



# Brock Experiences

AT LONGWOOD UNIVERSITY

[www.longwood.edu/academics/brock-experiences](http://www.longwood.edu/academics/brock-experiences)



2022 Phi Kappa Phi Excellence in Innovation Award Portfolio

In 2016, the largest gift in Longwood's history created the Brock Experiences, a growing group of immersive, citizenship-focused courses at sites around the United States. Exploring the important issues of our time, new courses are announced each fall, and after a development period, will be added to the slate of signature experiences available to all students.



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# Brock Basics

Brock Experiences for Transformational Learning take students outside of the traditional classroom to explore an unresolved civic issue in ways they never thought possible. Students travel to Yellowstone National Park to study the stewardship of public lands while spotting wolves. They study the impact of America's southern border on the community while reaching their hands through the bollard fencing that separates the United States from Mexico. They unpack humanity's genetic code while exploring San Francisco's history of race and disability advocacy. They follow one of Alaska's major pipelines while talking with indigenous people about what is taken from the land. They wade through the floods in disappearing communities as they consider stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay. At the heart of each Brock Experience is a diverse team of faculty, staff, and field partners that challenge the students to see these civic issues in a way they may never be able to in a classroom—through the eyes of a citizen.

**“The collective challenges of our 21st-century democracy don't fit neatly into categories, so we will teach our students to think about them across disciplines, to assess evidence and assemble civil arguments, and to exercise the practical skills of working with one another to make progress in solving them.” — W. Taylor Reveley IV** LONGWOOD UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT

AMERICA'S CIVIC DUTY: START TEACHING DEMOCRACY, TIME MAGAZINE  
[HTTP://TIME.COM/4507728/VICE-PRESIDENTIAL-DEBATE-DEMOCRACY/](http://time.com/4507728/vice-presidential-debate-democracy/)

# Vision of Education

The creation of citizen leaders is a mission that is incorporated into every area of Longwood's educational process. It is a natural extension of this mission to educate future leaders on the important issues affecting the common good. Education around civic issues engages students with the present reality of navigating change in America's democratic system. By doing this, Longwood prepares students to contribute to the common good

## LONGWOOD UNIVERSITY MISSION

Longwood University is an institution of higher learning dedicated to the development of citizen leaders who are prepared to make positive contributions to the common good of society. Building upon its strong foundation in the liberal arts and sciences, the University provides an environment in which exceptional teaching fosters student learning, scholarship, and achievement. As the only four-year public institution in south central Virginia, Longwood University serves as a catalyst for regional prosperity and advancement.

APPROVED BY THE LONGWOOD BOARD OF VISITORS, JULY 1997



# For the Common Good

## A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE MODEL

Longwood University's general education program focuses on preparing students for both citizenship and for success after college. The skills necessary for success in the workplace or in graduate school are the same skills that citizens need to develop—communication, collaboration, critical thinking and ethical decision making, and cultural awareness. To that end, the name of the program reflects this unique contributions of civics and life (vitae): Civitae.

The Civitae program begins with Foundations level courses that provide all incoming students with a shared set of common skills for success at the collegiate level. Students then progress into Pillar courses that allow students to explore discipline-specific courses grouped into broad areas of inquiry. Following Pillar courses, students participate in Perspectives courses that combine two or more disciplines in civic inquiry. The culminating course in the Civitae program is the Symposium on the Common Good—a capstone experience that explores citizenship on a deeper level and weaves together all of the formative experiences in a student's college career.



**“Being an immigrant, I have always been interested in learning more about immigration and the rules and limitations behind it. I have also always been passionate about being a voice and fighting for those who are unable to fight for themselves. Going to Arizona and participating in the Brock Experience has helped me grow more into the person I’ve always wanted to become. It has helped me make more sense of where I want to go in life and what I want to do with my life and with my photography. I want to be able to share their stories, share their passion for wanting a better life for themselves and their families. I want to be able to explain to people why immigration isn’t as bad as everyone seems to make it seem; after all, this nation started out a nation of immigrants. Who are we to change that?” — Hiba Abou Chabke BORDERLANDS 2018**

