

GCU

AUGUST 2016

MAGAZINE



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spirit of GCU into
mission of church**

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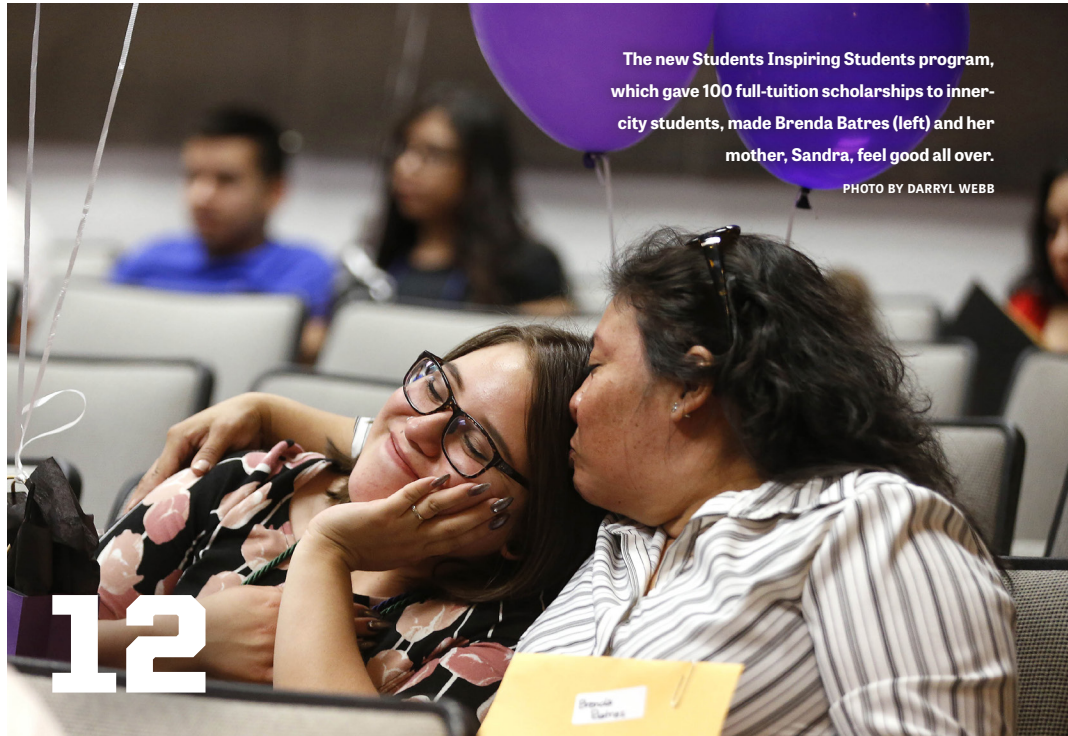


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The new Students Inspiring Students program, which gave 100 full-tuition scholarships to inner-city students, made Brenda Batres (left) and her mother, Sandra, feel good all over.

PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB

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Grand Canyon Theological Seminary promises to be a one-of-a-kind experience for students in the classroom, on campus and in the neighborhood.

18 INSIDE INFORMATION
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16 Proving grounds
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20 Solid foundation
Of all the facilities built on campus in the last year, GCU Stadium will be the first one a lot of people notice. But students will reap the benefits of many others.



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ON THE COVER: Annalee Ramirez (left) and Bijan Mahlouji are two of the students enrolled in Grand Canyon Theological Seminary, which combines the vibrancy of a college campus with the spirit of an education in ministry. PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB



August

26, 28

GCU STADIUM OPENS

It will be the dawn of an exciting soccer era when GCU Stadium is unveiled with the men playing Central Florida and the women facing UTEP two days later. Men, 7 p.m. Aug. 26; women, 1 p.m. Aug. 28. gcuarena.com/lopes-soccer

September

23

CASTING CROWNS

The contemporary Christian band, maker of 14 albums in its long run, returns to campus and brings with it five-time Grammy nominee Matt Maher and newcomer Hannah Kerr. 7:30 p.m., GCU Arena. gcuarena.com

30

CHRIS YOUNG

The American country music artist is on tour for his fifth studio album, "I'm Comin' Over." Joining him at the event are Cassadee Pope and special guests Dan + Shay. 7:30 p.m., GCU Arena. gcuarena.com

October

14-16/21-23

'OF THEE I SING'

From the looks of things, a good political satire will be in order by then. The Ethington Theatre play provides a laugh-filled platform that we all can support. 602-639-8880.



7-9

FAMILY WEEKEND

So many activities! Chapel talk by President Brian Mueller, a 5K run, basketball teams' "Midnight Madness," a soccer game, Movie on the Lawn, Parent Meet and Greet, family sports competition and much more.

14-15

ONLINE COMMENCEMENT

Nearly 10,000 graduates are eligible to walk this year, and the attendees will hear what should be a fascinating talk by Jade Simmons, known as "classical music's No. 1 maverick." 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. both days, GCU Arena.

Amy Grant & Michael W. Smith

November

13

CHRISTMAS WITH AMY GRANT & MICHAEL W. SMITH

Get in the holiday spirit! The multi-platinum Grammy winners are joined on their popular Christmas tour by Jordan Smith, Season 9 winner of NBC's "The Voice." 7:30 p.m., GCU Arena. gcuarena.com

25

MEN'S BASKETBALL

The Lopes won all but two home games last season, and the atmosphere is sure to be electric in the regular-season opener against Coppin State. 7 p.m., GCU Arena. 602-639-8992. gcuarena.com



5 QUESTIONS WITH

Faith Weese

Chief University Relations Officer

Faith Weese has worn many hats in 30 years of service and education at Grand Canyon University. Today, she is responsible for overseeing community advancement and development after previously serving as registrar, leading a half-dozen GCU departments and teaching classes. She earned her bachelor's and master's degrees at GCU and also has co-authored several publications. Weese shared her thoughts about her "happy place."

1 What is your favorite memory of GCU? I remember a graduation in 2006 when many of our loved ones were serving in the military in Iraq and Afghanistan. A master's student was chosen as the class speaker, and we found out that her husband had been in Afghanistan for almost a year. Time was short and commencement "pomp" was upon us, so I had to work quickly and quietly. That day, once she finished her speech, spotlights came on way in the back of the arena. Her children were escorted to the stage as a man was escorted up the aisle. The man's walk became a jog and the audience began to roar as our student realized who was coming: the love

of her life and the father of her children, the man they missed so much. I'll never forget it, and neither will many who attended.

2 What do you think about today when you walk around campus, considering how much has changed? Oh, my ...

I think how blessed we are here at GCU! God just continues to bless us on all fronts.

3 How do you feel about GCU's can-do spirit? We've always had a can-do spirit — that's nothing new — but it has grown deeper over the years with amazing and inspired leadership, vision, passion for people and community, experience, spirit, teamwork and partnerships. As enrollment increases we clearly are inspired to lift up our community in new ways and through new methods. God continues to use us in ways we never thought possible.

4 How have the things that attracted you to GCU changed? We were mom-and-pop. We started with a group of pastors who had a heart, and my dad was one of them. We were small, close-knit, Christian and determined. It takes people power, it takes a



Faith Weese has worked at GCU in various capacities for 30 years and is known around campus as the unofficial University historian.

lot of teamwork and it takes a lot of passion. Those who do not lose spirit and are not afraid to move forward during the tough years will survive. We have. We do. Every day, we stand on the shoulders of those who went before us. Rich heritage, for sure!

5 How do you feel about being the unofficial University historian?

Walking history book? Really? Ha! Never really thought of it that way. The truth is, I just plain love GCU and what it means. It's more than a job — it's a mission. It's more than just the pages in the book

you memorize — it's what you learn between the pages that really counts. Over the years, my passion and love for the University and our surrounding community grew. Canyon is my happy place. I found my purpose here.

— Laurie Merrill

Keeping the faith

BY RICK VACEK

Grand Canyon Theological Seminary focuses on fulfilling a critical need in churches – and the world

A lot of spiritual words come to mind when you think of a seminary. Devotion. Compassion. Faith.

To name just three. But there's another word that has a spirit all its own in the seminary environment.

Focus.

It might be the most important word of all at Grand Canyon Theological Seminary, which opened this year on a vibrant campus in a busy city.

"We're in this incredible moment historically where the global culture clearly has shifted in directions that are unhealthy and, in many ways, unfocused, and there's this kind of groping, not sure where we're going," said Dr. Jason Hiles, dean of Grand Canyon University's College of Theology and the Seminary. "When the world around us doesn't know what it's doing, we'd better have our act together within the church."

But this is a different type of seminary focus, and that's what makes it special — and it's also why instructors and students alike are so excited about it. There is the introspective aspect of the theological environment, sure, but it is mixed with the opportunity to take part in the multitude of campus events and do ministry in the community.

"It's cool to say, 'Hey, I go to seminary, but I go to seminary at a university with Division I athletics, which is unique,'" said Bijan Mahlouji, who got his Christian Studies degree from Grand Canyon University in April and now is enrolled in the Seminary's Master of Divinity program.





Anna Faith Smith (left), assistant dean of the College of Theology, and the COT dean, Dr. Jason Hiles

Said Annalee Ramirez, another GCU Christian Studies grad who has moved up to the M.Div., “I feel it will help us better serve the different cultures in our neighborhood.”

That’s not a sentiment often heard at seminaries where the focus tends to be more inward. But this is a new kind of intentional experience.

“In a seminary environment, it’s really easy to turn it into a Christian bubble, and we don’t really want a Christian bubble here,” said Anna Faith Smith, assistant dean of the College of Theology. “We want a place where Christians can grow, but in an environment that’s challenging and yet encouraging.”

The Seminary, like the University, is interdenominational, thus providing a path for students whose churches don’t have an established seminary program. It teaches the same doctrinal

“ We want a place where Christians can grow, but in an environment that’s challenging and yet encouraging.”

principles and Biblical truths as GCU.

In short, it is everything the University champions — same sense of community, same warm feeling, same spirit of servant leadership, same affordability. Even better, many of the instructors already have real-world knowledge that truly is real.

“Students are in for a treat,” said one of those instructors, Dr. Justin McLendon. “They won’t just have instructors who will fill their heads with knowledge, they’ll be taught by people who are ministers already. We don’t want students to have big theological brains and hard hearts.”

