Select
Binghamton University
National News Hits

Spring 2018
We gained thousands of new likes/followers across our social accounts. We have 62,650+ likes on Facebook, 22,400+ followers on Instagram, 33,200+ followers on Twitter and 94,000+ followers on LinkedIn.

We expanded our use of the Stories feature across Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat, incorporating more visually appealing, branded content. In addition to our "Week In Review" series, we launched a weekly "Events Roundup" feature, spotlighting noteworthy events on campus that coming week, and also started spotlighting more blogs and news content.

We provided comprehensive coverage of Commencement 2018 across our social networks including: livestreams on YouTube, photo galleries of all ceremonies on Facebook, and photo and video content utilizing the Stories feature on Instagram and Snapchat.

We continued our Snapchat Takeover program, in which members of the Binghamton community take over our account for 24 hours. Notable takeovers include a junior studying abroad in Prague, an organizer for Relay for Life and a member of the rowing team at a competition in South Carolina.

Our "Snowy Bing Aerial Tour" video generated 16,500+ views on Facebook and 2,200+ views on YouTube. "President Stenger Breaks a Leg," a humorous video highlighting the president's commitment to the University, garnered 1,700+ views on YouTube and reached 30,000+ on Facebook. Our bite-sized research videos generated thousands of views on YouTube. For example, "Scientists discover oldest known modern human fossil outside of Africa" garnered 20,000+ views.

We published 24 blogs, touching on a variety of topics -- from Commencement speakers to Instagram influencers.
Over the last year, our Facebook following has grown by 1500+ likes, 300+ Twitter followers, 750+ Instagram followers and 13.3k LinkedIn followers.

Our Hamilton Opener Video at the Signature Awards Event received 15k+ views, becoming our most popular post this year.

Throughout the year (May 2017-May 2018), we posted a wide range of social ad campaigns targeting both alumni and students to increase the number of followers on our pages, attendance at Homecoming, Binghamton in the City Week, the Alumni Awards and participants in Alumni Global Day of Service, and chapter events.

We featured Alumni Global Day of Service projects all across the world in 13 different states and 3 different countries.

We were recognized as the best in the SUNY system in the categories of Alumni and Fundraising videos and for our Individual Platform Campaign. The video highlighted alumnus George Nunez titled "From the South Bronx to Wall Street" and the 2017 Senior Week Campaign - "Photos at the Berm."

We started using the Instagram Stories more frequently to highlight our new blogs and upcoming events events and more. Posts in our Stories regularly receive 2,000+ views.

We published 9 blogs featuring alumni garnering 36.6K unique views and established a new category of Q&A blogs with prominent alumni who are trail blazers in their fields.
January 1 - May 31, 2018


Isaac Vaghefi, assistant professor of information systems, was featured in The Washington Post, The Huffington Post, Yahoo.com and others for his research on how certain personality traits might make you more addicted to social networks. TOTAL CIRCULATION: Over 212 million.

Congru Jin, assistant professor of mechanical engineering, was featured in Scientific American, NBCNews.com, Smithsonian,Yahoo.com, Motherboard, Digital Trends, Newsweek, IFL Science, Popular Mechanics and others for her research on a self-healing concrete that could provide a sustainable solution to America's crumbling infrastructure. TOTAL CIRCULATION: Over 75.8 million.

Meredith Coles, professor of psychology, was featured in Forbes, Reader's Digest, Men's Health, Newsweek, MSN Lifestyle, The New York Times and others for her research which showed that people who sleep less than eight hours a night are more likely to suffer from depression and anxiety. TOTAL CIRCULATION: Over 61 million.

Matthew D. Johnson, chair and professor of psychology, was featured in Business Insider, Chron.com, CNN, The Conversation, Salon, IFL Science and others, where he explained that the maxim "opposites attract" is a complete myth. TOTAL CIRCULATION: Over 59.6 million.

William Eggleston, clinical assistant professor, was featured in Newsweek, The Washington Post, The Star Tribune, The Idaho Statesman and others for his insight on the FDA's move to change packaging on over-the-counter anti-diarrheal products. He called the move "a good first step" but thinks that the drugs should be behind the counter. TOTAL CIRCULATION: Over 52 million.

Binghamton University was featured in Chabad.org, Cleveland Jewish News, Jewish News Syndicate and Algemeiner for hosting its first-ever alternative graduation ceremony for observant Jewish students who would otherwise be unable to attend their graduation. TOTAL CIRCULATION: Over 37.1 million.