## BROCK & CIVITAE

All courses in the Brock Experiences program fit within the Civitae core curriculum at the Perspectives level. This level gathers the skills from first-year Foundations courses and discipline-specific Pillar classes to dive into a multi-layered issue. Perspectives courses are learning experiences designed to make connections between courses and fields. They are challenging—students must develop the ability to understand issues from a variety of perspectives and practice the skills necessary to address those issues as an informed citizen. For Brock Experience courses, students center in on a particular unresolved civic issue while seeking to understand it from the multiplicity of perspectives found in a particular place. Brock Experience faculty challenge students to think of their broad, unresolved civic issue as consisting of many sub-issues that can be analyzed using a variety of disciplinary or focus area lenses.

# Brock Specifics

The Brock Experiences for Transformational Learning support faculty as they create learning opportunities focused on the three central components of a Brock Experience. These are:

1. An unresolved civic issue about which reasonable people might disagree
2. A place-based pedagogical approach that embeds the learner in a community critically impacted by the issue at hand
3. A transdisciplinary approach to the learning that cuts across traditional boundaries for deeper, more integrative learning.

## CIVIC ISSUES

Since all of Longwood University's education is centered around the preparation of citizen leaders for the common good, it makes sense that its core curriculum and its signature travel program would be similarly aligned. The first, and most important, of the components is that all Brock Experiences are designed around an unresolved civic issue. A Brock Experience introduces students to a complex civic issue in the United States that features a variety of viewpoints and will require a holistic approach for resolution. Faculty on a Brock Experience will frequently place the civic issue in a historical context but always orient the academic inquiry towards future resolution. This is not to say that Brock Experiences are focused on finding the perfect solution to the identified civic issue. Instead, Brock courses teach students the skills necessary to engage with any civic issue by focusing in on one in particular.

## PLACE-BASED APPROACH

Place-based pedagogy seeks to put the learner directly in contact with the subject of study rather than studying a topic through the lens of a written text. These techniques draw on the deep meanings of a place to enrich or even define the issues to be studied. Rather than relying on strict courses of study, place-based education seeks to push students out of the comfortable dynamic of a traditional classroom and into the uncomfortable context of the wider world. Students must wrestle with conflicting information and competing opinions related to the lived experience of the people they encounter. Through this wrestling, students make new meaning and attempt to find common ground among disparate perspectives.



**“I knew that it was an amazing opportunity that I could not pass up. But what I didn’t know was how much I would grow as an individual, as a citizen leader, and as an educated member of all communities. While sitting on a rock writing my [turning point reflection] timeline, I couldn’t help but think about the turning point in my citizenship. I began to think about ways I have harmed my own Blue Ridge Mountains and Shenandoah Valley without a bat of an eye ... I’ve learned that no matter how beautiful something may be, without conservation it won’t last.” — Celia Dean YELLOWSTONE 2017**

**“I will no longer be able to mindlessly walk through a new location, but rather I will look at it through a critical lens. The most mundane things around you have so much to tell about the people who live there, one just has to take notice. I never realized you could learn so much from a bumper sticker, graffiti, or even talking to a random person in a coffee shop. No longer will I see a location for just the touristy aspects, but rather the small things found in everyday life as well.” — Grace Dalton ALASKA 2017**

“The most affirming part of being involved in this Brock Experience was the student experience that I got to watch. The transformation that I got to see in each and every one of the students was amazing. They were learning and retaining the content and applying it to their lives. It was easily the most affirming part of everything.”

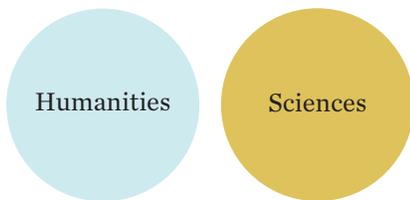
— Dr. Monique Bates *BORDERLINES 2018*

## INTERDISCIPLINARY / TRANSDISCIPLINARY

Transdisciplinary work is necessary in the education of citizen leaders because civic issues do not fall neatly into singular disciplinary frameworks. Life’s issues do not often fall neatly into discrete categories that can be studied from individual disciplinary perspectives; therefore, transdisciplinary education is of vital importance in educating the citizen leader. Despite this, most colleges and universities