All in this together

Talk to anyone about the seminary life, and the one theme that comes up over and over is the unity and togetherness. No matter how different they may be, seminarians have



something special in common — a love of God and a desire to serve.

“Some of my closest friends are people I went to seminary with,” McLendon said. “We’re joined in this together. It’s the same as if you put two doctors in the same room. They’d already know a lot about each other even if they don’t know each other. They’d still have a lot to talk about.”

And they can talk no matter what their background or belief system is. Jared Ulrich, GCU’s Spiritual Life worship manager, said his time in a seminary gave him a valuable perspective.

“The thing I loved about it, and the thing that’s similar to what GCU will have, both undergrad and grad, is that you get people from all denominations,” he said. “You get people from the whole theological spectrum. To me, that was the most refreshing part about it.

“Sometimes it got a little dicey and sometimes people could be a little bit opinionated, but at the same time, having healthy, respectful debates and dialogues about different viewpoints within the faith was probably the most helpful thing for me in my spiritual walk.”

It was an even more unusual — but equally beneficial — experience for Smith, who went on to a seminary after graduating from GCU. Women in a seminary were not even a “minor minority” in those days, she said, but she didn’t feel ostracized. The environment certainly helped.

“You’re in a group of people who are all working together toward the same goals,” she said. “Each one has a different focus, but they’re pulling on the same team, all trying to get the best preparation they can because they have an idea that God has called them to do a certain kind of ministry.”

That brings up another important difference that GCU brings to the seminary experience — diversity. This will incorporate a multitude of denominations and a wide range of demographics.

“I think we’ll let it grow organically,” Smith said. “I think it would be really odd to say, ‘This is a school that really supports women,’ because that might swing things in some odd way. But what we need to do is show that we are diverse so that when people see us, they see that there are men, there are women, there are many ethnicities and they think, ‘I could fit there.’”

Hiles described the Seminary faculty as “incredibly diverse — men, women, those who are a little older, those who are a little younger, people of color, people who are not of color, various denominations. It’s an incredible mix. And they work together. We’re going to do research, we’re going to be engaged in the scholarly community, but we’re not going to focus simply on publishing books. We’re going to focus on the lives of our students and trying to make our students strong.”

Community feeling

There’s another aspect of the GCU experience that will blend well with the Seminary: having undergraduates mixing with graduate students. Mahlouji and Ramirez both said that’s one of the things they most eagerly anticipate.

“I think there are going to be a lot of opportunities for graduate students to serve and to teach the undergraduate students in ways they might not get in the classroom,” Mahlouji said.

SEMINARY FAQs

What is the mission of the Seminary?

To develop leaders, ministers and scholars who rightly handle God’s Word, teach what accords with sound doctrine, and equip the people of God for missional service within a rapidly changing world.

What is the relationship between the Seminary and the rest of the College of Theology?

It is symbiotic and mutually beneficial for all involved. Students and faculty at the Seminary commit to the same doctrinal, ethical and covenantal standards as other students in the college.

How does that apply to the graduate program?

The Seminary is embedded within COT and represents a distinct graduate theological entity. All graduate theological programs, whether online or on the main campus, are under the auspices of the Seminary. Students who graduate from these programs are considered Seminary graduates who enjoy all the rights and responsibilities associated with this honor.

How does the relationship work with churches?

The process requires meaningful church involvement on the part of students and also depends substantially on mentoring relationships and opportunities offered by seasoned gospel ministers and Christian leaders. In cooperation with the Seminary, professional experience and development are provided within the context of seminary training through a combination of mentoring relationships, supervised ministry requirements and internship experiences. These experiences, which take place within the context of a particular congregation or ministry, provide vital opportunities for spiritual and professional growth and development.

Is it affordable?

Absolutely. The Seminary recognizes that ministers generally don’t bring home large salaries, and the University has frozen tuition on the traditional campus for eight consecutive years.

“It's going to be a lot of people helping each other. . . . That was my experience as an undergrad.” — Annalee Ramirez

Said Ramirez, “It’s going to be a community. I think that’s going to help a lot. It’s going to be a lot of people helping each other — students helping students as well as instructors helping students. That was my experience as an undergrad.”

Ramirez works as an instructor’s assistant in the College of Theology, so she has seen from both sides how the classroom relationships work. She is a volunteer youth pastor in her church, but her goal is not to go into ministry — it’s to teach.

The fact that she is on this path is a far cry from what she envisioned only a few years ago. Ramirez, who was born and raised in Phoenix, used to go to the mall for a different type of shopping experience: She was shopping for what she would do with her life.

Every time Ramirez went, she would look wistfully at the Marine Corps recruiting center and think she wanted to follow in the bootprints of people from her church who had enlisted. “I would peek in and my heart would race,” she said.

But as time went on, Ramirez instead felt a tug from God in a far different direction, and here she is.

“God obviously intervened,” she said, “because I’m totally where I should be right now.”

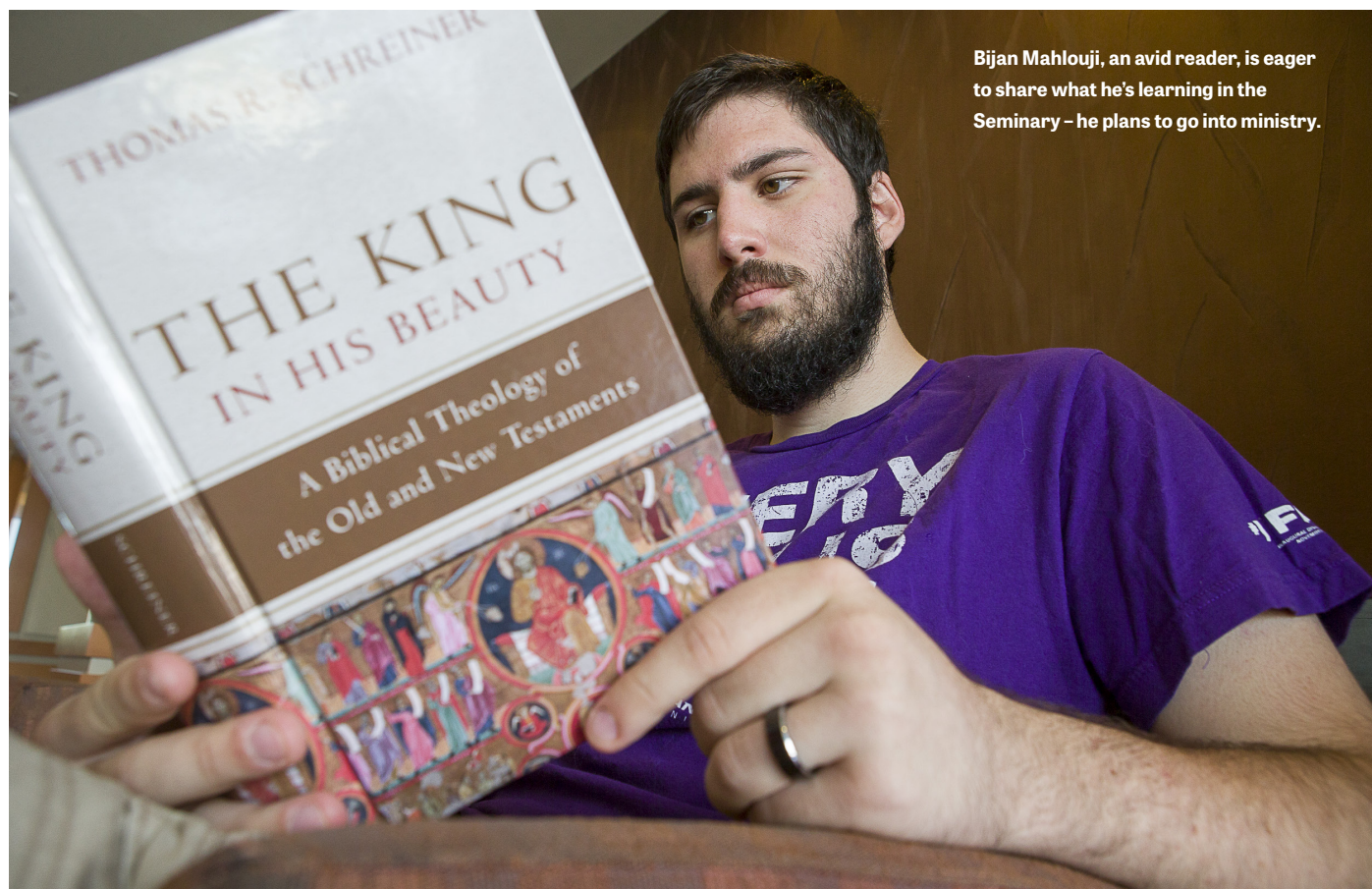
It has been a similar experience for Mahlouji, who grew up just outside Boulder, Colo., and learned of GCU when the University had a booth at a Christian concert. Only in his case, he plans to go into ministry.

“I have found that this is the calling for my life,” he said. “I’ve had people tell me how talented and gifted I am in communicating the word of God to them in a way that’s clear and understandable.

“Charles Spurgeon (a famous 19th-century preacher) told his students, ‘If you can imagine doing anything else with your life other than ministry, you should do that.’ I’ve found that, of all the passions in my life, there’s nothing I could imagine doing other than serving the church.”

And yet, Mahlouji still wasn’t quite sure about his next theological destination until he heard about GCU’s Seminary plan. It helped that Dr. Dan Diffey, one of his mentors at GCU and the assistant dean of the Seminary, was there to advise him and inspire him.

“He was a big influence in my life,” Mahlouji said. “After being in his classes, and we go to the same church as well, just hearing who he is and seeing the man of God that he is and hearing that he’s helping to create the curriculum for the Seminary, I said, ‘Yes, I want to be a part of this.’”



Bijan Mahlouji, an avid reader, is eager to share what he’s learning in the Seminary – he plans to go into ministry.



Annalee Ramirez loves to help at her church, which includes braiding the hair of 15-year-old Iliana Rodriguez.

Years in the making

College of Theology leaders have been discussing the idea of Grand Canyon Theological Seminary since at least 2009, and once those talks accelerated a couple of years ago it became a freight train rolling down the track. This is what GCU does. The system is already in place.

“It’s a great environment to be in,” Hiles said. “We have the space, we have the resources, we have the support, we have everything we need, plus we have this amazing student body. Put a faculty together that wants to meet those needs, that wants to speak into that, and you’ve got an incredible combination.”

