Front cover image: This close-up photograph of basaltic lava is similar to the lava flows poured by the interdisciplinary team of sculptor Bob Wysocki (assistant professor, Department of Art) and geologist Jeff Karson (professor, Department of Earth Sciences) shown on the right. The Syracuse University Lava Project is a confluence of art and science, inspiring Wysocki’s art and Karson’s interest in lava’s impact on the human and natural environment.
Dear friends,

Inspiration can arise from contemplating an unexpected chord in music, the unexplored depths of the ocean, or an unexplained chemical reaction. What comes next is up to us.

The College equips students with the intellectual and social tools to make sense of the world—and then take ownership of their role in it. By cultivating their ability to think freely, act ethically, and live decisively, we can help students find their paths to a life well lived.

In this issue, we introduce you to a few of our students, faculty, alumni, and staff who embody the spirit of innovation and community-mindedness. As I reflect on the breadth and diversity of scholarship taking place, it is wonderfully evident that so many of us here are on fire with a passion for discovery and progress. We hope that you enjoy reading about these extraordinary members of the Arts and Sciences family—and are inspired to see what more you can do, too.

Sincerely,

Karin Ruhlandt
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Distinguished Professor of Chemistry
Avinash “Avi” Thakur is on a quest to change how diseases such as cancer are detected and treated, using nanopore sensors. The Ph.D. candidate in physics designs his own experiments, noting they “give me a new way of developing ultra-sensitive, diagnostic, and large-scale drug screening technology.” This will potentially lead to more effective cancer treatments.

Friday Block (Mariner Books, 2018), by creative writing instructor Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah G’16, has been compared to works by Ralph Ellison, Kurt Vonnegut, and Anton Chekov. But the 28-year-old Ghanaian American’s work is a forceful exploration of racism, violence, and consumerism today. “When someone who looks like me can be murdered with impunity, [I] feels like something I should talk about,” he says. “Just how bad does it have to be for us to care?”

For his Honors Thesis Project, Leo Marino ’18 combined music, nature, and numbers to compose “Year,” a pastoral, eight-movement piano suite. Expressing cyclical growth and change, the piece invokes the Fibonacci numbers sequence. “Each movement represents a different month, season, or plant,” says the Central New York native. “Everything is part of a familiar, recurrent cycle.”

To hear the sounds of snowdrops blossoming, visit thecollege.syr.edu/spring.

Choosing from nearly three dozen interdisciplinary degree programs and more than 20 departments, Arts and Sciences’ minds are unbounded by academic field or cultural expectation. The result? Transforming momentary insights into deliberate actions to answer questions in medicine, culture, the environment, and other fields.
A liberal arts education reaches beyond the campus years to inform a lifetime of actions, large and small. With the perspective gained through coursework, internships, study abroad, and volunteering, our students are inspired to be confident and purposeful citizens.

United Kingdom

The daughter of Egyptian parents, senior Dina Eldawy draws on her own experiences to connect with different immigrant communities in the United States. The Pensacola, Florida, native recounts that tutoring Somali and Syrian refugees in Syracuse sparked an interest in policy reform. “They taught me the meaning of resilience,” says Eldawy, the University’s second Marshall Scholar. “Now I want to spend my life helping those in need.” Eldawy will use her Marshall award to fund graduate studies in immigration and education reform policy at the universities of Oxford and Sussex.

Rutgers, New Jersey

“I guess I’ve been lucky,” says Joel L. Lebowitz G’55, G’56, H’12, an 88-year-old Holocaust survivor whose parents and sister died at Auschwitz. The Czech-born teenager moved to the United States, eventually becoming a preeminent authority on statistical physics. Deeply concerned about human rights, he helped lead the Committee of Concerned Scientists in supporting oppressed researchers in the former Soviet Union. Today, the Hill Professor of Mathematics and Physics at Rutgers calls on scientists to take a stand. “While the problems facing us now are different from the Nazi period, the basic moral issues are unchanged,” he says. “In fact, they are eternal.”

