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HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

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ABOVE: Rose-Hulman students at the Cape of Good Hope, South Africa. L to R, Jared Gibson, Dalal Bima, Michaela Biske, Austin Salisbury, Chris Hockaden, Brandon Benedict, Maddie Pritchett, Jody Jensen and Mike Kukral.

LEFT: The Boomslang Bridge in Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden in South Africa.

Students Inspired by Africa Journey

Rose-Hulman students gained professional and personal inspiration during a two-week trip to southern Africa in the spring.

Seven students from a variety of majors traveled to the southern tip of the continent at the Cape of Good Hope in addition to visiting Cape Town, Johannesburg, Kruger National Park, Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden, the Apartheid Museum, the Nelson Mandela National Museum and Gaborone, the capital of Botswana.

Their travels were the culmination of a Humanities and Social Sciences course centered on the culture, geography and literature of South Africa taught by professors Mike Kukral and Jody Jensen.

Remarkable bridges, including the spectacular Boomslang walking bridge in South Africa, were a prominent feature of the trip, and came to symbolize the human connections students made during the journey.

"As a Rose-Hulman student, this trip has helped me form friendships with my fellow students and professors," says junior physics major Jared Gibson. Learning about apartheid in the abstract is one thing, "but actually visiting the country where these events occurred has made me aware of a fact that should be so very obvious – these people are just like me."

Maddie Pritchett, a 2018 civil engineering graduate, says discovering the extent of water shortages in South Africa gave her new inspiration as she begins her career.

"Seeing this has re-inspired me to use my engineering career to help others," Pritchett says. "It's very easy for us to be wrapped up in neat projects or in the money we will make. It's easy for us to compete against one another. We forget that we as engineers - particularly civil engineers - carry a responsibility to help and protect the public."

As the trip began, the students began to notice the diverse and impressive bridges scattered throughout their daily travels. By the end of the trip, bridges became a point of interest that also symbolized the human connections the trip helped create.



Casey Named Excellence in Teaching Chair

Political Science professor Terrence Casey **has been named** the inaugural Alfred R. Schmidt Chair for Excellence in Teaching. He plans to use the three-year position to expand student opportunities to study abroad.



Art and Math – We've Got Lots in Common

Many people see art and math as completely unrelated – but professors Souly Abas and Josh Holden showed a dozen Rose students that's not true.

Abas, an assistant professor of art, and Holden, a professor of mathematics, joined forces to demonstrate links between the two subjects during a math and art workshop September 15 and 22. The workshop served as a test run for a combined math and art class planned for spring of 2019.

The workshop focused on medieval Islamic designs, which are deeply rooted in geometry. During different periods of history, Islam has prohibited the depiction of the human form because it was considered idolatry. That is why Islamic art shifted its focus to geometric designs with the occasional incorporation of plant-inspired patterns.

Holden explained the math behind several designs and the variety of approaches taken to achieve a particular design. He also discussed the math behind color theory. Abas discussed color theory and the relationships between different color schemes. She demonstrated how to make paint using raw pigments and discussed the different properties of color. She also did a brief demonstration on how to paint ceramics tiles with acrylic paint.

After the presentations, the students put their creative skills to work, designing three different color schemes based on color theory. Starting with pencils sketches, they then transferred their sketches to ceramic tiles using only primary colors with black and white. The final result was a dozen ceramics tiles designed and painted by students from a wide variety of disciplines, including electrical engineering, chemical engineering, computer science, mathematics and others. It was a great success!

Support for the workshop was provided by the office of Cross-Cutting Programs and Emerging Opportunities.

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"The calling of the humanities is to make us truly human in the best sense of the word."

~J. Irwin Miller

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