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College of Humanities and the Arts

Spring 2020

Expressions, Spring 2020

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EXPRESSIONS

Spring 2020

SJSU | COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND THE ARTS



EXPRESSIONS

Spring 2020

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Uniting People Through Art

SJSU's Natalie and James Thompson Gallery

The Natalie and James Thompson Gallery at San José State University is a welcoming space where students, artists, community members, and faculty come together to observe art. Nestled within the Art Building, the gallery is a great place to stop by and walk through the various exhibits, learn from professional artists, and view student work.

The Thompson Gallery is free of charge and open to the San José community. It is located in the Art Building, and it is the main space where guest artists' exhibitions are displayed. The new Gallery Director and Collections Manager, Dr. Alena Sauzade, arranges exhibits, events, and lectures, and she promotes art activities throughout the SJSU campus and the greater South Bay. Dr. Sauzade also teaches one to two courses a year, produces publications and catalogs, and collaborates on curriculum development.

Dr. Sauzade works closely with Cynthia Cao, the Gallery Technician and Coordinator, to curate and select four to six exhibitions each academic year. The artist selection process aids art students directly since the Director curates a speaker list to best accommodate the

needs of all areas of concentration. Professors from the Art and Design departments also come together to give their input on which guest artists they see benefitting student learning. Dr. Sauzade believes, "These exhibitions reflect pressing concerns in the study of art and design, encourage diverse worldviews, and showcase cutting edge technologies used by contemporary artists."

The main exhibition space is funded through the Natalie and James Thompson Endowment. The endowment also funds the weekly Tuesday Night Lecture Series, which helps bring artists, designers, and scholars to the SJSU campus. Aside from the Thompson Gallery, six student galleries are found lining the hallway along with more displays. The Student Galleries showcase the work of the Art Department's B.A., B.F.A., and M.F.A. students. These programs have proved successful in bringing in cultural awareness and diversity to our campus

PROFESSIONAL EXHIBITIONS

The Gallery Director and Coordinator work together to curate four to six exhibitions that feature work from professional artists who

come from all over the world. The exhibitions are typically one to two months long, and afterward, the works remain at the Thompson Gallery for guests to enjoy.

The current professional exhibit on display at the gallery is Rosa Menkman's *Shadow Knowledge*. *Shadow Knowledge* includes three bodies of work titled *Whiteout*, *Pique Nique pour les Inconnues*, and *365 Perfect*. Menkman is a digital media artist who creates art through digital feedback like glitches, compressions, and encoding.

STUDENT GALLERIES

Art students are able to showcase their work through Student Galleries, a program that displays student work on weekly rotations in the Art Building. Students have the chance to have their work critiqued, gain inspiration by viewing the work of their peers, and improve their art techniques and designs.

In total, there are six student art galleries and ten display cabinets which are located in both the Art Building and Industrial Studies Building. Each year, there are more than 200 student exhibitions. The exhibitions are switched out often, so be sure to stop by during the week to view them before they are gone.



Photo provided by Belden Granada, SJSU Art Galleries

TUESDAY NIGHT LECTURE SERIES

Through the Thompson Gallery, students have great opportunities to meet, connect with, and learn from professional artists. Every exhibiting artist is asked to visit our campus, deliver a lecture, and hold one-on-one meetings with M.F.A. students.

The Tuesday Night Lecture Series is a weekly series that hosts global artists, designers, and critical theorists. The lectures cover topics such as art concepts and techniques, and they are held in the Art Building Lecture Hall.

Itzel Vega, an SJSU alumna, graduated with a degree in Art Education and greatly benefitted from attending the weekly night lectures. According to Itzel, attending the Tuesday Night Lecture series helped her gain confidence in her career path as well as meet other undergraduate students who shared similar struggles. She adds, "I met some amazing people who made my undergrad studies a lot easier and enjoyable by sharing their own struggles and offering advice." Not only that, the weekly series also helped her learn more about experts in their field.



