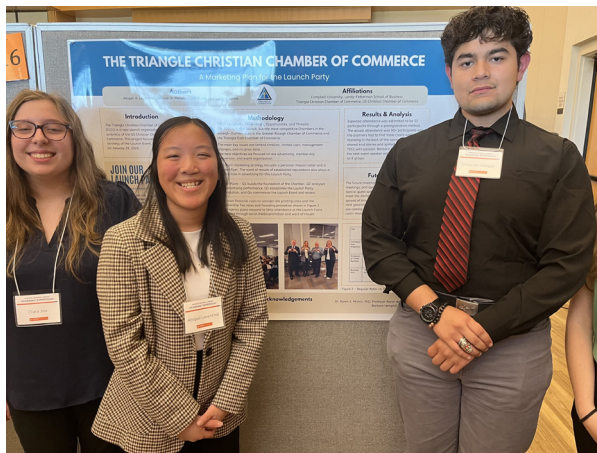
Library Student Assistant Andrew Gray partnered with fellow Business major Jackson Carter on a poster, "How Does Inflation Affect Bank Perfor-

mance?” Andrew reflected, “I am grateful that I had the chance to present my work for the first time. It was a lot of effort, but the work I did on our poster provided me with insight into econometrics, an aspect of finance that I might not have researched otherwise.”



Andrew Gray shows off his insights with his poster.

Student Assistant and fellow Business major Clara Jex had a similar experience, working on a four-person team to create “The Triangle Christian Chamber of Commerce Launch Party Marketing Plan” poster. “It was nerve-racking,” she said, “but I appreciated the experience a lot. It definitely helped me as a student. It was good practice for presentations, which is essential to me as a Business student.”



Clara Jex (left) and two members of the team beam during the poster session.

Symposium veteran and graduating senior Simon Osbourne presented for the third year in the Art Exhibit, calling on his interest in natural and environmental sciences to create “The Aral Sea Crisis, An Environmental Infographic.” In addition to

detailed research, the work found him navigating the world of professional outreach at the urging of Symposium mentor, Professor Dejan Mraović. After “lots and lots of emails” to several notable Uzbekistan organizations here in the United States, Osbourne received high praise from the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the United Nations, Ambassador Ulugbek Lapasov. “I didn’t expect a reply in the slightest, so I was surprised to have been met with such praise from a real UN Ambassador,” said the artist.



Simon Osbourne shows off his highly praised work.

Another 2026 graduating student assistant, Lea Politz, had an outstanding result from her Symposium poster and the hard work behind it. Politz’s “Geriatric Resources: Local and National Supports for Older Adults” poster outlines her creation of a comprehensive manual of resources available in Harnett, Lee, Sampson, and Wake counties. The Social Work major’s project also has been presented at Campbell’s School of Osteopathic Medicine, and



Lea Politz, earning her degree in Social Work this month, stands proud next the culmination of her hard work.

the manual is on permanent display in Taylor Hall. Of the experience, Politz said, “It highlights the work that I have done and puts a face to my name, so to speak. It overall just feels rewarding to share the hard work that I’ve put into my resource manual out there, knowing that many caregivers and older adults will use this.”

Double-Duty Dividend

A Symposium first this year was the participation of someone who is both a student and a Campbell employee: Wiggins Library

Circulation Assistant Vonnie Linn. The Biomedical Humanities major partnered with her seven peers who were enrolled in a pilot CUC 300 course, Calling in the Disciplines. (CUC 100- and 200-level courses are long-standing classes that merge the University’s foundations of “faith, learning, and service to educate, challenge, and prepare students to live and act responsibly in this world.”)

For the 300-level course pilot, led by faculty mentor and Director of Hallmarks and Character Education Dr. Rachel Nelson, each student created a digital portfolio and at the Symposium reflected on their experience, growth, and vocational discernment vis a vis the core components of Campbell’s Hallmarks — Calling, Initiative, and Character. Linn reflected: “It filled me with joy seeing my fellow students, who I get to support with their academic endeavors in my job, be confident, share their stories, and crush their presentations.”

Planning for the Future

Student Assistant presenters cited the LibGuides, project templates, and hands-on guidance from librarians as helping to bring their projects to fruition. They also encouraged future presenters to prepare well and practice relaxation techniques.

