

NAROPA

M A G A Z I N E

2018-19

Naropa UNIVERSITY

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Naropa University is a private, nonprofit, nonsectarian liberal arts institution dedicated to its mission of contemplative education. This approach to learning integrates the best of Eastern and Western educational institutions, helping students know themselves more deeply and engage constructively with others. The university comprises a four-year undergraduate college and graduate degree programs in the arts, leadership, counseling, education, and religious studies.

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Photo: David DeVine

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

It is my pleasure to share a bit of today's Naropa story as told in this magazine. You will experience many voices, each with a unique perspective and all with a shared passion for our mission and deep commitment to the student journey.

The beginning of the fall term is always a time of great energy and connection. This year, we are especially happy to welcome the inaugural class in our new BA in Elementary Education. Our teacher licensure degree is the first in the country to fully integrate mindfulness and resilience practices for both teachers and their students together with the academic training a K–6 teacher needs. In addition, our graduates will hold endorsements in Cultural and Linguistic Diversity, adding to their employment prospects. This integrated four-year degree will graduate teachers who will have lasting impact on the profession.

The Naropa Counseling Center (NCC) is now a licensed Medicaid provider. In addition to offering mental health counseling to students—our essential responsibility—the NCC is serving low-income residents of Boulder County, whose choices for sub-acute mental health care are severely limited. In addition to supporting our community, this expansion of services has created additional internship positions for our Graduate School of Counseling and Psychology students.

We are doing other off-campus work as well. Building on our pioneering fifteen-week Authentic Leadership program, the online Mindful at Work course launched. In addition, through funding from the World Bank, Naropa's Authentic Leadership Center worked with fifty managers in the Government of Jamaica Finance Ministry in order to bring mindful leadership skills into the civil service.

We have also been invited to present diversity and inclusion training to business and nonprofit audiences in Colorado, California, Washington, D.C., and a growing list. The work flows from our Office for Inclusive Community and the stated mission to create beloved community through critical consciousness



raising and cultural transformation. This important work, as any lasting systemic change is, blends the hard skills training with the deeper work that brings contemplative practice into alignment with compassionate action.

At Naropa, we work hard to hold multiple missions. We know very well that Naropa sits in a complicated social, political, and economic reality, and that one mission is to share with students a certain urgency to engage. And at the same time, lasting impact requires a degree of patience as well. Transformation is not instantaneous. Rather it emerges from the discipline of mindfulness, awareness, and compassion practice as well as sharpening intellectual knowledge and understanding. That is combined here with the deeper work of honing values of diversity, inclusion, and sustainability.

I am proud to engage daily with the committed Naropa students, faculty, and staff who—from the foundation built almost a half-century ago—are propelling Naropa into an even more relevant and impactful future. I invite you to share our passion.

Warm Wishes,

CHARLES G. LIEF
PRESIDENT, NAROPA UNIVERSITY

LOOKING SEEING SHAPING HONING

A Lifelong Practice

By Cassandra Smith

"I often paint in series," shares recently retired professor Robert Spellman, the artist behind this issue's cover image, *Boulder Creek III*. "[I do this] partly because it is an accepted custom among painters everywhere, and partly because I can never quite make up my mind what a painting ought to be, so I try different approaches to work that out."

This was the approach he took with the *Boulder Creek* series he painted for a solo exhibition at the Dairy Arts Center in Boulder in early 2018. The three paintings are quite large—nine and a half by ten feet—one of which is covered in pre-owned clothing splashed with acrylic.

"The *Boulder Creek* paintings came out of a sense of respect for local water courses," says Spellman. "Respect for water courses is a very ancient and universal custom incompatible with a dualistic worldview. I heard that in the 1960s, Boulder Creek was a neglected mess, the go-to place to dump old tires and washing machines. Imagine! I'm grateful that it was well cleaned up by inspired citizen initiatives by the time I moved here in 1991."



The Naropa Buddha by Joan Anderson and Robert Spellman.

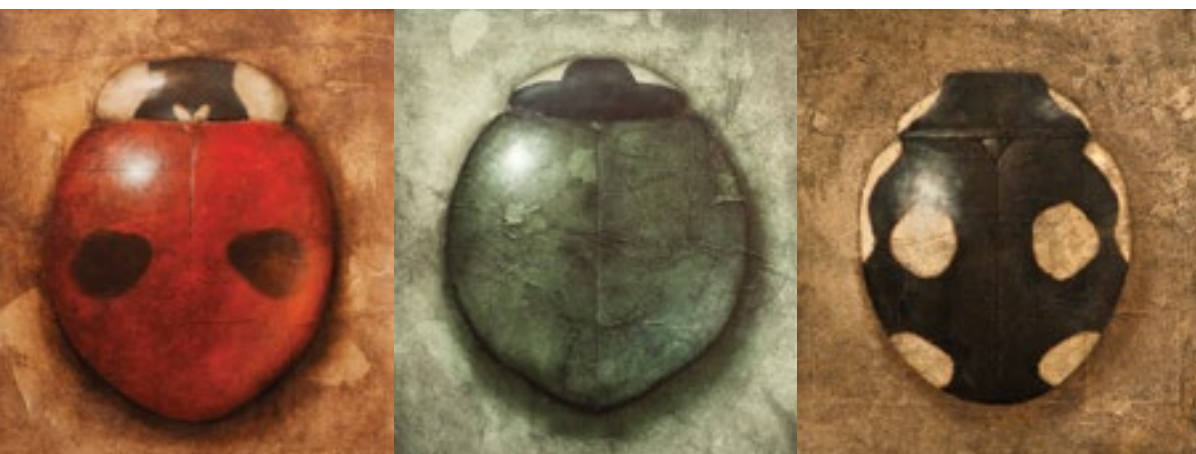


Top right: Robert Spellman with MFA Theater: Contemporary Performance students and faculty the day of graduation. Photo courtesy of Chie Saito.

Middle: Robert Spellman teaching the final 'Introduction to Drawing' class of his career at Naropa. Photo: Cassandra Smith

As Spellman ends his time teaching at Naropa, he is beginning a new chapter of Dharma Art and contemplative practice offerings. "My wife Joan Anderson and I are currently building Mountain Water, an artists' refuge and land restoration laboratory in southern Colorado, the culmination of a twenty-five-year vision," he says. "It's not hard to imagine the facility we are building becoming a satellite of Naropa University, where students can experience immersive meditation, creativity, and land stewardship."

As Spellman looks back at his time at Naropa, he says he was always surprised how naturally artistic so many of the students were. "Many of them see creativity as a way of being rather than a career choice," he says. "This has been continually instructive to me." 🌀



Acrylic paintings by Robert Spellman. From left to right: Garrison Beetle V, Garrison Beetle VIII, Lateral Lady Beetle.



MEET MICHAEL BAUER

Naropa's Director of Sustainability

Edited by Billy Thieme

Photos by Sofia Drobinskaya



In January 2018, Naropa welcomed Michael Bauer as the Director of Sustainability within the Office for Inclusive Community. Bauer brings his broad experience in sustainability program design and impact evaluation, stakeholder engagement, and program development. Bauer sat down with Naropa student Jennifer 'Fern' Dieninger (BA Contemplative Art Therapy, '19) for his first interview as director.

Jennifer 'Fern' Dieninger: *Could you talk about your background and foundation prior to Naropa?*

Michael Bauer: I do find it interesting that there is five-billion-year-old carbon in my bones—when I learned that, it blew my mind. I guess that's reflective of how I have always been—very much interested in learning. And that's been really important to me throughout my life.

MB I moved to Boulder in '96 to study biology at University of Colorado Boulder (CU) and made money on the side as a jazz musician. Before I moved here, I studied jazz, was in a big band and some jazz combos, and then realized I didn't want to spend my time indoors smoking cigarettes. I wanted to be outside, to learn more about the natural world.

I worked for Boulder County Open Space for ten years, and then—in the early 2000s—I started to get more concerned about climate change and how it would affect what I love the most: predator-prey dynamics. Wolves and elk, cougar and deer—these systems that have been flowing energy up and down food webs for millions of years. I was fascinated with them because of their need for large wilderness areas. That's the key—pulling from Rachel Carson, David Brower, and John Muir—the importance of protecting large wilderness areas. I began anxiously and seriously looking at what I could do to create change around this climate crisis.

CU's Civil Systems Engineering program—something I had never heard of—had just launched, covering engineering at the intersection between civil engineering, environmental engineering, and urban planning. I got my master's degree in civil engineering in 2013, and taught engineering at Metropolitan State University of Denver. They invited me to help develop their Sustainable Systems Engineering program, just while I was trying to find work around making a difference in the climate crisis. I was making a positive difference with students and Metro State—injecting some humanities and service-oriented philosophies into their program. But, I really wanted to get into the ground level of sustainability decision-making on a larger scale.

This open position at Naropa—a unique combination of teaching and curriculum development at the university level and sustainability reporting—was exciting.

JD *I'm wondering about the current state of greenhouse gas emissions at Naropa, what truly renewable energy forms we have on campus, and where transparency and the public comes into this?*

MB A lot of work around climate neutrality was done from 2007–2009, when students got really active developing a plan for making Naropa carbon neutral. The Climate Action Plan was finished in 2011 through the energy of these activated

students. It was updated in 2013 and became a road map for getting us to carbon neutral and balanced energy emissions on all of our campuses. There are three phases, and we're in an implementation phase. We've got a seven kilowatt solar array on the Pamela Krasney Pavilion, and another two-and-a-half kilowatt array on the Harry Smith Print Shop. Together, those produce about nine-thousand kilowatt-hours of energy per year, which keeps about three tons of coal per year in the ground. But, that's still not enough.

We also try to help students, faculty, and staff reduce their 'Scope 3' emissions coming from commuting to and from campus and between campuses. We partner with the BCycle® bike sharing program—free to all students, faculty, and staff—which provides unlimited one-hour trips. We also offer the EcoPass® to the community from RTD®, which allows one to take any RTD bus anywhere—not just to work and/or back home.

We've also publicly committed to what is now called the Climate Commitment. From there, we hope to join the Carbon Commitment and the Resilience Commitment as well. We're now exploring the best matches for our scope and finances to set targeting objectives. By committing publicly to these things and being transparent, we're accountable and have a framework for getting where we need to be.

In my first six months here, I've focused on community partnerships with local sustainability directors—City of Boulder, Boulder County, CU—and with different nonprofits around energy transportation, food security, agriculture, etc. We recently partnered with the Colorado Carbon Fund to offset all of our building energy emissions. We physically offset

those emissions by "balancing our carbon sheets," if you will, through their Larimer County Landfill Gas Capture projects. This keeps the dollars in Colorado, and it helps develop the carbon draw-down economy, while increasing our community involvement.

We're also moving into regenerative farming—which falls under the broader permaculture envelope. Regenerative farming, also called 'carbon farming,' is an array of techniques that help reduce the amount of carbon you are using to farm with tractors, trucks, and things like that. It also involves physically sequestering carbon into the soil through different practices like no till, agroforestry, rotational grazing, and more.

JD *The more I study this, the more I realize that sustainability and climate change intersect with social identities and form an inextricable web. Can you speak about how the Department of Sustainability interacts with the Office for Inclusivity here at Naropa, and what that web may look like on campus?*

MB The idea of sustainability is traditionally related to solar panels, or electric cars, or recycling, or riding bikes, or rain barrels, or organic farming, and the like. Those are really important, but they're just not enough. Sustainability starts with each person. Personal or purpose sustainability is the most important and most powerful domain of sustainability. If you're not completely nihilistic, and you're not completely burnt out, then your personal sustainability is such that you can expand your self-love and self-compassion to other people around you—beyond your immediate family. Even into larger life support systems; maybe even to the whole planet. It aligns really well with Naropa's mission of 'Transform Yourself, Transform the World.'

This fits sustainability in terms of what used to be called the 'triple bottom line.' Now it's the 'quadruple bottom line,' which is a series of concentric circles starting with personal sustainability at the core, and then social sustainability outside of that, followed by economic sustainability, and then finally ecological sustainability. These circles aren't separable in any way, and the social sustainability circle is where diversity and inclusivity come in. Who does climate change hit hardest and most severely? Communities that are marginalized economically



Michael Bauer and Jennifer 'Fern' Dieninger at the Naropa Bike Shack.

and socially. The Office for Inclusive Community includes diversity and inclusivity, and then contemplative practice—encompassing personal sustainability—and then finally environmental sustainability—the ecological sustainability circle.

It's not just like sustainability plus inclusivity, plus contemplative practice equals four. There's a compounding, exponential effect where we each grow off of each other, and the more each of us grows, the more that rate of growth increases.

When students who are focused on sustainability start talking about diversity, or students interested in diversity and inclusivity see us talking about sustainability and contemplative practice, it starts to dissolve walls in their minds—walls that don't exist and never did. We can talk about these concepts separately, and there are certainly distinctions, but the overlap is significant, helping us work in a more powerfully integrated way.

