



PHOTO, 4B

Take a look at "Holiday Season Celebrations at A-State."

A-State introduces 3D printing course

BAYLEIGH FREEMAN

STAFF WRITER

During the COVID-19 pandemic, A-State's campus has continued to be enriched and expanded. Despite campus restrictions and guidelines, the list of courses and opportunities for students is only continuing to grow.

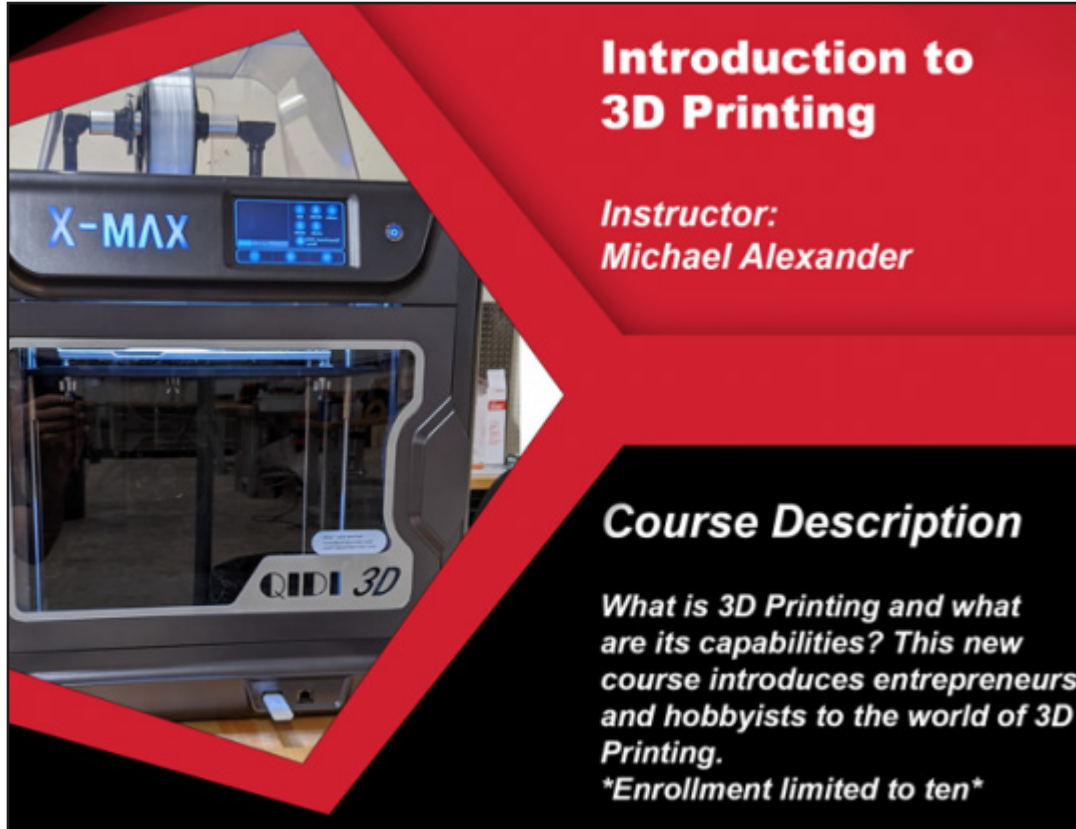
A-State added a 3D printing class to their course list, which premiered this month, with Michael Alexander from the Delta Center of Economic Development as the instructor.

The course premiered on Monday in the Garage on campus, at 611 University Loop in the old residential life maintenance building.

The course, which only has 10 available spots, will be offered again next year. In addition, the cost to participate is \$25.

Though many would not necessarily consider 3D printing a necessary class, Alexander said the course is going to go above what those people might think. It covers much more than just basic 3D prints and goes as far as to dive deep into what 3D printing truly is.

"We're going to talk about a lot of the questions raised and answer questions about what it is," Alexander said. "The technology goes back to the 1980s, so we'll cover a little of how we got from there to here. We'll talk about the different types of 3D printing out there today, how they work and their strengths and weaknesses. We'll cover the economics of 3D printing. You can spend between \$150 and \$3000 on a 'basic' 3D printer. We'll talk about why that is, and what features are offered at what price and



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF ARKANSAS STATE

The class was first offered on Dec. 6. There are 10 spots available per class as well as a \$25 fee to participate.

how that might fit your needs. We're going to go through the 3D printing workflow from start to finish so you can see exactly how it works."

In the course, Alexander reiterates the impact of 3D printing, as he himself uses it on a daily basis and believes he would still use it often even if it weren't a big part of his job.

"3D printing is an additive manufacturing process for making three dimensional objects, usually from a digital file, but it is more than that, too," Alexander said. "It's very much changed how I do things. In a day, I can come up with an idea, model it and make it real. That lets me quickly and cheaply try things. I don't really save much

time, but I can iterate a lot more designs. I'm sure that additive manufacturing will have a big impact on industry. Its strength is allowing you to make complicated geometries easily."

Despite the positive aspects of 3D printing, Alexander emphasized that it is not without its flaws.

"It can be slow and the materials are limited," Alexander said. "A lot of innovation right now is combining 3D printing technologies with more traditional manufacturing techniques to capture the strengths of both. I don't think that 3D printers are going to be in everyone's house like microwave ovens anytime soon. Though I do think if you're the

kind of person with a small shop or craft room, and you're comfortable with computers, you should look at adding a 3D printer to your tool set."

Alexander said there are a few different printing technologies that are referred to as 3D printing. However, their processes are all started in the same way and all take a 3D digital file and put it into layers.

"We use a program called a slicer to slice the file into layers that the printer can work with," Alexander said. "Typically you end up with hundreds of thousands of layers."