Graphic Designer Hodge said, “I had some worries about presenting because I am not a public speak-

er, but once I started speaking it felt easier after each person. I enjoyed expanding my outreach and meeting new people. ... Before starting a project

make sure to think of the real meaning behind what you are doing. Through purpose and hard work, it can make any project a success. The main thing is just to relax and be yourself.”

Wall added: “Try to have fun with it! Pick a topic you’re interested in and that you enjoy talking about and that will make it easier.”

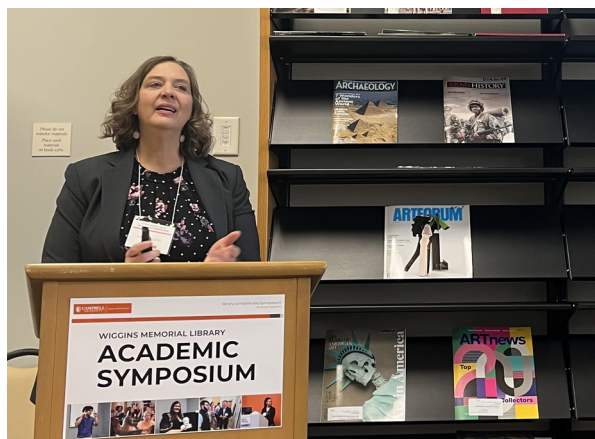
Jex echoed the sentiment:

“Be prepared and stay confident. If you know the topic, you will be ready for anything.”

From Graphic Artist Osbourne: “I think the best advice I could give to future Symposium presenters is to dress confidently, act confidently, and think confidently. Make sure you have everything prepared for your presentation at most 4-5 days before the date, and be ready to engage with visitors and staff. Most importantly, get enough sleep before the symposium and keep hydrated during your presentation.”

Hats off to the outstanding library assistants, and all the other bright and brave Camels who have conquered the Wiggins Memorial Library Academic Symposium! Circulation Assistant Linn reflected on the overall value of the event. “Most of all I felt pride in how the Symposium continues to be a staple of academic life at Campbell University,” she said. “It is a foundational part of the practical outcomes of the material taught in the classrooms. It is an outlet for creativity to be showcased. Finally, it establishes a high standard to aspire to.” ■

You can explore more about the presentations at library.campbell.edu/symposium2026



Vonnie Linn talks about how the Hallmarks are reflected in both her work and her studies.

2026 Symposium Accolades

Graduate High Merit

Kyle Agostini, “The Association of Chronic Pain and Complementary Health Approach Usage: A Comprehensive Analysis Adjusting for Demographics” (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Robert Agnello)

LeAnn Cain, “When Women Bear the Ultimate Responsibility: Gendered Blame in Capital Prosecutions” (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Matthew Christopher “Chris” Cox)

Desiree Byrd, Maria Echeverri, Alyson Kidd, “An Overview of Appendiceal Mucinous Neoplasms: Histopathological and Clinical Implications” (Faculty Mentors: Dr. Alan Proia, Dr. David Green)

Hannah Ruiz, Madison Lawrence, “A Case Study: Hydronephrosis with a Review of Possible Causes” (Faculty Mentors: Dr. Bonnie Brenseke, Dr. Terence Mitchell)

Riya Nitesh Shah, “Building a Diverse Health Workforce: A Demographic Analysis of a Rural FQHC Medical Scribe Pipeline” (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Jan Lee Santos)

Undergraduate High Merit

Zyann Saunders, “Bisclavret: A Revelation of Queer Embodiment in Medieval Literature” (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Abigail Palmisano)

Coral Burke, “Stand Proud: This Must Be the Work of an Artist” (Faculty Mentor: Professor Ray Im)

Samuel Bohlen, “Unraveling the Microbial Potential of Regenerative

Agriculture: A Comparative Study Between Farming Techniques” (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Michelle Suhan Thomas)

Daphne Dew, “No Hues of Pencil or of Language Can Portray.” Spoken vs. Written Language in Charles Brockden Brown’s ‘Wieland’” (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Sherry Truffin) Dew’s two other presentations also had award level scores.