JD *There were reportedly student forces that demanded a Department of Sustainability at Naropa, and this was what led to your position. Could you talk about that process?*

MB In 2014 and 2015, a group of activated students became particularly concerned about certain practices and behaviors by some Naropa faculty and administration that were identified as systemic racism, and they protested strongly. They camped out on the green for weeks! They called their action 'Decolonize the Commons,' in reference to western European global colonization. They demanded recognition and change for students of color. And rightly so. That insight and activism led to a number of wonderful changes around institutional and individual implicit bias, systems of oppression, diversity, and inclusivity that are still ongoing.

So, noticing the success of these students' beautiful efforts, another group of students then felt equally inspired to point out shortcomings in the institution around its commitments to sustainability. With the help of Regina Smith and the Office for Inclusive Community, these folks successfully organized demands for a commitment to the practice of sustainability, a sustainability core seminar, and a full-time Director of Sustainability.

JD *And now you're here.*



MB Thanks to the skillful, sustained efforts of these students, I'm fortunate to be here. One of the key things that the students wanted was for the Director of Sustainability not to report to anyone except the university president. Regina suggested having the Director of Sustainability housed in the Office for Inclusive Community, which took care of that administrative structure, based in the truth that the philosophy and practice of sustainability are not separable from social justice.

JD *I think we are regularly interconnected in that way.*

MB I wish I had realized that sooner in my career. I have my own background in social justice work as well but didn't always connect the dots. Social justice is ecological justice, and ecological justice is social justice. It's a much more powerful way to think about how you can align these values and dissolve the walls between them.

JD *Many students talk about the gloom of working with the climate in this day and age. What does maintaining active hope as someone invested in cultivating sustainability look like to you?*

MB It does seem like the bad news just keeps on coming—around climate, the refugee

crisis, opioid crisis, political instability, economic shocks, homelessness, and on and on. I am not convinced that a lot of that isn't just our news cycle. I don't think things are as bleak as they often seem, or as bleak as we're told over and over. We actually live in a time of immense wonder and excitement around a number of things, and I'd just like to give you a few examples that show that life is improving in many domains:

- The polio vaccine—only four countries in the world haven't fully eradicated polio.
- Global contraceptive use is higher than it's ever been—and it's still growing.
- We know that one of the most effective methods of ensuring economic success and social sustainability is empowering women. A 2015 study by the World Health Organization correlated investments in women's health with stronger economies and stronger workforces specifically, and it also showed that those investments have gone up by 90 percent since 2012.
- As far as climate right now—if I asked how much more it costs to build a net carbon zero home versus a standard home, I'm sure people would offer wildly different guesses. But in Colorado, it's only about two to three percent more.
- In 2015, MIT did a study that showed that the solar panels existing in that year alone would be enough to supply all of the world's electricity by 2050.
- The Gates Foundation's annual letter in 2016 said governments are prioritizing global health initiatives, citizens are supporting it, and scientists are migrating to it.

I think we're in the process of waking up, collectively and as a species. We're learning at Naropa how to engage our suffering where it is. Whether we feel murderous rage or collapsing sadness—we're learning how to engage that, instead of just discharging it into our societies and children like we have done for millions of years.

JD *How can students on campus get involved with the Sustainability Council?*

MB Sustainability Council meets every two weeks during the semester, and that's where we plan as a group how to get more involved. There

is shared governance, so we keep each other accountable. I'm also interested in community partnerships where we can get students working out in the community, working with faculty and staff to get into our bodies. We spend so much time in the classroom, and as a species we're just so cerebral. We need time to get embodied and get down into the dirt—into our bodies. One of the most successful and exciting sustainability initiatives is the Bike Shack on the Arapahoe Campus, where students can learn how to work on bikes, get bikes fixed, or build their own bike—for free.

JD *If your time here had a season or a weather pattern that described it, what would it be, and has it transformed?*

MB Well, I started in January, so it was cold and snowy, and I had longer hair and a beard—I was in my winter mode. It started out as a cold winter day that's bright and sunny and clear, with cold air and warm sun.

JD *Truly a Boulder winter.*

MB Yeah, exactly! And then the wind really started to pick up, and clouds came in, and it got a little stormy—wind blowing and snowing and then raining—and then warming up and calming, the clouds parting, and the sun coming out. So, I would say it grew as with the seasons.

Right now, I'd say it's a clear summer day here with lots and lots of activity—wildlife and some weather, there's a lot going on. 🌻





THERAPIST AS ALLY: SOCIAL JUSTICE IN & OUT OF THE THERAPY ROOM

By Amanda Hart, MA Clinical Mental Health Counseling: Transpersonal Art Therapy '19

Alumni Chelsea Karcher, MA, LPC-IT, with her partner Owen Karcher, MA, LPC, run The Center for Community Healing in Madison, Wisconsin. Both graduated from Naropa's Transpersonal Counseling Psychology: Art Therapy program in 2013, and they frame their work through a strong social justice lens. Emphasis with clients, as well as in their consulting work, is placed on understanding the oppression and injustice experienced by their clients both within their personal lives, as well as societally. A large portion of this centers around their ever-developing awareness of personal bias, internalized oppression, areas of privilege, and worldview. As Chelsea explains, "In order to better society and community at large, this internal work is mandatory. When working with clients from any marginalized background, knowing our own (as therapists and individuals) implicit biases and how they are being brought into the relationship has to be worked into awareness."

Naropa's Art Therapy program standards require burgeoning therapists to take courses outlining a social justice and multicultural approach. To be a therapist no longer means sitting across from

another person without an understanding of their larger social context and the implications of this, nor does it allow for the ignorance of their privilege as therapist. It grows more and more important to shed light on the role of therapist as an ally and agent of social change, with the expectation that



integrity be held around personal blind spots and areas of ignorance. Owen and Chelsea hold this understanding central to their practice, welcoming clients who come to them in need of recovery from painful therapeutic experiences. "Mental health professionals have an ethical responsibility to conduct an examination of their own cultural identity, development, and unaddressed unconscious material in order to serve clients more thoroughly. Without this examination, a therapist may continue to operate without a conscious integration of suppressed aspects of self, relating to their cultural identity in a way that adversely affects the client and perpetuates harm. The harm to the client can manifest by inaccurate mirroring of their experiences, continuing to devalue their experiences of marginalization and oppression, or perpetuating preexisting power dynamics in relation to societal privilege."

In order to maintain an inclusive space, Owen and Chelsea have created an outline of commitments for themselves in regards to personal and social responsibility as art therapists and allies. The first of these is the need to continually examine their worldviews and socially constructed ideals as therapists. Second, is to have consistent reflection on how that sense of identity and self carries over into the implicit hierarchy of the therapeutic relationship. Third, is an acknowledgment of the interconnectedness of the human experience. Fourth, is to move beyond the walls of the therapy room and out into the community in order to improve the state of the world.

Growing from these principles is their online training course, 'The Transgender Advocacy Blueprint,' for service providers seeking the knowledge and skills necessary to confidently and respectfully work with transgender people. Chelsea and Owen have offered LGBTQ inclusivity and

anti-racism training to groups of social workers, educators, healthcare providers, state and county employees, parents, and nonprofits locally and nationally. They have also provided psychotherapy and support services for more than two hundred transgender individuals in the Midwest, many of whom travel several hours to see them due to lack of quality services in their own areas. The couple

explain, "Clinicians are shaped by the culture that surrounds them. If therapists are part of the dominant group in society, they may operate from a place of stereotypes or assumptions defined by the cultural norm. Most therapists lack formal education and direct experience in developing the justice-oriented, respectful practices transgender and gender-nonconforming people really need. The standard trend of providing 'good enough' care, well-intentioned but ill-informed, is harmful and reinforces the sense of mistrust and avoidance that keeps transgender people from seeking the treatment and support they need."

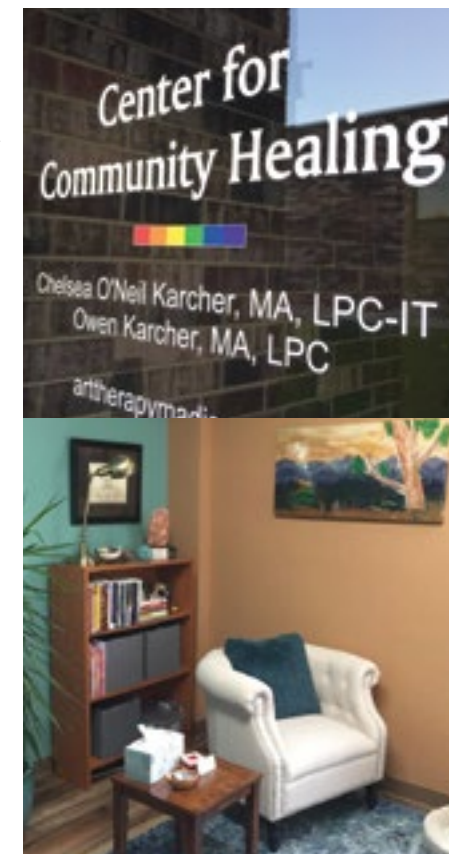
For those of us working in the field, and for those of us seeking license to do so, it is important to remember the innate privilege of our

profession and the immense responsibilities that come with this. The Center for Community Healing is making training and knowledge around these issues more accessible, in hopes of making quality, compassionate, and understanding care more accessible to all clients. 🌀

This interview was rewritten for Naropa Magazine. Find the original interviews with Chelsea and Owen Karcher online at Naropa's Pilot Light Blog:

"Naropa Alumni Bring Social Justice Framework to Therapeutic Relationship"

"Art Therapy & Social Activism"



EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

The Holistic Life Foundation Visits Naropa

Photo: Sofia Drobinskaya

By Samuel 'Jasper' Cliff, BA Creative Writing & Literature '18

Last semester, three self-proclaimed “love zombies” who are on a mission to spread love through yoga and mindfulness visited Naropa University. Brothers Ali and Atman Smith and Andres ‘Andy’ Gonzalez are the founders of The Holistic Life Foundation (HLF), a nonprofit organization based in Baltimore, Maryland.

HLF helps students and adults in Baltimore’s most underserved communities develop mindfulness and coping strategies through yoga, meditation, and other self-care techniques. According to their website, the foundation is committed to nurturing communities, encouraging stewardship of the environment, and developing “high-quality evidence-based programs” and curriculums to improve community well-being.

The Smith brothers met Gonzalez at the University of Maryland, College Park. During their last semester, the trio read books on spirituality, philosophy, religion, history, politics, and astronomy in pursuit of answers to the bigger questions. During this time of expansion, they were also baffled by all the suffering in the world and in their own communities, leading Gonzalez to ask, “So what are we going to do about it?”

At first, the trio didn’t know exactly how they would contribute. They began deepening their knowledge of yoga and developing their practice under the guidance of Ali and Atman’s godfather. As young children, Ali and Atman grew up with

yoga in their home, and their father had them meditate every morning before school. As Atman says, “Our parents were big hippies. They were into yoga, vegetarianism, and all that kind of stuff.”

In December of 2001, in the house that Ali and Atman grew up in, they formed The Holistic Life



Photo: Sofia Drobinskaya

Foundation along with Gonzalez. The nonprofit initially existed as an after-school program serving twenty fifth-grade boys. It introduced them to yoga, mindfulness, urban gardening, and teamwork in an effort to revive the community through its youngest members. The leaders of the new nonprofit assured their neighbors—who were wary of a group of young men gathering on a daily basis—that they weren’t starting a gang but were “creating gangsters of good,” and that is exactly what they did. In a city where the dropout rate for high school students hovers around 50 percent,

nineteen of that first group of twenty graduated, and many of them now work for HLF.

They soon expanded their program to the elementary school down the street and started bringing yoga and mindfulness directly into the classroom. Seventeen years since their founding, HLF now proudly serves roughly 7500 students per week in more than forty-two Baltimore area schools, and employs thirty Baltimore youth. They offer trainings, a residency program, yoga and mindfulness classes, and other workshops focusing on stress reduction and healthy living.

Schools across America are facing some immense issues including underfunding, staff shortages, and teacher strikes—not to mention another wave of tragic shootings. For some school districts, like those in Baltimore, these concerns are layered on top of already existing issues like high dropout rates and fractured communities. It seems clear that now, more than ever, schools could benefit from having both their staff and student body equipped with the tools of mindfulness.

“Our children are suffering emotionally, physically, and spiritually. If we don’t have something in place to help children deal with [aggravation], it’s highly unlikely that they are going to perform at the necessary levels,” said Vance M. Benton, a principal of one of the Baltimore schools that HLF currently serves.

