

entertainment

Alumni spotlight: *Katie Nageotte shines at USATF National Championships*



USATF

Katie Nageotte pole vaulting at the 2018 USATF Indoor National Championships.

EVAN LAUX
Sports Editor

28 year-old Katie Nageotte, a former Eagle, has been making waves in the track and field world as she has consistently been climbing the ranks towards being the world's best female pole vaulter.

Nageotte was born in Lakewood, Ohio and raised in Olmsted Falls where she graduated high school in the class of 2009. After two years at the University of Dayton, she transferred to Ashland University, where she graduated in 2013.

She then trained in Knoxville, Tennessee before moving to Washington State in 2017 to train with pole-vault sage Brad Walker, who was the American record holder in 2007 and world champion in the event.

During her two years at AU, Nageotte won two NCAA Division II national championships in the pole vault in 2013 – one indoors and one outdoors, and was a three-time All-American under the coaching of then-Eagle assistant coach Denny Steele.

In a 2018 interview with Dennis Manoloff of Cleveland-based "The Plain Dealer," Nageotte was quoted with saying, "I struggled at Dayton, so it ended up being a blessing in disguise that I went to

Ashland. I got to work with great coaches such as Denny Steele. It was the best thing for my career. I'm not sure that, if I hadn't transferred, I would be at this level."

"It's no wonder she got so good when she was being coached by Denny," said AU sophomore pole vaulter Adam Keller. "He really focuses on each vaulter individually and makes sure everyone has something particular to work on and improve. It's a lot easier to get better as an athlete when you are forced to focus on one mechanic at a time."

Most recently, Nageotte competed at the 2019 USA Track & Field Outdoor Championships on July 28 in Des Moines, Iowa. Nageotte was accompanied by four other current and former AU track and field athletes in junior-to-be Trevor Bassitt (men's 110-meter hurdles and men's 400-meter hurdles), Myles Pringle (men's 400-meter dash), Jordan Crayon and Danny Roberts (men's hammer throw).

"Katie Nageotte was really the main attraction," said AU head track and field coach Jud Logan. "She's really been going crazy lately and is one of the best in the world in her event. It's always cool to see a former Eagle achieve something so great and to see her progress since graduation."

Nageotte entered outdoor nationals with a jump of 4.82 meters or 15'8", being tied for the third best pole vaulter in the world at the time.

In the 2018 season, however, she made a personal best of 4.91 or 16'1.25" at the 2018 USATF Indoor Championships in Albuquerque, New Mexico. 16'1.25" was her final personal best after delivering two personal bests in a row in the pole vault. Her winning height of 16'1.25" was a whole 7.25" higher than her former height.

"She's really kind of an inspiration to me," said Keller. "To see someone from a small private D-II college who has become one of the best athletes in the world in their event is pretty awesome."

Since graduating, Nageotte has improved her vault from 4.33 meters to 4.91 meters, or an improvement of 1'10.8" over the course of six years.

In her 2018 Indoor Championship performance Nageotte upset both of her American teammates who had previously outclassed her, Jenn Suhr and Sandi Morris.

Suhr's resume includes Olympic silver (2008) and Olympic gold (2012), world indoor champion (2016), world silver (2013), and world indoor record holder (16'6"). Suhr owns 15 national titles (six in-

doors, nine outdoors).

Morris owns an Olympic silver (2016), world outdoor silver (2016) and world indoor silver (2017).

Nageotte, Morris and Suhr will all be competing at the 2019 IAAF World Championships in Doha, Qatar from Sept. 7- Oct. 6.

When not vaulting, Nageotte writes in her personal blog. Although fairly new (initial post made Apr. 24, 2019), the blog's four posts offer up criticism of what she calls "social media coaches," solutions to variables pole vaulters face, promotion and explanation of the sport of pole vault, and even how to negate anxiety and stress.

According to Nageotte, "Surrounding yourself with good people who appreciate you for who you are, not what you do or look like"

is a key step to maintaining positivity.

"There will always be people who are not a fan of yours, talk badly about you, and that's okay. That doesn't mean there's anything wrong with you, some people just don't mix. Instead of wasting your time wondering, why not use that energy towards appreciating the ones that do."



AU ATHLETICS

AU head track and field coach Jud Logan (left) poses with Nageotte (right) at USATF Outdoor Track and Field National Championships in Des Moines, Iowa on July 28.

Department chair spotlight: *Dr. Hilary Donatini*

CHRISTINE JENKINSON
News Editor

The English department at Ashland University is probably known to non-majors as the department that offers a number of core classes, from Composition to Humanities. What they might not know is that they offer three majors: English, Creative Writing and Integrated Language Arts Education.

"The English department offers a space for students to sharpen their writing and reading skills, fall in love with language, and marvel at the power of words," Dr. Hilary Donatini, Associate Professor of English, said.

This will be Donatini's seventh year as chair. She is originally from Bucyrus, Ohio and close with her parents and four younger siblings. After finishing her PhD at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in

2006, Donatini taught at a branch campus of the Wisconsin system for a year.

"I saw an ad for a job at Ashland and knew I was a good fit", Donatini said. "I'm eternally grateful that my current and former colleagues felt the same way."

Students in the English department study and continue to sharpen their writing skills as they study and read literature (varying from Beowulf ...as well as film and global literatures in English).

Students have also studied novels in their African Literature class, such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel *Americanah*.

"They learn how to unlock the deeper meaning of texts through close, careful reading, as well as studying contexts that shed light on the meanings of literary texts," Donatini said. "Students learn to discuss both published literature

and the creative writing of their classmates thoughtfully and respectfully, as our courses are designed to foster community and collaboration."

One thing that the English department teaches is how to use writing as a tool to express original ideas. This will help students pass classes, but this is also a tool that can be used well after graduation.

Integrated Language Arts Education is the only major of the three that requires an internship of student teaching their senior year. English and Creative Writing majors are encouraged to complete an internship, and nearly all do.

The English department hosts world renowned writers on campus during every academic year and the Ashland Poetry Press, which celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in continuous operation last year, was founded by English Depart-



ASHLAND.EDU

Dr. Hilary Donatini, Chair of the English department at AU.

ment faculty and continues to be housed in the department.

"Take a class with us," Donatini said. "We'd love to have you...we welcome you to our visiting writer events where you can hear published authors read from their own work and answer questions about

their craft. Watch out for posters around campus about some exciting visitors this fall."

Students who are interested in majoring in the English department can talk to Donatini in Bixler 306.

If you have a story idea or want event coverage, you can email Zach Read at zread@ashland.edu