

# SIGHTS and SOUNDS

APRIL 2025



COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS & COMMUNICATION  
**LAMAR UNIVERSITY**

— NEWSLETTER —



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## **Can't Miss This!**

**Hello!**

I am Golden Wright, privileged to serve as the Dean of the College of Fine Arts & Communication at Lamar University. Our college is a dynamic hub housing an array of talented individuals, including students, staff, and faculty. Through this monthly newsletter, we aim to shine a spotlight on the exceptional achievements of these individuals across various disciplines within the fine arts and communication fields.

At the heart of our college is the profound connectivity we foster among students, faculty, and staff through the common thread of communication. Each distinct area within our college relies on communication in its own unique way. Communication serves as the cornerstone of each departments' success within the college.

From the multifaceted realm of communication and media, utilizing mediums of television, radio, social media, and newspapers to disseminate information, to the evocative storytelling of music majors who convey emotions and narratives through voice or instruments. From the invaluable contributions of speech and hearing sciences, enhancing our ability to communicate effectively, and improving our quality of life, to the empowering field of deaf studies, which enables individuals to serve as vital mediators in communication. The immersive experiences offered by theatre and dance provide an escape from reality through the interplay of movement and text. And lastly, the visual eloquence of art captures moments and places, transporting us to new dimensions and inspiring our imagination.

We hope this newsletter illuminates all of the possibilities that our College provides. We are immensely grateful for the unwavering support of our surrounding community, which generously provides funding for scholarships, new equipment, and invaluable learning opportunities. Thank you!

“THE BEST KEPT SECRET...”



**Golden Wright**  
College of Fine Arts & Communication, Dean



# ***THAT'S A WRAP!***

As we close the curtains on Le Grand Bal 2025, "We Are Family," we would like to thank our wonderful chairs, Shelly Vitanza and Betty Schluter for their vision and dedication to the event, Friends of the Arts and the College of Fine Arts & Communication at Lamar University.

We would also like to show our appreciation for this year's honorees, Rob Clark and Jerry Thacker and Michael Kennaugh.

In addition, we would like to thank the Division of Student Engagement, The Faculty and Staff of the College of Fine Arts & Communication, Brice Sinclair, Rachel Brown, Chef Mark, Chef Clint, Chartwell's, and the members of the Le Grand Bal 2025 Committee, Michael Bartnik, Stephanie Chadwick, Sandy Fertiitta, Jeannette Fresne, Joel Grothe, Jenny Hamilton, Tabitha Holcomb, Carol Lindsey, Polly McNeel, Albert Nolen, Jeff Simmons, Kim Steinhagen and Golden Wright.

***We look forward to seeing everyone next year as we celebrate our 50th Le Grand Bal celebration! Mark your calendars for March 21st!***







# Our Protégé

**T**he Lamar University Department of Art & Design was excited to again help support the Annual Protégé Competition, a juried high school exhibition sponsored by Market Basket and held by the Art Museum of Southeast Texas (AMSET).

Protégé is open to entries from twelfth-grade students in Jefferson and surrounding counties. Students are allowed to submit one work to be considered for the exhibition and the final selection is exhibited with an opening reception and an awards ceremony. The works are exhibited at AMSET and travel to regional high schools and the Dishman Art Museum on Lamar University's Campus. The winners of the 2025 Protégé Competition are, First Place – *The Space Between* by Alleigh Rios of Hamshire-Fannett High School, Second Place – *Yawnzzn* by Ayra Momin of Port Neches-Groves High School, Third Place – *Nightmare* by Kindal Moreau of Barbers

Hill High School, and Honorable Mentions – *Death of America* by Kaylee Hargett of Hardin-Jefferson High School, *Shelby* by Allison Kruger of Port Neches-Groves High School and *Destination* by Camila Perez of Nederland High School.

The first, second and third place winners all receive scholarships to Lamar University, courtesy of the Department of Art & Design and the Friends of the Arts, ranging from \$500 to \$1000. In addition to scholarship awards, varying denominations of gift certificate monies are awarded by AMSET, courtesy of Blick Art Materials. The teacher of the first place winner also receives \$100 for classroom art supplies and many of the teachers helping students enter work are Lamar University Department of Art & Design alumni.

The artist who is this year's first-place winner is Alleigh Rios of Hamshire-Fannett High School. She is also a Presidential Scholar Recipient and will be attending Lamar University this Fall!

Presidential Scholars receive a full scholarship for four years covering tuition, fees, room and board, and books. The requirements to apply for this prestigious scholarship are competitive and applicants must have a minimum high school GPA of 4.40 and rank in the top 10% of their graduating class.