Naropa University’s new BA in Elementary Education and Teacher Licensure Program share many of the same values as those in HLF’s mission statement. The teachers of tomorrow will benefit greatly from being equipped with the tools to help their students face themselves as well as the myriad of day to day challenges. But it isn’t just about braving the storm of societal ills that makes mindfulness in the classroom important. It also encourages the development of a more complete human being who’s ready to contribute to the world and fully assimilate information. Naropa’s founder believed mindfulness was an integral part of the learning process. According to Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, it is the third level of the Buddhist approach to education:

“Having collected information and having identified with the knowledge, then next, you have to use what you have learned as a way to develop precision ... You’re precise on the spot, and your intelligence is sharpened so much, that you [can] actually be on

the dot all the time. So you begin to experience some sense of freshness, which is the meditative state.” (*Education for an Enlightened Society*, 1978)

This seems to be part and parcel of what HLF is providing to the schools it supports, a new level of alertness and a fresh approach to what it means to educate children and to learn. “It’s about what we are doing for children, what we’re doing for our staff that goes beyond evaluating them, that goes beyond looking at their data,” said Benton. 

This article originally appeared as a post on Naropa’s Pilot Light Blog:

“Holistic Life Foundation to Visit Naropa”



Photo: Larry Jackson

Naropa University’s new BA in Elementary Education program is a first-in-the-nation, fully accredited, contemplative teacher licensure program based on mindfulness practices and rigorous academics. The program provides graduates with the credentials required to teach Kindergarten through sixth grade in any public or private school in the state of Colorado, and potentially in all fifty states, and includes an endorsement in Cultural and Linguistic Diversity.

WHY NAROPA? WHY NOW?

Students and alumni share why they sought something outside the norm for their college experience and what it was about Naropa that drew them in.

Photos by Jacob Marty

Finn Woelm

BA Interdisciplinary Studies '18

I had a few formative experiences before college, including a year-long volunteer service program



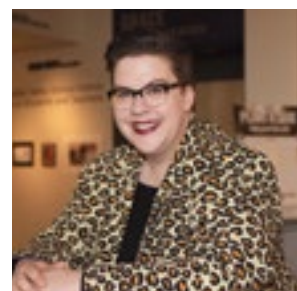
in Ghana. These experiences made me determined not to accept the status quo and made me want to contribute to making systemic change on this planet. I was determined to study at

Princeton, because I believed it would help me make change in the world. I came to Boulder to go to Watson Institute, and after my first year at Watson, I came to Naropa. I wasn't sure about Naropa at first, but I quickly realized what a magical community I had just stepped into. I made some of the best friends of my life and really got to know myself—what makes me come alive, what I'm afraid of, and what limiting narratives I'm telling myself. My education at Naropa has become the foundation for the work that I'm taking into the world.

Woodzick

MFA Theater: Contemporary Performance '18

After auditioning for graduate schools as only an



acting candidate and not finding a placement, I was disheartened. I took a year to reflect on my goals, and it became evident that I needed an interdisciplinary graduate degree in

theatre to fulfill my creative and professional needs. Naropa's MFA in Theater: Contemporary Performance is one of the only interdisciplinary graduate theatre degrees in the country. Also, as a non-binary student, it seemed like an environment that could support a gender non-conforming student. In my time at Naropa, I have played and written roles of all genders. A phrase you'll hear a lot in the department is one coined by Barbara Dille: "Not too tight, not too loose." Naropa provides academic rigor, but also a sense, a container of possibility, so students can choose to follow their highest level of excitement. For me, an MFA from Naropa paved the way for a PhD at CU Boulder.

Sierra Hofstatter

BA Interdisciplinary Studies '18

I came to Naropa after I'd convinced myself I would never return to conventional schooling. I'd



come to deeply value living as consciously as I could, which didn't seem in alignment with any traditional school I knew of. I became inspired and confident in my ability to learn on my own and

create a career for myself. Once I heard of Naropa though, the seed was planted. I came to realize that it was possible to have a structured learning container without it being out of alignment with my heart and my truth. There wasn't a whole lot of 'mental' activity that went into my decision to go to Naropa; it was mostly synchronicity, and so much has come of it that I didn't know was possible when I started.

Marina Batah

BA Contemplative Psychology '20

I decided to come to Naropa after I attended one year at a traditional university. I did not feel like



the 'traditional' education I was getting was serving my greater purpose or the vision I had for my future. Something inside me knew that there was something deeper and more relevant to be

learned. When I heard about Naropa, I immediately knew it was the right school for me. The contemplative approach, in my opinion, is more effective to the learning process because it touches other layers of our consciousness that go beyond the thinking-mind. What I experience here is permanently imprinted in my being, because I do it with enthusiasm and use the integrity of my being to present for classes—I always show up with my body, mind, and spirit.

Joshy Vang

BA Yoga Studies '19

I made my decision to attend Naropa University through an uncanny coincidence of recommendations,



personally and professionally. I was attracted to the Naropa faculty and staff fostering a delicate investment in their students—mentally, emotionally, spiritually—and academically encour-

aging awareness of self and community engagement through interpersonal academic work. I've always had a passion for dance and a knack for psychology. I sought to combine these two passions and nurture their potential to revolutionize my skills to better serve the community. The knowledge I continue to lovingly discover allows a professional and emotional development of capacity for compassionate commitment that most traditional schools do not offer. Most importantly, Naropa graciously welcomed and acknowledged me in full support of my multi-faceted identity as a Person of Color, LGBTQ individual, and United States Army Veteran.

Carla Mueller

Master of Divinity '16

I chose to come to Naropa University because I wanted my education to have a deeper impact on



who I was and how I could feel more confident in all aspects of my life. Naropa felt like it was alive with the possibility to enrich my current endeavors and to reach for what it was that I desired

out of life. I wanted to feel the freedom to be able to do what I knew was best for me, to discover my true purpose and the modalities that would best fit this endeavor. Ultimately, I wanted to know how to genuinely help myself and others. I knew that in order to do this, not only would I need to engage with curriculum, but I would also need to spend time with myself and have guidance in how to uncover my own intuition and sense of self-worth. For me, this is at the core of life and something we all deserve to experience and unravel, so that we can bring our true aspirations and inspiration into whatever it is that we are doing. That being said, the education at Naropa was far more reaching than a degree—it was the fulfillment of my divine inheritance and work worth doing.

Chris Cole

BA Contemplative Psychology '10, MA Clinical Mental Health Counseling: Mindfulness-Based Transpersonal Counseling '19

Our world needs compassion along with intellect. At Naropa, I learned to take contemplative learning into every aspect of my life, and began digesting



the intricate inter-connections between bodies and systems, how those systems came to be, and how they inform and shape my experience of the world. I came to Naropa University amid immense

personal suffering, much of which I did not understand. I learned tools to feel into my life and the ways in which I learned to live. Without Naropa University, and this great lineage of embodied wisdom and secular enlightenment, I would not be doing the work I do today—working toward informed, compassionate theories and models of mental health. Naropa didn't just give me the best chance to learn; I was welcomed into the space of unlearning, which births the spontaneous arising of truth and allows the opportunity to feel into the timeless reality of warriors throughout space and time.

Ina Sajovich

BA Religious Studies '12

I chose to come to Naropa over other schools because I knew what I wanted to study (Asian Religions and Sanskrit). I knew that a more 'traditional' environment wouldn't feel as satisfying to me. I was also—perhaps naively—confident that



if I focused on creatively engaging my academic field of choice, I would be able to apply the skills I learned to whatever industry I eventually entered. I see a lot of the work I'm doing now—the

unique approaches I take to business—being positively disruptive within my career field; I hope that my involvement and impact will continue to ripple out and affect further positive change in my industry at large.

I always made great grades in school, but I always felt like something really integral to the human experience was lacking in AP U.S. History, for example. It was the urge to pinpoint this 'elephant in the room' that inspired me to find another approach to education. These days, I often find myself amazed and further inspired by how business-as-usual companies are leaning more towards themes like authenticity, diversity, and civic engagement as unique value propositions—precisely the areas Naropa excels in teaching. 🌀

The World Needs COMPASSION

NOW

More Than Ever Invest in Naropa

“If it weren't for the scholarships, graduate assistantship, and work study positions I received, I wouldn't be where I am today. For all of this, I am forever grateful to Naropa.”

Your gift to the Annual Fund helps students to become the changemakers that this world desperately needs. As alumni, parents, and friends of Naropa University, you are the champions of what is to come.

“At Naropa, I learned the wisdom of staying with discomfort, as well as many practices to support me in my ability to do this—not only with myself, but also with others. Today, I am a somatic therapist working both in private practice and at a nonprofit organization, Queer Asterisk, serving predominantly marginalized populations, including immigrants, people of color, bilingual, and trans clients.”

— Nora Alwah, MA Somatic Counseling '16

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ONE DROP OF LOVE

By Heather Hendrie,
MA Clinical Mental Health Counseling:
Transpersonal Wilderness Therapy '20

Photos by David DeVine



It is my belief that the real magic in art arises in the space where the personal masterfully meets the universal. And mastery is what Fanshen Cox DiGiovanni brought to us in April over our lunch hour at Naropa University with her one-woman show, *One Drop of Love*.

Cox DiGiovanni, an award-winning actor, producer, playwright, educator, and activist, was on campus performing as part of Naropa's annual Bayard & John Cobb Peace Lecture. She wrote her show as her MFA thesis. In answer to the question, "How long did it take you to create this beautiful piece?" she laughed and said, "Oh, about 48 years!"

Using pieces from her father's memoir and real images and recordings of conversations with family members, Cox DiGiovanni created a masterpiece. She has performed the show across the country over the past five years. *One Drop of Love* is an interactive multimedia show that explores the intersections of race, class, and gender in pursuit of truth, justice, and love.

What felt most evocative (and provocative) for me was the way that Cox DiGiovanni shone light on the contrast between the questions of, "Who am I?" as traced out through her own personal history versus the oppressive identities assigned by the "What are you?" box forced by the U.S. Census from 1790 forward. The creative juxtaposition of the historical (and ongoing) census against a very personal and moving story served to highlight the stark difference between these two approaches to who a person is in a very powerful way.

I felt involved as an audience member, which could explain the fact that tears were streaming down my cheeks, that I burst out laughing, and that as the show wrapped up, I raced back to my desk to write about it.

The show, produced by Cox DiGiovanni, Ben Affleck, and Matt Damon, is an absolute must-see. It was awarded Best Non-Fiction Script by the United Solo Theatre Festival, and the film version won Best Documentary Feature at the

Roxbury International Film Festival. It is also an official selection of the San Francisco Black Film Festival and the Black International Film Festival.

"I have been doing this performance for five years, and have been in a lot of different communities—some certainly more receptive to the themes around race and racism and class and gender than others," said Cox DiGiovanni on Naropa's podcast, *Mindful U*. "Sometimes I think people feel uncomfortable with it, or maybe they're shy because of the stigma of being in a theater. But I got the sense after being here at Naropa for about a day that this might be a very embracing community—and that's exactly what it was. Still, something that I really appreciate about this community was its natural interaction, a kind of vocal interaction, which I don't always get. Naropa was just right there along with me, laughing out



loud, saying 'Hmmm ...,' and just offering both a wise and calming response."

It was clear the Naropa community appreciated Cox DiGiovanni's presence as well; her show was met with a standing ovation from a sold-out house. This is appropriate for every reason, not least of which is the name 'Fanshen' comes from a term from the Chinese Revolution that

means, "to stand up," or "to enter a new world." With art like this and the mastery of activists and artists like Cox DiGiovanni, we are poised to enter a new world. And it is up to the rest of us to make sure that we do just that. 🌀

A version of this article originally appeared as a post on Naropa's Pilot Light Blog:

"A Standing Ovation for One Drop of Love"

CONTEMPLATIVE COGNITION:

Progress Toward a More Inclusive Framework of Meditative Mind

By Billy Thieme



Peter Grossenbacher and Art Therapy student Amanda Hart discuss the distinctions between the conceptual and non-conceptual mind in the Naropa University Consciousness Laboratory.

While it may be common knowledge that Naropa's mission rests on the advancement and adoption of contemplative education, it may be less evident that Naropa is also focused on helping to describe and understand the very nature of contemplation itself, and how contemplative awareness and practices affect our daily lives as individuals, communities, and societies. This is where the Cognitive and Affective Science Lab (CASL) and the Naropa University Consciousness Laboratory (NUCL) fit into the university's mission, and both have been highly active in these pursuits. To these ends, CASL and NUCL conduct research on contemplative mind that engages the academic community to advance a wider, more inclusive acceptance and understanding of contemplative practices across the globe.

NUCL endeavors to explore common functions of human awareness that are woefully under represented in the wider psychological sciences. By following systems of inquiry involving both direct experience with and historical knowledge of cognitive science and ancient contemplative traditions, NUCL aims to inform a more complete

understanding of functions of awareness, attention, worldview, and intention. Ultimately, NUCL's charge is to forge a synergy between ancient contemplative practices and modern psychological science to come to a greater, deeper, and more profound understanding of mind and spirit. For example, the results from a recent interview study of meditation instructors reveal some intriguing commonalities among various traditions in teaching meditators from beginning through advanced stages.