CONTINUED:
3D PRINTING, 4A

Advisor of the Year announced

JONATHAN SCHAUFLE

NEWS EDITOR

Advising is not just a job that stops at the end of the workday, but rather one that requires you to be available 24/7.

Dr. Catherine Calloway, professor and assistant chair of English, has been advising at A-State for 38 years. In her time, she has seen and helped hundreds of students in their college journey. Calloway was recently awarded the "You Make a Difference" award and named Advisor of the Year. This award is completely student nominated and student selected, and Calloway says she owes this award to nothing other than her students. "I love working with students. It has been a great job. I love working with the student population here," Calloway said.

For 38 years Calloway has worked with A-State students. While she has had other job offers to go other places, she never felt the need saying, "I feel like this is where I belong."

Calloway keeps an "open door policy" when it comes to advising. She answers emails on the weekends, tells her students they are welcome to come by anytime and wants them to know she is approachable and available.

"The job doesn't stop when I leave for the day. I am available for (students)," Calloway said.

As dedicated as she is to her students, she said it was a complete sur-



PHOTO COURTESY OF ARKANSAS STATE

Catherine Calloway

prise to her when she won. "I was stunned. There were many qualified nominees and there are many faculty who do a lot of great work," Calloway said.

As some would think, college advising would stop at a student's graduation. However, for Calloway it lasts much longer.

"I still hear from former advisees. They call and ask for letters of recommendation or just contact me to tell me they have a job offer somewhere," Calloway said.

Whether it is her love of students, her dedication or availability, Calloway has spent her career working with A-State students and does it because she wants them to succeed. She said she hopes what she does will help them take away what they need for the future.

A-State plans to switch from Blackboard Learn to Blackboard Ultra

RACHEL RUDD

STAFF WRITER

A-State is in the process of switching from Blackboard Learn to Blackboard Ultra. Blackboard Ultra is a cloud based learning management system, or LMS. It is used by professors and instructors to keep a roster of students, maintain a gradebook and post assignments.

Currently, the campus is using a mixture of Blackboard Learn and Blackboard Ultra. The main page of Blackboard, called Ultra Base Navigation, has already been employed by the university. It updates the appearance of the main page, taking on a more streamlined and modern appearance. However, when using the course view page,

both students and professors still see Blackboard Learn.

The beginning of the switch occurred in August of this year. Blackboard Learn, as opposed to the newer Ultra, was stored on physical servers on a server farm. Blackboard Ultra changes that system to a SaaS platform, which stands for software as a service. That means that instead of A-State having its information updated and stored on server farms, it is stored in the cloud.

Kevin Downum, who is over Academic Technology and Media, stated he believes one of the biggest benefits to switching from physical to cloud-based services is the ease of updates.

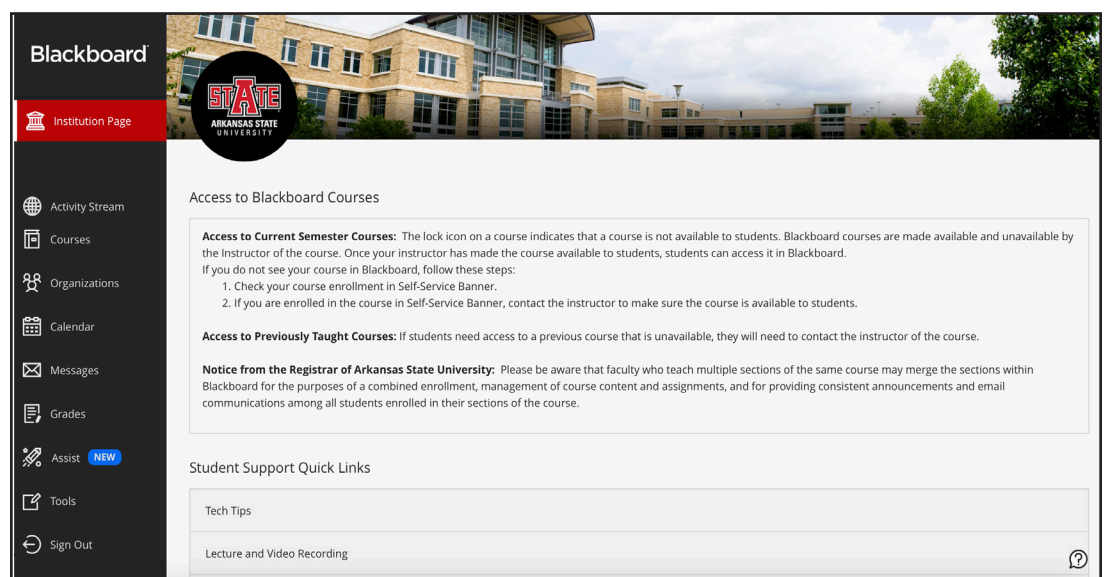
"When you're in the cloud, because there's multiple servers, your updates are alive. So you don't actually

have to shut the system down to update," Downum said.

It is currently unknown how much longer Blackboard Learn will be supported. Downum expects professors to use the original system for as long as they can, as both they and their students are most comfortable with that system.

While the switch was taking place early on, there was some concern about the integration of third party tools.

When Blackboard Ultra first launched, there was some difficulty integrating some of the major textbook publishers such as McGraw Hill, Norton and Cengage, among others. According to Downum, students and faculty do not need to worry about losing access to third party resources.



SCREENSHOT BY RACHEL RUDD

Blackboard Ultra is the new cloud based learning management system, which will make updating easier.

"As far as I know, everything that we use is going to integrate and be integrated. I think

that the third party tools pretty solid," Downum said. would be the biggest concern. As far as I know, those are