

GCU

DECEMBER 2016

MAGAZINE



Welcome to
LOPEVILLE

POPULATION: 17,384

Why it's like
home sweet home
for students



We are West Phoenix and this is our Home

Follow GCU's story that shares how a collaborative coalition of many continues to impact a larger mission. See how strong local partnerships, United by Purpose, are transforming a community with profound potential.

#sharemypurpose



GCU Magazine is a quarterly publication of the Office of Communications and Public Affairs at Grand Canyon University.

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Lip Sync, in which teams of students twist songs and movie clips into hilarious routines, is one of the many ways the campus culture makes GCU a special place to live.

PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB

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GCU students and staff regularly reach out to the community and beyond, but the joy they bring to their mission demonstrates an important fact: They like doing it.

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ON THE COVER: GCU has become its own little town, and the students who populate it have a lot to say about what makes them proud to get their Lopes Up. PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB

December

3, 7

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Two high-profile teams, Louisville and San Diego State, visit GCU for back-to-back games. The Lopes upset San Diego State last year on its home court. 7 p.m. Dec. 3 vs. Louisville, 7 p.m. Dec. 7 vs. San Diego State. gcuarena.com

9-10

WINTER DANCE CONCERT

Dance Ensemble members explore the tension created by change in both our individual lives and as communities in "Impermanence." 7:30 p.m., Ethington Theatre. 602-639-8880. events.gcu.edu

13

K-LOVE CHRISTMAS 2016

Experience a night of seasonal favorites with some of Christian music's most talented artists, including Crowder, Third Day lead singer Mac Powell and Unspoken. 7 p.m., GCU Arena. gcuarena.com

16

WINTER COMMENCEMENT

Nearly 900 graduates are scheduled to get their diplomas. The keynote speaker is Mark Schulman, a drummer for rock and pop artists who uses music and personal stories to deliver his message of personal growth. 2 p.m., GCU Arena



For a complete list of events at GCU, visit events.gcu.edu.

January

7-8

WELCOME WEEKEND 2017

Two days of activities welcome new and returning students to GCU for spring semester. The weekend of fun includes a Tailgate Party and a men's basketball game against Utah Valley on Jan. 7. events.gcu.edu

18

WINTERFEST

The Canyon Activities Board stages its first major event of 2017, a live music festival. "It's our welcome-back event for the new semester," said Sarah Bell, student engagement coordinator.

February

10-12/17-19

'TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA'

Things get complicated as two young friends are torn between the bonds of friendship and romance in this Shakespearean play, considered the "granddaddy" of modern buddy comedies. 602-639-8880. events.gcu.edu

24-25

HOMECOMING

Events include a networking happy hour at Canyon 49 Grill, a shotgun golf tournament and brunch at the GCU Golf Course, the Hall of Fame induction ceremony and a tailgate before the men's basketball game vs. UMKC.

5 QUESTIONS WITH

Kenny Laird*GCU Police Chief*

Grand Canyon University's public safety efforts have changed dramatically since 2012, when Kenny Laird, a 22-year Phoenix Police Department veteran, came to work for his alma mater. But in May, the Arizona Legislature set the stage for one of the biggest changes, allowing GCU to elevate the Public Safety Department to an independent Police Department with the ability to appoint certified peace officers. Laird, who was named chief of the new department, shared his thoughts about public safety.

1 What are the advantages of GCU forming its own, independent police department? After much deliberation and several meetings over three years, President Brian Mueller and the Public Safety Committee decided the best course for serving students in a growing University was to form a Police Department. It is a full-service agency for the students, faculty and staff here at GCU. We still are close partners with the City of Phoenix and maintain our own GCU Police Department to cut response times and

increase service and safety on campus.

2 What are some of your goals as GCU's police chief? My first goal is to completely staff the department. After that I will be engaging in programs such as meetings we used to call "Coffee with a Cop," which is when students can meet with their police department at places such as our Grand Canyon Beverage Company. We already enjoy a low crime per capita here at GCU, and we would like to continue to be innovative and keep crime at a minimum. We are always looking at new ways to integrate technology and new programs into our department, and we have some ideas in terms of mobile apps. I hope to continue the current course in keeping the campus one of the safest in America.