Similarly, CASL conducts research on contemplative training and experience with the intention of advancing scientific understanding of mental, emotional, and social well-being. Through engaging a uniquely contemplative approach to the research process itself, CASL also

aims to provide training opportunities for students, community members, and the next generation of contemplative scientists. Research in CASL relies on a range of methods, from smartphone-based surveys to neuroscientific measures. In addition, it is innovating new applications of virtual reality (VR) to help answer questions about the mind. For example, a recent CASL study explored "virtual

lucidity," the extent to which people can "see through" the virtual nature of VR, similar to awareness that one is dreaming during a lucid dream.

The directors of these laboratories, Jordan T. Quaglia, PhD (CASL), and Peter G. Grossenbacher, PhD (NUCL), recently coauthored an article published in the peer-reviewed journal *Mindfulness* in December of 2017 entitled, "Contemplative Cognition: A More Integrative Framework for Advancing Mindfulness and Meditation Research." Compassion meditation, visualization, and centering prayer are just a few of the contemplative practices already under investigation that do not fit neatly under the umbrella of 'mindfulness.'

Critiques of mindfulness abound, but there is now an alternative, more inclusive approach to integrating research across diverse practices. In their paper, Grossenbacher and Quaglia propose "contemplative cognition" as a new, inclusive framework to better support scientific understanding of the wide variety of contemplative states, traits, and trainings.

Their paper explains that the contemplative cognition framework "integrates three attention-related processes entailed by a variety of contemplative practices: intended attention, attention to intention, and awareness of transient information." Grossenbacher and Quaglia go on to describe how these processes can cooperate to surpass discrepancies in mindfulness research, imbue research with more context and practitioners' motivations, and better support investigation from multiple scientific perspectives. Ultimately, they share that their "new approach has potential for advancing a more inclusive, productive, and theory-driven science of mindfulness and meditation." You can read a version of the full article, now published in the peer-reviewed journal *Mindfulness*, here: <https://mindrxiv.org/xhnm8/>

Moving forward, contemplative science researchers need ways to measure the meditative mind, such as during or after a meditation session. Toward this end, Grossenbacher and Quaglia are currently developing a self-reporting instrument to assess contemplative cognition and its components. This instrument may be especially useful for understanding how different practitioners could be instructed in the same technique, yet experience different results. Ultimately, the researchers are interested in producing a data-driven tool that

could be made widely available to contemplative practitioners through a smartphone application. They are now taking steps toward offering an opportunity for a postdoctoral researcher to join their team to collaborate on this and related research projects. Since the scope of this work is substantial and growing, they are now seeking funding support.

Both CASL and NUCL actively support and strengthen the cornerstones of Naropa University's mission—to educate the whole person by cultivating academic excellence with contemplative insight. Further exploration of diverse contemplative states and practice, through more inclusive frameworks such as contemplative cognition, will help to advance our most precious values. Thus the work of these labs, together with other scholarly activity at Naropa, can help contribute to Naropa's central tenet of contemplative education: to transform the world through self-transformation. 



Jordan Quaglia works with Interdisciplinary Studies student Sierra Hofstatter to fit the EEG Cap they use in research experiments on the effects of meditation on the brain.



Naropa students, alumni, staff, and faculty bring their brilliance to our local community every day. Drawing on their leadership skills, contemplative training, and activist hearts, they also make incredible contributions around the country and across the globe. There are so many stories to tell about how the Naropa community is helping create a better world. Here are just a few of them.

By Lisa Birman

Community Meditation Class

Each Wednesday evening, Naropa opens its doors to the Front Range community for free meditation classes. Facilitated by Giovannina Jobson, Naropa's Director of Contemplative Practices and Traditions, the sessions include basic guided meditation

instruction, walking meditation, compassion practice, and instruction and discussion with guests, including Frank Berliner, Reed Bye, Judy Lief, Jane Carpenter, and Phil Stanley.

"It is great to see how talented, passionate, and inspired our faculty are," Jobson reports. "Their own mindfulness practice clearly manifests in their teaching and their lives through their poetry, generosity, and commitment to service."

The program has been running for two years, with plans to continue this spring. With attendance ranging from five to forty people, Jobson has personally met over three hundred community members through this outreach program. "We have the resources, experience, and dedication for this practice, and it is a natural extension of our mission to offer it to the community," adds Jobson.



Photo: David DeVine

Lee Worley's Contemplative Art Tour

Professor emerita Lee Worley recently taught a series of master classes in Europe. Starting at the Dechen Chöling Retreat Center in France, experienced practitioners joined with new students for "Mudra: Activating Kindness Beyond Borders."

Worley then traveled to the Netherlands, where she taught two workshops—"Shamatha: Stillness and the Senses" in Rotterdam and "Tasting the Moment With Body, Mind, and Spirit" in Epe. The tour concluded with a Contemplative Performance Workshop at the Isadora Duncan Dance Research Center in Athens, Greece.

This final leg of the tour was organized by alumna Anna Tzakou (MFA Theater: Contemporary Performance, '10). "Anna's exciting site-specific work in Athens has brought her in touch with many performers and other artists," reports Worley. "But sourcing from the body and contemplative approaches to art-making are still under-discovered in Athens."

Tzakou was also excited to bring Worley's teachings to her community. "The teachings of Professor Worley enabled us to encounter contemplative practices within the context of psychophysical

Making Our Mark in New York

Over the last year, Naropa has partnered with ABC Carpet & Home and Deepak HomeBase in New York City to offer quarterly presentations, performances, and workshops featuring Naropa faculty, including Jeanine Canty, Anne Waldman, Judith Simmer-Brown, and Reed Bye.

Charlotte Rotterdam, Director of Naropa's Center for the Advancement of Contemplative Education (CACE), explains, "At the heart of Naropa is a vision for supporting 'enlightened society,' in which all citizens can rise to their fullest potential as compassionate and aware human beings. Our NYC programs range from dharma arts to environmental social justice to the fierce, awakened feminine principle. ... Our focus for each program has been on creating both inspiring content and an opportunity for experiential contemplative engagement, particularly through the arts, so that audience members can resonate with the topic at conceptual, emotional, and somatic levels."

Téana David (MFA Theater: Contemporary Performance, '09) co-curates and produces the programming at Deepak HomeBase. "This kind of learning connects the head with the heart and through to the hands, allowing us to take action and shape our world for the better. The four programs we scheduled for 2018 as part of our Naropa in New York Series encapsulate this full-body, integrative understanding, an ethos that is deeply aligned with ours at ABC Home."



Photo courtesy of Deepak HomeBase

Both a physical and virtual salon, Deepak HomeBase at ABC Carpet & Home aims to create a "critical mass where together we can create a peaceful, just, sustainable, healthy, and happy world."

performance. They demonstrated to us possibilities to practice the art of nonaggression in a disillusioned environment such as the city of Athens in financial and cultural crisis. I hope that the workshop will sow the seed for many others to come, bringing Dharma Art to the West as well as to its troubled and confused places," says Tzakou.

Many of the exercises featured in the workshops can be found in Worley's new book, *Teaching Presence: Field Notes for Players* (Naropa University Press, 2018).



Photo courtesy of Lee Worley

Anna Tzakou (front right) and participants of Lee Worley's (back row, fourth from left) Contemplative Performance Workshop for dancers and other artists at the Isadora Duncan Dance Research Center in Athens, Greece.

Service as a State of Mind

"I've always been passionate about helping the most vulnerable populations," says Mindi Counts (BA Contemplative Psychology, '08). Within months of launching her acupuncture practice and the Inner Ocean Center for Healing in Lafayette in April 2013, Counts founded Inner Ocean Empowerment



Mindi Counts, Inner Ocean Empowerment Project founder, treats the many children who visit her clinics in Nepal. Many of these children have struggled significantly since the earthquake of 2015. She and her team brought along toys to replace the ones lost during the disaster.

Writing His Own Script

Jaime González (BFA Performance, '12) says he lives "in a crossroads of continuing to build a career in the arts or dropping everything to go stare at a wall." In all likelihood, he'll continue to navigate his way through both worlds as an actor, producer, and novice Zen monk. After moving to Mexico five years ago, González worked as an actor on Netflix's first Latin American show, *Club de Cuervos*, as well as in a telenovela, an indie film, and a number of commercials. He also produced two short films.

Over the last eighteen months, he has devoted his time to producing, directing, and writing two web series. "My brother ran as a candidate for a local congress seat in Sinaloa. He was an independent candidate with no party and no political godfather and a few bucks to spend. So we used our creativity and decided to make a different kind of campaign," he explains. "We made a comic miniseries with the intention of appealing to young crowds of people who are very uninterested in politics.... We didn't win ...



Project, a nonprofit bringing integrative health-care and education to places most in need. "Service isn't something you do—it's a state of mind. And if you let it, it penetrates everything you do."

In the last four years, the organization has spent thirty-two weeks in the field on eight international and U.S.-based projects. Among other projects, they have provided vital and timely assistance to survivors of sex-trafficking in India, victims of violence in the United States, persons displaced by natural disasters in Nepal and the United States, and Burmese refugees.

That would be enough to keep most people busy, but Counts is also working on a book about Chinese medicine, forthcoming from Shambhala Publications in 2020.

however, we created a stronger social base for my brother and his group and were innovative."

Watch González's web series, *'Culichis Al Poder - La Serie'* on YouTube.



Photo courtesy of Jaime González

Never Settle

As Co-Executive Producer of *Never Settle Show* and Head of Digital Strategy and Content at Mario Armstrong Media, Shy Mukerjee (BA Writing and Literature, '09) is committed to producing "positive television" that inspires guests and viewers to pursue their dreams. Mukerjee served as both a producer and the social media co-host for the show's premiere season, earning a New York Emmy Award for Outstanding Interactivity. He is also a board member and the Interim Marketing Director at Baltimore's Annex Theater, the city's number one spot for experimental theater and interdisciplinary performance. "Between my role at the Annex and my role on *Never Settle Show*, I've discovered that some of my truest talents lie not in creating material directly, but in finding new, creative ways to facilitate the process and help others to produce the best art and entertainment they can."



Photo courtesy of Shy Mukerjee

Through his many national and international moves since graduation, Mukerjee has kept several shelves of books and notes from his Naropa days. "I refer to them often, for answers about art and life, and find my Naropa education helps me every single day to be the best person I can be and to enact love and kindness in my interactions with others."

Transforming International Education

Following a four-year partnership, Naropa has purchased LeapYear, a truly unique alternative first year of college. The two-semester curriculum includes nine weeks of group travel in Nepal, India, or Central America, a three-month individual internship, two months of retreats, an experiential college curriculum of life skills learning, and formal and informal rites of passage. In addition to a full-credit alternative first year, the program can be taken for noncredit or by students looking to complete high school in a nontraditional manner.



Photo courtesy of Sam Bull

LeapYear students at the Sivananda Yoga Ashram in Kerala, South India, where the group was doing a week-long yoga retreat which included asana practice, yoga philosophy, purification techniques, meditation, and chanting.

Former staff member Sam Bull and his wife Cassie Bull (MA Dance/Movement Therapy, '88) founded LeapYear and credit Naropa with inspiring their transformative vision of holistic and innovative international education. "LeapYear weaves the academics directly into experience, letting the threads of travel, service work, creative expression, and working in community be

at the heart of a student's education," explains Cassie. "Placing our program into the context of a forward-thinking institution of higher education seems a perfect next step for the evolution of the LeapYear program," adds Sam.

LeapYear extends Naropa's curriculum into over one hundred countries and expands funding options for students seeking experiential international gap year programming. "Naropa University has long been committed to offering experiential learning together with mindfulness and compassion training to a

diverse student body," says Naropa President Chuck Lief. "LeapYear shares our mission, and we are delighted that the founders have entrusted their wonderful program to us. We are also excited that LeapYear students will now start their program in Colorado and have access to Naropa's exceptional faculty throughout their learning journey."

Santuario | Sanctuary

The first production of Proyecto Migración, *Santuario | Sanctuary*, premiered to sold-out audiences at Boulder's Dairy Arts Center in September. The documentary theater project explores the parallel and divergent migrations of monarch butterflies and youth across the U.S.–Mexico border.

Co-playwright Teresa Veramendi (MFA Theater: Contemporary Performance, '16) explains, "Society accepts and supports the migration patterns of animals and insects as natural, while rejecting the migration patterns of human beings that mark our ancestral lineage. We developed a short ten-minute piece in 2015 inspired by these issues, and as a group agreed to pursue creating a full production after we graduated."

With the support of a Boedecker Foundation Path to Excellence Grant and Naropa University, members of The Great Perhaps Performance Collective, including Veramendi, Victoria Gonzalez (MFA Theater: Contemporary Performance, '15), and former staff members Amy Buckler Rusterholz and Stephanie San German, conducted more than thirty interviews with



Photo courtesy of Teresa Veramendi

"(im)migrants, nuns, volunteers, conservationists, and law enforcement in the United States and Mexico."

With a staged reading coming up at Chicagoland's Piven Theatre in November, they are exploring future productions around the United States and in Mexico. "We see our play as a sanctuary where we can honor the loss and those who have died—human and animal—and hear their stories outside the sensationalized and fear-based narratives we see in the news."