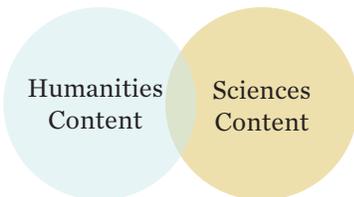
structure their general education curricula to present a variety of discreet disciplinary perspectives that map onto the disciplinary structures of the academy. At Longwood University, faculty intentionally design Civitae Perspectives courses to address topics from multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, or—ideally—transdisciplinary approaches. Brock Experiences are the pinnacle of this approach in that the civic issues at their root, axiomatically, cannot be broken into discreet disciplinary perspectives. For example, immigration along the United States’ southern border is, of course, a political topic but it is also a topic ripe for study by scholars from criminal justice, sociology, mathematics, biology, or environmental studies. Similarly, the stewardship of public lands lends itself to study by scientists, artists, and education scholars. Faculty from a variety of academic disciplines serve on Brock Experience instructional teams to provide real-time challenges to students on their perceived limitations of knowledge.

### TRADITIONAL DISCIPLINARY BASED COURSES



**FIGURE 1** In a traditional University class, disciplines are rigidly defined and bodies of knowledge are kept separate. Students are left to make connections among seemingly disparate content areas.

### INTERDISCIPLINARY BASED COURSES



**FIGURE 2** In an interdisciplinary course, separate content areas are represented together in one class with time devoted to areas of overlap.