New Zealand Coast

While most of her peers navigated shoals of homework, Kathryn Spencer ’20 spent last semester at sea through the Sea Education Association. The double major in chemistry and forensic science recalls, “After weeks preparing in Cape Cod, we spent two months on a tall ship along the New Zealand coast, exploring the environmental and cultural influences on its islands.” With a newfound respect for the sea and life within it, Spencer hopes to mitigate future human impact on the environment.

805 East Genesee Street, Syracuse

Dr. Tanisha M. Jackson has long believed in art’s power to create social change. “The art of the African diaspora can help challenge people’s unconscious biases and perspectives,” says the new executive director of the Community Folk Art Center (CFAC) and professor of practice in African American studies. “CFAC showcases the tremendous creativity that exists in Syracuse, while encouraging dialogue and creating a stronger community.”
Guided by rigorous academics and regular advising, A&S students channel their passion and build meaningful careers. They are following in the footsteps of distinguished alumni, faculty, and staff who act and live with purpose.

401 Hall of Languages

Dympna Callaghan, a University Professor and the William L. Safire Professor of Modern Letters, is widely recognized for her studies in Renaissance poetry and drama, women’s writing, and especially Shakespeare. “His influence on language, literature, theater, and culture—and on me—has been overwhelming,” she notes. Callaghan’s extensive body of work explores the Bard’s poetry and plays through many lenses, including the feminist perspective. “Shakespeare seems to be more relevant all the time to issues we are dealing with today, such as gender fluidity, rape, and rhetorical violence against women,” she says. “It’s all there.”

550 Harrison Street, Syracuse

Growing up, Sharon Brangman ’77 was told by teachers and advisors that a career in medicine was not achievable. Today, she is the Distinguished Service Professor of Medicine at SUNY Upstate Medical University and the inaugural chair of its Department of Geriatrics. Brangman also directs the Center of Excellence for Alzheimer’s Disease and the Nappi Longevity Institute. “My mother was my strongest supporter and advocate,” she says. “If you don’t have someone to help you stay focused on the big goal, you’ll have a hard time achieving it.”

To hear Brangman’s thoughts about improving quality of life for aging Americans, visit thecollege.syr.edu/spring.

3-032 Center for Science and Technology

Yongna Lei ’19 is a biochemistry major interested in the molecular trigger of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), or Lou Gehrig’s disease. The 2018 Meredith Scholar studies protein mutations behind an illness affecting more than 5,000 Americans a year. “There is no cure,” says Lei, an Honors student with a minor in philosophy. “The more we understand how mutations lead to ALS, the more we’ll be able to develop new therapies.”

5-032 Center for Science and Technology

Yongna Lei ’19 is a biochemistry major interested in the molecular trigger of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), or Lou Gehrig’s disease. The 2018 Meredith Scholar studies protein mutations behind an illness affecting more than 5,000 Americans a year. “There is no cure,” says Lei, an Honors student with a minor in philosophy. “The more we understand how mutations lead to ALS, the more we’ll be able to develop new therapies.”

Saratoga Springs, New York

Ed Mitzen ’89 is a serial entrepreneur who has founded two successful advertising agencies, but his most important work occurs outside the boardroom—one the streets of his native Saratoga Springs. He and his wife are financing the construction of a permanent, year-round homeless shelter, replacing a temporary one operating out of a church basement. Mitzen, who majored in biology, was Saratoga Living magazine’s 2018 Person of the Year, believing that “family, philanthropy, and fun can serve the greater good.”

To hear Brangman’s thoughts about improving quality of life for aging Americans, visit thecollege.syr.edu/spring.
The College of Arts and Sciences would not be where it is today without the support of alumni, parents, and friends like you. Your gift will help us maintain our standing as a destination liberal arts college for exceptional students and faculty. Please make a gift to the College today. Thank you!

**Gifts can be made online at:**
http://thecollege.syr.edu/inspire

**Or by mail to:**
Office of Advancement
The College of Arts and Sciences
203 Tolley Humanities Building
Syracuse NY 13244