Photo provided by Tran Tran, SJSU Art Galleries

Overall, the Natalie and James Thompson Gallery promotes community involvement and cultural awareness through programs and events that tie our campus to the greater San José community.

LEARN MORE

For more information on the Natalie and James Thompson Gallery, please visit:
www.sjsu.edu/art/places/thompsongallery/

For more information on Student Galleries, please visit:
www.sjsu.edu/art/places/studentgalleries/

For more information on the exhibition program at SJSU, please visit:
events.ha.sjsu.edu/art/natalie-james-thompson-exhibitions/

For more information on the Tuesday Night Lecture series, please visit:
events.ha.sjsu.edu/art/tuesdaynightlectures/

Deep Humanities & Arts

An Intellectual Exploration



In Spring 2018, Dr. Revathi Krishnaswamy—Professor of English and Comparative Literature at San José State University—introduced the Deep Humanities & Arts (DHA) initiative to the university curriculum. The goal of DHA was to shift the university’s focus to questioning and understanding human-computer relationships in closer detail. As a result, students and faculty members have begun to analyze our current use of technologies such as social media, robotics, and artificial intelligence (AI). While attempting to define the human condition as one of the focuses among the Humanities, DHA reintroduced old concepts and applied them to contemporary forms of technology.

In 2018, SJSU launched the DHA initiative with the Frankenstein Bicentennial Celebration, and highlighted the university’s perspective on what it means to be human. Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* functions as

a cautionary tale for new generations, warning them against the misuse of STEM as society becomes more reliant on technology. As a result, the novel has shed some light on new concentrations in robotics and technology—like AI. Throughout this event, ethical disciplines within the fields of science and technology were questioned in an attempt to differentiate between the human and the monster.

“What does it mean to be human?”

Since the Frankenstein Bicentennial Celebration, DHA has implemented a series of events that have helped redefine the relationship between humans and machines. In 2018, Tobias Rees, Professor of Humanities at The New School for Social Research, gave a presentation that emphasized the question: What does it mean to be human?

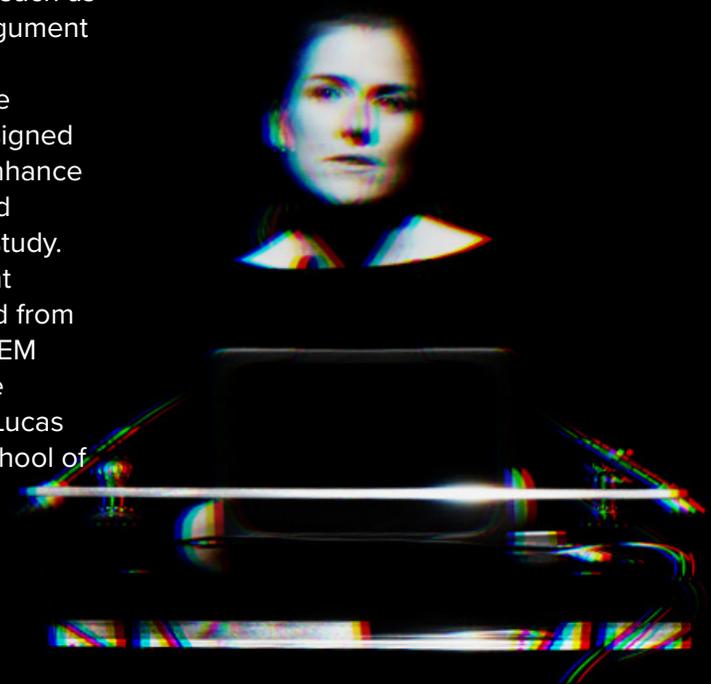
This allowed him to utilize his prior knowledge of neurobiology, anthropology, and philosophy and develop new ideas that re-examine the world of global health through the use of AI.