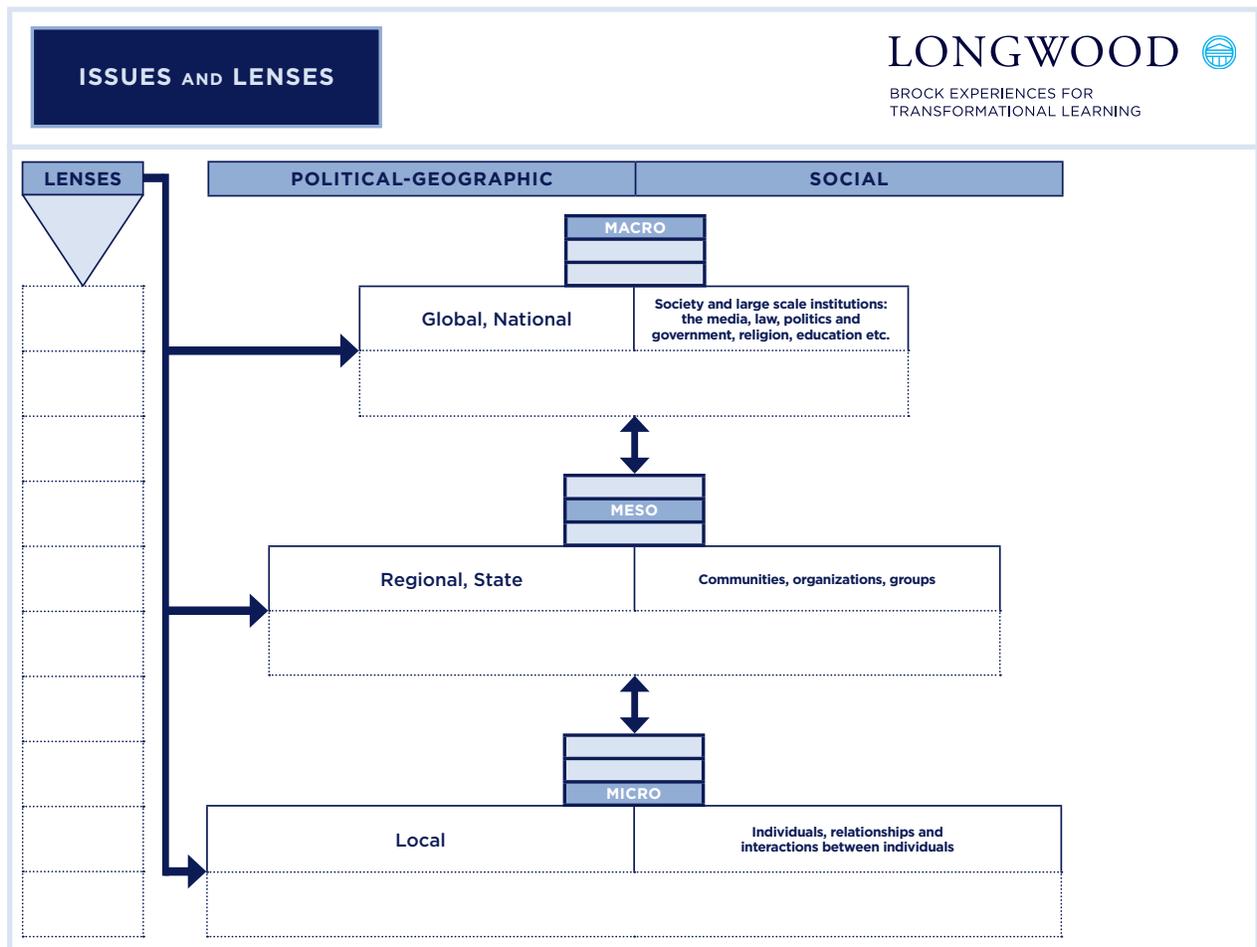
### TRANSDISCIPLINARY BASED COURSES



**FIGURE 3** In a transdisciplinary course, divisions between content areas disappear and disciplines blend into one another. Brock Experiences exist as transdisciplinary courses focused on unresolved civic issues, the solutions to which no one discipline can claim ownership.

## CIVIC ISSUES FRAMEWORK

As Fellows design their Brock Experience, they do so by intentionally arranging their class into issues and lenses. The instructional team further organizes the civic issues into three levels – macro, meso, and micro. The macro level is, usually, what the course is principally “about.” This level encompasses the broad, unresolved issue that students will explore such as stewardship of public lands or who gets to be considered an American. The meso level of the issues at hand are often related to the place in which the Brock course is situated and provides a meaningful bounding on the issue. In the case of our public lands class, the meso level is the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. For the American identity course, it is America’s southern border in Arizona. From there, the civic issue is further refined into the individual micro issues that constitute the larger framing. These micro issues are specific to the place under consideration and the unresolved civic question at the heart of the course. Students on a Brock Experience study wolves, fish, bear, and fire in Yellowstone while considering the stewardship of public lands. Some of those same issues may arise in a different course about an unrelated topic but likely won’t. Instead, other issues present at the micro level. Finally, all of the courses utilize a series of lenses to interpret or view the issues at the various levels, intentionally asking students to shift their mode of inquiry to push them beyond rigid disciplinary models of thinking. These lenses might be things like aesthetics or ethics or economics. While particular disciplines may lend themselves to specific lenses, they don’t always map onto existing disciplinary boundaries.



# Course Profiles



## Longwood University@Yellowstone National Park

(LU@YNP) Date Founded: 2006

**Civic Issue: Stewardship of Public Lands and Resources**

**Description:** America's first national park serves as the backdrop for this course about the stewardship of public lands and resources. Students explore the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and surrounding border towns as they interact with stakeholders and community members who live in the shadow of the natural landscape, sometimes called Wonderland. Early mornings bring the exploration team into view of bears and wolves while evening discussions help the students to synthesize their data into new knowledge.

## Alaska

Date Founded: 2016

**Civic Issue: Extractive Natural Resources**

**Description:** America's last frontier serves as the setting for this course's ten-day exploration of the resources extracted from the ground. Students learn about sifting for gems, the movement of oil across the landscape, and the loss of indigenous culture as they travel from Fairbanks to Anchorage, Denali to Kenai Fjords.



## Borderlands

Date Founded: 2018

**Civic Issue: America's Border**

**Description:** Across America's southern border stands a literal line in the sand that divides the United States from neighboring Mexico. By traveling to communities that abut this border, students begin to understand the issues facing those most directly affected by immigration and changing laws. Visiting with Border Patrol officers, supplying humanitarian aid in the form of water, and meeting immigrants firsthand all challenge students to find connections with others they may view as wholly different than themselves.