Andrea Zlotucha Kozub, project director and faunal analyst of the Public Archaeology Facility, was featured in Forbes for her discovery of fetal remains and associated artifacts in two upstate New York domestic outhouses. TOTAL CIRCULATION: Over 36 million.

Oscar Gil Garcia, assistant professor of human development, was featured in The Conversation, San Diego Tribune, Los Angeles Times, Salon and many others for his research in which he documented one man's deportation, the impact on his family and his eventual return to the U.S. TOTAL CIRCULATION: Over 34.5 million.
OLDEST MODERN HUMAN FOSSIL EVER DISCOVERED OUTSIDE AFRICA REWRITES TIMELINE OF EARLY MIGRATION

BY KASTALIA MEDRANO ON 1/25/16 AT 2:00 PM

An international research team working in Israel has discovered the oldest-known modern human bones ever found outside the African continent: an upper jawbone, including teeth, dated to between 175,000 and 200,000 years old. It shows humans left Africa at least 50,000 years earlier than we had thought.

The scientists unearthed the fossil at Misliya Cave, one in a series of prehistoric caves on Israel's Mount Carmel, according to a Binghamton University press release. This region
These Personality Traits Could Put You At Risk for Social Media Addiction

Rachael Rettner Senior Writer / LiveScience.com March 15, 2018
They found that people with low levels of both agreeableness and conscientiousness were more likely to develop social media addiction than people with average levels of these personality traits. But surprisingly, people with high levels of both of these personality traits were also more likely to develop social network addiction, compared to people with average levels of the two traits.

It's possible that people who have high levels of both agreeableness and conscientiousness make a conscious decision to use social networks more, in order to help their friendships flourish, the researchers said.

It's important to note that because the study involved a few hundred college students at a single university, more research is needed to confirm the findings, the researchers said. But they added that the findings could have implications for those who treat tech addictions.

"Our findings explain that users with higher levels of IT addictions may not be considered as one homogeneous group of users, as different personality traits can play different roles in users' dispositions toward IT addiction," the researchers wrote in their paper, which was presented in January at the 51st Hawaii International Conference on Systems Science.

Vaghefi added that he hopes the findings will encourage people to look at the "whole picture" of how personality traits affect tech addiction, "rather than just focusing on one personality trait" at a time.
Fungi Can Help Concrete Heal Its Own Cracks

One promising candidate is eco-friendly and poses no known risks to human health

By Congrui Jin

January 24, 2018

Infrastructure supports and facilitates our daily lives—think of the roads we drive on, the bridges and tunnels that help transport people and freight, the office buildings where we work and the dams that provide the water we drink. But it’s no secret that American infrastructure is aging and in desperate need of rehabilitation.

Concrete structures, in particular, suffer from serious deterioration. Cracks are very common due to various chemical and physical phenomena that occur during everyday use. Concrete shrinks as it dries, which can cause cracks. It can crack when there’s movement underneath or thanks to freeze/thaw cycles over the course of the seasons.
As they grow, they’ll work as a catalyst within the calcium-rich conditions of the concrete to promote precipitation of calcium carbonate crystals. These mineral deposits can fill in the cracks. When the cracks are completely caulked and no more water can enter, the fungi will again form spores. If cracks form again and environmental conditions become favorable, the spores could wake up and repeat the process.

*T. reesei* is eco-friendly and nonpathogenic, posing no known risk to human health. Despite its widespread presence in tropical soils, there are no reports of adverse effects in aquatic or terrestrial plants or animals. In fact, *T. reesei* has a long history of safe use in industrial-scale production of carbohydrase enzymes, such as cellulase, which plays an important role in fermentation processes during winemaking. Of course, researchers will need to conduct a thorough assessment to investigate any possible immediate and long-term effects on the environment and human health prior to its use as a healing agent in concrete infrastructure.

We still don’t fully understand this very young but promising biological repair technique. Concrete is a harsh environment for the fungus: very high pH values, relatively small pore sizes, severe moisture deficit, high temperatures in summer and low temperatures in winter, limited nutrient availability and possible exposure to ultraviolet rays from sunlight. All of these factors dramatically influence the fungi’s metabolic activities and make them vulnerable to death.

Our research is still in the initial stage and there’s a long way to go to make self-healing concrete practical and cost-effective. But the scope of American infrastructure’s challenges makes exploring creative solutions like this one worthwhile.

**Congrui Jin**
Congrui Jin is an Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering, Binghamton University, State University of New York.
SLEEPING LESS THAN EIGHT HOURS LINKED TO DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY IN NEW STUDY

BY DANA DOVEY

1/6/18 AT 7:00 AM

Lack of sleep may cause more than just dark circles under your eyes. New research found that people who sleep less than the recommended eight hours are also more likely to have repetitive negative thoughts, a finding that could explain the link between sleep and mental health.