Cambodia's First Art Therapy Conference

In collaboration with Ragamuffin Cambodia and Partners for Social Justice, Naropa recently sponsored the first arts therapy conference in Cambodia. *Nourish: Arts Therapy and Wellbeing Conference* was held in Phnom Penh in January 2018. The conference was attended by more than 150 art therapists, social workers, educators, and caring professionals from more than twenty-five countries. Scholarships were provided for therapists from the United States with discounted and free admission for eighty Cambodian attendees.

Jenna Noah (MA Contemplative Psychotherapy, '13), Conference Coordinator, recounts that the conference had its beginnings in a 2011 meeting between Naropa faculty Sue Wallingford and two former students, Katie Hanczaryk

(MA Transpersonal Counseling Psychology, '12) and Meg Hamilton (MA Transpersonal Counseling Psychology, '12). Within a year, they, along with other interested students, made their first trip to Phnom Penh as Naropa Community Art Studio International, a student-led service-learning program bringing art therapy to women and children rescued from sex trafficking. "They had a dream, imagined the possibilities, and believed in the vision," Noah adds.

Wallingford and Hanczaryk are co-founders of the conference, and Hanczaryk's husband Nathan Torti (MA Transpersonal Counseling Psychology, '12) serves as Director of Finance. Plans are already underway for the next conference in 2020.



Photo courtesy of Sue Wallingford

Naropa Associate professor Sue Wallingford and Cambodian clinical psychologist Serey Samchet at *Nourish: Arts Therapy and Wellbeing Conference*.

Celebrating Ten Years in Bhutan

In collaboration with the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB), Naropa is continuing to expand its offerings to undergraduate and graduate students. Jane Carpenter-Cohn, Bhutan Partnerships Director and Associate Professor, explains that the Naropa Center for Bhutan Partnerships, established in 2013, stems from Naropa and RUB's "common mission to educate students for the transformation and health of the world."

Nestled in the Himalayas, Bhutan pioneered the philosophy of Gross National Happiness. Steeped in Himalayan/Tibetan Buddhism, the kingdom holds a deep commitment to environmental sustainability, international studies, and creativity.

The Naropa Center for Bhutan Partnerships has its roots in a collaborative low-residency Post-Graduate Diploma in Guidance and Counseling, launched at RUB's Samtse College of Education in 2009. Designed to meet the challenges caused by rapid modernization of Bhutan's society, Carpenter-Cohn explains that most students were "school teachers who wanted training in counseling to support their students and create counseling centers."

"I see myself as a new person," says RUB student Sonam Wangchuk ('12), "with the desire of helping others and [myself]."

Having graduated over one hundred students, the success of this program led to the development and 2016 launch of the Master's in Contemplative Psychotherapy, the first master's program in counseling in Bhutan. The program will graduate its first cohort of sixteen students in 2019.

Professor Anne Parker serves as Study Abroad Director, lead teacher for Naropa's three courses, and on-site health and wellbeing coordinator. Carpenter-Cohn and Parker were instrumental in establishing Naropa's undergraduate study abroad program with RUB in Bhutan, which launched in 2015. "I think this is a really exceptional program," Parker says. "We go as peers—not as tourists, experts, observers, or short-term visitors. We consciously avoid the American 'fix it' mentality and look closely at and apply a decolonizing approach to any research we do. It is a deep dive into another culture."



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In addition to their Naropa courses, students take courses at one of three RUB campuses—The College of Natural Resources, Paro College of Education, or The College of Language and Culture Studies. Students are fully immersed in RUB life—living in campus dorms, eating in the cafeteria, joining student clubs, and dressing in traditional Bhutanese clothing. They engage in service work both on campus and in the larger community. “These have been the richest five months of my life so far. ... I have gained more wisdom, love, happiness, and humility than I would ever have thought possible,” says Max Prah (Centre College, Bhutan Spring 2016).

Thirty Naropa students have already participated in the program (three of them twice!), as well as three students from other U.S. universities. The program is open to any qualified U.S.-based undergraduate.

Authentic Leadership Training for Jamaican Government Officials

At the invitation of Ruby Brown, an alumna of Naropa’s Authentic Leadership program and Executive Director of the Management Institute for National Development in Jamaica, the Authentic Leadership Center (ALC) is training managers in Jamaica’s Ministry of Finance.

Forty-five managers participated in a recent ‘Coaching for Change and Transformation’ program in June 2018, which included two three-day on-site sessions and twelve weeks of individual and group coaching. The training emphasized mindfulness, communication skills, coaching, and change management. Susan Skjei, Director of the ALC, and Curriculum Design and Distance Education Manager Mary McHenry, along with eight other coaches, were the faculty and facilitators for this change management process.

They explain, “Typically we offer our courses on-site at Naropa and have leaders from different industries and sectors in our programs. So the opportunity to work in a different culture and to bring authentic leadership principles and practices into a governmental agency was very exciting. It really stretched us to demonstrate the applicability of our contemplative curriculum to an organization

undergoing profound change. The participants went through their own personal transformation in the five-month program as they practiced coaching skills in a changing and challenging workplace. These skills have mindfulness embedded in them—it is about presence and compassion—so it is a doorway into the values/mission of Naropa that also enhances their professional skills. This unique coaching program with authentic leadership principles at its core could become a new public offering for our center.”



Managers from the Ministry of Finance in the government of Jamaica doing small group experiential coaching exercises during the second on-site week of the ‘Coaching Through Change and Transition’ program.

The Heart of Mindfulness Meditation

Local readers and writers were thrilled when Shambhala Publications moved its offices to Boulder in 2015. Amongst the happiest was Kay Campbell (MFA Writing and Poetics, ‘00), who had just been appointed Director of Online Education and Media at Shambhala.

“Shambhala Publications launched its first online course in the fall of 2013 and in the time since, we’ve offered over two dozen courses to over twelve thousand participants in countries around the globe,” Campbell explains. Naropa and Shambhala Publications began discussing a collaborative Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) shortly after the move. “We wanted to find a way to highlight the work done by both organizations and feature some of our faculty and authors. The resulting course helps draw the connection between today’s secular mindfulness movement and its origins in the root traditions, and it provides a piece of the story of how these traditions came to the United States.”



‘Mindfulness: What It Is, Where It Comes From, and How to Practice It,’ a two-month certificate course, launched in January 2018 on Canvas Network, with Distinguished Professor Judith Simmer-Brown and Professor Amelia Hall serving as faculty. “It has been a pleasure to collaborate with Shambhala Publications on innovative ideas for online learning,” says Simmer-Brown. “Kay Campbell has been especially helpful for our mindfulness MOOC, shaping it from the beginning and seeing through the filming and editorial process.”

“The course was developed by an incredible team of women with the intention to be free, accessible, and beneficial to anyone interested in learning about mindfulness practice. It also highlights the combined wisdom of both Naropa University faculty and Shambhala Publications’ beautiful books,” explains Hall. With over five hundred students in the first semester, the course will continue to be offered several times a year.



From left to right: Robin Bruce (Master of Divinity, ‘20), who assists in facilitating the course by engaging in discussion with students and posting announcements, with Kay Campbell, Judith Simmer-Brown, and Amelia Hall at Shambhala Publications.

ART as a Contemplative Practice

Photo: Sofia Drobinskaya

Drawing on his experience as an artist, contemplative practitioner, researcher, and cancer survivor, Michael Franklin's *Art as Contemplative Practice: Expressive Pathways to the Self* (SUNY Press, 2017) provides a welcoming and instructional guide to art as contemplative practice. In his foreword, Christopher Key Chapple writes, "The reader will be edified by the wisdom contained in these pages and perhaps inspired to pick up a pencil to write a poem or create an abstract or even literal form or design to give voice to the feelings welling up from within. Art in its myriad forms holds the power to heal. Michael Franklin invites us to explore that power." The following are excerpts from Franklin's book.

Ascent, Descent & Imaginal Space

As a child, growing up in Miami, Florida, I would often go fishing. While trolling on Biscayne Bay, schools of dolphins would appear. Like shiny metallic sewing needles, they would stitch the sea by diving deep, disappearing for a while, eventually surfacing to breathe and then dive again. Watching in amazement, I would wonder about the vast seen tabletop of the water contrasted with the dark, invisible world below. Later I came to realize that the dolphins were plunging and reappearing similar to the way visual symbols behave, from unconscious to preconscious to conscious awareness. Recalling now how the dolphins sutured the sea continues to reinforce this germane teaching.

Visual symbols are the transportation between unconscious inner realms and awareness. They provide graphic embodiment for unknown felt material to manifest as relatable content. Symbols help to rebalance psychological forces by materializing discrepancies within the psyche. For example, craving riches in day-to-day life, yet dreaming at night about nonmaterial spiritual adventures, conveys the point. When received and embraced, symbols serve as compensatory

messengers to help break patterns and recalibrate personal values.¹



¹ Harding, M. Esther. "What Makes the Symbol Effective as a Healing Agent?" In *Current Trends in Analytical Psychology*, edited by Gerhard Adler, 1-17. London: Tavistock, 1961.

Solidity, Form & Descent

The beauty of a dark, waiting, underworld beneath rocks or within caves summons us closer to obscure spaces. Yet we tend to favor habitual security by going inside as night falls, avoiding the lush veiled subtlety of darkness. What is counter to habit is good for the development of intuition; perhaps the most important ally in artistic work. There are moments when it is time to step off of the edge of safety, plunge into darker unknown spaces, and take healthy risks. One way I learn about these leaps of faith is to enter unfamiliar landscapes with intense curiosity.

When possible, I seek out caves like at Lewis and Clark Caverns State Park in Montana and experience these fantastic dimly lit places. One enters into the cavernous darkness with respect, knowing that the ground, walls, and canopy consist of delicate rock formations patiently sculpted over millennia. The temperature quickly drops, light fades, and one soon realizes that tactile knowing is an indispensable way of receiving information. Gently feeling into the darkness and tenderly touching the cool stone surfaces reveal the contoured language of rock and time. The face feels moisture while the ears hear the expanding, viscous silence. Though foreign to usual perception, this "down there" darkness, too, is home.

Figuratively speaking, spelunking is a skill for the contemplative artist. To journey into emotional spaces where it is silent, dark, perhaps even hellish, can reveal ripe opportunity. Like many dialectic relationships, the freedom to ascend and descend does not imply contradictions of either-or, positive-negative undertones. If willing, we can go toward counterintuitive, prohibited subjects and mend the splits of dualistic thinking, while participating in the discovery of personal wholeness.

The exploration of formlessness promises revelation. In alchemy, the empty space of ether is the prima materia, or the original material from which all forms and ideas emerge. From the emptiness, a soon-to-arrive unborn moment emerges bringing the assurance of manifestation.

Art teaches us to fall in love with the physical world including what is easy to see as well as what repels us. Dead flowers are as interesting to look at as a

living bouquet. Mindfully perceiving with full sensory awareness deepens participation in any life event.

When I worked inpatient psychiatric care with hospitalized teens, they often announced their boredom. "How can you be bored?" I responded to them. "If you are bored it is because you are boring." Yet they had a point as many were deprived of any sort of arts education. So I would teach them how to see through paper towel tubes, photograph with homemade pinhole cameras, and investigate their surroundings with magnifying glasses. We found ways to experiment and build small dreams such as drum sets and life-sized guitars out of cardboard and thrown-away ice cream store barrels. Over time, boredom



Michael Franklin's gallery show, 'Small Places to Pray: Silence, Surfaces, and Clay Reliquaries' at Naropa's Cube Gallery last fall.

moved into remission. The teens became emotionally and aesthetically engaged and excited about their sensory capacity to receive the world, feel their feelings, and step into the emptiness of blank canvases and cardboard remnants in order to create their stories. Most encouraging, they repeatedly requested new, more complex assignments. They were alive and they knew it, learning that persistence always yields results when attempting to manifest unseen ideas. 

Michael Franklin, PhD, is professor and chair of the Graduate Art Therapy Program at Naropa. He is the founder of the Naropa Community Art Studio, a research project training socially engaged art therapists while providing services to diverse populations in the Boulder community.



MINDFULNESS AMPLIFIED

Naropa's *Mindful U* podcast explores mindfulness from a variety of perspectives—both in higher education and the world at large. Hosted by Naropa alumnus and Multimedia Manager David DeVine (BA Interdisciplinary Studies, '12), episodes feature Naropa faculty, alumni, and special guests on a wide variety of topics including compassion, permaculture, social justice, herbal healing, and green architecture—to name a few. Subscribe on iTunes, Stitcher, or Spotify to explore the transformative possibilities of mindfulness, both in the classroom and beyond! Here are some excerpts from popular podcast episodes:



A Journey of Discovering Sanity

Lauren Ciovacco

Crisis Intervention Clinician, MA Contemplative Psychotherapy and Buddhist Psychology '16

DAVID: What was your experience like when you got to Naropa? How has the contemplative model shaped your ability to use psychotherapy in your life now?

