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WCU Museum of Anthropology & Archaeology

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Interactive model of Berlin Wall on exhibit at WCU

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Second Opinions Welcome**

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Interactive model of Berlin Wall on exhibit at WCU

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Museum director Michael A. Di Giovine (center) with student co-curators in front of the graffitied Western side of the Wall. Back row, left to right: Chris Di Maria, Brad Nehls, Ani Kunchink, Natalie Fenner, Meg Hartnett, Christian Sabree, Emily Rodden, Foster W. Krupp, Aaron Gallant; front row, left to right: Aiden Max, Jacqueline Wanjek, Michael A. Di Govine, Marshall Goodman, Brianna Eldridge, Brittany Siemon. Not pictured: Stephen Darrell and Shahd El Gerzawy.

SUBMITTED PHOTO - Senthil Vel

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WEST CHESTER — West Chester University’s Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology previewed its newest interactive exhibit, *Faces of the Berlin Wall: Divided Lives and Legacies 30 Years after the Fall*, during a public opening reception on Friday, April 26, at West Chester University, Old Library, 775 South Church Street, West Chester.

The immersive centerpiece of the exhibit is a giant, 10-foot interactive model of the Berlin Wall that divides the museum space, making visitors choose which side to examine first. Mirror-image tableaux greet the visitor: one on U.S. military and Stasi secret police; the other, on the everyday lives of Berliners on the day Ronald Reagan visited. The touchable, interactive concrete model of the wall serves as a memorial for the numerous lives lost in attempting to cross the border. Featuring artifacts from both East and West Berlin, the exhibit includes authentic pieces of the wall, a computer used to crack Soviet codes, toys, military materials, Stasi records of former WCU faculty, and tourist souvenirs.

With historical artifacts, the exhibition traces the history of the wall, explains its engineering, examines the lived experiences of East and West Berliners, and exhibits the many “afterlives” 30 years following the dismantling of the wall. The exhibition culminates with an exhibit *Through their Eyes*, which features profiles of four West Chester community members who hail from East and West Germany.

Fifteen undergraduate and graduate students have co-curated this ambitious exhibit from start to finish as part of their Museum Exhibit Design class, which included input from professors in anthropology, art + design, education, history, political science, and sociology, as well as members of the West Chester community who lived in East and West Germany. The student co-curators also collected the oral histories featured.

“Marking the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall in November, the exhibition shows that the Berlin Wall is not just a concrete construction, but a culmination of lived experiences that has had a significant cultural impact on Germans and the global community, and continues to be relevant thirty years later,” said West Chester University anthropologist and museum director Michael A. Di Giovine, a specialist in museum and heritage studies.