The resources clearly were evident to the Association of Theological Schools, which made GCU an associate member (the first step toward full accreditation) only four months after its

representatives visited campus in February.

Hiles talked recently with two local pastors who expressed their excitement about the Seminary’s impact. “We want them to feel that they can trust us, that they would embrace us,” he said.

That, in turn, means embracing the students who soon could be leading churches in a multitude of ways. This won’t be for the faint of heart ... or faith.

“We’re trying to prepare students to really get their hands dirty, shoulder some of this burden and take Christ out into the world, where it’s going to make a huge difference,” Hiles said.

The focus is clear, the goals are in sight. No “Christian bubble.” No “big theological brains and hard hearts.” A desperate world awaits. **G**

VIDEO



GCU President Brian Mueller and Dr. Dan Diffey, assistant dean for the Seminary, explain what will make the program special in this video at news.gcu.edu.

INSPIRAT



'Students Inspiring Students' filled with great stories, but these two twists of fate resonate

BY JEANNETTE CRUZ

Pahoran Fornes always had one goal — to make his parents and siblings proud.

He played sports, kept his grades up, volunteered within the community, attended church and looked after his brothers. It was a tight-knit bond.

But that cocoon was unraveled during his sophomore year at Washington High School in Phoenix when he arrived home one day and found it nearly empty — his parents, three of his four siblings and most of their belongings were gone, with only his bed and clothes left behind.

His uncle Jesus gave him a place to stay, and it wasn't until the following day that Fornes learned what had happened: His family had been deported to Mexico.

Jane Sabuni, her parents and six siblings didn't

have it easy in their native Tanzania, but they were happy where they were until civil war forced them to flee in 2010. They were placed in Phoenix by the U.S. Immigration Service, and Jane was forced to assimilate into school. She didn't speak English.

Fast forward from those incredible challenges to the evening of May 12, when Grand Canyon University brought together the first 100 recipients of its new "Students Inspiring Students" full-tuition scholarships for a celebration at GCU Arena.

The featured student speakers? None other than Fornes and Sabuni — one left here by fate, the other brought here by fate, but both determined to make fate their friend.

The idea of the program is as simple as it is life-changing for both students and their

ION X 100



It was a memorable moment when the first 100 recipients of full-tuition scholarships in the Students Inspiring Students program gathered onstage in GCU Arena.

families: The GCU Learning Lounge has provided free tutoring and mentoring for more than 1,700 neighborhood students from kindergarten through 12th grade since it opened in 2013, and now those inner-city students can earn scholarships, then pay it forward by serving in the Learning Lounge to help the next generation of students behind them.

Tears of joy ... and sorrow

When Fornes' parents were living in the U.S., his mother made money cleaning homes and his father was a construction worker. In Mexico, he said, they barely make enough to survive.

"Of course I miss them every day, but I've learned to deal with it so that someday I can



Tears stream down the cheeks of Pahoran Fornes as he struggles to get through his emotional speech at the Students Inspiring Students event.

***“I know that
I can’t save the
world, but I can
save the world
of some.”***

– JANE SABUNI



provide for my parents just like they have for me,” Fornes said.

Fornes was left behind along with his older brother, Carlos. And yet, despite having to become self-reliant, despite having to keep his home life a secret and despite not knowing when he’ll get to see his family again, Fornes remained focused on his education. He plans to become an engineer.

It’s no wonder that Fornes’ speech at the Students Inspiring Students celebration was filled with emotion. He struggled through several long pauses before he was able to finish his message. The reason: It was the first time he had shared with a group what it meant to have a shot at attending college, apart from his family.

“Even though I had practiced before so many times,” he said, “it was in that moment that everything came to me.”

Fornes has the heart of a servant — he smiles, he’s willing and he carries the right motivation in everything that he does, said Myrna Fornes, his aunt.

“He is the perfect example of what it means to grow through life’s challenges,” Myrna said. “Because of that, we know he deserves this opportunity and we are grateful to God.”

Language barrier

Sabuni was 11 when she took on the heavy task of learning a new language and adapting to a new culture. It wasn’t an easy adjustment.

“I was bullied and made fun of a lot because of the way I pronounced certain words,” said Sabuni, now 18. “It was hard and it was concerning, but I knew it was another test in my life that I would have to pass to see the great things ahead.”

Now, Sabuni said, those great things are starting to become real. She is proud of graduating from nearby Alhambra High School.

“I am a refugee, a minority, an immigrant in a country with many intelligent people, and I was able to do something so big,” Sabuni said.

Even though her family’s circumstances have improved slightly, Sabuni worked while going to school in order to contribute

financially to her French-speaking parents and her siblings.

“As a child, I saw my family struggle a lot — my dad worked two jobs, my mom worked at a meat factory and I wasn’t fortunate to have the life of a normal child,” she said. “I want my younger siblings to know that you can cultivate what you want with the very little that you have.”

Sabuni plans to become an entrepreneur and hopes to serve as an inspiration to other refugees. Someday, she would like to open an orphanage.

“In Tanzania, we used to live next to an orphanage where my mother would take food to the children, and I would see that and feel that calling within my heart,” Sabuni said. “Although what we had was very little, I was lucky to have parents who provided me with a roof. I was lucky to have water and to have food.

“I know that I can’t save the world, but I can save the world of some.”

That’s exactly what GCU is trying to do, too. **G**



Hundreds of students take advantage of the free academic assistance in the Learning Lounge every day.

Learning Lounge enables students to use a natural resource – other students



BY JOE VERES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, STUDENT DEVELOPMENT AND OUTREACH

When you look at schools across the country, whether in affluent areas or inner cities, they look very similar between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. — great teachers, great administrators and great resources.

But what happens between 3 and 8 p.m.? That is when you see a difference.

At schools in our neighborhood, you see many hard-working adults and immigrants, many of whom never finished high school themselves as they entered the workforce early in life in order to provide for their families. When their children

come home from school, there is often no one at home who can help them with their schoolwork.

The original mission of the GCU Learning Lounge was to become that resource by providing free academic assistance to high school students from 3 to 8 p.m. weekdays. That was the first step.

We saw that these students were willing to work hard and pay it forward, so the next step was to establish the Students Inspiring Students scholarship fund, which provides full-tuition scholarships to students who sought assistance in

the Lounge, excelled in the classroom and exhibit the servant leadership to help future students in the same way that they got help.

Our biggest motivation was to build relationships between high school students and our GCU learning advocates — or LEADs — who have a desire to serve and support and have a passion for Christ. What it boiled down to was students coming to our campus to smile, build confidence and courage, and share their stories.

We have hundreds of students who come through our door

every day and often spend three hours a night. A lot of them come from low socioeconomic status and are potential first-generation college students with concerns and innate fears of what college is.

Even though they might not see it, what I see in these students is that they believe in themselves — they just need someone to bring it out. These students are going on to be engineers, doctors and teachers. The impact that they make on the next students is going to be remarkable because their stories are powerful. **G**



Their cup runneth over

BY LAURIE MERRILL

Opportunity rocks for students in new GCU business ventures

Something new is brewing at Grand Canyon University, and it's not just coffee.

This year, folks hankering for a cup o' joe on campus will have a new option for satisfying their yen: Grand Canyon Beverage Company (GCBC), a University-owned business managed by graduates and run by students.

"It's by the students and for the students," said GCBC General Manager Brennan Williams, a recent graduate and former leader of the wildly popular Havocs.

GCBC, which also will sell energy drinks, gourmet donuts, tea and other goodies, is one of three new student-operated businesses the University is launching in the coming months. It will be followed by a T-shirt and merchandise company this fall and a clothing and supply exchange next year.

The intent is to create viable business enterprises in west Phoenix that have a

significant client already in place — the University itself — and the ability to provide those goods and services externally as well.

"Why send all those profits off campus to a bunch of people we don't even know?" said GCU President Brian Mueller. "By creating these businesses, we can take those profits and reinvest them back into the University and into the many outreach efforts we have in the community. And, most important, it helps us continue to hold the line on tuition, which has been frozen on the ground campus for eight straight years."

GCBC opened its doors in August and has two locations: the second floor of the Student Union and the ground floor of the newly constructed Roadrunner Apartments.

Wake up and smell the coffee

When it comes to coffee, GCU has a fragrant history. The first coffee shop, in 2002, was Latte Dah. Next came Jazzman's, then

Starbucks, Peet's and Canyon Coffee.

"It was astounding to me how much money there was in coffee," Mueller said. "The University is viewed as a very, very successful business. Why not use our business acumen to give our students the opportunities to run their own businesses?"

As befits the University's philosophy to explore assets worthy of investment, a GCU-owned beverage company was born. To manage it, GCU hired Williams and fellow 2016 graduates Julisa Smith, Lauren Lentini and Parker Shipe as shop managers.

With access to GCU's full portfolio of resources, they chose a name, picked a logo, developed a menu, created a mission statement and selected interior designers to redo the entire Student Union second-floor space, which will be theirs to manage.

"There were seven different (décor) ideas here," Lentini said. "We wanted to bring it together and make it flow."

They sought to create an attractive yet homey place where students, faculty and staff come to purchase beverages and snacks but stay to socialize with friends or study.

The Roadrunner location is expected to have a bolder, more outgoing atmosphere.

Coffee from a tap

Sure, GCBC will offer drips, flavored lattes and other traditional caffeinated favorites as well as energy drinks, teas and other beverages.

But new to the campus scene is cold-brew coffee that pours from a tap and is so smooth, in Shipe's view, its delicate flavors become detectable.

"You can really taste the chocolations," he said.

Also new is nitro coffee, so named because it is made from infusing cold brew coffee with nitrogen gas, which gives it a foamy head.

"It comes out like a creamy river," Smith said.

The managers also are focused on shortening wait times and, to that end, plan to hire as many as 50 student workers.

"With the right management, this place could be a cash herd, not a cash cow," said Judith Baldwin-StHilaire, a hospitality major who was visiting the business.

The managers chose local vendors, including Press Coffee Roasters, White Lion Tea Company and Fractured Prune Doughnuts.

Did someone say T-shirt?

Anyone who has spent even a few hours on GCU's campus probably has gotten a free T-shirt. The University provides them by the thousands, and for years, GCU's tremendous taste for T-shirts has profited outside coffers.

But now GCU hopes to funnel those dollars back to the University with its own business that will make and sell T-shirts and other apparel and merchandise. "Canyon Promotions," a retail and manufacturing company, is expected to operate in a 7,000-square-foot space in the new parking garage on Camelback Road.