Sleep-deprived individuals are less able to quickly shift their attention away from distressing stimuli. As a result, negative thoughts may stick with them throughout the day more strongly than better rested people.

The findings, published in *Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry*, suggest that lack of sleep really can make us sad. The study also points toward rest as a key treatment options for certain mental health conditions, such as depression and anxiety.


For the study, researchers assessed the sleep habits of 52 volunteers who also had moderate to high levels of repetitive thoughts, indicated by their score on a psychological test known as the Perseverative Thinking Questionnaire.
Opposites attract' is a myth — science says you're more likely to fall in love with someone similar

Matthew D. Johnson, The Conversation

Feb. 13, 2018, 5:30 PM

Everyone seems to agree that opposites attract. Young and old people, happy and distressed couples, single folks and married partners — all apparently buy the classic adage about love. Relationship experts have written books based on this assumption.
As it turns out, it's pure fiction. There is essentially no research evidence that differences in personality, interests, education, politics, upbringing, religion or other traits lead to greater attraction.

For example, in one study researchers found that college students preferred descriptions of mates whose written bios were similar to themselves or their ideal self over those described as complementing themselves. Other studies have supported this finding. For example, introverts are no more attracted to extroverts than they are to anyone else.

Why are we so sure opposites attract?

Despite the overwhelming evidence, why does the myth of heterogamy endure? There are probably a few factors at work here.

First, contrasts tend to stand out. Even if the partners in a couple match on tons of characteristics, they may end up arguing about the ways in which they are different.

Beyond that, there's evidence that small differences between spouses can become larger over time. In their self-help book "Reconcilable Differences," psychologists Andrew Christensen, Brian Doss and Neil Jacobson describe how partners move into roles that are complementary over time.

For example, if one member of a couple is slightly more humorous than the other, the couple may settle into a pattern in which the slightly-more-funny spouse claims the role of "the funny one" while the slightly-less-funny spouse slots into the role of "the serious one." Scientists have demonstrated that, yes, partners grow more complementary over time; while they may begin as quite alike, they find ways to differentiate themselves by degree.

In the end, people's attraction to differences is vastly outweighed by our attraction to similarities. People persist in thinking opposites attract — when in reality, relatively similar partners just become a bit more complementary as time goes by.
To Your Health

FDA wants to curb abuse of Imodium, 'the poor man's methadone'

By Laurie McGinley January 30

The Food and Drug Administration is asking manufacturers of over-the-counter anti-diarrhea treatments to change the way they package their products to curb abuse by people with drug addictions.

Commissioner Scott Gottlieb said in a statement Tuesday that the agency was taking the "novel" action because of growing concerns that abuse of Imodium A-D and similar medications was adding to the death toll of the nation's opioid epidemic.

The products, readily available in supermarkets and drugstores, are safe when used at the recommended maximum daily dose of four 2-milligram tablets. But in large quantities, the agency warned, these products can cause dangerous, irregular heartbeats and other problems potentially resulting in death.

Loperamide, the generic name for the anti-diarrheal agent involved, is sometimes referred to as "the poor man's methadone." In large quantities, it induces a cheap, mild high and relieves withdrawal symptoms for drugs like hydrocodone, morphine or heroin. People with addiction problems increasingly are turning to loperamide, experts say, as prescription opioids become harder to obtain because of changes in legislation and regulation.

The FDA said it has asked manufacturers to refashion their packages to contain only enough medication for short-term use.
Jewish News

Colleges Across U.S. Offer Alternative Graduations for Jewish Students

Ceremonies before or after Shavuot at four colleges in New York and one in California.

By Tzipora Reitman May 17, 2018 5:46 AM

Mariah Stein, left, and Sammi Plotsker prepare for their alternative graduation ceremony at Binghamton University.
Jacob Niebloom, the sole participant in University of Rochester’s alternative graduation ceremony, with is fiancee Talia Rosenstrauch.

“I’m very proud of Jacob for standing up for what is right, even if it is not necessarily the most convenient. Students often have a dream of what their graduation will look like, but Jacob knows what’s important,” said Yaras, who attended the alternative graduation along with Rabbi Nechemia Vogel, co-director of the Kessler Family Chabad Center, and Rabbi Ari Kilimnick of nearby Congregation Beth Sholom, as well as Niebloom’s parents and grandmother. The family is looking forward to the next big milestone in Niebloom’s life; he is getting married on 12 Tammuz, June 25, to Talia Rosenstrauch, also of Livingston.