We wish Alleigh the best of luck in her academic career at Lamar University and look forward to seeing all the wonderful work she creates during her time with us. We also look forward to seeing more work created by all of the Protégé applicants and hope they decide to continue their education at Lamar University in the Department of Art & Design.

Protégé will be on view at the Dishman Art Museum from April 15th through the 21st. The Department of Art & Design will also host a Character Art Workshop at the Dishman on April 17th for the exhibiting artists, current Lamar University students, and the Lamar State College Port Arthur students of LU alumna and workshop leader Mary Catherine Wilbur.



# Creative Conversations

**A**t the end of March, the Department of Communication & Media hosted their Creative Conversations series.

The Creative Conversations series is an opportunity for our current students to hear from alumni who are out in the field. One session is held each semester and features alumni who work in specific aspects of the creative communication discipline. We have had film makers, television reporters, and entrepreneurs. The talk consists of two or three individuals who each tell the students a bit about who they are and what they do. That is followed by a question-and-answer portion.

This year, the Department was pleased to welcome back Josh Yawn, Wyatt Cagle, and Kenneth Dupuis; all active and dedicated alumni.

You may know these alumni as the creative force behind the LU Super Bowl commercials, the promotional videos currently being made for the College of Fine Arts & Communication, and numerous films including the award-winning *The Example* about the 1943 Beaumont Race Riot.

In addition to discussions about their strong resumes and outstanding professional projects, they focused most of their time on discussing the business side of show business with current students.

They informed the students about the challenges of setting up and running your own business including the intricacies of establishing your brand, billing, purchasing materials and equipment and scheduling large groups of people. They also explained that you must be open to collaboration while enhancing your own strengths and improving on your weaknesses.

Our wonderful alumni taught our students that it is possible to pursue your creative dreams while earning a living, but it requires a tremendous amount of hard work and dedication. Josh, Wyatt, and Kenneth made it clear that even with the business aspect, it is still worth the time and effort to pursue your craft.

They each left our students with quotes of wisdom.

***"The hustle becomes your responsibility."*** – Josh Yawn  
***"You are the company you are representing."*** – Wyatt Cagle  
***"Set a realistic deadline for yourself."*** – Kenneth Dupuis

The Department of Communication & Media is so thankful for their committed alumni and look forward to seeing what The Creative Conversations series brings next semester!





## SPOTLIGHT ON ACCESS



**T**he Department of Deaf Studies & Deaf Education has been conducting some exciting partnerships with Southeast Texas Stages and the Lamar University Department of Theatre & Dance under the direction of Dr. Zanthia Smith, Associate Professor and Program Director for Bachelor of Arts in American Sign Language.

Previously, the Department offered a course in Drama and Media Interpretation, where students were able to interpret well known musicals and shows such as "Les Misérables". But enrollment grew scarce until recent years.

**"Suddenly, we have a new generation of students who are extremely interested in Theatre!"** Says Dr. Smith.

Because of this increased interest, students were able to perform, through interpretation, "Scooby Doo and the Witch's Ghost" for groups of local high school students.

**"We had everything 'Scooby' that night!"** Explains Dr. Smith. Including door prizes and homemade 'Scooby Snacks' that were passed out.

**"We were able to recruit three students to the undergraduate program**

**from that performance,"** says Dr. Smith. **"So it's not only an opportunity for our students to enrich and enhance their interpretation and translation skills, but also an opportunity to recruit students into our program."**

Through a partnership with the Department of Theatre & Dance, Dr. Smith and her students have been able to provide interpretations every semester for their theatrical productions. In addition, they also provide their interpreting skills to Southeast Texas Stages, formerly Beaumont Community Players, allowing the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities to enjoy a traditional theatre experience.

Interested students go through an audition process and are selected to perform specific parts.

**"We try different pairs to see who interacts well together and then we make those assignments based on their interaction and their skill with the language,"** explains Dr. Smith.

Interpreters are required to dress in all black, but often include small props or accessories to help bring their characters to life.

**"We use simple props so that the Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals are watching the play and watching us interpret can make connections between us and the characters on stage,"** says Dr. Smith.

In addition to this style of interpreting, Dr. Smith has also appeared in shows at Southeast Texas Stages, like "The Miracle Worker" and "Constellations" as a shadow interpreter.

**"We pair with the actor so that it's, in essence, two plays occurring at the same time on the same stage, but in two different languages,"** explains Dr. Smith. **"It helps bring the Deaf community and the Theatre community together. It's important that there are not just hearing actors, but Deaf actors as well. For the community to see themselves in those roles, to see themselves on stage, to see themselves as part of the general community."**

Dr. Zanthia Smith and her students provide a wonderful example of how the College of Fine Arts & Communication collaborates, innovates and creates. Keep up the good work!



COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS & COMMUNICATION

**LAMAR UNIVERSITY**

Mary Morgan Moore Department of Music

# *The Season of* **LOVE**

## THE ANNUAL LOVEU CONCERT

Spring into the season of love! The Mary Morgan Moore Department of Music is proud to announce their annual LoveU concert.

*"Simply, we want to say 'we love you!,'"* says Dr. James Han, Director of Choral Activities and Holmes Family Endowed Professorship in Choral Activities.

The LoveU concert features love songs from around the world.

*"Every song we present tells the story of love; love of parents, spouses, friends, and God,"* explains Dr. Han.

Attendants can expect to hear a small portion of "Ode to Joy" from Beethoven's 9th Symphony, "Evening Song" by Johannes Brahms, a Korean art song titled, "First Love", and many more. The choir students, still inspired from last summer's trip to South Korea, are particularly excited to perform "First Love" in the LoveU concert.

In addition to many talented choir students, Dr. Han has also spent additional time to prepare five selected choral Music Education students on their conducting artistry. Because these students excelled in their studies, they will each conduct one piece in the LoveU concert which has been carefully assigned by Dr. Han and prepared throughout the semester.

LoveU will take place at the Dishman Art Museum on May 4th at 4:00 p.m.

*"The Dishman Art Museum is our favorite places to be. It's where the fine arts get a chance to collaborate. When art meets music and music meets art,"* says Dr. Han.

Attendants are encouraged to arrive thirty minutes early to secure seating, as seating is limited.





COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS & COMMUNICATION

**LAMAR UNIVERSITY**

Department of Speech & Hearing Sciences



Two McNeese Graduates currently enrolled in the Leveling Program  
Left: Lindsay Lopez, Right: Mary Caraway

# LEVEL UP!

**I**n addition to robust undergraduate and graduate programs, the Department of Speech & Hearing Sciences also offers a Pre-Graduate Preparation: Leveling Program.

Both graduate degrees in the department require students to have an undergraduate degree in a related field; but the leveling program helps bridge that gap.

*"The leveling program is a win-win from the department perspective and the student perspective,"* says Dr. Johanna Boulton, Chair of the Department of Speech & Hearing Sciences. *"Having the leveling program allows us to recruit strong, well-rounded prospective graduate students from other disciplines."*

Some of the disciplines that have an interest in the graduate programs include education, linguistics, biology, public health, nursing, and many others; or sometimes something completely unrelated to the fields of Speech-Language Pathology or Audiology. Some may believe that not having an undergraduate degree in the field would be a hindrance to the student's overall success in their career, but this couldn't be further from the truth.

*"People become excellent speech-language pathologists and audiologists even without an undergraduate degree in the major,"* says Dr. Boulton. *"If someone already has a bachelor's degree in another discipline and they're interested in a career change, the leveling program is an excellent way to clear the path toward becoming a speech-language pathologist or audiologist."*

At the end of the day, what matters most is a passion for Speech-Language Pathology or Audiology and a desire to help people communicate.

Students in the leveling program are required to complete up to seven courses in Speech & Hearing Sciences in addition to four courses from the General Curriculum. The program typically takes two full semesters to complete. The program also offers additional flexibility by offering online courses in the summer.

After completing the program, students are qualified to apply for either the Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology or the Doctorate of Audiology (Au.D.).

For students interested in the leveling program, the form can be found at [lamar.edu/sphsleveling](http://lamar.edu/sphsleveling) and a representative from the Department of Speech & Hearing Sciences will contact you about your specific academic needs.



COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS & COMMUNICATION

**LAMAR UNIVERSITY**

Department of Theatre & Dance



As we approach the end of another spectacular academic year, The Department of Theatre & Dance is proud to announce the sixth and final production of the '24-25 season, Dance Unleashed.

This concert will feature our wonderful student performers pushing boundaries and bringing innovative ideas to the table. The audience can expect to see different genres of dance including modern, contemporary, tap, and jazz.

*"This is an incredibly ambitious concert," says Amy A. Wright, Assistant Professor of Dance, "It includes a little bit of just about every kind of dance our students study, plus you're going to see dances that include sets, props, and special visual elements in the program."*

This semester's Guest Artist is Felicia B. Avalos, a tejana storyteller, performer, choreographer, and educator.

"We're very excited to welcome guest artist Felicia B. Avalos, currently based in New York, who is setting a work about her family heritage on eight of our students; while here, she's also been teaching master classes in Modern Dance, Composition, and Ballet Folklorico," explains Amy.

Karla Figueroa, a graduating senior, will be taking the stage at Lamar University for the last time.