While GCBC and Canyon Promotions will market new products, the third business, "Canyon Exchange," will capitalize on debris students discard, Mueller said.

After ground students departed last spring, Mueller was stunned by the sheer volume of belongings — desks, stereos, furniture, clothing and other items — left in dormitories and student apartments.

"It was 50,000 pounds of stuff," he said. "If it doesn't fit in the car, leave it."

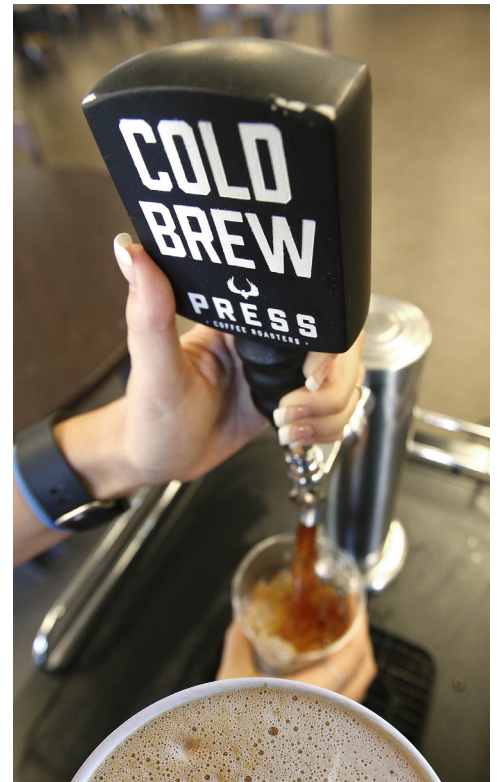
Instead of getting rid of the items, GCU officials came up with the idea for the Canyon Exchange, which will operate similarly to the popular Buffalo Exchange companies. Customers will get store credit for unwanted items they bring to the store and can use the credit toward items they purchase. It benefits not only students, but residents in the area looking for affordable second-hand options.

GCU is exploring possible locations along Camelback Road for the Canyon Exchange store front.

The benefits of new business are manifold, Mueller said: They allow recent graduates to remain here and work, they help GCU meet its determination to keep tuition low and they create an employment opportunity for people from the neighborhood.

"I don't think there's a more God-honoring thing we can do than create a product or service that makes people's lives better and creates jobs," he said.

GCBC's aromatic beverages and tasty treats also figure to be available to the public — an off-campus location is already being discussed — because expanding the franchise is an idea that is, well, percolating. 



From left, Parker Shipe, Julisa Smith, Brennan Williams and Lauren Lentini will be managing Grand Canyon Beverage Company.

INSIDER GCU

What's new this year? What are some fun facts about campus life? Get INformed.



What are the new food options?

Canyon 49 Grill: New restaurant at GCU Hotel promises to be outstanding

World of Wings (WOW): Wings, burgers, fries, salads

Auntie Anne's Pretzels &

Jamba Juice Express: Smoothies, soft pretzels and more

Fresh Fusion: Tossed-to-order salad bar with a large variety of seasonal vegetables, proteins and toppings, plus flatbread sandwiches

Lean Canteen: Breakfast bowls, parfaits and freshly squeezed juice drinks

Grand Canyon Beverage Company: New student-run coffee shop

Lopes Natural Mart at Chaparral: Variety of organic, natural and other healthy options

Taco Trueno: Tacos and other street fare

Insider tip: "Dining dollars will be accepted at all dining locations, including Canyon 49 Grill and the convenience stores. To add dining dollars, students should call 1-800-800-9776."

— Zachary Casavant, marketing and communications, Sodexo and GCU Dining

What should newcomers know about Chapel and The Gathering?

The main thing is to get there early. Chapel, for anyone on campus, starts at 11:15 a.m. Mondays in the Arena; The Gathering, for students, is at 8 p.m. Tuesdays in Antelope Gym. With more students than ever on campus, seats at both will be at a premium. For the speaker schedule, go online to <http://bit.ly/2aYbujr>

Insider tip: "We have a great balance of local and out-of-town pastors, some who have been coming to speak at GCU for years and some who are coming for the first time. Every week, Chapel will be filled with energetic worship and powerful messages from God's Word that will inspire all who attend."

— Jared Ulrich, Spiritual Life worship manager



What do you do if you can't make it out to cheer on the Lopes?

Lucky for you, there will be more ways than ever to catch your favorite GCU athletic teams in action in 2016-17. Twenty-five home contests will be broadcast on local television, and more than 90 home events will be streamed live on GCU Lopes.com. KASW CW6 will be the home for 21 events, and four men's basketball games will be featured on KTVK 3TV.

Insider tip: "In addition to the many great new athletic facilities on campus, the Lopes also will be featuring some sharp new Nike uniforms this year."

— Mike Vaught, Vice President for Athletics



What's the Ethington Theatre series schedule?

Sept. 2-4, 9-11: "The Mousetrap"
Oct. 14-16, 21-23: "Of Thee I Sing"
Nov. 18-20, 25-27: "Our Town"
Feb. 10-12, 17-19: "Two Gentlemen of Verona"
March 31-April 2, April 7-9: "West Side Story"

Insider tip: "This year we will be producing two musicals — 'Of Thee I Sing,' a classic lampoon of presidential elections, and the extremely popular 'West Side Story.' These musicals join our usual lineup of classical plays and offer a great variety to our 2016-17 season. Ethington Theatre productions sell out fast, so please get your tickets early to ensure that you have a good seat."

— Claude Pensis, dean, College of Fine Arts and Production

The Arena hosts all sorts of games and concerts. What's another cool event?

GCU's first Thrive Conference, designed to help family business owners learn the tools of the trade, is scheduled for Oct. 26. Two of the speakers will be GCU President Brian Mueller and Phoenix sports and business icon Jerry Colangelo.

Insider tip: "This is going to be an amazing opportunity for our students to hear firsthand from business leaders regarding the delicate balance of work and family within a family-owned business. The message will be one from the perspective of both faith and business operations."

— Dr. Randy Gibb, dean, Colangelo College of Business

How do the residence halls get their names?

Residence Life and Housing come up with recommendations for President Brian Mueller and Pastor Tim Griffin, the dean of students. The names follow an Arizona/Southwest/desert theme — Saguaro, Chaparral, Sedona — and now a desert bird has joined the party with the new Roadrunner Apartments. Did you know that roadrunners have blue feet?

Insider tip: “The more names we use, the better the chances of using my personal favorite — Peppersauce, which is a cave complex just north of Tucson. But I think I am pretty singular in my support for that one.”

— Matt Hopkins, director, Residence Life

What are the dates and locations of this year's “Lopes on the Road” gatherings for alumni?

Men's soccer: Oct. 6 at Houston Baptist, Oct. 16 at Seattle U.

Women's basketball: Nov. 22 at Rice, Nov. 29 at UC Riverside

Men's basketball: Jan. 12 at New Mexico State, Jan. 28 at Chicago State, Feb. 16 at Seattle U., March 4 at CSU Bakersfield

Baseball: Feb. 22 at Arizona Diamondbacks (Salt River Fields), March 14-15 at UNLV, March 17-18 at Pepperdine, March 21-22 at New Mexico, April 7-8 at Sacramento State

Insider tip: “We had a great time. I actually attended both universities playing in the game, but I feel a deeper connection to GCU even though I only attended online. It is events like this that make me feel part of the community.”

— Vicki and Larry Ramirez

How does the Dance Team come up with all those creative routines?

The GCU Dancers learn a great deal of their game-day routines at the college camps they attend during the summer, and choreography for themed timeouts usually is created by the dance members or coach. The team practices and trains for 13 hours per week.

Insider tip: “Our most crowd-pleasing tricks and choreography often have started as a team joke and developed into something really visual. Anytime the team hears me say ‘Wait, I really like that,’ they know it is going to end up in a timeout dance!”

— Jacque Genung-Koch, coach, Dance Team



How many “alumni bricks” have been purchased on the pathway south of the intramural field?

Be honest now: How many times have you walked over those bricks and wondered how many there are? (We did.) The total is 310... and growing. For information on how to get one of your own, go to www.gcu.edu/bricks1949.

Insider tip: “Alumni can leave a permanent mark on campus by purchasing a brick, and the proceeds benefit the Spiritual Life Foundation.”

— Kimberlee Marlow, director of Alumni Relations



How much money has been raised by the GCU Foundation Run to Fight Children's Cancer in its six years?

The race has attracted almost 20,000 people and stands as the largest event in Arizona dedicated solely to pediatric cancer. Proceeds have gone to directly support children's cancer research and care, and with funds raised as part of the seventh annual race, scheduled for Saturday, March 11, the total donations will surpass \$500,000.

Insider tip: “September is Children's Cancer Awareness month, and we'll be hosted by GCU men's soccer on Friday, Sept. 30 to celebrate and honor the youngest cancer-fighting superheroes among us. Bring your capes, get your Lopes up and join the fun!”

— Debbie Accomazzo, GCU community outreach manager and Run to Fight Children's Cancer race director



A BEAUTIFUL SITE

GCU Stadium is a shining purple light among campus construction projects

BY JEANNETTE CRUZ

There's a reason why those of us who grew up living and breathing soccer call it "the beautiful game." When you look closely at the sport — from watching school-age kids kick around a ball in a neighborhood park to rooting on professional teams in the World Cup — something magical happens. Soccer creates a cultural bond, one in which spirit, diversity and

communities are brought together as one because it takes more than a single player to dominate the field. Add in passion and skill, and achieving the goal makes the moment even more significant.

Sounds a lot like what's happening at Grand Canyon University.

GCU's already passionate sense of community is adding yet another bonding



GCU Stadium's intimate setting should make it one of the top college soccer venues in the country.

element this month: the state-of-the-art stadium that now adorns the west side of campus.

Men's soccer coach Schellas Hyndman can hardly contain himself as he sits in his new office under what he calls "arguably the best soccer stadium in the country." Above his desk is a rendering of the stadium, a gift from GCU President Brian Mueller when Hyndman arrived early last year. Like a good game of soccer, Hyndman notes, it took an endless amount of teamwork to master that goal.

"In 31 years of coaching, you put together all the time that I've personally spent with presidents of universities, and it may have amounted to just a little over an hour," Hyndman said. "My first meeting with President Mueller was probably 2½ hours.