And one person can make a world of difference. Rabbi Michael Danow, co-director of Chabad Lubavitch at Leeds in England, reports that one of the Jewish students who attends Chabad convinced the Leeds College of Art to change the date of an exhibit of work by graduating students from Shabbat to a weekday.

In Binghamton, Amanda Nussbaum of Teaneck, N.J., who will receive a B.A. in economics and hopes to work in data analytics, expressed her gratitude for Chabad. “I feel totally taken care of by Chabad,” she said. “They worked out everything about graduation before we even knew about it.”

“They always go above and beyond to help us,” she continued, “and they’re even making a fancy dinner for us and our families the night before. Chabad being here is a huge part of the reason I chose Binghamton. And just like I felt cared for by Chabad as soon as I arrived here, I’m leaving college with the same feeling about Chabad.”
Forbes

Aborted Fetus And Pill Bottle In 19th Century New York Outhouse Reveal History Of Family Planning

Bottle of 'Clarke's Female Pills', an abortifacient drug, found in the 19th c Morton privy in Binghamton, NY.

The archaeological discovery of presumably aborted fetuses in outhouses in New York along with pill bottles and historical records have led researchers to conclude that many 19th century American women had family-planning concerns similar to those of 21st century women.

Writing in this month's Historical Archaeology journal, archaeologist Andrea Zlotucha Kozub of the Public Archaeology Facility at Binghamton University details her discovery of fetal remains and associated artifacts in two upstate New York domestic outhouses.

Although potential aborted fetuses have been previously found in an outhouse associated with a 19th century brothel in Manhattan, Zlotucha Kozub's study is the first to find this sort of evidence from middle-class houses.
A house on Canal Street in Binghamton, New York, was the site of archaeological investigation by the Public Archaeology Facility in the 2010s. Historical records identify the family, which Zlotucha Kozub has chosen to pseudonymize as the Mortons to preserve the privacy of potential descendants in the area. Through intensive documentary research, Zlotucha Kozub found that Mrs. Morton bore three children between 1871 and 1875. The Mortons' outhouse contained a wealth of information about their daily lives, including a lot of trash related to the children and childrearing. However, the outhouse also yielded 18 bones from a 30- to 32-week-old fetus.

Discovery of fetal bones is not uncommon on archaeological sites, as miscarriages were at least as frequent in antiquity as they are today. Zlotucha Kozub, however, interprets the bones as a potential aborted fetus because of a pharmaceutical bottle discovered in the trash pit that had contained "Clarke's Female Pills." This mail-order drug contained savin, an herb that was a known abortifacient, and "may be considered circumstantial evidence for the death of this particular fetus."

Whether the fetus was from Mrs. Morton or from one of the family's two live-in servants is unknown, but Zlotucha Kozub thinks that "the combined evidence of the discarded nursing bottles and Mrs. Morton's abrupt cessation of childbearing both point to family planning, for which abortion would have been both consistent and historically valid." The fetal remains in the outhouse context seem to be "an act of concealment, underscoring the criminal aspect of the abortion," since the fetus "was expelled well after quickening." Had the fetus been miscarried, the Mortons would likely have buried it rather than disposing of its body in the family outhouse.

The second potential abortion that Zlotucha Kozub found was from an archaeological site in Niagara Falls. 17 bones from a fetus approximately 30 weeks' gestation were found in an outhouse associated with a rental house that was occupied in the 1850s. Census records suggest that Mr. Chester, a lawyer, lived there around that time with his wife and three daughters (one teen, two preteen) and a female teenage servant. Unlike the Binghamton case, the Niagara Falls outhouse does not include enough artifacts or context to suggest whether the fetus had belonged to Mrs. Chester, the eldest daughter, or the servant. Additionally, because this was a rental property, it is equally possible that some other tenant than the Chester family was responsible.

"The Binghamton and Niagara Falls sites," Zlotucha Kozub writes, "share a greater historical context demonstrating middle-class use of abortion for family planning in the 19th century. Concealment in the outhouse is suggestive of maternal indifference and/or a consciousness of criminal activity, both of which are consistent with abortion." Historical records from the period rarely note what happened to stillborn or aborted fetuses, but occasional police and coroners' records mention the discovery of 'infanticide victims' in outhouses."
Deported twice, man struggles to help family survive

February 22, 2018

By: Oscar Gil-Garcia
Assistant Professor, Binghamton University, State University of New York

For more than a decade, I documented one man’s deportation, the impact on his family and his eventual return to the U.S.