"Every performance, every rehearsal, every challenge has led me here. This journey has been more than just



dance—it's been about growth, passion, and finding my voice! To my professors who gave the tools and the freedom to create at my disposal, I am grateful to be able to get to the finish line and excited for my next chapter after graduation!" Karla reflects.

"The concert is always an exciting time for our students; it's their opportunity to share what amounts to months of work with our campus and community audience," says Amy.

Dance Unleashed will take the stage May 2nd at 7:p.m. and May 3rd at 2 p.m. and 7:30 pm. All performances will be held in the University Theatre, and tickets can be purchased at [lamar.edu/lutdtix](http://lamar.edu/lutdtix) or by calling the box office at (409)880-2250. We hope to see you there!





# Classroom to CAREER



**M**eet Chloe Thompson! Chloe graduated from Lamar University with both a Bachelor of Science in Biology with a minor in Chemistry and a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Studio Art – Drawing Concentration with an Art History minor, and she is so ecstatic to be returning to her Alma Mater as the new Administrative Assistant for the Dishman Art Museum.

*"They can't keep me away!" Jokes Chloe, "I love Lamar, I love the community here."*

Chloe is excited to have the opportunity to collaborate with the greater Southeast Texas art community, including the Art Museum of Southeast Texas, The Art Studio, Inc. and the Beaumont Art League.

*"I hope to help show students and community members the different opportunities that are available to them," explains Chloe. "There are always opportunities in leadership through internships and volunteering."*

She also hopes to encourage students to participate in study abroad opportunities; something she heavily credits to her success during her undergrad.

*"I did an independent study abroad in Italy in 2022 where I lived in Florence for four months and completed research for my senior thesis project," says Chloe. "I'm always going to tell people to 'go for it,' because it will be the best experience of your life. You learn so much about yourself and about the world."*

Chloe is also interested in inter-departmental collaboration.

*"I'm always open to inter-departmental collaboration because I come from two different Colleges on campus. I think that projects that involve multiple departments are part of what makes the educational experience at Lamar University so unique," explains Chloe.*

In her spare time, Chloe enjoys going to karaoke, spending time with her dogs and cats, and creating wonderful works of art she enters in local exhibitions. You may have seen her work at The Art Studio, Inc., The Beaumont Art League, or even on campus at the Dishman Art Museum or the SOL Gallery.

If you're in the area, make sure to stop by the Dishman Art Museum to get a chance to meet Chloe!

# BACK to the BAYOU

## BAYOULANDS SEASON NINE PREMIERE

**K**VLU is excited to announce the Season 9 premiere of Bayoulands, Sunday, April 27th at 5:00 P.M. on 91.3 FM and online at [kvlu.org](http://kvlu.org).

This season will bring more stories from the Southeast Texas area, with the first episodes features covering the history of the Examiner, Orange Community Players, and The Lamar University Department of Theatre & Dance's outdoor production of Shakespeare's, "As You Like It."

If you're too excited to wait until April 27th, feel free to stream the latest episode of Bayoulands wherever you find your podcasts, online at [kvlu.org](http://kvlu.org).

Stories from the latest episode of Bayoulands include Stephanie Chadwick's conversation with acclaimed artist, Southeast Texas native and Lamar University alumna, Evita Tezeno; Jesse



Doiron's conversation with architect, art caretaker and contributor to Lamar University public art, Rob Clark; and a feature on the Shankleville Freedom Colony in Newton County, one of more than 500 freedmen's towns in Texas founded by formerly enslaved people who were emancipated after the Civil War.

We look forward to having you tune in! Bayoulands airs every 4th Sunday at 5:00 P.M.



# CAN'T MISS THIS!

**APR 17**

**Character Design Workshop**  
Dishman Art Auditorium  
5:30 PM

**APR 25**

**MOVE: Student Choreography**  
University Theatre  
7:30 PM

**APR 10 — APR 13**

**As You Like It**  
Meet at Studio Theatre Lobby  
[lamar.edu/lutdtix](http://lamar.edu/lutdtix)

**APR 25 — APR 26**

**Opera Theatre**  
"Patience" by Gilbert and Sullivan  
Rothwell Recital Hall  
7:30 PM

**APR 12**

**Jimmy Simmons Jazz Festival**  
University Theatre  
7:30 PM

**MAY 4**

**LoveU**  
Dishman Art Museum  
4:00 PM

**APR 15**

**Symphonic Band Concert**  
Julie Rogers Theatre  
7:30 PM

**MAY 2 — MAY 3**

**Dance Unleashed**  
University Theatre  
[lamar.edu/lutdtix](http://lamar.edu/lutdtix)

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