The DHA initiative has also changed certain courses such as ENGL 1B and ENGL 2 (Argument and Analysis and Critical Thinking & Writing). These courses have been redesigned to help STEM students enhance their ability to analyze and write about their field of study. Currently, the involvement within DHA has expanded from uniquely belonging to STEM fields to a more extensive curriculum including the Lucas College and Graduate School of Business.

Read more about the initiative here:

- **Frankenstein Bicentennial Celebration**
- **Tobias Rees Presentation**
- **Margaret O’Mara Presentation**
- **SJSU Hackathon 2020**

Dr. Krishnaswamy plans to expand the Deep Humanities & Arts initiative throughout the Bay Area by collaborating with other universities and institutions to indoctrinate the ethical use of technology and science.



SJSU

O’Mara

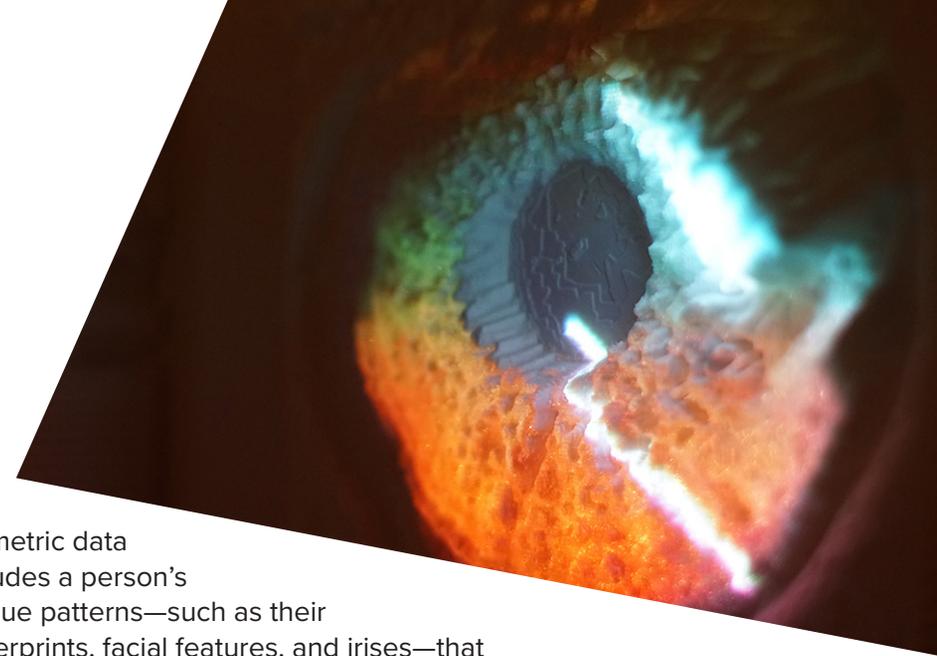
EYES

Dr. Yoon Chung Han, Assistant Professor of Graphic Design at SJSU, presented her installation “Eyes” on November 1, 2019, at San José State University’s Annual Author and Artist Awards, held in the Grand Reading Room of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library. “Eyes” is a multimedia interactive project where users scan their eyes, and the scan of their iris is transformed into a unique 3D animated sculpture and personalized musical sound. By participating in her installation, users can explore and understand what it means to be themselves through the novel experience of transforming their biometric data into sound.

The experience starts with “iris sonification,” a process where a user looks into the lens of the camera, and, after their eye is scanned, their iris data is uploaded into customized software. The software then processes the data by analyzing the image, extracting its visual features, and building it into a 3D animated sculpture. Using the sculpture, the software synthesizes the user’s personalized audio. Each sound of the musical audio is made by tracking the dominant colors, brightness, and size of the user’s iris. All of these visual elements inform the user’s musical sound and craft their unique “sonic signature.”