I did this as part of my work studying the migration of indigenous Mayan refugees from Guatemala to Mexico and the U.S. My telling of the story of this man, who I’ll call Alex to protect his identity, is forthcoming in the journal Representations.

I believe it can help shed light on the human consequences of deportations and family separations – and the enormous risks deportees are willing to take, irrespective of walls, fences, and the danger of reuniting with their families.

Here is Alex’s story.

An immigration raid

Alex was born in a refugee settlement in Chiapas, Mexico. His family is one of more than 200,000 Guatemalans who fled a protracted war, supported by the U.S. and its allies, that largely targeted the indigenous people in Guatemala.
Despite their reunification, Alex’s family continued to face significant hardships in Mexico. Alex’s friend, a coyote, informed him that he could make a livable wage working as a coyote and stay close to his family. Alex decided to explore this alternative.

**Clandestine migration**

Alex’s participation in a human smuggling network came with enormous risks. One day, for example, armed bandits surrounded a group of migrants he was leading across the U.S.-Mexico border and confiscated their belongings. Alex ran into the desert bush and escaped to the U.S. side of the border.

After a night in the desert without food or water, Alex returned to Mexico. He later learned that the bandits had taken the migrants hostage, but that they were released after relatives in the U.S. paid an undisclosed ransom. Alex returned home and informed his wife and parents of the incident. All insisted that he no longer continue to work as a coyote.

A large body of research documents how the militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border has led to a militarization and reorganization of drug trafficking organizations. Drug cartels can interfere with smuggling networks, making migrants even more vulnerable to assault or being forced to transport drugs. Scholar Laura Ortiz argues that the increased participation of imposter coyotes, who recruit migrants only to extort them, has helped reinforce dominant perceptions of smuggling as intertwined with drug trafficking. Despite this dominant perception, scholar Simón Pedro Izcaray Palacios argues that human smuggling and drug trafficking are operated by different groups. Drug cartels are not directly involved with human smuggling, but instead extort fees from human smugglers. Indeed, Alex identified how cartels pressured smugglers to pay a user’s fee for crossing the Sonora-Arizona border. Failure to pay can result in violence.

The risk of violence in coyote work, along with an absence of viable job opportunities in Chiapas, prompted Alex and his wife, now with four children, to make arrangements to join other family in the U.S. in 2015. Although Grace’s father is a U.S. permanent resident, he could not sponsor them through what politicians refer to as “chain migration” because he failed to meet annual income criteria - no less than 125 percent of the federal poverty level.
Others have identified how prolonged detention compromises due process protections that violate international human rights law and coerce migrants into surrendering to deportation. Several have identified how deportations can be tantamount to a death sentence.

His family feared that he too may be killed following deportation and begged him to permit the attorney to adjudicate his case. Alex weighed his options and declined legal counsel. Following the end of his sentence and deportation, he returned to Chiapas. Within a month he made arrangements with another coyote and paid $7,000 to cross via the Chihuahua-Texas border. Like most who attempt re-entry following an apprehension, he succeeded, and is now reunited with his wife and children in the U.S.

**Family reunification**

Alex says he never wanted to be a coyote. His story provides an opportunity to understand the complex motivations that fuel unauthorized re-entry of deportee parents with family in the U.S. A 2009 Department of Homeland Security report states that 21 percent of re-entries are those without a U.S.-born child, while more than one-third of re-entries are parents of U.S. citizen children. Scholars have also shown how deportees like Alex, who are separated from families in the U.S., are more likely to migrate again than those without family ties.

As the nation considers reforming immigration policy, it is important to remember that deterrence strategies are ineffective in reducing the intention to migrate, particularly among those with family in the U.S. Walls or even detention cells are no match for those with direct experience with crime and violence who have credible fear claims and those separated from their families in the U.S.

In 2017, two years after Alex’s family’s reunification in the U.S., Grace appeared in court for her immigration hearing. The immigration judge filed an order of removal. Like other returnees and recent unauthorized arrivals, both now face the threat of deportation. Until international protocols on the protection of migrants and their families are upheld, the U.S. will continue producing unauthorized persons or families who are at risk of deportation for years to come.
About That Song You’ve Heard, Kumbaya

By JOHN ELIGON / FEB. 9, 2018

We chant it with locked arms and closed eyes, at campfires, in protest lines and from the pews at church, but the truth is, many of us have no clue what the lyrics mean or exactly where they come from.

