Community

Dear Neighbors,

As we enter a new year, I wish you and your loved ones all the best for the months ahead. We kicked off 2023 with our third annual Wintersession, a two-week academic festival in and around campus that included evening events open to the broader Princeton community. I hope many of you participated in what is rapidly becoming a vibrant new Princeton tradition.

Another highlight of 2023 will surely be the community-wide program of exhibitions and events exploring the creative process of the late Toni Morrison, the brilliant author and Nobel laureate who was for 17 years a Princeton professor. The series — held on campus and in town — will kick off Feb. 22 and continue into the summer.

The signature exhibition, “Toni Morrison: Sites of Memory,” will be on display in the Ellen and Leonard Milberg Gallery of Firestone Library. Curated by Autumn Womack, assistant professor of English and African American Studies, the show is drawn from the Morrison archives at the Princeton University Library. It features items that have never been exhibited and highlights previously unexplored aspects of Morrison’s writing process.

If you’re a Morrison fan, you’ll have a feast of affiliated exhibitions and events to enjoy in the coming months. Among them are newly commissioned performances responding to Morrison’s work presented by the McCarter Theatre Center and Princeton University Concerts, as well as a symposium bringing together more than 30 writers, scholars, and artists.

The Princeton University Art Museum’s Art@Bainbridge on Nassau Street will also exhibit “Cycle of Creativity: Alison Saar and the Toni Morrison Papers,” featuring the artist’s works by the renowned mixed media artist. Not to be missed is a conversation between Saar and esteemed poet Evié Shckley on March 25 at 3 p.m.

National news outlets including The New York Times and CNN have begun to spread the word, and we expect these exhibitions to draw visitors from far and wide. Details of all that’s planned are in the story at right.

Morrison’s literary and cultural influence extends worldwide. She had a profound impact on this University’s commitments to the arts and to African American Studies and authored for our 250th anniversary what had not only on Princeton — where she taught for 17 years beginning in 1989, later lending her name to Morrison Hall, home to the school’s Department of African American Studies — but also on the culture of American life.

“It is difficult to overstate the importance of Toni Morrison’s writing to American literature, art and life. This exhibition draws us toward the unexplored corners of her writing process and unknown aspects of her creative investments that only live in this archive,” Womack said.

The Toni Morrison Papers archive includes 200 linear feet of research materials, manuscript drafts, correspondence, photographs and other ephemera that the University acquired in 2014. The PUL exhibition includes around 100 original archival items, most of them never before exhibited.

“At this moment, we can’t stop thinking about how this magnificent archive opens up new possibilities for coalitions and partnerships,” said President Christopher L. Eisgruber ’83.

I also wanted to show how this archive draws us toward the unexplored corners of Morrison’s writing process. It is an unprecedented opportunity to explore the legacy of Toni Morrison’s work and the remarkable impression it has made on campus and beyond,” said President Christopher L. Eisgruber ’83.

For updates check library.princeton.edu

The exhibition is curated by Autumn Womack, Assistant Professor of African American Studies and with curatorial contributions from Jennifer Garon, Librarian for Modern and Contemporary Special Collections; Rene Boothman, Technical Administrative Assistant; Special Collections; Kiera Duncan, graduate student, Department of English; Andrew Schlager, graduate student, Department of English.

RELATED EVENTS
Feb. 22 to June 4 Cotsen Children’s Library, "They’ve Got Game: The Children’s Books of Toni & Slade Morrison" exhibition
March 23 to March 25 Sites of Memory Symposium
March 24 and March 25 McCarter Theatre performances
April 12 Princeton University Concerts: Cecile McLorin Salvant

P rinceton University Library (PUL) will present a revelatory exhibition, “Toni Morrison: Sites of Memory,” excavating the creative process of writer and former Princeton University Professor and 1993 Nobel laureate Toni Morrison. Curated by Autumn Womack, assistant professor of English and African American Studies, the exhibition will be the center of a community-wide exploration of how Morrison’s archive continues to influence the past, present and future.