“Eyes” is significant because it provides a new avenue for exploring our identity through an interactive audiovisual experience. Han says that we typically think of data in the form of bar graphs and tables, but she aspires to show people how to interpret these numbers and figures in more innovative forms. Han says, “I am trying to incorporate tangible, multi-sensory, interactive, and experimental approaches to my project to open up the spectrum of visualizing data.”

Han was inspired to create this installation after questioning how our identities are formed in the era of biometric data collection.

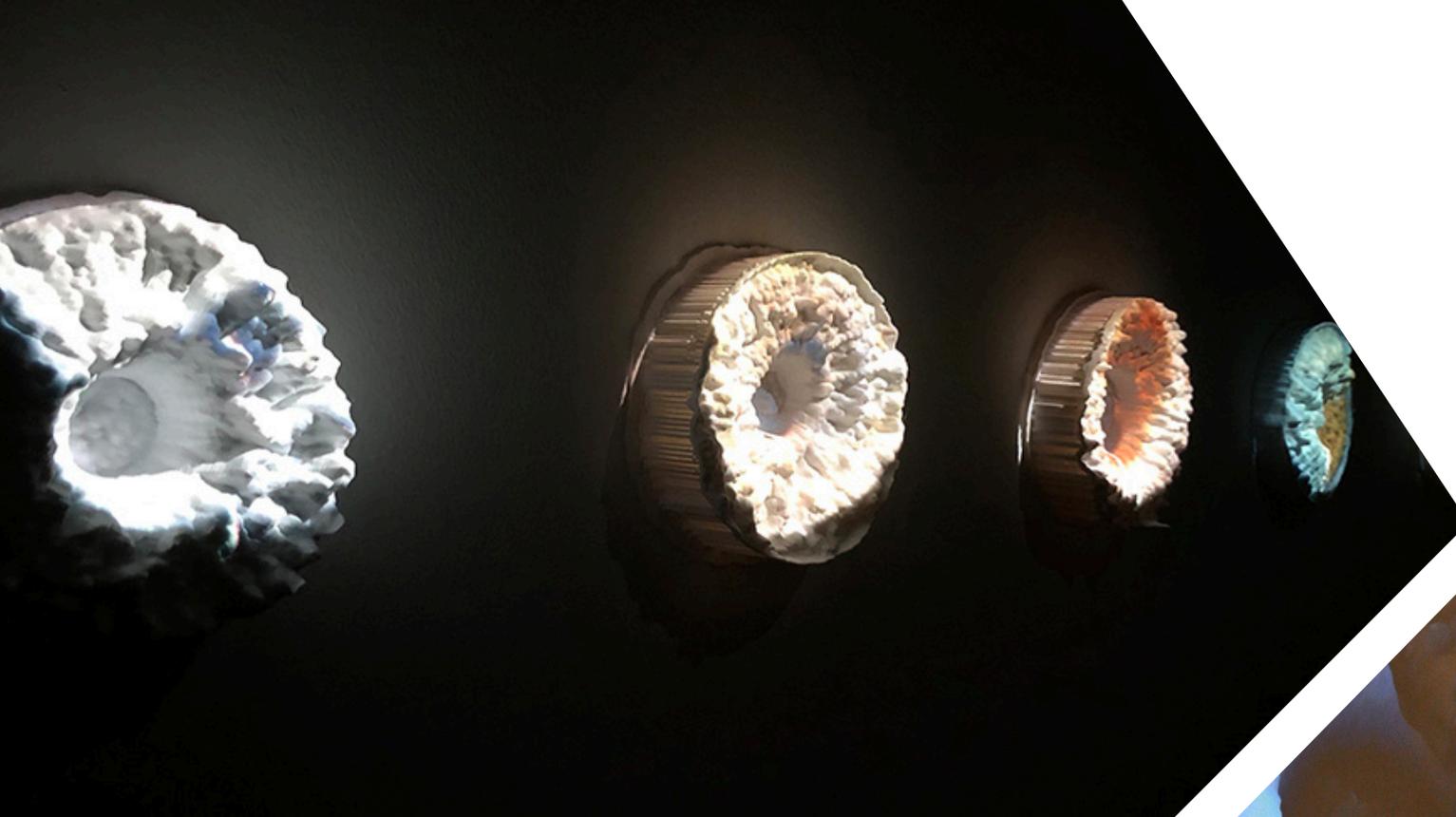