His level of enthusiasm is one you can appreciate."

Since then, the former FC Dallas coach has sat down with Mueller regularly to talk about their vision for the intimate stadium setting, which encompasses 41,000 square feet and has grass berms on three sides. Now that vision is ready to come to fruition with music, fireworks, halftime shows and, of course, great soccer.

Hyndman promises that the atmosphere will be electrifying. And as the only Division I men's team in the state, the potential of GCU soccer is bounteous.

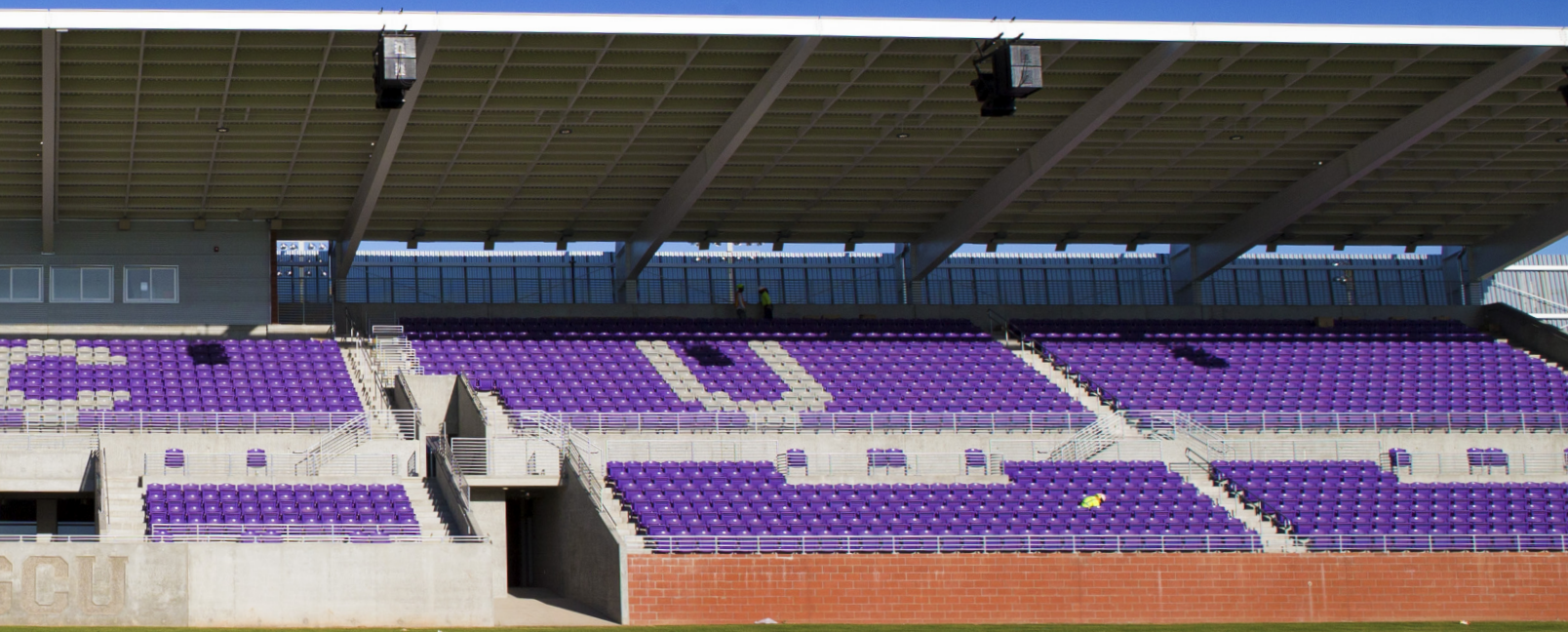
"At the collegiate level, these moments are called soccer games, but at GCU they will become events," Hyndman said. "It's going to be a great home field, with great fans and

all of the plans and all of the ambition that the University has about creating a larger community."

The new soccer stadium is only a speck of what GCU has built in just the last year. By the end of the year the University will have 10 new facilities recently completed or under construction. So let's pass the ball on to the next project.

Just east of the soccer stadium is the Student Life Building, a new four-story modern office space at the intersection of the Promenade and Lopes Way. The initial upside to this building is the fact that it is located at the Promenade Circle, which historically has been considered the heart of campus.

On the first floor are the busiest departments — Canyon Activities Board,



VIDEO



Get an overview of the campus construction projects and an inside look at the Student Life Building in these videos at news.gcu.edu.

Spiritual Life, Life Leaders and Associated Students of GCU. There also is a study lounge and some common spaces.

The office of Pastor Tim Griffin, the dean of students, is on the second floor along with Residence Life, Counseling and the newly created Housing department. Athletics occupies the third floor, and the executive team and a number of other departments are on the top floor.

Griffin said he envisions a dynamic and cultural atmosphere on the lower levels that will be overrun by students 24/7 — a sight he is eager to catch from his window right above the east entrance.

“I hope that students see this building as a place that is here to serve them,” Griffin said. “If they see this as an ivory palace, then we’ve made a mistake. Our intent is to embrace and engage students. Our doors will be open all the time.”

Danielle Rinnier, Spiritual Life director, said the first few weeks of the fall semester will consist of helping students find a club that best fits their interests, which typically means there will be popcorn machines and snow cones right outside the administrative offices.

“I hope that students see this building as a place that is here to serve them. . .”

— Pastor Tim Griffin on the new Student Life Building (right)

“It’s exciting to know that this place will be highly populated as students come and go,” she said. “That is probably the single greatest impact that this building is going to have.”

This year, GCU will have at least 170 unique and small weekly groups for students to choose from — including Chapel, The Gathering, Refugee Ministry and Canyon Kids. For Welcome Week alone, the office of Student Engagement has at least 80 events already planned.

“Students drive students — that’s a huge philosophy of ours,” said Jeremy Mack, director of Student Engagement. “We sacrificed office space for student space because our biggest focus is to have students capture the attention of our incoming freshmen. If they feel a connection with a program or club on campus, we want to connect them to it.”

Just south of the soccer stadium is a wing of the L-shaped, 173,447-square-foot engineering building, the second structure on campus devoted to that program. The new building consists of two four-story structures connected by elevators and stairs and houses two lecture halls, 34 classrooms and project labs, 66 faculty offices and eight laboratories for students enrolled in new electrical, mechanical and biomedical engineering degree programs.

Three new six-story apartments — Encanto, Roadrunner





New buildings on campus include (Page 22, from top) the engineering building, Student Life Building and Roadrunner Apartments. Artist's renderings of buildings to come (this page, from top): office complex at 27th Avenue and Camelback Road, expanded baseball stadium and basketball practice facility.

and Agave — will accommodate upperclassmen and bring the number of residence halls up to 17. Each of the 241,705-square-foot apartments houses 650 beds and features a full kitchen and four individual bedrooms. The style is similar to Papago I and II, which opened in 2014.

Giving maturing students the freedom to be independent continues to be an important part of the college experience, said Matt Hopkins, director of Residence Life. His department also helps students learn to develop close-knit friendships and creates community gatherings to keep students engaged.

Recreational opportunities are another major focus this year — four new competitive and intramural beach volleyball courts, six new tennis courts, two basketball courts and enhancements to the baseball and softball fields. The university's Division I baseball and softball stadiums both will be expanded, with the softball facility pushed out to the northeast to create more seating for spectators.

For the first time, the GCU tennis teams will have a place on campus to call home. The new tennis courts on 30th Drive will be kept busy as a practice facility and site of intercollegiate, club and intramural matches.

Construction of a 24,000-square-foot basketball practice facility next to GCU Arena has begun and is scheduled to be completed by January. The facility also will house a Jerry Colangelo museum, devoted to one of the most influential business and sports icons in the country. Inside, the men's and women's basketball teams will have access to a players' lounge, a team meeting room and a full practice court with offices and cameras overlooking the court.

The practice facility puts GCU men's and women's basketball on par with some of the top schools in the country that already have a dedicated practice facility, said Mike Vaught, GCU's vice president of athletics.

Off campus at 27th Avenue and Camelback Road is the 155-bedroom GCU Hotel, which opened to the public last August. It will be joined in December by a new four-story office building that will centralize employees who currently work at GCU's Peoria and Tempe campuses.

Walk into the GCU Hotel and the first thing you'll notice is the purple — purple paintings, purple bed décor and employees in purple uniforms, plus trendy stools with antelope engravings. It is opening its new family restaurant, 75,000-gallon pool and outside gaming area this month. The restaurant name, Canyon 49 Grill, is a nod to Grand Canyon College's opening in 1949.

"I like to think of this place as a learning laboratory for students," hotel manager Brett Cortright said. "What's going to make this hotel different is the student workers. They're working to be a part of this industry, and that commitment adds interaction, customer-friendly service and engagement."

There is a purpose to all this construction — to benefit students and the community. That's the goal. And that's a beautiful thing. **G**

A young man with dark hair, wearing a white dress shirt, a blue patterned bow tie, and dark suspenders, stands in the center of the frame. He is looking upwards and to the left with a thoughtful expression. The background is a chalkboard covered in white chalk drawings of various business and academic concepts. These include bar graphs, pie charts, flowcharts, lightbulbs, puzzle pieces, and text boxes with words like 'CHOICE', 'business', 'document', 'team', 'success', and '\$'. There are also arrows, question marks, and a globe. The overall theme is research and business strategy.

In Research Of...

Students, faculty probe unsolved mysteries in new GCU initiative

BY LAURIE MERRILL

How helpful are certain plants in cleaning toxins from soil? Will 3D printing technology eventually create anatomical replacements? Can a fitness curriculum help firefighters prevent injuries?

What is exciting about these topics — and about 17 more like them — isn't that students and faculty at Grand Canyon University are posing such questions. It's how they will attempt to arrive at the answers that is of major significance.

In the dawning of a new era, GCU's College of Science, Engineering and Technology (CSET) this fall will establish, for the first time, scientific research on campus.

"One of the things I was brought here to do was to revisit the idea of whether we could build a research capability for the faculty and students," said CSET Assistant Dean Jon Valla, who came to GCU in June 2015 after working at Midwestern University in Glendale, Ariz., and Barrow Neurological Institute in Phoenix.

The resounding answer, Valla learned, was yes. Once it was proposed, science faculty and students began flocking to the fledgling program.