“Toni Morrison: Sites of Memory,” which opens at PUL’s Milberg Gallery on Feb. 22 (through June 4), will anchor a series of programs that include an art exhibition at the Princeton University Art Museum’s Art@Bainbridge with the renowned artist Alison Saar; newly commissioned performances responding to Morrison’s work presented by McCarter Theatre and Princeton University Concerts; a landmark three-day symposium that brings together over 30 writers and artists to reflect on Morrison’s relationship to the archive; public tours of “Sites of Memory”; children’s programming; a spring lecture series; and undergraduate courses on “With his marvelous gifts, Preston is making a historic addition to the Art Museum’s collections and providing a vibrant forum in which they can be explored and studied. We are deeply grateful to Preston for his tremendous generosity to the Art Museum and for his decades-long commitment to the arts and humanities at Princeton.”

Haskell’s gift is one of several major alumni commitments that have enabled...

Preston H. Haskell III ’60 has made a leadership gift in the Venture Forward campaign toward the creation of the new Princeton University Art Museum, to be recognized with the naming of a new education center in that facility. He is also making a gift of art that is one of the most significant gifts in the museum’s history, including eight canonical abstract paintings from his private collection.

“Preston Haskell’s leadership and generosity have helped make possible this bold effort to reimagine the Princeton University Art Museum and expand and extend its impact on campus and beyond,” said President Christopher L. Eisgruber ’83.

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Exploring the creative process of Toni Morrison

Author and Nobel laureate Toni Morrison was a member of the Princeton University faculty for 17 years. Photo by Sameer A. Khan/Fotobuddy

Save the Date!

PorchFest 2023
April 29 Noon – 6 p.m.
Downtown Princeton

Art Museum announces gift of abstract art and establishment of the Haskell Education Center

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
Feb. 22 through June 4 “Toni Morrison: Sites of Memory,” Milberg Gallery, Firestone Library; Monday through Friday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, noon-6 p.m.
For updates check library.princeton.edu

Preston H. Haskell III (left) and James Stewart, director of the Princeton University Art Museum.
Photo by Andrea Kane

A Princeton University Community and Regional Affairs publication • Winter/Spring 2023
Princeton researcher studies how our human activity affects animal evolution worldwide

One night back in 2016, Shane Campbell-Staton couldn’t sleep. Doing any person who feels inexplicably restless at 3 a.m. might do, biologist Campbell-Staton embarked on a YouTube rabbit hole. A few videos deep, the annual reviews of the tuskless elephants living in Gorongosa National Park. Pringle invited Campbell-Staton to Mozambique, to studying how urban lizards and wolves and their responses to human activity.

The accidental foray into elephant tusk research was one of many unusual paths that anyone who knows Campbell-Staton, who joined Princeton as an assistant professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology in 2021, might expect him to take. “What attracts me to projects are stories that I find fascinating, mysteries that I find fascinating,” Campbell-Staton said.

From looking for tuskless elephants in Mozambique, to studying how urban lizards in Puerto Rico adapt to rising temperatures, and from joining a new collaboration to investigate radiation’s impact on the wolves of Chernobyl, Campbell-Staton’s interests take him in many directions.

Growing up in South Carolina, Campbell-Staton found on TV for the natural world. He spent a lot of time at home, taking care of his little sister while his mom worked as a taxicab driver. He spent time watching crocodile hunter Steve Irwin and biologist-television host Jeff Corwin. The love Campbell-Staton found on TV for the natural world led him to the University of Rochester, where he completed his bachelor’s degree in ecology and evolutionary biology. There he began blending his interest in genomics and lizards. He went on to pursue his Ph.D. at Harvard. Coming full circle, he will host a six-part science and travel documentary, “Human Footprint,” on PBS starting in July.

It wasn’t until toward the end of his Ph.D. that Campbell-Staton had the opportunity to explore the phenomenon that would become the hallmark of his research: how human activity can impact evolution. That opportunity arrived after a winter storm passed through Texas where Campbell-Staton had been studying several populations of lizards. “I decided to go back and look at how these populations responded to the single extreme weather event,” he said. What he found astonished him. The lizard populations experienced a number of shifts in gene expression that allowed them to better tolerate the cold, much like associated with tusklessness. During the war, elephant populations declined 90% due to poaching for their valuable ivory tusks. The study provided evidence for the role of poaching in tuskless-elephant survival and population growth.