Biometric data includes a person’s unique patterns—such as their fingerprints, facial features, and irises—that form their identity. As biometrics become more intertwined in the devices we use, Han believes that “biometrics are now representations of ourselves.”

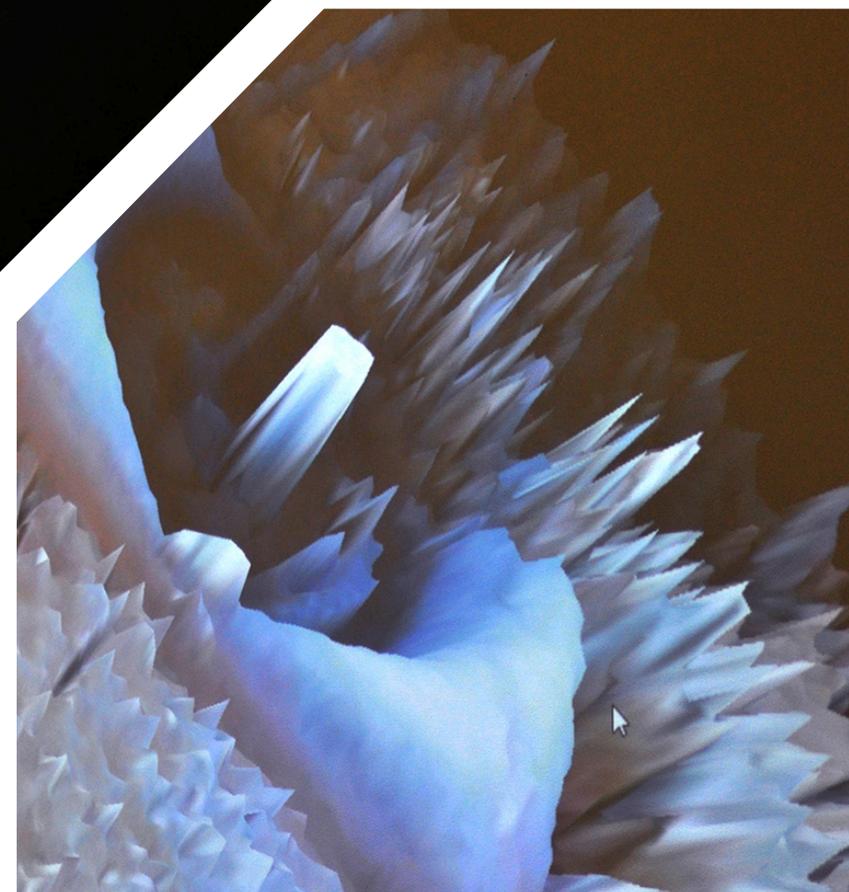
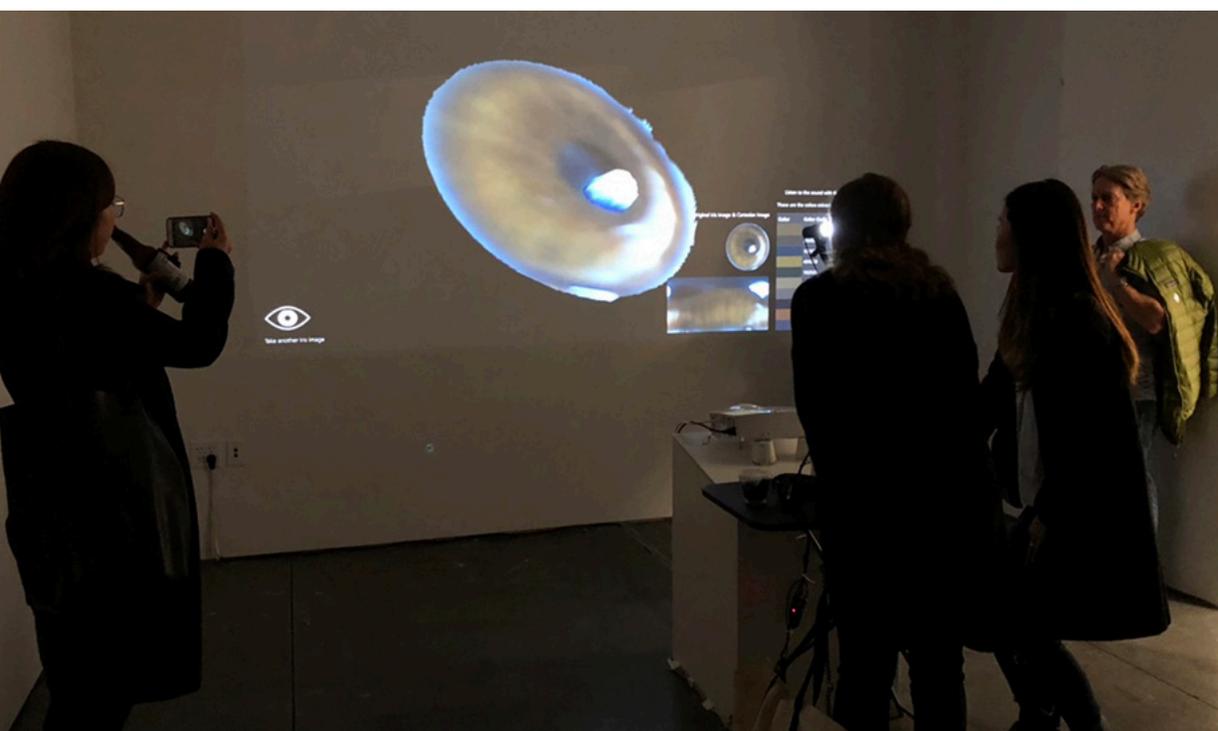
With this idea in mind, Han asked herself, “What is the meaning of the identification and uniqueness of biometric data? What can we learn from the biometric data? What if we can find some hidden stories within our biometric data?” By asking these questions, Han is asking us to understand that our biometric data can be understood both analytically and personally to explore our individual narratives.