## Chesapeake Bay

Date Founded: 2018

**Civic Issue: Stewardship of Public Water and Resources**

**Description:** The Chesapeake Bay is the largest estuary in the United States and provides the perfect classroom for students to confront the issue of changing climate and diminishing natural resources. The exploration team travels by boat to remote islands facing sea level rise, learns from watermen struggling to make a living, and comes nose to gills with the fish responsible for much of the omega-3 oils in the world's vitamins.



## Colorado River

Date Founded: 2019

**Civic Issue: Where does the water go?**

**Description:** Tracing the mighty Colorado River from the headwaters outside of Denver, CO, until it trails to a trickle in Yuma, AZ, this course is focused on the quest, "where does the water go?" And when the water goes where it goes, what does it do there? Students start the course in full snow and end in the sweltering desert as they travel on the road trip of a lifetime exploring hydro-power, aquaculture, and the tourism industry along one of America's disappearing rivers.





## Curating Citizenship

**Date Founded:** 2019

**Civic Issue:** Art and Citizenship

**Description:** Public and private art collections in and around Boston, MA, serve as the learning laboratories for students exploring the connection between citizenship and art. Statuary and murals challenge the students to consider whose stories get told and how society remembers important events. Private art locked behind glass invites the students to imagine who is allowed access to these expressions of beauty. The story of the unsolved theft of priceless art pieces causes students to contemplate what is lost when citizens are denied their art.



## Puerto Rico

**Date Founded:** 2019

**Civic Issue:** Citizenship and Statehood

**Description:** The American territory of Puerto Rico has long considered whether to petition to become a full-fledged state. Students on this course explore the unique cultural and physical landscape of the island while considering the economic impact statehood would bring, both to the island and to the country as a whole.



## Being Human

**Date Founded:** 2021

**Civic Issue:** The Future of Humanity

**Description:** In recent years, humanity has made great advances in technology such that it is possible to edit genetic code. If someone has a disability, should society manipulate their genes to erase that facet of their identity? If scientists can address human limitations, can society also enhance human ability? If society can achieve all of this, at what point does a human simply stop being human? This course explores these biological and ethical issues in the context of San Francisco's vibrant communities of researchers and advocates.

# Creation of Brock

## EARLY TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING COURSES

In the winter of 2006, a few enthusiastic faculty members took a handful of undergraduates to explore the stewardship of public lands at America's first National Park. From there, the Longwood University at Yellowstone National Park (LU@YNP) program began. After 10 years of transformative learning in a unique landscape, the LU@YNP team proved that its unique pedagogical approach to teaching unresolved civic issues could be transferred to a different environment and the Longwood University at Alaska course began. Thereafter, Longwood University committed to this innovative style of teaching civic engagement by establishing a suite of courses connected to and embedded within its core curriculum.

## INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT

When the institution established the Office of Brock Experiences for Transformational Learning, thanks to the generous support of Mrs. Joan Perry Brock '64, it did so with a commitment to support these unique courses. The Director of Brock Experiences reports directly to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and is responsible for recruiting faculty, supporting course creation, shepherding students through the enrollment process, and managing the budget to make all of this possible. In addition to the full-time Director, two committees of faculty and staff support these initiatives through the selection of new Fellows and the training of those Fellows, respectively.

# Constant Innovation

Through all of the various versions of each Brock Experience, one thing has remained constant—innovation. Each year—each course—reinvents itself for the current iteration of the civic issue. For example, as the issue of illegal immigration became prominent in popular American discourse, Longwood University launched the Borderlines course. As the wider national conversation has waned and attentions turn elsewhere, Borderlines has expanded its pedagogical focus to be inclusive of the wider cultural impact of the border on the region. In that way, Borderlines has innovated to become Borderlands.



Likewise, new initiatives within courses provide opportunities for experimentation and iterative change. For a number of years, the LU@YNP course partnered with the Yellowstone Heritage and Research Center to capture oral histories from the local residents. The participants developed skills through that partnership that became part of the formal curriculum of the course. Service learning projects, recreation activities that put students into contact with stakeholders, humanitarian relief efforts, and cultural experiences all serve as learning activities and possible future areas of exploration in future courses. In this way, the instructional teams for each established Brock Experience also continues to innovate even as the institution innovates with new course offerings.

## FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Tenure-track or tenured faculty members propose new Brock Experiences through a competitive process resulting in an appointment as a Brock Fellow. These Fellows, in turn, recruit a diverse team of faculty and staff to form the instructional team that plans, pilots, and launches a new Brock Experience over the course of a two-year cycle. These Fellows travel to the off-campus location with the rest of their faculty team to deliver content, guide exploration, and facilitate transformative learning about the unresolved civic issues at the core of the course.

It is not easy to educate at the unique intersection of civic issues, place-based pedagogy, and transdisciplinary opportunities. To accomplish this, the Brock Experiences office provides administrative benefits in the form of a reassignment in teaching load, stipends, course development funding, and staff support. By providing for two fellowships annually for faculty, the Office of Brock Experiences allows the brightest scholars at Longwood University to spend time engaged with wildly different pedagogical styles. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Brock Experiences exist as an expression of the overall, university-wide commitment to educating future citizens in these unique ways.

Since the traditional university set up is not necessarily conducive to or structured around the three pillars of a Brock Experience, faculty often require professional development. Engaging workshops and institutes provide faculty and staff with the opportunity to explore each of the areas in a scaffolded way that leads to the long-term success of the individual program. As a result of their experience with a Brock course, faculty and staff get the opportunity to consider unresolved civic issues and the role of place in their understanding of them while being challenged to look beyond their particular discipline.

# Impact

## STUDENTS

Students who have taken a Brock course report experiencing transformation as a result of the class. During the course they describe feeling overwhelmed and tired: “I’m overwhelmed. The days are extremely long, the content is difficult, and the things we see and hear aren’t easily processed ... I’ve never experienced anything like this, but I’m glad I am,” said one student on the Borderlines course in her reflection notebook. After the travel portion they report changes in their own self-conception as a result of the experience: “This [course] taught me to keep an open mind and to never let my own personal opinions cloud information I am receiving, because that information may be crucial to understanding the bigger picture. After this amazing experience I definitely feel as though I am ready to enter the world with an open mind, ready to learn and receive new information from our diverse human race,” said a student on the Alaska course. Often, students update their own personal timelines to reflect a before Brock college career and a post Brock period.

On an institutional level, preliminary data seems to show a link between the high-impact practices found in a Brock Experience and student success. Since the program is so young, Longwood University is still exploring these data and the cause thereof. Students who take a Brock Experience course retain at a higher rate than those who do not, particularly among those who are students of color or Pell-eligible. In addition, those who took a Brock course raised their grade point averages after the experience.

Beyond the academic impact of the Brock Experiences, all participants (students, faculty, and staff) report meaningful interpersonal connections. “These people have become like family,” said Jen Fraley (Dean of Students) who participated in the 2018 Alaska course, “I’ve gotten birth and wedding announcements from them, I still serve as a reference for one student, and another just got hired by the University to be a Campus Police Officer.” These strong community bonds have formed a lasting connection between the participants and Longwood University

## FACULTY & STAFF

Those instructional faculty members who serve as Brock Fellows receive professional development on the pillars of Brock as well as other important areas of University administration. Through that development, they consistently report growth as instructors and demonstrate greater mastery of bureaucratic processes. Meanwhile, the faculty members who serve on the instructional team of a Brock Experience are challenged to think in transdisciplinary ways that push them outside of their academic comfort zones.

All Brock Experiences are required to travel with a staff member that exhibits expertise in learning outside of the classroom. These staff members can come from a variety of functional areas at the University such as Student Affairs, Student Success, or the Greenwood Library. Jennifer Beach, a librarian embedded in both the Boston and San Francisco Brock Experiences, observed that the relationships formed in the courses served as “the foundation for future opportunities to connect with students in the library, and to collaborate with faculty on future courses or projects.” Brock Experiences also offer opportunities for staff members to add teaching experience and group facilitation to their resumes—an opportunity few and far between for non-instructional faculty. One such staff member, Larry Robertson, reported being challenged by facilitating some of the course learning activities and remarked that he “learned as much as the students.”