Kumbaya my Lord, kumbaya. Kumbaya my Lord, kumbaya. Thanks to research and lobbying by residents of a coastal community descended from slaves, the origins and meaning of “Kumbaya” have been recognized in congress, raising hopes that a fading culture might get a boost. The song may be sung more often than usual this month, especially in the part of Georgia where its soulful lyrics are said to have originated almost a century ago.

Speaking on the House floor two months back, Representative Buddy Carter of Georgia recognized the Gullah Geechee, whose ancestors were brought to America’s southeastern coast from West Africa, as the probable creators of the famous folk song.

If you’re searching for deep meaning in the word itself, the truth, as Mr. Carter laid out in his proclamation, is that kumbaya is probably a made-up word. Still, it has come to
Mr. Winick also found in the archives lyrics collected in 1926 by a high school student outside of Gullah territory for a song similar to "Come By Here."

That raised the possibility, Mr. Winick said, that the song might not have originated with the Gullah Geechee, though he maintains that it is quite possible that they could be its creators. The version of the song as we know it today very likely traces to the Gullahs because of the pronunciation of "come by here" as "kumbaya," he said.

"I think that in the general public, if you ask someone on the street, 'What does kumbaya mean,' they wouldn't know," he said. "They would think it means joining hands and being friendly to each other."

Someone's laughing, Lord, kumbaya. Someone's laughing, Lord, kumbaya.

Griffin Lotson, the Gullah historian, knew nothing of the song's connection to his people until he started researching it in 2012, and since then he has been on something of a crusade to elevate its history.

Many Gullah Geechee, Mr. Lotson included, were conditioned to think that in order to live a successful life, they had to leave their dialect and traditions behind, he said.

But now there is great interest in Gullah culture, from inside and out.

He was hired to consult on a scene in the remake of the television mini-series "Roots." He is often called upon to give cultural tours.

Lawmakers realized the importance of preserving the Gullah Geechee culture years ago when, in 2006, Congress created the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor.

The Gullah Geechee hope that the recognition of their role in the origins of "Kumbaya" will represent one step toward popularizing, and preserving, who they are.

"Gullah Geechee culture has influenced everything, from our music to the way we speak," Heather Lorraine Hodges, the executive director of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission, wrote in an email. "It is a foundational culture for the United States."

Someone's crying, Lord, kumbaya. Someone's crying, Lord, kumbaya.
‘Two societies, one black, one white’ – the Kerner Commission’s prophetic warnings

Donald Nieman: Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Binghamton University, State University of New York

Disclosure statement

Donald Nieman has received funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Council of Learned Societies.

February 27, 2018 6.29am EST

On July 23, 1967, Detroit exploded in rioting. Five days later, 43 were dead, 7,200 had been arrested and US$22 million worth of property had been destroyed.

It was just the latest in a string of more than 100 disturbances that shook American cities during “the long, hot summers” of the mid-1960s.

Before the embers cooled, President Lyndon Johnson appointed the National Commission on Civil Disorders to investigate. The panel became known popularly as the as the Kerner Commission, after its co-chair Otto Kerner, the Democratic governor of Illinois.

Fifty years ago, on Feb. 29, 1968, the commission issued its report. As a historian of civil rights in the U.S., I’m struck by how the power of institutional racism so trenchantly revealed by the report constrains efforts to advance racial equity 50 years later.
Recognizing the role of the police in sparking violence, commissioners urged development of “innovative programs to insure widespread community support for law enforcement” and the hiring of more black police. They also demanded that police cease using massive force in the form of “automatic rifles, machine guns, and tanks.”

The report seized public attention. Covering widely in the press, it was issued as a paperback by Bantam books and sold 740,000 copies within two weeks of its release. Its chilling “two societies” phrase became part of the national vocabulary.

Harsh words, but little action

Impact was another matter.

President Johnson, confronting budget deficits, rising inflation, defeat in Vietnam and growing criticism from the right and left, offered tepid support. And his successor, Richard Nixon, rode to victory promising to restore law and order, not to support an ambitious civil rights agenda.

During the ensuing 50 years, retrospectives on the report surfaced on anniversaries and in the aftermath of highly publicized urban uprisings in Los Angeles, Ferguson, Baltimore and Staten Island.

Its effect on policy, however, has been modest. It helped spur passage of the Fair Housing Act of 1968, which aimed to end the residential segregation of American neighborhoods. Coupled with additional legislation passed in the 1970s and 1980s and the growth of the black middle class, the act has facilitated modest gains in residential integration.
But racism is the most important factor.

Has racism diminished?

Polls reveal a decline in racist sentiments among whites since the 1960s.