As time progresses and technology evolves, biometric data will become increasingly integrated into our personal lives and interactions with the world. “Eyes” takes a fresh look at biometric data by inviting users to witness their personal data being transformed into visual and audio forms. Ultimately, through her work, Han is providing people with the opportunity to transform intangible concepts like data into something they can experience themselves through captivating visuals and sounds.

“Eyes is significant because it provides a new avenue for exploring our identity through an interactive audiovisual experience.”



“Biometrics are now representations of ourselves.”





Dr. Kenneth P. Kramer began teaching at San José State University in 1974. His experience, optimism, and love for teaching brought out the best in those he met. Ken showed compassion to all, and his outlook on life radiated even in the darkest times. Sadly, Ken passed away on November 24, 2019, but he will always be remembered for his ability to listen with an open heart and mind.

Remembering Kenneth Kramer

Ken developed his perspectives on life, death, and religion during some of the most challenging periods of his life. At just 26, Ken was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, and at that point, he stated, “I would dedicate myself to intellectual and spiritual pursuits, to walking with poets and philosophers.” He took that dedication with him during his doctorate, and, in 1971, he graduated from Temple University with a Ph.D. in Religion and Culture. In 1974, Ken moved to Santa Cruz, where he would live the rest of his life with his two loving daughters, Leila and Yvonne.