3 What new or continued initiatives are you working on? We are continuing our \$1 million, five-year partnership with Phoenix police and the neighborhood. I worked in this neighborhood for several years, and I personally know most of the leaders in the neighborhood



Kenny Laird, GCU's first police chief, is eager to start new programs, such as "Coffee with a Cop."

associations. Our focus as a department is campus oriented, and the Phoenix Police Department will continue to focus on neighborhood issues.

4 How does the atmosphere at GCU contribute to overall safety? We have the best students in the country, and they all look out for each other. We have a

low incidence of crime and criminal acts. The honesty and integrity of our students and their care for their community is something I have not seen anywhere else.

5 Have you always wanted to be a police chief? I never really thought about it until about three years ago when I retired. I prayed

about it. I asked God to give me the direction He wanted me to go and what He wanted me to do for His glory. Fortunately, this is the product. My wife and I both graduated from GCU, so we were very excited when the announcement was made and we look forward to this opportunity.

— Laurie Merrill



LOPEVI



RISING LOPEVILLE



Phoenix has a new 'town,' and it sure has grown on its residents

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Many people say that the best years of their lives were spent on a college campus. The spirit, the sense of self-discovery, the lifelong friendships — they wrap together into an enduring, beautiful memory.

But events of the last several years have created an even more special feeling at Grand Canyon University. Almost overnight, it has become a large, fast-growing, impactful university that still maintains its small-town feel.

It has a vibrant downtown, with a variety of restaurants and stores and people everywhere. Coffee shops. Sports events with top-quality venues. Plays and concerts. Places to exercise, relax and socialize. A chapel. A hotel. A golf course. A bowling alley. A post office. Swimming pools. Soon, it even will have a beach volleyball stadium.

Everyone talks about it. Students. Faculty. Staff. Visitors. As new building after new building has sprung up, so have new gathering spots, new activities and new additions to the culture. And the sense of purpose that pervades the campus only gets stronger as it gets bigger — as demonstrated by GCU's \$1.1 billion annual economic impact in the community and its commitment to transforming the neighborhood.

In this issue of GCU Magazine, we explore why the 17,384 students who populate it and the 3,650 employees who work here feel so strongly about it. Welcome to Lopeville, a town within a campus, a campus within a city. We're glad you came.



Students enjoy dining outside with their friends along Lopes Way in the middle of campus.

PART 1: Living here

“It’s a whole different world in the middle of Phoenix. It’s a cool feeling, and the school does a great job of giving you that feeling of belonging from the start.”

..... • **Tamara Boyer**, *senior Christian Studies major*

Approximately 55 percent of GCU students live on campus in residence halls and apartments. And, unlike many universities, many of them remain campus residents through their senior year.

Matt Hopkins, director of Residence Life, attributes that trend to GCU’s commitment to creating a cocoon — a safe, inviting place to live.

“We want to do more than just house them,” said Hopkins, who oversees 31 resident directors and an army of student assistants. “We need to care for them. We are building a community for all students, whether they live here or off campus.”

Many of those students are from small towns themselves. Andrea Tims arrived at GCU three years ago from her home in rural Minnesota and immediately noticed stark differences.

The pre-med major had traded rolling Midwestern farmland for a sun-drenched, desert campus nestled in Phoenix, the nation’s sixth largest city, and had left behind a graduating high school class of eight.

Yet Tims felt right at home because both her town and her campus share a fundamental trait.

“I know what a small town feels like, and GCU felt warm and welcoming right away,” she said.

Some students need a little more time to get comfortable with being away from home for the first time, but it usually doesn’t take long before they’re spending all their time with their new family on campus — even if they grew up nearby.

Brendan Kaiser, a sophomore majoring in Electrical Engineering, said that as a freshman he often made the 20-minute drive home every other weekend. This year, he didn’t go home until Thanksgiving weekend.

“I’ve built a new life,” he said, one that revolves around class, his roommates, the pool, the library and the Havocs student cheering section.