Jayden Grier, “Fake Brotherhood: The Black Soldiers’ Experience with Racism in Vietnam” (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Jaclyn Stanke)

Andrew Gray, Jackson Carter, “How Does Inflation Affect Bank Performance?” (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Matthew Kelly)

Addie Simon, “The Chaos and Courage of Life After School: Navigating College, Work, and Independence for Individuals with Autism and ADHD” (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Jen Lowry)

Graduate Merit

Sarena Gresko, William Green, “Arnica Ethanolic Extract Activates Nrf2 and Inhibits Akt and ERK Signaling to Alleviate Postoperative Pain” (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Lei Wei)

Bailey Wells, Emily Wernsing, “Ibogaine Treatment for TBI and Associated PTSD” (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Robert Agnello)

Vikasini Reddy Chinthala, “TAOK1 as a Regulator of Vascular Function” (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Victor Pulgar)

Olivia Knaus, Garrett Farringer,

“A Case Study: Mesenteric Lipoma with a Review of Contributing Factors” (Faculty Mentors: Dr. Adam Foster, Dr. Alan Proia)

Jentzen Loeffler, “Integrating Therapeutic Exercise and FES to Improve Balance in a Patient with Brown-Sequard Syndrome” (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Robin Baker)

Megan Stewart, “Exploring Isotretinoin as a Repurposed Therapeutic Agent in HepG2 Liver Cancer Cells” (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Sarah Liu)

Kaitlyn Stocks, “A Patient with a Rapidly Progressive Pustular Eruption after Treatment of a Cyst” (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Phuong Daniels)

Jessica Wayment, “Backwards Treadmill Walking with FES as an Intervention in Stroke Recovery” (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Robin Baker)

Undergraduate Merit

Michael McCoy, “Narrative From Nowhere: A Prisoner’s Search for Home” (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Sherry Truffin)

Christopher Shipley, “One Confused Brother: Garth Frierson’s Take on Chris Jaynes and His Muddled State of Double-Consciousness in Mat Johnson’s ‘Pym’” (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Sherry Truffin)

Kayla Caulk, “Tiny - A Macro Image in Buies Creek” (Faculty Mentor: Professor Brian Bowman)

Susannah Young, “Where the Paint Goes” (Faculty Mentor: Breck Smith)

Tanner Campbell, Tayler Cline, Ma-

rio Del-Angel, Noah Jackson, Christopher Rogers, “Culvert Inspection Project” (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Kim Fowler)

Maggie Holden, “Is AI a Better Friend Than You?: Replacement of Human Relationships with AI Chatbots” (Faculty Mentor: Professor Brian Bowman)

Natalie Jamison, “More To Be Dunn: Assets, Challenges, and the Future of a Rural Community” (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Justin Nelson)

Hyunchul Lee, “Enhanced Padding Method for Playfair Cryptosystem” (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Sidong Zhang)

Jillian Malham, “Ruling the Self, Restraining the State: Positive and Negative Liberty in Ancient and Contemporary Thought” (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Ethan Alexander-Davey)

Christopher Mowry, “Stories From Stone: A Case Study of Blowing Rock, North Carolina” (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Justin Nelson)

Alena Suarez, “Chemical and Incendiary Warfare in Vietnam: The Weapons, the American Public’s Response, and the Consequences” (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Jaclyn Stanke)

Riley Parker, “Cell Phone Use in the Classroom” (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Terrie Hampton-Jones)

Laura Trivett, “Development of a Novel Diels-Alder Reaction for the Organic Teaching Labs” (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Elizabeth Blue)

2026 Dean’s Award for Teaching Excellence



Meredith Beeman, Head of Research and Instruction Services.

Ms. Meredith Beeman, Head of Research and Instruction Services, is the recipient of the 2026 Dean’s Award for Teaching Excellence for Campbell University Libraries. A member of the library faculty since January 2023, Ms. Beeman

moved swiftly from her role as Reference and Instruction Librarian to Head of Research and Instruction Services because of her obvious strengths in management, organization, and reflective practice. As co-chair of the Academic Symposium and liaison librarian to the Chemistry and Physics, Communication Studies, Engineering, Honors Program, and Mathematics departments, Meredith serves a wide variety of students and faculty with dedication and skill.