Nevertheless, a 2012 AP poll found that 56 percent of non-Hispanic whites held explicit or implicit anti-black attitudes. Other recent polls have revealed that a majority of whites believe that whites work harder than blacks and that the country talks too much about race.

Persistent racism has been exploited by many Republicans - Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush and Donald Trump to name a few - to woo working-class white Northerners and turn the South red.

Republican resurgence after 1968 - Democrats have controlled both Congress and the White House for only for only six of the past 50 years - has created partisan gridlock on civil rights, killing serious consideration of the commission's bold recommendations.

Sadly, the report's fundamental insight remains as relevant today as 50 years ago.

"What white Americans have never fully understood but what the Negro can never forget - is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto," the report asserted.

"White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it."

I'm encouraged by how Black Lives Matter has once again shattered the nation's complacency about race. The movement reminds Americans that we have not overcome and that institutional racism remains an intractable barrier to equity. It has shattered illusions that the U.S. has become a post-racial society and challenged the nation to grapple with the ugly realities the Kerner Commission laid bare.
THE CONVERSATION

Why this conservative bastion chose a liberal evangelical icon for its commencement speech

April 25, 2018 6.49am EDT

Author: Adam Laats
Professor of Education and History (by courtesy), Binghamton University, State University of New York

Disclosure: Adam Laats received funding from Spencer Foundation.

Former President Jimmy Carter will give this year’s commencement address at Liberty University. AP Photo/John Amis
and universities that could reclaim its role as the brains and conscience of the entire nation.

Almost a hundred years ago, Dean Lowell Coate of Marion College in Indiana pleaded with his fellow conservative evangelical academics to forge a new type of college.

Mainstream institutions, Coate lamented in August 1923 in the pages of the Moody Bible Institute Monthly, had fallen prey to the siren song of "evolution, destructive criticism, and liberalism." Leading mainstream colleges, Coate warned, had foolishly abandoned Christian thinking in favor of new fads in science and scholarship. They had adopted uncritically a new, liberal approach to biblical hermeneutics.

What America needed, Coate believed, was a new, superior system of higher education, one that would "ignore the whole worldly system, and organize courses independent of the world’s stereotyped curricula, engage the strongest conservative scholarship in America, raise the educational standard above the present unchristian philosophy, establish [sic] it upon 'the faith once for all delivered to the saints,' and then challenge the world to meet the new scholarship."

Long before Jerry Falwell Sr. opened Lynchburg Baptist College in 1971 – today’s Liberty University – evangelical academics heeded Coate’s call. Institutions such as Wheaton College in Illinois, Bob Jones University in South Carolina, Biola University in California, Moody Bible Institute in Chicago and many others created a new network of conservative religious colleges and universities.

As I found in my research, the fundamentalist college network wanted to do more than just protect students from trends in secular schools. It wanted to create a better system of higher education, without being secular or skeptical. It wanted to be more than the religious wing of one political party; it planned to be the religious voice of the nation.

For instance, when fundamentalists took over the struggling Des Moines University in 1927, leaders bragged that the revived school would be more than just a fundamentalist hothouse. William Bell Riley – a Minneapolis leader who hoped to bring all American fundamentalists under his purview – praised Des Moines in the December 1927 issue of his Christian Fundamentalist magazine as a “strictly fundamentalist University” that welcomed students of all backgrounds, including Catholic and Jewish students.

Des Moines University soon gave up its fundamentalist ambitions, but other fundamentalist colleges thrived. The goal was always the same: to create a secure fundamentalist home for college students, while still earning the respect of the wider world.
SUNNY HOSTIN GOT A DOCTOR OF LAWS DEGREE FROM BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY:

**Transcript:**

*Whoopie Goldberg:* So, congratulations Sunny. How was the commencement?

*Sunny Hostin:* I think I should be called Dr. Sunny now.

*Sara Haines:* Oh, geez. How about Dr. Hostin?

*Sunny Hostin:* Well, I got a Doctor of Laws from my alma mater, Binghamton University. And, I gave my first commencement speech. [Clapping and cheers].

*Sunny Hostin:* I did. I talked about you guys. I talked about you gals and I also talked about the need for this generation to use their voice for change.

*Whoopie Goldberg:* Very good.

Sunny Hostin graduated from Binghamton University in 1990, with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and Rhetoric.
Immigration agents X-raying migrants to determine age isn’t just illegal, it’s a misuse of science

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A teenager’s father is murdered in Somalia, and the boy travels to the United States seeking asylum. Another teen’s father and brother are murdered by extremist groups in Afghanistan and he too makes his way to the U.S. to seek asylum. Since both are minors, federal law decrees that they must be held separately from adults under the oversight of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR).