He now considers GCU his “town.” “There’s always people on the

sidewalks, always something to see and do,” he said.

Ty Seaton, a junior Sports Management major, noted that the campus now has distinct neighborhoods, from The Grove residence halls for freshmen in the northwest corner of campus to his favorite, Lopes Way, which is akin to a downtown.

“They all come together in a good way with a friendly feel,” he said.

Like so many students, he walks everywhere on the pedestrian-friendly campus. He shops in convenience stores, often filling his bag with his favorite sushi and a natural fruit drink. He plays ultimate Frisbee with neighbors, makes French toast and eggs with roommates, and grills burgers outside for dinner.

He seldom leaves campus because “I really don’t need to. Everything I need is right here.”

PART 2: Eating here

“Most of the students love the food scene and make it a very social time.”

Sara Bachofer, *sophomore Biomedical Engineering major*

GCU has 26 eateries, four convenience markets stocked with food and staples, a weekly farmers market and a taco cart. Most are clustered in the Student Union, Lopes Way and Thunder Alley.

“We’ve created a campus where students never have to leave to eat,” said Zach Casavant, marketing and communications director for GCU Dining. “We have a one-stop dining district.”

The residential dining experience is one of the most significant elements on campus. So it makes sense that students hunger for Lopes Way — GCU’s food strip — rather than calling it a day at 10 p.m.

Some students close their books and meet up with friends, others pull out their dinners and books to stay up working late. Favorites include Subway, Chick-fil-A, Habit Burger and The Grid, the University’s grocery store.

Just around the corner of Lopes Way at Thunder Alley, students gather around a fire pit. Some bring their meals, others bring their guitars and some close their laptops to engage in quiet singing.

On most days, Peter Barranco eats breakfast, lunch and dinner at a table in the Student Union. He calls it his “kitchen table.” It’s a gathering spot, a break from classes and the dorm.

“Whenever I want to meet someone, it’s almost always here or at another one of the restaurants,” the pre-med major from San Diego said. “It’s not like my kitchen table at home, but it’s pretty close.”

Daniel Pennington, a senior pre-med major from Sacramento, admits he’s not exactly a five-star chef. But he’s a good enough cook to prepare



The student-run Grand Canyon Beverage Company quickly has become a popular student hangout since opening in August.

most of his meals, preferably healthy, in his campus apartment.

Pennington owns a car, so he has the luxury of leaving anytime to eat out at Phoenix-area restaurants. But he seldom does.

“There’s everything here,” he said, sipping a white mocha iced coffee in Grand Canyon Beverage Company. “I’ll never go hungry.”

The student-run GCBC, which opened in August on the second floor of the Student Union and now has another outlet in Roadrunner Apartments, quickly has become a popular place to gather.

“An independent coffee shop run by students is my generation’s badge of honor,” Tims said. “We are a coffee shop culture.”

VIDEO



Find out more about Lopes Way and see the GCU Magazine cover being shot in videos on news.gcu.edu.

PART 3: Praying here

“I feel comfortable here being open about my faith. I can pray openly, I can talk about my faith in class. I am surrounded by people who I can share my faith with, and for that I am grateful.”

Kirie Taillon, *freshman Digital Design major*

Junior Rachael Proby began her freshman year walking to class with books in her backpack and uncertainty in her heart.

The Los Angeles native finally had reached her goal — attending a top-tier, out-of-state university. But she felt caught precariously between missing home and not feeling at home.

Her salvation came on a Monday morning. A student she had just met invited her to Chapel, one of two weekly services along with The Gathering on Tuesday nights.

The next hour was pivotal, an “aha” moment that erased Proby’s nagging doubts.

“I knew sitting in Chapel that I had made the right decision, that I was in my new home, the place I would live for the next few years,” she said.

Although she was touched by the speaker’s talk, that alone didn’t calm her freshman jitters. Instead, it was the nearly 6,000 students in GCU Arena’s seats. They made her realize she was in the right place at the right time.

“It was such a welcoming feeling, a touching experience like never before,” Proby said.