When Campbell-Staton is not traveling for his research, he spends his time in his laboratory at Princeton, typically at a computer completing statistical analysis. Across all systems and scenarios studied by the researchers in Campbell-Staton’s lab, a common theme comes up again and again. “Life is both incredibly fragile and incredibly resilient,” he said. Species are plummeting to extinction due to human activity, and at the same time species are finding unique and strange ways to adapt and survive.

New TigerTransit electric bus fleet rolling into service

Princeton University’s first all-electric bus made its inaugural appearance on campus in late October, marking an important milestone toward the University’s goal of reaching net-zero emissions by 2046 or sooner. The bus is one of 17 slated to arrive and be put into service as the University transitions to a fully electric bus fleet.

“Tennyson said when all of the buses are put into service, Princeton will be the first among its Ivy League peers — and also among the first transit operators throughout the northeast — to operate a fully electric bus fleet.

The conversion of the fleet from diesel will eliminate roughly 500 metric tons of carbon dioxide each year and improve air quality by reducing the small particulate matter that may cause asthma and other respiratory problems. The new buses also run more quietly, Tennyson said, and can run for about 200 miles on a single charge.

Members of the public may ride TigerTransit buses for free. They are fully accessible with state-of-the-art features for riders who use wheelchairs or need similar accommodations, and feature audio-announced stop information.
Jennifer Rexford named Princeton's next provost

Jennifer Rexford, the Gordon T.S. Wu Professor in Engineering, professor and department chair in computer science, and a 1996 graduate of the University, has been named Princeton’s provost. Her appointment will take effect on March 13.

Rexford, who has overseen a period of extraordinary growth in the Department of Computer Science, will succeed Deborah Prentice, the Alexander Stewart 1886 Professor of Psychology and Public Affairs, who will be the next Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, beginning July 1.

“Jen Rexford is a proven administrator, a decorated researcher in computer science, an excellent teacher, and a wonderful ambassador for Princeton’s University community citizen who collaborates beautifully with people throughout the Princeton community,” said President Christopher L. Eisgruber. “She is brilliantly talented and has a long history of effective leadership. I am confident that Jen will excel in the role of provost, and I look forward to working with her.”

As Princeton’s chief academic officer and chief budget officer with special responsibility for long-range planning, the provost ensures the continued vitality of Princeton’s academic mission and its long-term financial security. “Princeton is a place where I grew up both as a student and a faculty member, so it feels very rewarding to have a chance to give back and at a much larger scale,” said Rexford, who lives in Princeton with her wife.

Rexford earned a B.S.E. in electrical engineering at Princeton in 1991 and is a recipient of the Moses Taylor Pyne Honor Prize, the University’s highest undergraduate honor. Unlike the rest of the team. As a provost, she will focus on the Department of Computer Science as a full professor in 2005. Her research focuses on computer networking, with the larger goal of making the Internet worthy of society’s trust.

Prior to arriving at Princeton, Rexford worked as a researcher at AT&T Labs for more than eight years, creating techniques for monitoring, traffic engineering, and router configuration deployed in AT&T’s backbone networks. Rexford is an affiliated faculty member in electrical and computer engineering, operations research and financial engineering. Center for Information Technology Policy, High Meadows Environmental Institute and Princeton Institute for Computational Science and Engineering. She received her named professorship in 2012, became acting chair of computer science in 2013 and was named chair in 2015.

Rush has grown during the past decade from dozens of students to hundreds. In 2011, Princeton graduated 36 computer science majors.

Faculty, computer science is the University’s largest major, graduating approximately 200 students annually.

Rexford has served on the University’s Faculty Advisory Committee on Diversity. For the past three years, she has led an interdisciplinary data science faculty search committee responsible for hiring faculty who use machine learning and statistics as a lens for advancing scholarship in the humanities and social sciences.

Ferris Thompson Gateway restored along historic Prospect Avenue

Princeton University’s Ferris Thompson Gateway has stood proudly along Prospect Avenue since it was built in 1911 as a grand entrance to the former University Field, has been restored to its original glory and was reinstalled in January.

The ornamental gateway — named for its donor, track-and-field athlete Ferris Thompson, Class of 1888, and designed by the renowned New York-based design firm of McKim, Mead and White — underwent five months of rehabilitation, including the artisanship fabrication of elaborate wrought ironwork and leafy vine patterns with authentic wrought iron, a modern rarity.

“The project highlights the care that the University takes to preserve our historic campus,” said Kristin Appleget, assistant vice president for community and regional affairs.