# Professional Development

## PRE-APPLICATION WORKSHOPS ON EACH PILLAR

As the program has matured, leadership in the Brock Experiences identified the need for additional professional development for faculty on the three pillars of **1.** civic issues, **2.** place-based learning, and **3.** transdisciplinary education. The Brock Experiences office assembled a team of faculty to assist in facilitating this professional development through pre-Fellowship workshops and one-on-one mentoring. Since many of the elements of the Brock Experiences are shared in common with the Civitae core curriculum, these workshops double as training for effective teaching in the core as well.

## FACULTY INSTITUTE

Beginning in the summer of 2022, the office will offer a faculty development institute capitalizing on the Chesapeake Bay Brock Experience. Attendees will participate in a scaled-back version of a Brock Experience while learning about the three key pillars and brainstorming their own future courses. Faculty mentors will guide participants in reflection on the experience and application to their scholarship and teaching.



## BROCK FELLOW & TEAM LEAD BIOS



**Dr. Alix Fink** (Biology)  
**Longwood@Yellowstone National Park** (LU@YNP)

Alix D. Dowling Fink is the Associate Provost for Research and Academic Initiatives and a Professor of Biology. She is involved in collaborative interdisciplinary projects across the university, working with faculty in the arts and sciences and partners in student affairs. Among those collaborations is the long-running LU@YNP program that immerses students in the challenges of the stewardship of public lands. In its many iterations, the project has been the context for serious civic inquiry by more than 400 Longwood students.



**Dr. JoEllen Pederson** (Sociology)  
**Alaska**

Dr. JoEllen Pederson, associate professor of sociology, has been teaching at Longwood University since 2013. She received a B.A. in sociology from Berea College in 2007, and a master's degree (2010) and Ph.D. (2013) from Florida State University. Her research interests include cross-national welfare state comparisons, health care, and aging. In addition to research, Dr. Pederson works with interdisciplinary groups of faculty and students to improve project-based learning with a service-learning focus. This has resulted in publications in the *Journal of Statistics Education*, *New Horizons in Adult Education*, and *Science Education and Civic Engagement: An International Journal*.



**Dr. Phillip Poplin** (Mathematics)  
**Alaska**

Dr. Poplin started teaching at Longwood University in 2003. Phillip received his Ph.D. in Mathematics from North Carolina State University. Phillip has taught at North Carolina State University and Wake Technical Community College in Raleigh, North Carolina. In addition to serving as a program lead for Alaska, Phillip is a team member on the LU@YNP course.



**Dr. Renee Gutierrez** (Spanish)  
**Borderlines/Borderlands**

After a 10-year career as a Navy officer that included earning an MS in Management, Dr. Gutierrez pursued her Masters and Ph.D. in Spanish Literature at the University of Virginia. Dr. Gutiérrez then joined the Longwood University faculty where she specializes in Latin America, teaching its language, literatures and cultures. Her literary research publications rarely stray from Latin American epic poetry, and have been published in *Dieciocho* and *Calíope*, among other journals. She co-authored *Interculturalism and Teacher Education: Theory to Practice* (2014), and is currently working on a study to identify early warning signs of students who may struggle in the foreign language classroom. She is also the Assistant Director for the Center for Faculty Enrichment, focusing on professional development across the career. Dr. Gutiérrez volunteers at the Immigration Detention Center in Farmville, teaching English with the help of Longwood students and professors.



**Dr. Connie Koski** (Criminal Justice)  
**Borderlines/Borderlands**

After a 16-year career as a police officer, Dr. Koski obtained her M.S. in Criminal Justice from Wayne State University in Detroit, MI, and her Ph.D. in Criminology & Criminal Justice from the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Dr. Koski's work has been published in *Police Practice and Research: An International Journal*, *the Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, *Journal of Criminal Justice*, and *The Criminologist* and she collaborated with Dr. Gutierrez beginning in Fall 2014 in taking Longwood University students to Farmville's Immigration Centers of America detention facility.