LAUREN: Naropa taught me to question everything. There were so many ideas and theories and models that I came into Naropa with.

When we sat in that circle in those classrooms, we deconstructed it. We started from base experience.

Here we were in a psychopathology class, and I am thinking, "Oh, we're going to get into all the diagnosis and all the disorders." But day one, the question was, "What is mental health?" If we're going to define pathology, we first have to say what we are moving people towards. I remember my professor brought in a plant that was wilting and looked like it was dying. He said, "Now looking at this plant, what can you tell me about it?" And everybody started answering things like, "Maybe it's not getting enough water," or, "It's not getting enough sunlight."

DAVID: Yeah. Things like nutrients in the soil; the pot is too small.

LAUREN: Yeah. After we all gave these types of answers, our professor reflected to us one of the things he noticed was that nobody said, "It's a bad plant."

Nobody said it was broken. Everybody believed on some level that if this plant were provided the right environment or nutrients, the right caregivers, that it would be fine. Nobody doubted its basic 'plantness.' And, that lesson right there—if we want to talk about the quintessential Naropa experience, it was that moment.

What I was offered in the contemplative program was basic goodness and brilliant sanity. And when I say brilliant sanity—what's so cool about Buddhist psychology is we orient from a perspective of nothing is wrong with you. The Suzuki Roshi quote, "Each of you is perfect the way you are ... and you can use a little improvement," that's my entire therapeutic approach, and that's what I gained through the program. I learned that I don't have to doubt your inherent dignity, wisdom, and autonomy. It's there. So, when I sit with somebody, I am not doing any healing. All I'm reflecting is what's already there, so that they can see it. The healing is already in them. There is a natural healing intelligence that moves through each one of us, and you can access it at any time if you choose.



A Dialogue Between Love & Rage

Lama Rod Owens

Author, activist, and teacher in the Kagyu School of Tibetan Buddhism

DAVID: How has your idea of love changed since you started the dharma?

LAMA ROD OWENS: Before dharma, I had no idea what love was. I couldn't even define it. So when I came into dharma and got this definition of love being the wish for others to be happy, that was actually quite radical for me. It gave me a starting point, and I began

to understand that I don't have to like you to love you. I don't have to like you to want you to be free and happy. And love takes us into really depressing places. It's not the thing that we do to feel good. It's this thing that we do to get free and to free others. And we do this by decentering ego and wanting people to be their best selves and to be directly in tune with their basic goodness.

DAVID: Yeah, it sounds like unconditional stuff right there. Very cool. I am seeing a narrative kind of come out around honoring the things you are feeling in the moment. Are there mechanisms or tools that you use to help you regulate that?

LAMA ROD OWENS: It was basic practices of mindfulness and awareness and putting those into conversation in order to have a sense of what is happening. In the moment, it is about how to move through experiencing things that are coming up. That is basic dharma—just being aware. And my personal liberatory practice is actually stating and acknowledging, "This is where I am at in my body." When you are able to do that as a teacher—as a facilitator or a meditation instructor—you're actually giving people a really profound strategy to be free and open where they are.

DAVID: I feel like that is what people want when they come to dharma—strategies to be free. And you're like, "Here you go. Here are some tools."

LAMA ROD OWENS: And it's not what you think it is. It is actually way less sexy, way less glamorous. Dharma isn't sexy or glamorous for me. It's just work. It's discipline and work, and I do it because the fruit is this spaciousness. This openness. Where I can just be with my life. I am not interested in trying to avoid everything and am instead interested in moving into direct relationship with everything that comes up for me because it's mine. And that's where the liberation actually happens. Over the years of practice, you realize you've become a different person. You begin to trust yourself more because you're always in tune with your experiences coming up, and that is what I love. It just becomes very ordinary.



The Science of Compassion

Judith Simmer-Brown, PhD

Acharya, Distinguished Professor of Contemplative and Religious Studies

DAVID: Thank you so much for joining us. I'm really excited to hear about your topic—you're going to be speaking on the science and practice of compassion. So without any further ado—go for it.

JUDITH: In my course, we study the science of compassion. We look at both the social science and neuroscience of violence and also of compassion and kindness. We also are looking at compassion training

and what it takes to cultivate this fundamental kindness that human beings possess. We work with identifying the fundamental tenderness at the heart of who we are and then work on cultivating that toward ourselves and others.

Along with this, we really look at our own experience and see what's challenging or difficult. Some of the contemporary sources on Buddhism say that we are born with a certain capacity for kindness. Then, we have rough things happen in our life, and we develop reactions and defenses based on the things that happen to us—but the Buddhist training is all about the cultivation of character. Character is not what you're born with, and it's not what happens to you. It's about what you do with that. And so, Buddhist meditation has at the core of it a sense of empowerment that we can actually shape who we are. We cannot change our genes. We cannot change our previous life experiences, but we can change our reaction to life experiences. We can change our reaction to our genetic heritage, and what we do with that makes us very deep human beings. The spiritual journey is all about what you make of what you've got. And so, beginning to distinguish between genetic heritage—what has happened to us in the past—and what we can do about it is the core of contemplative training.

This is really the core of what we do in this class. We do a lot of experiential stuff. Just two days ago, I asked my students to take a moment to think over the last twenty-four hours and identify a moment when someone was kind to them. Maybe they didn't notice it at the time. Maybe it seemed inconsequential, like somebody in the grocery store smiling at them.

Then I asked them, "How did it feel to receive that act of kindness? Did you even notice at the time?" So, we spend some time talking about that because our habit is mostly to ignore all of the kind moments that make our days possible. My students were very struck by noticing the kind things that happened to them. And that's very interesting. This is really a kind of orientation about how as we retrain our brain, we recognize that our human life is woven with interconnection and kindness. We could not be breathing this moment if it weren't for all of the interconnected kindness we have received. 🌀

There are over 40 *Mindful U* episodes to explore!



Liberation Through Radical Dharma

Rev. angel Kyodo Williams

Author, spiritual teacher, master trainer and founder of Center for Transformative Change

"The conflation of mindfulness with a deep practice that includes an ethic view is a problem. When mindfulness becomes yet another thing that we can modify, and we think [mindfulness] is something that we can consume, then it's actually serving our ego."

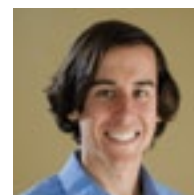


Gender & Women's Studies at Naropa

Olivia Meikle

Adjunct Faculty, co-host of women's history podcast, *What'sHerName*

"It's our mission to grow more awareness of women's issues, women's voices, women's history, and women's studies worldwide. All of the best practices of contemplative education are what make gender studies unique, and they also make gender studies possible."



Healing Emotional Trauma Naturally with TiPi

Joey Marti

BA Contemplative Psychology '14

"T.I.P.I., the French acronym for 'Technique d'Identification des Peurs Inconscientes,' or 'Technique for the Sensory Identification of Subconscious Fears' in English, resets our emotional response to trauma naturally, using the body's sensory memory to harmonize with the trauma's origin."



Engaging Our World with Contemplative Practice

Elaine Yuen, PhD

Associate Professor, Department of Wisdom Traditions

"How can we support people both at the peak of tragedy, getting over the most difficult parts, as well as the lasting repercussions? We meet people where they are, with an open heart, acknowledging them moment by moment."



Average monthly listens

4,300



Top episode download

4,800



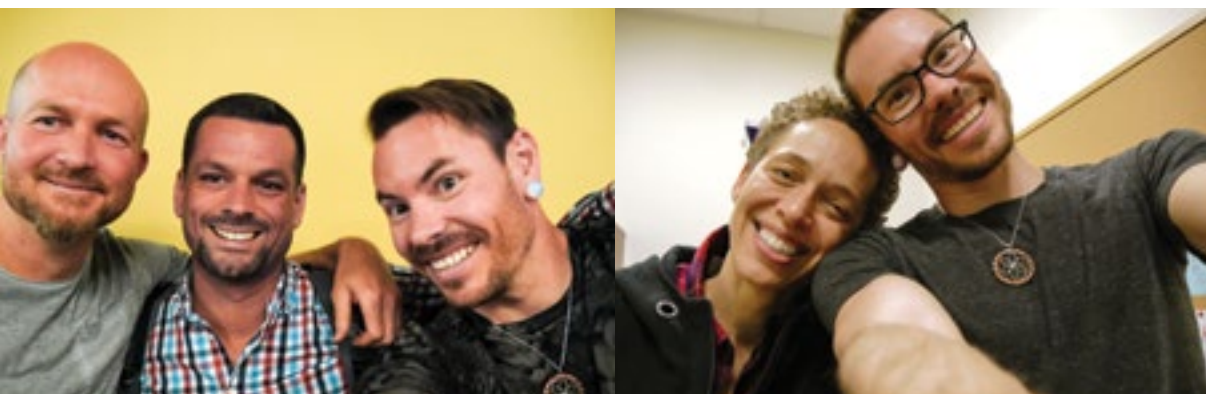
Total downloads/views

51,500



Average download per episode

1,300



Host David DeVine (first photo, right) with guests from the *Mindful U* podcast. Guests from left to right: Nataraja Kallio, Ben Williams, Fanshen Cox DiGiovanni, Ali Smith, Atman Smith, Andres Gonzalez, Krista Tippet.



LOVING LIVING HEALING

By Lisa Birman

Richard Froude (MFA Writing and Poetics, '04) figured he'd be in the United States for two years. After traveling from Bristol, United Kingdom, to attend one week of Naropa's Summer Writing Program (SWP) in 2001, he had applied to the MFA in Writing and Poetics. A few months later, on his twenty-third birthday, he was accepted. "Like all of the other most important decisions I have made in my life, I just felt very strongly and intuitively that it was what I should do." Sixteen years later, he's living in Denver with his wife Rohini Gupta and their two children, with two doctorates, three books, and over a decade of teaching under his belt.

After graduating from Naropa and spending time in Hollywood and Portland, Froude made his way back to Colorado in 2007, where he embarked on his first doctorate—a PhD in English (Creative Writing) at University of Denver (DU). While there, he launched a volunteer project at the University of Colorado Hospital, crafting "legacy documents" with palliative care patients. This grew into a grant-funded study at Denver Health, which Froude writes about in his essay "Things To Do In Denver When You're Dead," for which he received the 2013 Wabash Prize for Nonfiction, selected by Cheryl Strayed.

Days after graduating with his PhD, Froude took his first pre-med class at the University of Colorado Denver (CU), and in 2014, he started medical school, where he continued to explore his interest in narrative medicine. Froude graduated from medical school in May 2018. Recently he

commenced his residency in psychiatry at the University of Colorado, during which he will rotate through the inpatient medicine, neurology, and psychiatry services at Denver Health, the Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center, and the University of Colorado Hospital, before narrowing his focus to both inpatient and outpatient psychiatry.

"Medicine gave me the chance to live a second life, one that has transcended upon the life I already knew, and in doing this, I have the privilege of witness to the most profound moments of other people's lives: the moments they enter the world, when they leave it, when they are at their most vulnerable, most angry, most dependent on another human being," Froude explains. "WC Williams wrote how medicine let him into the secret gardens of people's lives. That permission is heavy and amazing, a gift, and a challenge that persistently takes everything I have."

It's not surprising that Froude finds inspiration in the words of Williams—who famously held dual careers as a writer and physician. Throughout his time at DU and CU, Froude continued writing and taught classes at Naropa's SWP and Denver's Lighthouse Writers Workshop, including outreach programs at Denver School of the Arts and the Alzheimer's Association. He's currently working on a collection of essays, some of which were originally delivered as lectures at SWP. "It's become a more coherent narrative about how I have found myself where I am, colored by the things I am most

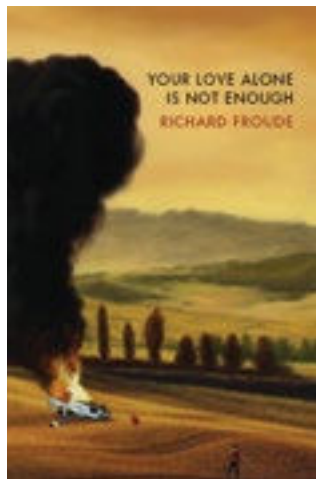


Photo courtesy of Richard Froude

preoccupied by: poetry, art, illness, the body, psychosis, suicide, coming to another country and the loss inherent in this movement. I'm a real barrel of laughs."

Writing about his status as an immigrant is heightened not only by the current political climate, but also by the fact that Froude is currently applying for dual citizenship. His thoughts on this speak to the heart of his work as a writer and doctor. "Re: the political climate in both the United States and the United Kingdom, I'll say this: As human beings, and particularly as artists or as healers, we have the responsibility to name and to resist cruelty and injustice in all their forms."

Froude's fourth book, *Your Love Alone Is Not Enough*, is forthcoming from Subito Press later this year. He describes the book as "a fictionalized account of Richey Edward's presumed suicide while I was in high school in England. But the book is not just this. It's about loss, grief, the things you'd rather you hadn't done. Sounds like a lot of fun, eh? It's about the failure of language as we push against these things. BUT, it's also about the triumph of language, of expression, of music, of failure itself, of all the things I have loved and tried to be."