On September 15, 1973, Ken wrote a letter to J. Benton White, the Coordinator of the Religious Studies program at SJSU, expressing his interest in teaching at San José State. In that letter, he detailed his experience, purpose, and what he strove to teach, but most importantly, he intended the letter to make him stand out as a suitable candidate. In his letter to White, he stated, “My educational purpose is: to lift the mystification of not-knowing from the realm of religion; to interpret the mirroring finger of its discourse; and to presence it as the 100 percent actualization of its phenomena.”

In White’s office some weeks later, Ken arrived for an interview.

“All that I know to do is: turn by leaning in towards you, address you respectfully, listen with concentrated attention, and respond unreservedly without agenda.”

- Dr. Kenneth Kramer

White states, “After an hour with Ken, it was obvious how bright he was and that he was better prepared to teach World Religions than anyone else I had seen.

Ken was everything I was not, a free spirit, very bright but non-traditional, and I thought the kind of person who would do what he said he would.” In 1974, Ken began his career at SJSU as a Lecturer in Comparative Religious Studies, and in 1988, he became a tenure-track Assistant Professor.

Throughout his 29 years of teaching, Ken was nominated for the Outstanding Professor Award three times in 1990, 1994, and 2000. And one of his greatest contributions occurred when a \$100,000 anonymous donation was given to the College of Humanities and the Arts with the condition that Ken would be given the time to write and

publish his book *Martin Buber’s I and Thou: Practicing Living Dialogue*. His contributions to the college had not ended with just his research and writing; Ken’s work ethic and outlook on life influenced everyone around him. His receptive and sincere nature allowed people to see Ken not just as a professor or colleague, but also as a friend.

Ken listened and empathized, turning towards others with the whole of his being and responding truthfully and compassionately. By creating a real connection with those he spoke to, Ken created a space in which relational trust was made possible. Enduring the debilitating disease of multiple sclerosis allowed him to see the true value of life. Ken shared his values through these connections—making all those he met feel like they were being listened to.

Professor of Comparative Religious Studies Todd Perreira, Ken’s former student and colleague, reflects on the impact Ken had made on him: “Ken’s Death, Dying, and Religion class is really one of his enduring legacies. It really made an impression on me; it’s part of the reason why I’m sitting here today. He was a special man. Ken made everyone feel they mattered. There are good teachers out there, with so much to teach

and learn, but with Ken, it went beyond that.” Their friendship blossomed from their mutual respect and close collaboration. Speaking on their relationship, Perreira says, “First, when he was my professor in 1994, I called him Dr. Kramer. Later, working together as colleagues and friends, I called him Ken. Over the last 25 years, from our first class together in 1994 to my editing and reviewing his final manuscript on *Martin Buber’s Dialogue: Discovering Who We Really Are*, published barely a month before he died, Ken and I were partners in dialogue. It is a dialogue I now invite my own students to participate in today.”

In 2003, Ken retired as a Professor Emeritus of Comparative Religious Studies, but even in the face of multiple sclerosis, he worked constantly. In his autobiographical memoir, *A Life of Dialogue: Love Letters To My Daughters*, Ken says, “I retired at sixty, which I would never have done had I not been given the gift of MS. I say ‘gift’ here because it has given me the chance to look back at my life, a chance to relax, to regroup, and to push ahead all the more vigorously with writing projects I’d already begun or imagined.” And write is what Ken did. He produced ten books, half of which were published in the last 10 years of his life. Perreira

recounts Ken's work ethic, saying, "He would wake up everyday and work relentlessly. The motto he lived by was 'Fidelity to the task.'"

Colleagues reflected on Ken's contributions both to the college and to them as individuals. Professor Christian Jochim says, "Ken has been a lesson in optimism, one who understands the joy of life." Looking back at Ken's 29 years as a professor, Benton White writes in a letter to Ken, "One of the smarter things I did in my college career was hire you. If I have had any responsibility in your success it was in the persistence I had in making you a permanent part of our faculty. That was the help you needed. You are fully capable of doing the rest."