**Dr. Ben Campbell** (Biology)  
**Borderlines/Borderlands**

Before joining Longwood in 2016, Ben previously taught high school biology, chemistry, and scientific investigations for five years in San Antonio, Texas. He earned a B.S. in Biology from Centre College, both an M.S. in Biology and an M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction from Arizona State University, and a Ph.D. in Science Education from the University of Georgia,



**Dr. Melissa Rhoten** (Chemistry)  
**Chesapeake Bay**

Melissa C. Rhoten received her B.S. in chemistry from James Madison University in 1994 and her Ph.D. in Analytical Chemistry in 2000 from Virginia Commonwealth University. In 2000 Melissa joined the faculty at Longwood University. She was tenured and promoted to the rank of Associate Professor in 2007 and was subsequently promoted to Full Professor in 2012. Her research interests include topics in chemical education, bioanalytical chemistry, and electrochemistry. Dr. Rhoten has also been involved in pedagogical activities focused on the implementation of inquiry-based learning into Longwood's chemistry curriculum. Professor Rhoten is an active member of her department and university. In April 2017 she was appointed as Director of the new Core Curriculum program. She served as the chair of the Department of Chemistry and Physics from 2006-2016 and as director of PRISM, a summer research program for STEM students, from 2012-2016.



**Dr. Mark Fink** (Biology)  
**Chesapeake Bay**

Mark L. Fink received his B.S. in biology from the University of Missouri in 1992, his M.S. in Fisheries and Wildlife Science from Texas A&M University in 1996, and his Ph.D. in Biology from the University of Missouri in 2003. His research interests include avian ecology, conservation biology, landscape ecology, and community ecology. Mark has been a member of the Longwood University faculty since 2001, and he regularly teaches courses in ecology, ornithology, conservation biology, senior capstone biology, and biology for future elementary teachers. He enjoys his work along the Chesapeake Bay working with students to document the biodiversity of Longwood's award-winning living shoreline at Hull Springs. Since 2010, Dr. Fink has served as Chair of the Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences.



**Mr. Mike Mergen** (Photography)  
**Colorado River**

Michael Mergen is an educator and artist with a BFA in photography from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2011. His work considers the political and civic nature of the United States and its citizens through the medium of photography. His work has been featured in *The New York Times Magazine*, *Harper's*, and *Mother Jones* magazines, and featured on *Time* magazine's *LightBox* and *Slate*. He has exhibited nationally and internationally and his work is held in several public and private collections, including the University of Maine Museum of Art, the Center for Photography at Woodstock, the Longwood Center for the Visual Arts, Urban Outfitters, Inc., and Center for Emerging Visual Artists.



**Dr. Shawn Smith** (English)  
**Boston**

Shawn Smith, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor of English at Longwood University. He teaches Shakespeare, Renaissance literature, and world literature, with an emphasis on literature from antiquity to the early modern period. Shawn is an avid museum goer and lover of artistic expression.



**Dr. Melanie Marks** (Economics)  
**Puerto Rico**

Dr. Melanie Marks received her undergraduate and graduate degrees in Economics from Texas A&M University in College Station, TX. Her fields of specialization include Experimental and Public Economics. She has conducted experimental tests of fund raising mechanisms for providing public goods. She instructs courses in Public Policy, Environmental Economics, Principles of Microeconomics, and Senior Seminar. She loves to travel and has led many study away experiences.



**Dr. Dale Beach** (Biology)  
**San Francisco**

Dr. Dale Beach grew up in the San Francisco Bay area and graduated from the University of California at Davis with a degree in Biology. After a brief period working in the biotechnology field, he attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for a doctoral degree in Cellular and Molecular Biology. He is currently an associate professor of Biology at Longwood University, in Farmville, VA, where he teaches introductory biology and courses relevant to molecular biology and genetics, and actively studies phylogenetic relationships in different fungal systems.





## VIDEOS FROM PREVIOUS BROCK EXPERIENCES

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPjqHeTax9o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPjqHeTax9o)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=uL8jHxDstfo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uL8jHxDstfo)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=MqREPFChEws](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MqREPFChEws)

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[www.youtube.com/watch?v=cXuXYyqiTaY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cXuXYyqiTaY)

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