The reasons are clear. Promoting a research capability in the sciences gives GCU students an edge in applying for medical and graduate programs. They can also dig deeply into subjects they care about and strive for outcomes that make a difference in the world.

"This also improves the scientific reputation as well as the overall reputation of the University," Valla said.

About 20 projects proposed by science faculty and students have been approved to start this semester. Valla said dozens of students have applied for the extracurricular projects.

"The students are so hungry," he said.

The research is in addition to work performed at GCU's Center for Innovation in Research and Teaching (CIRT), which publishes the Journal of Instructional Research (JIR) online.

The research opportunities, however, do not detract from GCU's superior reputation as a "teaching university" in which faculty responsibilities are first and foremost to instruct students.

"We will continue to be a teaching university first, but now we will be a teaching university with a research capability," Valla said.

Here are some examples of what is being explored:

Environmental sustainability: Dr. Randhir Prakash Deo, a CSET professor, has conducted



Goodyear (Ariz.) Fire Captain Branden Husky (left) and Donna Gerakos, a CSET assistant professor

extensive research on the impact of contaminants in the environment, and several projects he plans to explore will utilize his expertise.

A project he is leading will research the effects of certain pharmaceuticals after they pass through humans into the environment.

"Wastewater is not able to degrade these stubborn chemicals," Deo said.

In addition to monitoring, calculating a risk assessment and creating a remediation plan, Deo intends for students to take the scientific process a step further and propose action strategies for change.

"This is unique," he said. "There could be laws written, stricter regulation and a charge created to clean the environment."

Phytoremediation: Deo is teaming with CSET professor Dr. Neal Adam on a phytoremediation project to research the use of plants to cut down on pollution and assess environmental health.

"Some grasses are good at removing heavy metals from the soil," Adam said. "A first step in our program would be to see if we can produce similar results in this area. Then, more importantly for our project, would be to test to see if plants actually take up pharmaceutical compounds. Can plants remove pharmaceutical contaminants from the soil/water solution?"

Firefighter wellness: Goodyear (Ariz.) Fire Captain Branden Husky and Donna Gerakos, a CSET assistant professor, already are hard at work

investigating a curriculum to improve the health and decrease the injury rates of firefighters.

A 21-year firefighting veteran, Husky has witnessed first-hand the kinds of problems that put firefighters out of commission.

Back injuries are number one, Husky said, followed by knee and shoulder injuries, heart disease and crashes to and from scenes.

"The top four we can do something about," said Husky, who is enrolled in GCU's exercise science degree with a sports performance emphasis.

"Until now, I never thought of firefighters as athletes," Gerakos said.

Gerakos has been meeting with Husky throughout the summer to develop the strengthening and conditioning program.

They have a goal: to teach the first class in September at the Arizona State Fire School.

The first research projects are focused on biology and chemistry, Valla said, but engineering, IT and computer science soon will follow.

"The hope is that other colleges will follow the same model," Valla said.

He stressed that the Christian ethic will be alive and well in research.

"The application of the Christian ethic to the practice of research is critically important," he said. **G**



Chance of a lifeline

Florida student works to save others after God saved her

BY JEANNETTE CRUZ

Vanessa Johnson suffered in silence. A social worker who made many house calls and a mother of five stuck in an abusive relationship, Johnson had her own conflicts she faced at home alone. She grew desperate to escape the affliction of her life and attempted suicide more than 20 years ago, but through the grace of God she lived to share her experience.

“Here I was, a social worker, and yet

I couldn’t grasp my own situation in my home,” she said. “I could see everyone, I could laugh and talk, but at night I saw my own demons. I wanted to just sleep all of my pain away.”

Three years ago, Johnson felt called to start Blue Moon 211 Inc., a Tampa, Fla., nonprofit focused on suicide prevention and awareness. The origin of the name: Blue is for sadness, Moon is for God’s creations,

which we all are, and 211 is synonymous with the nationwide helpline.

The idea came to her after reading an article about a Seattle hip hop artist who had written a series of social media messages before shooting himself. But there was one caption that touched Johnson: “God, please forgive me.”

“I remember when I was in my time of distress and I said those same words,” Johnson said. “Then I looked to the skies to try to feel my inner spirit.”

Clinging to her faith in Christ, Johnson set off on her own with her children and only \$50 in her pocket. She never looked back.

Johnson, 54, now spends endless hours working while completing her master's in Christian counseling from Grand Canyon University. "From being a part of radio programs, newspapers, workshops abroad and my training from GCU, everything happened so fast and it's been a great journey," she said.

Blue Moon 211 has held workshops and conferences in Florida, Jamaica and Washington, D.C. Most recently, the nonprofit managed to secure a newly signed law to mandate youth suicide-prevention training in schools in Florida, effective this month.

And in April, Blue Moon 211 was part of a worldwide effort sending supplies to Flint, Mich., where more than 52 percent of the state is experiencing abnormally dry conditions — there is not enough safe water for drinking, sanitation, irrigation or economic development.

Perry Warrior, a community activist and minister in Flint, said he always will be grateful to Blue Moon 211 for contributing to the solution of Flint's safe-water shortage.

"We have a lot of work to do and it won't be overnight — it's going to be a long process," he said. "Vanessa came and she was ready to work. She delivered baby wipes, distributed water and spoke to community members. It was a blessing."

A blessing — that's how Johnson's enrollment counselor, Zanna Nelson, describes the online student.

"She encourages me with her Christian faith," Nelson said. "Even though she already works hard enough, Vanessa is always looking for other ways to contribute."

As president of the International Youth Empowerment Coalition Task Force, Johnson is inspiring youth to help the country move forward without violence. And in her partnership with the Tampa Police Department, she hopes to bridge the gap between police and the community by organizing community events.

"I was raised in the '60s when police brutality was a serious issue," Johnson said.




"I'm not saying it's OK, but what I am saying is that you can always overcome negative feelings of anger and hate with the spirit that God gives you and you can look at people with a different set of eyes.

"When I talk to the youths, I allow them to tune in with their emotions through music. Then, I'll ask them to tell me what the music brings to mind."

How does Johnson get all of her energy? She makes it clear — God. And she is thankful to have support from faculty at GCU who are upfront about their faith.

Johnson also has found fulfillment with a new husband (Johnny) and stepchildren. When she's not working, she's encouraging her 11 grandchildren to share their Christianity.

Johnson hopes that her efforts will help prepare strong and effective youth, and she is enthusiastic about the future.

"GCU helped me understand what I needed to know to go out and do what I do now with confidence and with faith," Johnson said. "God saved me before, and if He could save me then He can use me to save others. I truly thank God for helping me find my path, my destiny and my purpose for living. I know I'm expecting better days." 



Vanessa Johnson's work through Blue Moon 211 has benefited the water-starved people in Flint, Mich. (opposite page), and it also has had a major impact in her hometown of Tampa, Fla., as noted by the city's mayor, Bob Buckhorn (above).



J.C. Helton (left) and Gary Ernst have turned their passion for basketball into record-setting coaching careers.

Lope legacy

Winningest high school and middle school basketball coaches in Arizona history have GCU in common — and much more

BY RICK VACEK

The basketball legacies of Gary Ernst and J.C. Helton aren't just linked by their coaching statistics. That's merely a good place to start.

Ernst has won 860 games, more than any high school coach in Arizona history.

Helton retired with 847 victories, more than any middle school coach in Arizona history.

So, yes, both have sustained excellence on their legacy ledgers. But they have so much

more in common. Perseverance. Passion for fundamentals, teamwork and chemistry. High basketball IQ. An unabashed love of the game. Great old stories to tell.

Oh, and one other thing: Both played basketball at Grand Canyon, for coach Ben Lindsey when he was starting out toward winning 317 games, the most in school history.

One coach begets two more, and they combine for 2,024 victories. Think it's just a

coincidence? They don't think so, either.

"I knew when they went into coaching that they were going to make good coaches," Lindsey said. "That competitive spirit carried over into their coaching. They both worked very hard. I'm proud of them."

Both former players speak in equally glowing terms about their old coach, and Helton's relationship with Lindsey goes beyond his playing days — he later served as his



assistant coach for four years and used to live across the street from him. But how that came to be is such an incredible story, to this day Helton shakes his head in wonder as he retells it.

Hoosier hysteria

Basketball was invented in Springfield, Mass., by Dr. James Naismith. But people in Indiana will tell you they perfected it.

Helton is a big believer in that mystique. He played basketball at tiny Austin High School for coach Ray Green, a member of the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame and the father of Steve Green, coach Bobby Knight's first recruit at Indiana University.

"We bled basketball," Helton said. "We were dead serious about the game."

After a stint in junior college he found himself in a lucrative but unfulfilling factory job, but one day he saw in the newspaper that a local player had gotten a scholarship to New Mexico Highlands University. Helton told his buddy Bill Sullivan about it, and they hatched a plan: They were going to drive there and see if they could get scholarships, too.

"We left on June 1, 1965," Helton said. "Hopped in his 1949 Rambler and we headed west. We'd never been farther west than

Vincennes, Indiana. Had no idea where we were going — we just took off. And we get farther west and I'm looking at all the desert cactus and saying, 'Oh my God, what are we getting into?'"

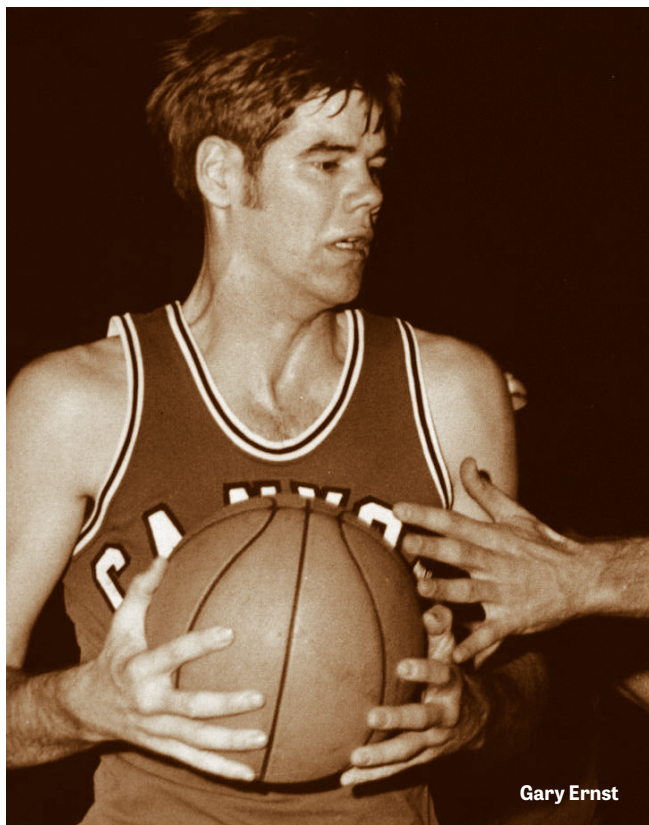
They got to New Mexico Highlands and learned that the coach was on a recruiting trip ... in Indiana, about 20 minutes from where they lived. Try Western New Mexico University, they were told.