However, in these two cases, and an unknown number of others, these minors were taken in handcuffs by Immigration and Customs Enforcement and held in adult detention facilities. The reason? In the absence of other information that could corroborate the teens’ self-reported ages, analysis of their dental X-rays revealed that both could be adults.

Lawyers for these two teens sued on the grounds that sole reliance on X-rays for age determination is illegal, and several federal judges agreed.

As a forensic anthropologist, I support these judicial decisions. My work can include estimating the ages of deceased persons using X-rays of bones and teeth, and I’m intimately familiar with the limitations of how specific these techniques can be. In my field, we generate an age range alongside several caveats; it’s irresponsible for ICE to rely solely on X-rays to provide a definitive answer in determining if a person is a minor or an adult.
While these factors differ between individuals, they also differ broadly between populations of people – for instance, as a group, Americans likely develop at a different rate than sub-Saharan Africans.

Many of the studies relied upon to make age estimations are based on populations not representative of the individuals to whom they’re being applied. Therefore, a certain amount of error can be expected in the final age estimation. What’s more, this error is immeasurable. Without scientific studies on growth that are specific to each population, we don’t know if on average, Population A ages six months, one year or two years faster or slower than Population B. And while many methods are bolstered by a statistical likelihood, this is not the same thing as being certain. We can never be 100 percent sure.

**Estimation ranges versus exact ages**

Of course, the amount of time since birth is the legally important age. But because a disparity exists, forensic anthropologists refer to the results of the scientific methods we use as “age estimation.” The estimation will never be a pinpointed exact age, because of the variation that exists between individuals and between populations of people.

Therefore, forensic anthropologists report age estimations as a range. For example, rather than saying someone is 17 years and 8 months old, our estimation may be that she is between 17 and 20 years old.

Sometimes, the estimated age range might include ages below and above 18. Take the development of the wisdom tooth, something we often look at when estimating age of older teenagers and young adults. But the development of this tooth is extremely variable, ranging from never developing at all to erupting anywhere from the mid-teens to early 20s. In such cases, how would a final decision of adult or minor status be made?

**Federal law** dictates that X-rays in cases where adult age is not obvious be used only in concert with other methods, such as verification of documentation and interviews. This makes sense because X-rays only provide orienting information rather than a definitive answer.

The recent court cases demonstrate that ICE has broken the law by exclusively relying on X-rays for age determination, ruling that the teens be released back into ORR’s custody as minors. Are these cases isolated or illustrative of a bigger problem? A 2008 report by the Office of Homeland Security found that it was not only unclear how often ICE needed to resort to X-rays to assist with age determination, but unknown how common it was for them to rely solely on X-ray results. Without accurate numbers, there is no way to know how widespread the practice is or how to improve the process.
A Great Idea Is Not Enough When Trying to Raise Funds for Your Startup

Henry Yoshida  1 Month Ago

There are more options than ever when it comes to raising money for your startup. One of the most obvious ones is reaching out to your friends and family. Then there's the bank. And not to be overlooked are Kickstarter and Indiegogo. These three options have something in common, which goes beyond how good or bad your idea is. They all rely heavily on your reputation and how they perceive your integrity as a person.

That intangible of growing support with friends and family, especially as companies make it easier than ever for those with retirement savings to diversify their portfolio by using their Solo 401(k) or Solo IRA, to invest in startups. While all can agree that diversification is good thing, the idea of investing retirement savings into a startup invites a little more consideration than taking capital from a money market fund and investing in a startup. Bank loan specialists, not surprisingly, focus intently on the entrepreneur's reputation and past history with their bank and others before extending a loan.

Then there's Kickstarter and Indiegogo. This spring, a new study from of Binghamton University, State University of New York, drove home that point about the importance of reputation when it comes to securing the necessary capital at these popular crowdfunding sites. Kickstarter and Indiegogo give people a platform to display their ideas for products or services they'd like to create, giving virtually anyone the opportunity to fund the project. Investors may sometimes give money with the promise that they'll get the product in return once it's fully funded and completed.

Unlike other e-commerce platforms such as eBay and Amazon, most crowdfunding websites don't have a traditional product and seller rating system, meaning funders often enter the process with a sense of uncertainty, according to the paper.

"Crowdfunding is interesting because you're literally buying something that isn't finished from a person who has never made it before. There are no product reviews, and there are no seller reviews," said Ali Alper Yayla, associate professor in Binghamton University's School of Management.