“Although the fields are long gone, the gateway serves not only as a welcome to the community at large. In its early years, the Ferris Thompson Gateway served not only as a welcome to the University’s athletic fields, but also as a passageway for the P-rade at Homecoming and Family Weekend.”

In its early years, the Ferris Thompson Gateway served not only as a welcome to the University’s athletic fields, but also as a passageway for the P-rade at Homecoming.

Those fields eventually became the site of the University’s Engineering Quad and, later, for the Andlinger Center for Energy and the Environment. What remains of the gateway and the original wall now stands at the front of Bowen Hall along Prospect Avenue.

Casey said the gateway was built, it stood as the southern border of the former University Field and included 860 feet of brick and granite with marble coping, running the entire length of the field on Prospect Avenue and continuing down Olden Street.

The wall was 20 feet high in some places, and the main, three-part gateway — 58-feet wide and situated at the midpoint of Prospect Avenue — was flanked by pillars of brick and granite topped with carved marble tigers.

The plans were drawn by McKim, Mead and White, which also designed Rockefeller Hall on Nassau Street.

In its early years, the Ferris Thompson Gateway served not only as a welcome to the University’s athletic fields, but also as a passageway for the P-rade at Commencement.

Those fields eventually became the site of the University’s Engineering Quad and, later, for the Andlinger Center for Energy and the Environment. What remains of the gateway and the original wall now stands at the front of Bowen Hall along Prospect Avenue.

Casey said the gateway was damaged many years ago during a construction project and its signature feature — a highly decorative wrought iron pediment above the entrance — was removed and at some point misplaced. For years, it had been the University’s intention to restore the gate in keeping with its original design and character.

Today, the Ferry’s Thompson Gateway was restored to its original glory and was reinstalled in January.

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For the past three years, she has led an interdisciplinary data science faculty search committee responsible for hiring faculty who use machine learning and statistics as a lens for advancing scholarship in the humanities and social sciences.

As part of Princeton’s campus landscape master plan, the gateway restoration was prioritized, and in 2021, the University engaged the Anderson Restorations project for Energy and the Environment.

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Princeton students have more options to ‘pay with points’ at restaurants and coffee shops in town as part of the expanded Community TigerCard program. Each semester, students on the University’s unlimited meal plan are issued 150 “dining points,” each worth one dollar, that they can spend on food and non-alcoholic drinks at campus dining locations and at participating restaurants off campus. The program launched with five establishments last fall, and the number of participating businesses has tripled to 15. To pay, students tap their ID card on a special pad at checkout, similar to how one uses a credit card to pay for a purchase. By loading funds to their TigerCards, Princeton faculty and staff members may use them to pay at the same locations:

- Arlee’s Raw Blends (Witherspoon St.)
- Chennai Chimney
- GREEK BITES
- Jammar’s Crepes (Nassau St.)
- Junbi
- KGB Korean BBQ & Grill
- Lan Ramen
- Mamoun’s
- Princeton Soup & Sandwich Company
- Pizza Den
- Proof Pizzeria
- Small World Coffee (Witherspoon St.)
- Say Cheese Café
- The Bent Spoon
- Thomas Sweet (Nassau St.)

LENS supports new paid summer service internships

very Princeton undergraduate will have the opportunity to participate in a paid service internship over the summer through a new University initiative called Learning and Education through Service (LENS). Princeton will provide funding that will allow all undergraduates to spend a summer focused on service and social impact work that engages with communities beyond campus.

LENS also will expand the number of paid summer service opportunities funded by the University and make it easier for students to find service internships at organizations located across the country and world. Internships may be completed in the summer following a student’s first, sophomore or junior year.

Executive Vice President Trey Williams said the University is committed to ensuring that all undergraduates have access to paid service internships.

“We know that summer service experiences inform students’ educational pathways through Princeton, their post-graduation goals, and how they can make an impact on the world that reflects the University’s informal motto, ‘Princeton in the nation’s service and the service of humanity,’” Williams said.

President for Campus Life W. Rochelle Calhoun said internships give students an opportunity to explore, to grow and to learn more about their own interests, no matter the career paths they choose to pursue.