They got to Western New Mexico ... and the coach didn't have any available scholarships. Try Grand Canyon College in Phoenix, he said.

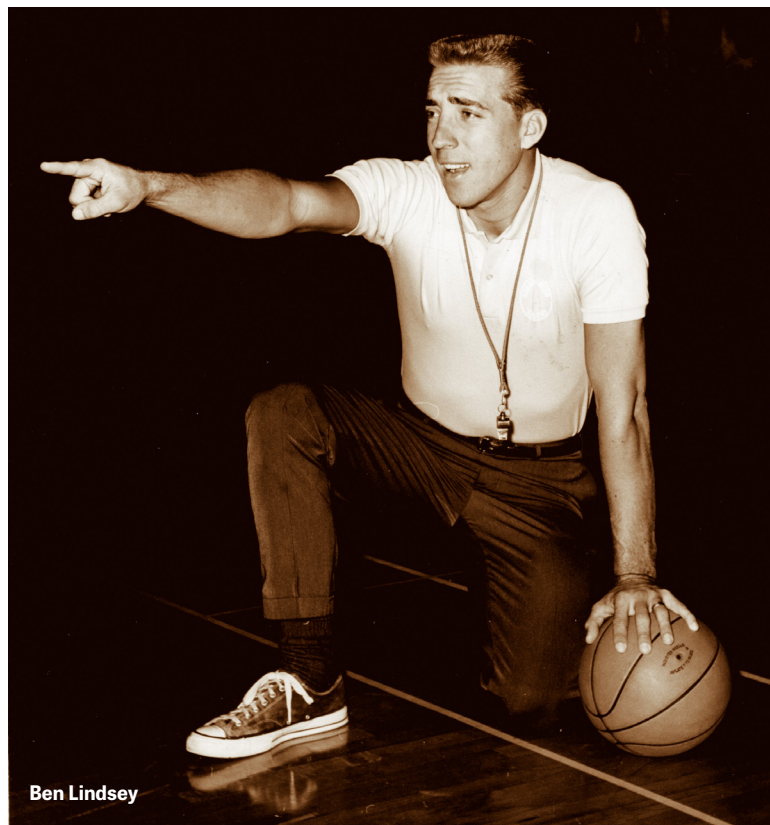
They got to Phoenix and called Grand Canyon, but Lindsey, who had just been hired, wasn't there. They got his home phone number. He was playing golf. Still not giving up, they called back in the evening. Bingo. Lindsey told them to come to the gym the next morning for a tryout.

When they drove down 35th Avenue in the morning, they went right past Isaac Middle School, where Helton later would win all those games as a coach and where the gymnasium is now named after him. The tryout went well — "We held our own," said Helton, ever the competitor — and Lindsey offered them scholarships, right on the spot.

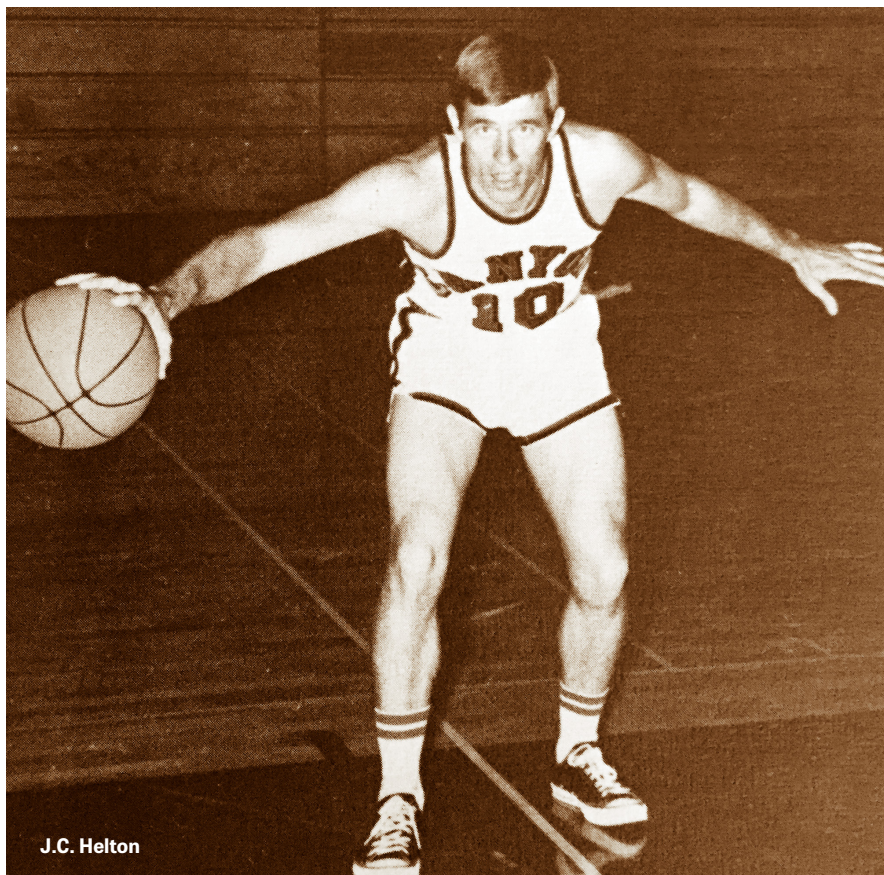
"I knew Indiana was a good basketball state,"



Gary Ernst



Ben Lindsey



J.C. Helton

fundamentals, offensively and defensively. I think chemistry is huge. Our parents provide dinner once a week for our players at somebody else's house, and I just think that has a huge impact on our chemistry. You don't have to have the most talent as long as the kids appreciate each other and value each other."

Ernst, who played on the 1969-70 Grand Canyon team that became the first in school history to go to the NAIA district playoffs, and Helton both speak fondly of playing in the old North Gym. "It was a little crackerbox, but it was full," Ernst said. "It was a great home court."

And they also take great pride in what the University is doing today.

"It probably means more now than it did back then — not to me, but to other people," Ernst said. "It has more relevance. To see the growth of the school is pretty prideful. This is my school."

Helton's love of GCU is so deep, it's downright dangerous. He lives only a few blocks from campus and drives past the University regularly ... much to the dismay of his family.

"Every time I go by there, I'm looking to see what's going on, I'm so interested," he said. "They say, 'Dad, you're going to wreck. You need to let somebody else drive when you go by this school because all you want to do is gawk.'"

Maybe the best legacy of a coach is inspiring others to walk in the same footsteps. Helton did exactly that for Dan Nichols, now an associate athletic director at GCU. Nichols wasn't sure if coaching was for him until Helton convinced him to be his successor at Isaac, and Nichols went on to become the head coach at GCU.

"I owe a lot to J.C. He's one of the two biggest mentors I've had in my life," said Nichols, who still has lunch with Helton regularly. "Every guy, whether you have a father you can talk to or you don't, you need a couple people in your life that will turn things for you. J.C. got me to realize that coaching probably was something I should be doing."

There no doubt are a lot of former players who would say the same thing about both Ernst and Helton. That's what it's all about. And that's how good legacies never end. **G**

Lindsey said. "They looked good in the tryout."

Both were in Phoenix to stay. Helton's teams at Isaac won six state championships and 10 Basketball Congress International titles, and his players included Darren Woodson, who also played football and became a star safety for the Dallas Cowboys, and Gerald Brown, who later played for the Phoenix Suns. A picture of Woodson hangs on the wall of Helton's study — "To the best coach in America," the inscription reads. Sullivan became a school administrator and was superintendent of the Cartwright School District in Phoenix. All because of a road trip that no travel agent could ever dream up.

Chemistry lesson

Ernst's path to Grand Canyon was more conventional — he was playing at Mesa Community College and then transferred over with several teammates. But he feels just as indebted for what playing ball at Grand Canyon did for his career.

"We were very, very close-knit," he said. "It was one of the things I learned that helped me there at that time — how important chemistry was, how important kids getting along was.

That's always been a stress I've had in coaching is trying to make sure that I create that chemistry."

He clearly has succeeded. Ernst's teams at Mountain View High School in Mesa have won eight state championships, and Helton got to see his fellow Lope's coaching acumen first-hand — he was a referee for years (often doing games with Sullivan) and officiated many of Ernst's games.

"Gary is a good fundamental coach," Helton said. "Very good disciplinarian. Very structured. Well organized. Team basketball. Really, really good coach. I respect Gary a lot."

Ernst doesn't have an Indiana background — he grew up in Farmington, N.M. — but his roots also are deeply entrenched in fundamentals. Some coaches win simply because they have great players; Ernst wins because he has made a habit of turning good players into great teams.

"We tell the kids that this coaching staff is old school," he said. "We really push the

VIDEO



Gary Ernst and J.C. Helton tell stories of traveling to away games in the infamous "white limo" — watch the video at news.gcu.edu.

CLASS NOTES



What's
new with
you? 

Send your class notes and a high-resolution photo to www.gcu.edu/classnotes.

1970s



Steven McClaren, B.A. in Religion, '76, was involved in an archeological dig on Mt. Zion sponsored

by the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. On the trip, McClaren also helped in the maintenance and support of both Messianic and Arab Christian churches in Israel. McClaren is a behavioral science instructor at Northern Oklahoma College.

2000s



Jonas E. Alexis, M.A. in Teaching, '04, is a columnist for Veterans Today and has written

more than 400 articles dealing with issues such as the Israel/Palestine conflict, culture wars, psychological warfare, the history of ideas and Christianity.



Marissa Leon, B.A. in Communications and Public Relations, '04, is the founder, president,

owner and operator of ML Communications LLC and has launched a new company website, www.marissaleoncommunications.com. Leon has career experience in corporate communications, event management, public relations and marketing in the real estate and franchising industries.