When asked about how he manages to balance his writing, medical, and family worlds, Froude notes the support of his wife. "I cannot imagine someone who is more supportive to me and the choices I have made than Rohini, who has her own career, is a full-time professor of psychology, runs her own private practice, and always has my back."

He also muses, "I don't know much about balance, but I'm starting to figure out how to be okay being off balance." Some of this can be traced back to his Naropa education, which he credits with teaching him "the work of better trying to understand how it feels—and perhaps even what it means—to be alive, to occupy a body, to perceive, to be bewildered by our situation. And not only that work in itself, but to reflect upon that work. ... The idea I return to most frequently that first arose for me at Naropa is to recognize and nurture my own negative capability—that capacity for uncertainty, not to grab for a solution prematurely but allow the situation to develop and disclose itself: a kind of radical patience with the overwhelming world." 🌀

Read Froude's "Things To Do In Denver When You're Dead" at www.dimeandhoney.com



MOVING FORWARD IN JOY & WISDOM

Excerpts from 2018 Commencement

Photos by Carly Carpenter

Krista Tippett

Commencement Speaker,
Creator and host of *On Being*

How can we find joy in a moment like this? I see good people right now nurturing anxiety and distress because it seems the only reasonable way to be in a moment like this. That joy would be a luxury—perhaps a privilege, even an insult—to those on the losing side of this moment's equations. But surely, amidst all of this, our greatest hope for the world, for our neighbors, and even those people who most dismay and frighten us, is for the world ultimately to recover its capacity for lightness and joy.



Joy is not a luxury. It is not a privilege. It is a resilience-giving, life-giving birthright. And we can't call forth in the world something we don't believe in and embody....

If I have learned anything in all my conversations across all these years, it is this strange, deep truth of our species: that wisdom emerges precisely through moments when we have to hold opposing realities in a creative tension and interplay. Dismay and joy. Power and tenderness. Pain and hope. Brokenness and beauty. Mystery and conviction. Calm and fierceness. Mine and yours.

My final word to you is to not let yourself lose the friendships or the teachers you found here. We are not meant to carry it alone. We surround ourselves with others who can hold mighty choices like love and joy and compassion with us and for us on the days and weeks, months when it might be simply

too much to ask of us. I am so grateful to be standing here looking out at you and knowing that you are my spiritual companions for this daunting and wondrous time ahead. I offer you my blessings and deep congratulations.

Ryan Shoemaker

MFA Creative Writing and Poetics '18

In graduating, we are about to lose a layer of safety that we've become used to. However, Naropa University is not a place to rest, a place to float, a place to bask in a seeming ease of a hippie environment. At Naropa, we are meant to stoke our individual lights, so that we leave this place able to enact change, rather than to watch the world burn.



Naropa and contemplative education are inherently subversive and create disruptions between logical, orderly, complacent, labeled, normative, and Western structures. Challenges to structure from students, faculty, and staff alike have been the lifeblood of my time at Naropa. This useful chaos is the thread that binds us together and should be welcomed as the opening of space, as Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche might have put it.

Out in the world, you are not to hide, but to literally become that which will transform what's out there. This work is what makes Naropa unique.

I set forth the task to keep the fire burning, to energize, as a catalyst within the crucible, the strength that Naropa possesses, that the world needs. I urge you. Move.

Awa Faridah Ndiaye

BA Peace Studies '18

Part of my Naropa education, particularly being in the Peace Studies program, has introduced me to this notion of social justice warrior. I was listening to Krista Tippett's podcast, *On Being*, where she interviews Reverend angel Kyodo Williams, wherein Reverend angel says that in order to do our work, we have to come into deep knowing of who we are. This work is the stuff that brings down systems of oppression, capitalism, patriarchy, white supremacy, and the ecological crisis—these things can't survive if enough of us do the work of reclaiming the human spirit. This reclamation also includes the humanity of those people who are the current vehicles for these swarms of oppression.



That's us. That's all of us in this room right now who need to continue doing the work and who deserve to take a deep breath and to reflect on the work we've done.

My time at Naropa has been both greatly comforting and filled with immense discomfort. The relationship I've developed with myself and with my community is the sweetest gift. I've thought, "Why would I want to leave the loved ones, the professors, and the ground that have nourished and held us in this intimacy of becoming?" What is helping me understand is that it's our responsibility to carry what we've built here out to the rest of the world and to reclaim our humanity, because the world needs it.

Elaine Yuen, PhD

Associate Professor,
Department of Wisdom Traditions

Our classes at Naropa begin with a pause and end with a pause. This pause is often embodied in the Naropa bow that aims to establish a brief moment of not doing and not knowing, which is a rarity in our contemporary Western world. It gives us an opportunity to stop in the midst of our rush to achieve, get ahead, and move on to the next thing. Yet, the beginning and end do not predicate what flows in between the classroom content. This content emerges from the joining of academic expertise with the pause of not knowing. We bring to our learning a commitment to academic discipline as well as openness and curiosity informed by our personal contemplative practices.



I feel our commitment to contemplative practices has the possibility to support an understanding of diversity and culture. Our emphasis on the immediacy of the first person experience allows the space for many difficult conversations.

I personally feel this is the most important work we can do, both within Naropa and in the world. In order to shift our conversations from ones of self-blame and guilt to those that include connection as well as difference, a capacity for self-forgiveness and friendship needs to be expanded. You graduates are stepping out into the world, a larger world rife with possibility, confusion, hope, disappointment. My wish for you is that this contemplative impulse, the gap—we might call space—will haunt you, as my teacher said, like a ghost. 



SparkTalks Ignite the World

Photos and article by Kelly Watt

October of 2017 brought some exciting opportunities to Naropa University. Over the past few years, alumni have made it clear that they have a strong desire to reconnect with their Naropa roots. And whether it is teaching a workshop or offering a presentation, many alumni want to give back to their alma mater and help guide the next generation of Naropa graduates. Enter Community Week 2017, created as an invitation for alumni to come home to Naropa. The inaugural Community Week offered free events through which alumni, students, faculty, staff, and visitors could learn more about the university's storied past, vibrant present, and exciting future through a variety of offerings including panel discussions, presentations, interactive workshops, and contemplative practice offerings.

The week culminated in the first-ever presentation of SparkTalks, an event created to exclusively showcase the wisdom of Naropa alumni to both the local community and a broader audience. The name originated from Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche's famous quote: "Let East meet West and the sparks will fly." Free and open to all, audience members were treated to a series of dynamic presentations on subjects ranging from mindful lying to mythopoetic pedagogy. Here are some excerpts from the 2017 presentations:

Integrating Jiu Jitsu, Buddhism & Positive Psychology for Inner & Outer Success

Mark Genco (MA Buddhist Studies '03)

Genco is a professional Jiu Jitsu competitor. He shared his philosophy of blending all aspects of life, spiritual and secular, with martial arts.

In Jiu Jitsu, you're always trying to find techniques that make things more efficient. If you don't know what efficient means, it just means minimizing wasted energy. Isn't that beautiful? That is a traditional martial art mindset right there. That is the same fundamental understanding of Tai Chi and Aikido. I feel like the philosophy of Aikido applies to Jiu Jitsu, but we just have a slightly different way of doing it physically. I also think it relates to Buddhism. Buddhism to me is one of the greatest self-improvement modalities you can think of. It raises your understanding of the world, and it cuts down on suffering.

... You are not a passive actor in this universe. Every action that you do, whether you think you're having an impact or not, will have an impact. So make your impacts on the world the most positive ones you can. Become more efficient, and watch your life improve in every way.



Aging Out—Advocating for the Dignity, Respect & Safety of LGBTQ Elders

Beit Gorski (MA Somatic Counseling Psychology '13)

Gorski is a somatic psychotherapist who develops Rainbow Elder Programming for Boulder County's Elder Rights Division. After taking us through the history of the pink triangle and its reclamation by LGBTQ activists, they reminded us of the ongoing and crucial work of creating safe spaces.

How visible we are, how accepted we are, how celebrated we are, how safe we are, that depends on a lot. That can change very quickly.

... Someone born in 1938 on that very first day, the first time a Nazi soldier put a pink triangle on the very first criminalized homosexual, someone born on that day would have been in their mid-thirties during the Stonewall riots. They would have been in their mid-thirties when the American Psychological Association finally, finally took homosexuality off of the list of mental disorders. That was the seventies. That person born on that first day, when that first pink triangle was applied, would have been forty-four the first time they heard about GRID, Gay-Related Immune Deficiency, known now as HIV/AIDS. And that person would be seventy-nine years old today.

We often refer to nowadays as progressive, inclusive, we're really making advances; boy, isn't it good we don't live in the dark ages. But, that seventy-nine-year-old likely remembers a different time line. That seventy-nine-year-old might remember times that seemed more progressive until they weren't, just before we were driven into camps much like the camps for gay men and women in Russia here and now today.

So think of the global, national, and local changes that our LGBTQ elders in Boulder County have witnessed and experienced across their lifetimes. You can see—once you start digging into our history, once you start talking to the elders that are still here and generous enough to spend time with us, brave enough to stay out with us—you can see that LGBTQ lives run in separate, if parallel, rhythms to heteronormativity. And that includes aging.

We don't age the same. We age differently. So end-of-life considerations that we all must consider regardless of our gender or sexuality, things like living wills, assisted living resources, end of a life review, the meaning-making that we need to do

when we hit the end of life, all those things are true for LGBTQ folks as well, but we have to include and expand the specific issues and concerns. We have to learn to be more visibly inclusive. We have to learn how to give those indications that let these folks know that even though they were out and proud and fighting for their whole lives, they don't have to go back into the closet to access basic services like housing, medical services, a coffee group, a grieving group. ... We have to do the difficult work of scraping through and rediscovering what it means to co-create safety in our communities.



Cosplay for Mental Health

Vonië Stillson (BA Art and Design '04)

Stillson specializes in aquatic dance/movement therapy and the intersection of geek culture with mental health. She spoke about how cosplay invites the whole self to the party.

Cosplay is people saying, "Here I am. See me." Cosplay gives people a chance to show those sides of themselves that they're normally not okay with showing and sharing with the world. I was not somebody who would walk outside in a corset ten years ago. It was not something I felt comfortable with. But as I've continued on my own journey and my own path, you know what? It's okay for me to be like, "This is part of me. See all of me."

... There has been so much research done on the value of play, cosplay. There's a value in play as adults; we still need to play. As kids, we need to play. We need to play with our kids and bring all those pieces together. So anything you're doing that's a creative outlet, that you're creating connection with people—the whole idea of it is you're lifting each other up versus dragging each other down. How is that not good for mental health?



You can check out all the 2017 talks at naropa.edu/sparktalks

Look for new SparkTalks from 2018 to be posted later this fall!



Nora Alwah, MA '16

Embodying Our Full Selves with Mindful Lying

Lying is a widespread act that we engage in every day. Why? Because the need for connection is stronger than the need to be honest. Learn how to honor this mechanism by cultivating authentic connections.



Chris Cole, BA '10

Bipolar Order: Getting to the Heart of Sanity

At age 18, Chris experienced what he thought was a spiritual awakening, only to be diagnosed with acute manic psychosis. After struggling for years amid an affinity for spiritual material and an aversion to psychopathology, he now finds refuge in love, which holds space for it all.



Tara Galeano, MA '00

Experiencing Pleasure After Pain: What I Learned from Women Who Have Had Cancer

An often overlooked aspect for women in recovery? Sex after cancer. Join us for an enlivening talk on rediscovering the body, exploring sexuality, and regaining confidence.



Beth Smith, MA '06

Being-Doing-Thinking: A Model for Change in Humans, Organizations, & the World

What happens when we combine the agile methodologies used by software development teams and mindful awareness? We'll explore how incremental improvements—and failures—are the path of meaningful living and worthwhile work.



Swanee Astrid, MFA '16

Mythopoetic Pedagogy

Swanee uses poetry as a framework for trauma recovery as a critically important method for pedagogy in combating misanthropy and antipathy in experiential learning. She promotes it as the method for creating a more empowered youth culture.

Experience Naropa

Discover
Connect
Engage



2019 Event Dates:

Friday, February 1

Friday, March 22

Friday, April 26

Friday, June 21

Friday, August 2

Naropa
UNIVERSITY

Naropa University opens its doors to prospective graduate and undergraduate students at Experience Naropa—a whirlwind of activity designed to open minds, spark creativity, and begin to create the bonds of community.

Tour campus, attend sample classes, and meet students and faculty who are changing the world. Get answers to your questions, and enjoy an engaging afternoon full of lively activities and passionate people.

For prospective students, family, and friends.

For more information and to RSVP visit:

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Bobbie Louise Hawkins: Relentless Artist

By Lisa Birman

here's a kiss for
sweet remembrance
here's a soft touch
for your cheek
here's a ghost
just passed by
the life you live
to give you a
moment's pause

Hawkins, Bobbie L. Bijoux. Boulder, Colo:
Farfalla Press / McMillan and Parrish, 2005.