During her very first summer at Wiggins Library, Meredith immediately established herself as a

thought leader in the library by leading a series of reflective seminars for librarians on the significance, meaning, and potential value of artificial intelligence within electronic resources. She is permanently engaged with trends in the profession and within the world of scholarly research, which is key to her leadership of the Library’s largest department, Research and Instruction.

Meredith is, in short, an outstanding librarian who can be turned to in times of need to solve problems, take on difficult organizational tasks, and bring in the many voices of her team members to create consensus. She is a strong leader and demonstrates a true sense of calling – one of the Hallmarks of the Campbell University experience that she has adopted so well into her work in instruction.

It is with great appreciation that Campbell University Libraries proudly recognizes Meredith Beeman as the recipient of the 2026 Dean’s Award for Teaching Excellence for her outstanding efforts and dedicated service to the Campbell University community. ■

*Steve Bahnaman
Dean of the Library*

WIGGINS WORKS

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Librarians Hannah Holmes, Holley Long, and Jennifer Seagraves' article, "Finding Belonging in the Archives: Promoting Teaching and Learning with Archival Primary Sources," was published in the *Journal for the Society of North Carolina Archivists (JSNCA)*. January 2026.

Instructional Pedagogy & Curriculum Materials Librarian Jennifer

Seagraves attended the Conference on Higher Education Pedagogy in Blacksburg, VA. February 2026.

Jennifer Seagraves was awarded a Campbell Faculty Development Grant to attend a Yogaville Retreat in Buckingham, VA. April 2026.

Reference & Distance Learning Librarian Abigail Pore attended the National Conference on Higher Education in Prisons (NCHEP) in Cleveland, OH. April 2026.

Hannah Holmes, Reference & Instruction Librarian, was accepted into the Summer 2026 cohort for the University of North Texas Online Health Sciences Librarianship Fellowship Training.

Jennifer Seagraves will serve as the President of the NCCMC Curriculum Materials Media Librarians conference this year.



STAFF REVIEWS

IMPROVING LEARNING AND MENTAL HEALTH IN THE COLLEGE CLASSROOM

*By Robert Eaton, Steven V. Hunsaker, and Bonnie S. Moon
West Virginia University Press, 2023*

This book has been showing up in my professional circles for some time, and I'm glad I finally read it. In February, I attended the Conference on Higher Education Pedagogy at Virginia Tech and met with colleagues in the teaching and learning space who had convened from all over the world for a snowy and energizing couple of days. As I often do at professional conferences, I use these spaces to reflect, inspire, learn, make connections, and open myself to curiosity.

Another director at a Center for Teaching and Learning and I decided to read and discuss this text, as it was of interest in both of our spheres. The book draws on the scholarship of teaching and learning and addresses how the COVID 19 pandemic has affected students' mental health and impacted teachers and administrators. Here are some points I came away with after this read and continue to mull over:

- Research shows that 1 in 4 students with mental health challenges are dissatisfied with their higher education experience, while 1 in 10 other students demonstrate dissatisfaction. Where would employees fall in these ranges? More research is needed.
- None of this information is surprising to me. What did strike me is the impact on faculty, and specifically librarians, in college settings. Is there a higher level of students self-identifying mental health

issues in a library? I find this to be true because librarians and library spaces are often sought out by people in search of connection.

- As a library liaison to social sciences disciplines, the topics students come to me with are heavy (mental health, disabilities, adverse childhood experiences, etc.) and often directly linked to their own histories, stories, and experiences. Being able to keep this research in mind is beneficial in my interactions with students. Notable practices covered in the text include the importance of checking in with students and mentoring. An emphasis on course design to specifically eliminate frustrations for students with anxiety and low coping skills is encouraged.

- Finally, I learned that (chronic) stress kills hippocampus cells, which quite literally kills creativity. The impact is staggering and heartbreaking.

My takeaway from reading this book is that we need to continue to take care of ourselves and each other to best serve our students and community as a whole. I'd love to discuss your thoughts on the text if you pick it up! You can reach me at jseagraves@campbell.edu. ■

IMPROVING LEARNING AND MENTAL HEALTH IN THE COLLEGE CLASSROOM



ROBERT EATON, STEVEN V. HUNSAKER,
and BONNIE MOON

Jennifer Seagraves, Instructional Pedagogy & Curriculum Materials Librarian

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**Life membership can be paid in four \$250 yearly payments or payroll deductions.*

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