Pat Dennen, M.S. in Executive Fire Leadership, '06, is the interim fire chief of Desert Hills Fire

District in Lake Havasu, Ariz. Dennen's fire service career began in 1974, and he has held almost all ranks in the fire service, including emergency manager, fire chief, county fire warden, battalion chief, division chief, assistant chief and deputy chief.



Jill Mahoney, B.S. in Corporate Fitness & Wellness, '07, and M.Ed. in Education

Administration in

Organizational Leadership, '09, has joined the University of Colorado women's basketball program as the director of operations. Mahoney made her coaching debut as an assistant at GCU, which won three Pacific West Conference championships and twice appeared in the NCAA Division II tournament during her tenure.



Melanie Barnett, M.Ed. in Secondary Education, '08, has been named East Coweta (Ga.) Middle

School Teacher of the Year. Barnett teaches sixth grade science and believes in helping students see the value in what they are learning beyond getting a good grade on a test.



Tom Dwiggins, B.S. in Public Safety Administration, '08, and M.S. in Leadership, '16, has

been promoted to chief of the Chandler (Ariz.) Fire, Health and Medical department. Dwiggins

has been with the department for 18 years and previously led the emergency medical services, fire prevention, training and outreach, and innovation divisions.



Erik Stone, M.Ed. in Education Administration, '08, is the principal of the Peoria (Ariz.)

Traditional School. Stone has worked for the Peoria Unified School District for 12 years as an elementary school teacher, assistant principal and athletic director.



Natasha Beavers, M.Ed. in Elementary Education, '09, has been named

Western Elementary School (Ga.) Teacher of the Year. Beavers teaches first grade and believes in creating a positive learning environment in which respect for others is fundamental in promoting intellectual diversity.

SPOTLIGHT

Brittany McKinney, '16

New lesson plan: teacher in Tonga



Brittany McKinney came to GCU to become an elementary special education teacher, but that changed at a job fair when she walked up to a Peace Corps recruiter sitting at an empty booth and learned that she could take her skills overseas. McKinney, who graduated in April, has joined 24 other recruits to teach English in Tonga, located in the South Pacific east of Australia, for the next two years. The

21-year-old is excited to represent Arizona and her alma mater. "I am so passionate about this because I know I have so much knowledge to share," she said.

In Tonga, her hope is to improve education and to begin her quest of setting up a library for the community. McKinney said her well-rounded education from GCU has prepared her to take on any life-changing experience — even if it means leaving her mother, Paula, and their two cats for the first time.

Once her service is completed, McKinney plans to earn her graduate degree in deaf education from Boston University.

—JEANNETTE CRUZ

Christal Zeigler, '96

Fostering hope for children



When no one else is willing to open their heart and their home to a child, GCU alumna Christal Zeigler (B.A. in Psychology, '96) passionately advocates for the young lives of more than 19,000 children in foster care in Arizona. Her goal is to break the generational cycle of foster care by creating a healthy, safe and supportive environment for biological families.

"If biological families could see different ways to parent, then children could learn what a healthy model of love looks like," she said. "And I believe that whether they return home or they're adopted, they will have a chance to positively affect generations after them."

Zeigler has been an adoption specialist at A Place to Call Home for 15 years and has spent 20 years in social services. She has appeared regularly on AZ-TV's Morning Scramble to highlight foster care and adoption and to feature children who need a "forever home."

Zeigler had her own struggles growing up — she lost her mother at 16 and grew up with a single father. That's why the feeling of loss resonates with her.

"God gave me a passion for this generation and for these children," Zeigler said. "These are my children and they're amazing."

—JEANNETTE CRUZ



Kelly Mains, M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction:

Reading, '09, is a recipient of the Lee County (Fla.) Public Schools Golden Apple award. The award aims to enhance public education by recognizing and rewarding excellence in teaching. Mains is a kindergarten teacher at Tortuga Preserve Elementary School.



Christi Loudon, M.Ed. in Education Administration, '09, has been named assistant

superintendent for Human Resources of Greenwood County (S.C.) School District 50. Loudon has spent her entire career with Greenwood County School District 50. She started as a fifth-grade teacher at Woodfields Elementary School in 2000, where she was named the school's First-Year Teacher of the Year.

2010s



Craig Hershey, B.S. in Secondary Education with an Emphasis in Social Studies, '11, is the

new athletic director of Van Wert (Ohio) City Schools. Hershey previously served as social studies teacher, varsity boys basketball coach and athletic director at Hardin Northern (Ohio) High School.



Ana Hill, B.S. in Accounting, '12, was promoted to senior consultant for BKD, LLP

National Health Care Group. Hill coordinates with nursing facilities to help prepare and deliver cost reports, analyzes reimbursements to compare payments with the costs of

rendering services, and assists with assurance services.



Ana Torres, M.S. in Professional Counseling, '12, is the elementary school counselor for

the inaugural year of Sandy McNutt Elementary School in Arlington, Texas. Torres and her family welcomed a new baby in 2014.



Eetu Karvonen, B.S. in Exercise Science with an Emphasis in Physical Education, '14 and M.S. in Psychology with an Emphasis in General Psychology, '15, has been hired

as head coach of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) national swim team. Karvonen is a former assistant swim coach at GCU and multiple national champion swimmer in Finland. He hopes to someday lead UAE swimming to Olympic qualification.



Elizabeth Bart-Plange Opoku, B.S. in Nursing, '12, and M.S. in Nursing, '14, went on a medical

mission trip to Bien Aime, Haiti, with the Mission Haiti Organization. Opoku and her team taught the Haitians important health practices, including how to treat water before drinking, hand hygiene, sexually transmitted disease prevention and well-baby care.



James Taylor, Ed.D. in Organizational Leadership in Organizational Development, '14, is

the new executive director of Utah State University's Uintah Basin campus. Taylor will oversee operations of the Roosevelt and Vernal locations.



Alan Pickett, B.S. in Public Safety and Emergency Management, '14, earned his

ministerial license as a reverend in the Church of God. Pickett is an assistant conductor with Amtrak in New Orleans but soon will be commissioned in the Army Reserve as a chaplain. He also is enrolled in GCU's Master of Divinity program.



Catherine Herron, M.S. in Leadership, '14, recently appeared on Trinity Broadcasting

Network (TBN) local station WMPV TV-21 in Mobile, Ala. Herron recorded two of her original gospel music songs for WMPV, both of which aired in June 2016.



Kate Beausoleil, M. Ed. in Secondary Education, '14, is the seventh grade physical science

teacher and assistant cross country coach at Pleasant Valley (Iowa) Junior High School. Beausoleil has completed three marathons and mentors runners for the Quad Cities (Ill.) Marathon.



Danielle Rodzen, B.S. in Psychology, '15, lived out her dream when she traveled with GCU

on a mission trip to Kenya and also took a solo trip to Ireland. Rodzen is a child life assistant at Phoenix Children's Hospital and a resident director at GCU.



Dr. Ann Wolven, Ed.D. in Organizational Leadership with an Emphasis in Higher

Education Leadership, '15,

recently presented at the international OLC Innovate 2016 conference in New Orleans. Wolven's presentation, "Faculty Metamorphosis through Mobile Technology," identified how mobile technology influences students' learning. She is an English instructor at Illinois Eastern Community Colleges.



Alena Gladwin, B.S. in Biology with an Emphasis in Pre-Medicine, '16, was chosen for a

one-year paid internship with the Translational Genomics Research Institute (TGen) in Phoenix. TGen is a nonprofit focused on the development of research and treatment for cancer, neurological disorders, diabetes and other complex diseases. Alena was a 2016 Outstanding Senior award recipient at GCU.



James Morales, B.S. in Secondary Education (Emphasis in Math), '16, is the new music

instructor for Four Peaks Elementary School and Fountain Hills (Ariz.) Middle School. Morales has worked in the high school program the Fountain Hills Unified School District for more than a decade.



Camila Moreno, B.S. in Nursing, '16, has been hired as the full-time night shift RN at Banner

Thunderbird Medical Center in Glendale, Ariz. Moreno will be working in the medical/surgical observation unit and credits her preparation at GCU for landing the job so soon after graduation.

GCU NEWS & NOTES

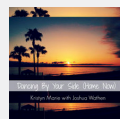
Mission work goes overtime

A student on the East Asia team is planning on returning next year to visit the friends that he made. A student on the Middle East team enjoyed her time so much and was so moved by the needs there that she extended her stay by a month.

Those are the typical — but hardly ordinary — stories you hear every year about the annual mission trips undertaken by Grand Canyon University students and staff.

This year, GCU sent out 357 students and leaders to 20 countries. The East Asia and Middle East trips both were 4-6 weeks and were student-led — they did college campus ministry there and were able to build relationships and share their faith.

Kayla's song still resonates



"Dancing by Your Side (Home Now)," the tribute song by GCU sophomore Kristyn Roberts to her late friend and roommate Kayla Castro, touched a lot of hearts.

Roberts said that she got multiple shares on her Facebook page after the GCU Today story and video were published.

"As much as I cried the first time I heard this song, boy, did the tears keep flowing watching the passion and emotion that was behind it all," one person wrote. "It has brought a tremendous amount of comfort in my own life with losses I've dealt with as well."

To read the story about Kayla's song, go online to <http://bit.ly/29V93Lq>

Science experiment is working

After igniting in Arizona, the Chief Science Officer (CSO) initiative is spreading rapidly to other states, and GCU helped fan the flames by hosting a three-day summer institute last month.

The GCU-sponsored program quickly grew to 200 students after one year. CSOs are junior high school and high school students elected by their classmates to promote STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) subjects in their schools.

Officials from Idaho, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, Washington, Oregon and New York attended the institute and since have committed to starting similar programs.

To read more about the CSO program, go online to <http://bit.ly/2a2A5Fd>

Parting Shot





Superman got nothing on me

You know what's the best part about this photo besides those adorable superhero socks? It seemed as if 6-year-old Sol Lipton was always smiling, just like this, when he was at the Dan Majerle boys basketball camp this summer. Sol was chosen as the Outstanding Camper in his age group, so when it comes time to play some basketball, he's always just one call away.

PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB



UPCOMING EVENTS

CASTING CROWNS

WITH MATT MAHER AND HANNAH KERR

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LIVE ORIGINAL TOUR 2016

SADIE ROBERTSON • SEPT. 27

CHRIS YOUNG

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MICHAEL W. SMITH

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