Family, friends, and students of Bobbie Louise Hawkins (1930–2018) gathered at Naropa's Performing Arts Center on June 17, 2018, to celebrate a great writer and dear friend. Guests included Bobbie's daughter, Sarah Creeley, grandchildren Miranda Konoplisky and Devin Houston, and paternal cousin Alec Axt. Many Naropa colleagues and former students, and Bobbie's friends from Brookdale North Independent Living filled the room.

Junior Burke, who hosted the memorial with Anne Waldman, recalls, "As a prose writer, monologist, stage performer, and visual artist, Bobbie had few peers in any of those categories. She was also blessed or burdened, depending how you look at it, with an unfailingly acute bullshit detector." In addition to her more than twenty books of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and monologues, Bobbie performed her work at

major stages across the country, including a national and international tour with Rosalie Sorrels and Terry Garthwaite. She was also an esteemed visual artist, holding the first one-woman show of paintings and collages at Gotham Book Mart in New York in 1974.

Bobbie came to Boulder in 1978, at the invitation of Allen Ginsberg and Anne Waldman. She designed the prose concentration at Naropa's Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics, where she taught until her retirement in 2010. Bobbie was a beloved mentor and teacher, bringing the same exquisite level of attention to her teaching as she did to her writing. She continued to stay engaged with Naropa beyond her retirement, frequently attending and reading at the Summer Writing Program.

Sarah Creeley gave a moving speech at the memorial. "She was what I call a relentless artist, she was propelled to create. ... My father was a writer as well, Robert Creeley. He said to me, 'You don't choose writing; writing chooses you.' But my mom showed it to me in action. ... I am so grateful to her, and I am really grateful for her friends at Naropa who gave her a sense of purpose and a place where she could really flourish and really make a difference and really be a wonderful teacher to her students."

Looking towards a new generation of readers, Anne Waldman says, "I'm excited about the new manuscript *Gossip* and hope it will see the light of day soon; and there should be a Bobbie Louise Hawkins reader for a larger audience. We are blessed with her long presence in this Naropa/Boulder community, and I like to think it was an interesting haven for her these many years. What a stunning presence; one always knew when she was in the room."



Photos courtesy of the Naropa Archive



Photos: Malachi Tharp

Speakers at Hawkins's memorial celebration from left to right: Chuck Lief, Anne Waldman, Sarah Creeley, Laird Hunt, Lisa Birman, Swannee Astrid



Photos of Hawkins's art by Stephen Parlato

RETIRING FACULTY

This year, we say farewell to many beloved faculty members who have been an integral part of Naropa's growth and development. With 125 years of combined service to Naropa, these faculty founded programs, chaired departments, and held the lineage of Naropa as a beacon to future generations. We are deeply grateful for their commitment and service and wish them the best in their next endeavors.



Deborah Bowman, PhD

Deborah Bowman is the founder of Transpersonal Counseling Psychology: Wilderness Therapy and initiated Art Therapy and the Community Counseling Center at Naropa. She is a licensed psychologist, certified Gestalt therapist, and Jungian oriented psychotherapist in private practice. Bowman served as president of Boulder Graduate School, and worked for Boulder County Hospice and Boulder County Social Services. She is a meditation instructor with Nalandabodhi Boulder and author of *The Female Buddha*, *The Luminous Buddha* and coauthor of *When Your Spouse Comes Out*.



Richard Brown, PhD

After teaching in public school and a Buddhist-inspired K-12, Richard Brown founded Naropa's Contemplative Education department in 1990. In 2017, Colorado approved Naropa's contemplative Teacher Licensure Program. Brown creates Buddhist-inspired approaches for nonsectarian programs from pre-K through higher education. He coauthored *CARE for Teachers*, publishes widely, and teaches internationally. For eight years, he trained Bhutanese educators, contributing to the restoration of the country's contemplative heritage. Now Director of SPARC Initiatives in Education, Brown mentors Naropa faculty and continues to develop the Teacher Licensure Program.



Barb Catbagan, MEd

Barbara Catbagan, most recently chaired the Contemplative Education department at Naropa University. Her passion for equity, education, and contemplative practices converged with the opportunity to lead the creation of the Teacher Licensure Program for undergraduate students at Naropa. Former Naropa positions included Director of general counseling track in the Transpersonal Counseling program, Dean of the School of Humanities and Interdisciplinary Studies, and Special Advisor to the President for Diversity and Inclusion. In retirement, she plans to continue providing professional development for educators and grow in her own practice.

Carla Clements, PhD

Carla Clements practiced psychotherapy for three decades, taught full-time at Naropa for the last fifteen years, and was the chair of the Transpersonal Counseling Psychology department for a decade. As part of her career focusing on trauma, she was the Independent Rater for the Boulder MAPS study using MDMA to treat chronic, treatment-resistant PTSD, published a model of trauma in the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, and coedited *Shadows and Light: Theory, Research, and Practice in Transpersonal Psychology*. She is also a yoga practitioner and musician.



Sarah Harding

Sarah Harding was Associate Professor in the Wisdom Traditions program. A lama in the Shangpa Kagyu tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, she completed the first three-year retreat for westerners in 1980 under Kalu Rinpoche. Her published translations include *Creation and Completion*; *Machik's Complete Explanation*; *The Life and Revelations of Pema Lingpa*; *Niguma, Lady of Illusion*; *Treasury of Knowledge: Esoteric Instructions*; *Treasury of Precious Instructions: Chöd*, and *Zhijé*. She continues to work on translations and conferences as a fellow of the Tsadra Foundation.



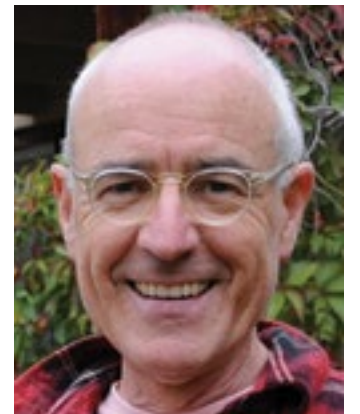
Laurie Rugenstein, EdD

Laurie Rugenstein served as a core faculty member in the Transpersonal Counseling Psychology program for twenty-one years. She founded and directed a Music Therapy Concentration within this program that ran from 1994–2007. She also served as a music therapist with hospice and as a primary trainer in the Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music. Rugenstein studied voice work with members of the Roy Hart Theatre and incorporated this work in training counseling students.



Robert Spellman

Robert Spellman was chair of the Visual Arts program at Naropa University from 1996 to 2003, and more recently served as faculty in the MFA Theater: Contemporary Performance and MA Religious Studies programs. He continues his engagement with painting, book illustration, and music. His work is widely exhibited and appears in numerous print and online publications. Since retiring from Naropa earlier this year, Spellman has been overseeing construction of Mountain Water, a refuge for art and meditation in the wilds of southern Colorado. Visit his website at robertspellman.com.



[Read his cover artist profile on page 3](#)

NEW CORE FACULTY



Trevor Buser, PhD

Trevor Buser will be joining Naropa in January 2019 as a Core Candidate Associate Professor in the Mindfulness-Based Transpersonal Counseling Program. He is a licensed professional counselor, certified school counselor, and approved clinical supervisor. Buser most recently served as a Professor of Counseling at Rider University, where he taught in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling programs. Buser's research centers on cognitive predictors of self-injury, addictions, and mindfulness in counselor training. He is former editor of the *Journal of Addictions and Offender Counseling*.



Marina Dorian, PhD

Marina Dorian joins Naropa as a Core Candidate Associate Professor in Clinical Mental Health Counseling: Mindfulness-Based Transpersonal Counseling. After earning her doctoral degree from the University of Illinois in 2007, Dorian held a faculty position at the California School of Professional Psychology at Alliant International University in San Diego. She has conducted international research in Ukraine, Moldova, Russia, and Mexico on family stress and resilience. Dorian has published and presented on the importance of incorporating mindfulness into clinical training and on topics ranging from relational mindfulness to the role of mindfulness in decreasing implicit bias.



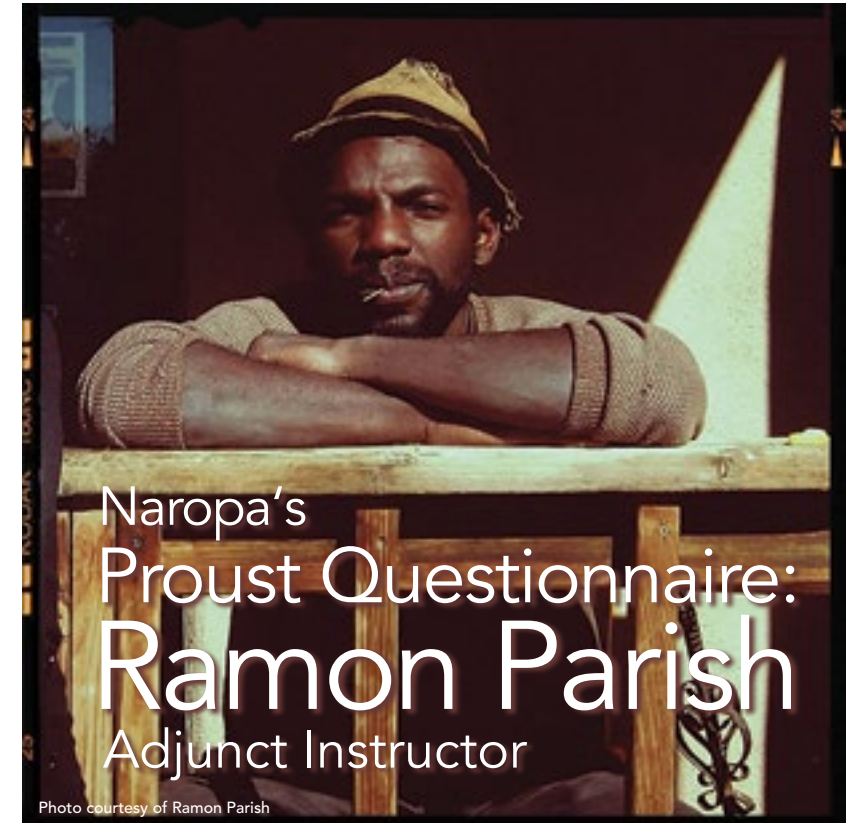
Sara Lewis, PhD

Sara Lewis will join Naropa in January as a Core Candidate Associate Professor in the Contemplative Psychotherapy & Buddhist Psychology program. She is an anthropologist of religion and medicine who is also trained as a psychotherapist. Her forthcoming book with Cornell University Press, *Spacious Minds: Trauma and Resilience in Tibetan Buddhism*, investigates how Buddhist concepts of time, memory, and emotion frame recovery practices within the Tibetan diaspora. Lewis looks forward to joining with Naropa students and new colleagues in exploring the dynamic—and challenging—intersections of social justice, engaged Buddhist activism, and contemplative care.



Jessica Whitesel, LPC, ATR-BC

Jessica Whitesel has been appointed to Core Candidate Assistant Professor in the Contemplative Art Therapy program, where she has been a faculty member since 2007. Her focus includes the integration of EMDR and creative arts therapy, dissociative processes, and Jungian approaches to art therapy. While working as an art therapist at Mount Saint Vincent Childrens Home in Denver, Whitesel co-authored a treatment manual to help clinicians utilize somatosensory approaches in working with traumatized children, called *Doodles, Dances, and Ditties: A Somatosensory Handbook*, which includes an introduction by Bruce Perry, PhD.



1. What was your journey to Naropa?

I had heard about the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics back in high school. I had a poetry phase. Decades later, I was student of Boulder-based somatic educator Melissa Michael's rites of passage process Surfing the Creative®, where I met a number of people who were graduate Naropa somatic psychology students. But it was really Jeanine Canty, who was my graduate adviser at Prescott College, who pointed me in the direction of Naropa.

2. Who are the gurus in your life, real or fictional?

I don't know about gurus, but inspirations, formative influences—Jesus, Lao Tzu, MLK, Sun Ra, Amiri Baraka, Jim Morrison, Hendrix, Marley, Buckminster Fuller, Teilhard de Chardin. All the dope ancestors. The night sky. Flowing water. The Blues. The drum.

3. How do you know where you are in a space?

The air has textures ... density. Something just below color

4. Favorite way to make yourself uncomfortable?

Tell the truth, dance, play sports, be the only, or one of a few, black people in the room.

5. What kind of environment do you like to teach in?

Inspirational. Deep. Serious. Big scope. Raw. Honest. Emergent.

6. Everything that is not is. True or false?

Still thinking on that one ...

7. What is your favorite quote about teaching?

"Everybody is a star."—Aleister Crowley or is it Sly and the Family Stone?

"The world is moved not only by the mighty shoves of heroes, but also by the aggregate of the tiny pushes of each honest worker."—Helen Keller

8. Do you have a personal mantra? What is it?

"You can pause, but you can't quit."