“Princeton students report having some of their most meaningful undergraduate experiences doing summer service and social impact internships,” Calhoun said. “And through service, Princetonians respond to the needs of the world and develop knowledge that makes a difference.”

LENS bolsters Princeton’s already strong network of summer internship programs. LENS also will help students secure unpaid internships for service internships they find on their own, allowing students to design their own experience with support from the University.

Art Museum donation

Continued from page 1

new galleries, Construction, which began in the summer of 2021, is expected to be complete by late 2023. Having a great art museum is important to the primary mission of the University, which is teaching, learning and research,” said Haskell. “Without the great collection and the scholars, curators and researchers — both permanent and visiting — you couldn’t have a great museum and you couldn’t have a great educational experience. It’s also the community museum, located in the central part of campus and open to the public. This gift was motivated by helping one of the finest art museums in the region move to the next level.”

Haskell is an avid art collector whose primary interests are abstract expressionism, minimalism and pop art from the mid to late 20th century, especially the 1940s to the 1970s. In 2003, he was listed in Art & Antiques magazine as one of the top 100 collectors in the United States.

Haskell served on the Princeton University Art Museum’s Advisory Council for 24 years and as its chair for four years (2010-14). He remains an honorary member. In 2010, he endowed the Haskell Curatorship of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Art Museum, a position currently filled by Mitra Abbaspour.

When the Art Museum reopens, it will include eight masterpieces of abstract painting from Haskell’s collection, constituting one of the most significant gifts of art in the museum’s history, including works by Willem de Kooning, Helen Frankenthaler, Hans Hofmann, Joan Mitchell, Gerhard Richter, Jean-Paul Riopelle and Mark Rothko.

“Without Preston’s steadfast volunteer leadership over many years, I doubt very much that the project of making a new Art Museum at Princeton would be becoming reality,” said James Steward, the Nancy Green Rumbaugh Director of the University Art Museum. “His early commitment of financial support led to many of the fundraising successes that have followed, and now Preston’s commitment of art takes our collection of modern art to a new level.”

The Venture Forward campaign, launched in 2021, supports the University’s strategic framework. Its fundraising and engagement initiatives are aligned with the key focus areas of that plan: college access and affordability, financial aid, data science, bioengineering, the environment, the humanities and other important areas of inquiry that characterize Princeton’s commitment to the liberal arts.

Advanced Communications

Toni Morrison celebrations

Continued from page 1

she left on Princeton University,” said Anne Jarvis, the Robert H. Taylor 1930 University Librarian.

To accompany the exhibition, the Princeton University Art Museum will present “Cycle of Creativity: Alison Saar and the Toni Morrison Papers,” which pairs writings and other notes from the writer’s archive with sculptures, prints and textiles by Saar to explore their joint dedication to voicing the spiritual practices, artistic techniques and historical truths of the many cultures that inform Black American experience. The exhibition opens at the Museum’s Artst@Bainbridge gallery in downtown Princeton on Feb. 25 and will run through July 9.

McCarter Theatre has commissioned the celebrated performance artists David Alexander Jones and Maria Diaria Samantha Speis to spend time with the Morrison archive and create original works reflecting on her influence. Their first public offerings at McCarter on March 24 and 25 will present extraordinary collaborations on Morrison’s work that reveal its wide-ranging effects beyond the field of literature.

Princeton University Concerts will also co-present a newly commissioned work inspired by Morrison’s archive, created and performed by MacArthur Fellow and three-time Grammy Award-winning jazz vocalist Cécile McLorin Salvant. Two performances of this original composition will be held on April 12 at Richardson Auditorium on campus.

A three-day symposium organized by Womack and Kinshi Nishikawa, associate professor of English and African American Studies, is scheduled for March 23 to 25. The Department of African American Studies will present its Princeton Lectures in Race and Culture, and the symposium will reflect on and commemorate Toni Morrison’s contributions to the field of literature.

There is not a corner of Princeton University, Black creative life, and cultural production that Toni Morrison has not impacted,” said Woman. “This initiative, we hope, will bring to the surface new aspects of that wide impact.”

This story is condensed from the library website. Read the full story at library.princeton.edu

Community Connections

Princeton University’s Office of Community and Regional Affairs is pleased to send this publication to our neighbors with information about the many ways the University and the local community intersect.

Questions? Email us at pcura@princeton.edu or call 609-258-3204.