The Appalachian College Association is pleased to announce the recipients of its 2020-21 Faculty Fellowships. Through this program, the Association will furnish during the 2021-2022 academic year financial support to member institutions’ faculty for post-doctoral research or pre-doctoral degree completion.

This year, twenty faculty members are awarded fellowships.

**John B. Stephenson Semester Fellowships**

John B. Stephenson, then Director of the Appalachian Center at the University of Kentucky, received the first Mellon Foundation grant for fellowships for faculty at over 30 private colleges in Central Appalachia, forming the “Appalachian College Program.” In 1990, participating member colleges in the fellowship program incorporated as the Appalachian College Association and assumed administration of the program. Stephenson, President of Berea College from 1984-1994, served as the first chair of the ACA’s Board of Directors. After his death in 1995, the ACA Board voted to name fellowships in the liberal arts and sciences in his memory.

**Amy Boyd, Professor of Biology**

Warren Wilson College

*Stephenson Post-Doctoral Fellowship*

Project to expand a long-term study in the Sonoran Desert of North America of the endangered cactus Nichol’s Turk’s head cactus in order to better understand environmental factors impacting its success or demise in differing habitats.

**Shayne Confer, Associate Professor of English and Reading**

Union College

*Stephenson Post-Doctoral Fellowship*

Multiple research projects focusing on various components of the writings of John Milton; project using the legend of Troilus and Cressida as a case study in shifting popularity and tastes in literature from its treatment in the 14th century Florentine author Giovanni Boccaccio’s Il Filostrato through its adaptations by Geoffrey Chaucer and William Shakespeare, and forward.

**Jamie Ferguson, Associate Professor of Chemistry**

Emory & Henry College

*Stephenson Post-Doctoral Fellowship*

Research projects while in residence at the Stockholm University Center for Sustainable Systems (Sweden) synthesizing and characterizing d- and felement complex ions in ionic liquids and characterizing them for their structural, electrochemical, and luminescent properties.
Joshua Holbrook, Assistant Professor of Environmental Science
Montreat College
Stephen Post-Doctoral Fellowship
Research examining if fish structure macroinvertebrate and/or amphibian communities across a latitudinal gradient in North America and if permanent, fishless ponds make unique contributions to regional species richness and diversity.

Elizabeth Hull, Professor of English
Bethany College
Stephen Post-Doctoral Fellowship
Research project to compile oral history and archival research to construct an institutional history of Kirkland College, which ceased independent operations in 1978.

Troy Messina, Associate Professor of Physics
Berea College
Stephen Post-Doctoral Fellowship
Research investigating measurement of information that can be recorded of single fluorescent molecules.

Ann Peiffer, Associate Professor of Psychology
Mars Hill University
Stephen Post-Doctoral Fellowship
Completion of an 18-hour graduate certificate in qualitative methodologies from Kansas State University.

Christopher Stephenson, Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology
Lee University
Stephen Post-Doctoral Fellowship
Research seeking to "redeem ritual" for Pentecostals to develop theology that is compatible with their spirituality and to engage in spiritual practices that are compatible with their theology.

Semester Fellowships

Scott Heggen, Associate Professor of Computer Science
Berea College
Post-Doctoral Fellowship
Research project designed to create the foundation for converting institution-specific, proprietary software into generalized, customizable open-source software that serves the needs of a wider audience.

Benton Jones, Assistant Professor of Business
Bryan College
Pre-Doctoral Fellowship
Research project studying the application of Intergroup Social Contact Theory to diversity education, relying on the development and inclusion of an online diversity education module in college-level business courses.
Fujiko Nito, Professor of Computer Science
Bethany College
Pre-Doctoral Fellowship
Research to establish a new software testing research project along with the completion of the Enterprise Mainframe System graduate certificate program at Robert Morris University.

James Rogala, Professor of Optometry
University of Pikeville
Post-Doctoral Fellowship
Research exploring vascular changes in the eyes of patients with age-related macular degeneration (AMD) to discern if the choroidal angio-architecture altered in the early stages of AMD.

Summer Fellowships

Wei Fu, Assistant Professor of Marketing
Maryville College
Summer Research Fellowship
Research to explore various personal, demographic, and market factors affecting consumer acceptance of lab-grown meat.

Kristi Grassi, Assistant Professor of Biology
Alderson Broaddus University
Summer Research Fellowship
Research investigating the efficacy of neurofeedback therapy in minimizing or eliminating Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE).

Aaron Johnson, Associate Professor of Classics and Humanities
Lee University
Summer Research Fellowship
Research toward completion of a monograph on the Philosophy and Tradition in Cyril of Alexandria’s contra Julianum.

Steven Conor Keitzer, Assistant Professor of Environmental Science
Tusculum University
Summer Research Fellowship
Research linking models of agricultural runoff to species distribution models for fish, amphibians, and birds to simulate biodiversity improvements in realistic conservation scenarios.

Kristen Mudrack, Assistant Professor of Chemistry
Milligan University
Summer Research Fellowship
Research focused on the synthesis of unnatural dipeptide antibiotics against Pseudomonas aeruginosa, a bacterium that commonly infects the lungs of cystic fibrosis (CF) patients.
Martha Lynn Russell, Assistant Professor of English
Bryan College
**Summer Pre-Doctoral Fellowship**
Completion of graduate coursework in English and residency requirements toward the Ph.D. at Old Dominion University.

Laura Kelly Vaughan, Associate Professor of Biology
King University
**Summer Research Fellowship**
Investigation of the neuroprotective effect of nicotine in the model organism *C. elegans*.

**In-Year Research Fellowships**

Dennis Ashford, Assistant Professor of Chemistry
Tusculum University
**In-Year Research Fellowship**
Research to design, synthesize, and test light-activation of a new series of anti-cancer prodrugs, ruthenium(II) polypyridyl complexes, that absorb much further into the red region of the electromagnetic spectrum.