Ken left an impact bigger than he could have ever imagined. He was a man who stood against pain and hardship but eventually found his spirituality through his relationships. He was a father, teacher, and writer. He was the sum of all those that he met; he was Kenneth Paul Kramer.

“Ken has been a lesson in optimism, one who understands the joy of life.”

“He was a man who stood against pain and hardship but eventually found his spirituality through his relationships.”





Writing Across the Curriculum

Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) is a development program that emphasizes writing as a valuable tool for all disciplines across the university. This program helps faculty members who are interested in integrating writing into their own courses. In turn, the program benefits students as they learn from instructors who have been trained in best practices for writing instruction. Dr. Thomas Moriarty, Director of WAC and Professor of Writing and Rhetoric at San José State University, says that the main goals of the program are “writing support” and “support[ing] the teaching and learning of writing on campus.”

WAC provides faculty the opportunity to learn and experience effective writing so that they can translate what they learn into teaching effective writing skills. To accomplish

this, the main initiatives of WAC include workshops, WAC-sponsored research projects, and their latest faculty-focused addition, Writing Across Your Career. The main goal of WAC is for faculty members to learn effective writing techniques and teaching methods, allowing students to benefit from the program as well.

WORKSHOPS

Workshops for faculty members are a staple of the WAC program. These meetings are provided in two formats: seminars that meet once a week for up to six weeks, and one-day, “drop-in” workshops that include up to two hours of presentations and discussions. In either format, faculty learn strategies for working with student writers of all academic levels, which include best practices for writing assignments, peer review, evaluation, and more.

The workshops include topics like “Working with Undergraduate Student Writers” and “Working with Graduate Student Writers”, both led by Dr. Moriarty. He describes his role in these workshops as helping faculty members “think about how they can integrate writing into their courses, [and] how can they design good writing assignments” to ultimately “improve the teaching of writing.” Faculty take what they learn in these workshops and apply it to their courses with the goal of increasing student performance across all curriculums.

WAC-SPONSORED RESEARCH PROJECTS

Aside from faculty development workshops, WAC also provides support for writing-related research projects as an extension of the program. WAC sponsors and funds research projects within various fields that focus on researching the best teaching techniques, working with multilingual writers, and other writing-related practices.

The program’s current project, Does Silicon Valley Need Hybrid First Year Composition Class Options?, studies whether students are responsible enough to handle online education and the implementation of hybrid classes that meet both

in-person and online. By creating a hybrid English class that uses online components, the goal is to research those online components with the hope that they enhance learning while mimicking aspects of an in-person-class. This way, students who must travel to campus or rely on an online component will benefit from the hybrid class option while experiencing similarities of a face-to-face meeting. A test pilot course for English 1/2B was established in Fall 2019 and continues to be assessed.

WRITING ACROSS YOUR CAREER

The newest extension of the WAC program also aimed at faculty is Writing Across Your Career. This program differs from Writing Across the Curriculum because it supports any writing that the faculty does outside of the curriculum, such as publishing articles and applying for grants. Dr. Moriarty says that “the idea behind Writing Across Your Career is bringing a lot of the best practices that we know that work with students,” and apply them to faculty, such as establishing deadlines for assignments and forming writing groups to share writing and get feedback. The program is planned to start Fall 2020.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

If you would like to get involved, opportunities to be a part of the program are available. Dr. Thomas Moriarty, Director of the Writing Across the Curriculum program, has expressed his desire to create a panel discussion for alumni and former faculty alike. This is one way to provide current students and faculty with information about the kind of writing that is done as a professional after college.

LEARN MORE

To find out about how to get involved, contact Dr. Moriarty at thomas.moriarty@sjsu.edu

To learn more about Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC), visit: <http://www.sjsu.edu/wac/>



Thank you for your support!

To learn more about how you can support the College, please contact:

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San José, CA 95192-008

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