Today, GCU fits her like a favorite pair of shoes. And, yes, at 11:15 a.m. on Mondays she attends Chapel.

“It still makes me feel calm,” she said, “and it always makes me feel like I am home.”

For many students, GCU’s Christian and academic missions are equally important.

They want to build their faith while earning a degree. They want to pray before a meal and listen to a professor weave religion into the business curriculum. They want to spend Saturdays repairing homes for families in the neighborhoods surrounding campus and mentoring junior high school students.

Miracle Williams, a junior Sociology major, chose GCU for all those



reasons. “That is why I am here and why I am at Chapel on Mondays. My faith is that important,” she said.

Christian Taillon, a sophomore Information Technology major, likes being able to attend a university with others who share his deep faith.

“I like being able to talk about my faith and the scripture with so many other students. GCU encourages this connection between students and encourages their faith.”

Faith also is encouraged by Life Group leaders, who meet weekly with small groups of students to pray, share the ups and downs of university life and read the Bible.

Sam Anderson, a junior Film Production major, considers it an honor to be in a spiritual leadership role.

“It allows me to get an insight into the Christian faith of others, the beliefs that shape who they are,” he said.

Allison Rodzen, a sophomore Exercise Science major, became a Life Group leader to encourage other students to embrace their faith.

“I came here for the Christianity,” she said. “And with Chapel and Life Groups and all the other places I can express our faith, it feels like my community and family. I know that I’ll never be judged for my faith.”



Students pack Antelope Gym for The Gathering on Tuesday nights.

PART 4: Playing here

“I like to say it’s always a good day in Lopeville. We’re our own interesting world here.”

Slate Herman, *president, Associated Students of GCU*

.....

They can be seen along the Promenade on Wednesday nights, swinging their hips, spinning, gliding and smiling to the Latin tunes of Luis Enrique and Prince Royce.

Students stop to watch. Those on the “dance floor” call out to



familiar faces and wave at spectators to join.

A student chats with her friend as they watch from a table just a few feet away. A friend walks by, grins and holds out a hand. “Who’s going to be my dance partner?” he asks.

It’s an hour of free salsa and bachata dance lessons coached by a local professional dance couple. The instructors stand over a stage deck to teach students the basic steps of Latin dancing. It’s a night of social dancing that brings together all levels of dance lovers and connects people from all over campus.

On another night, students gather on the Promenade for Java Jam, a coffee-house-like setting filled with the sounds of funky jazz, dazzling lights, coffee, donuts and passionate musicians.

Frank Ngoga says it’s a great way to unwind after a long day. He likes how welcoming the students are.

There is a small but eye-catching stage with a backdrop and pumpkins that add a touch of fall. Students quickly fill the rows of chairs. Others line up for their GCBC coffee. And still others watch from the tables outside the Student Union.

Indie singer Scot Madison Quiggle, a junior at GCU, sings solo and plays her mandolin. Even though the Phoenix native’s parents live a few minutes away from the campus, Quiggle said GCU is the perfect home away from home.

“Here, it really is a family,” she said. “So many people that I meet are encouraging, and the good thing is that when we put on events like this it’s cool to see the students rally around local artists.”

Ethington Theatre, with plays, dance recitals and other performances, and GCU Arena, with a variety of concerts and shows, also offer plenty of quality entertainment. And, of course, GCU sporting events serve as a rallying point that attract more devoted fans — and students — with each passing year.

This year there are 1,500 students in the Havocs, a jump of 500 from 2015-16, adding even more noise, energy and purple-painted zaniness to what SB Nation has called “the biggest party in college basketball.”

“The team is growing, the school is growing, and the students are creating a kind of pride in where they go to school,” said Abigail Ploeser, marketing manager and liaison for Havocs with Heart, the group’s community-outreach arm.

Students who want to play sports but aren’t on one of GCU’s 21 Division I teams have plenty of other options. There are 30 club teams at the University, and 11 intramural sports also are available.

As the University has grown, so have the places to play. The many basketball courts (both indoor and outdoor) and artificial-turf fields are full well into the evening as students unwind from classes and homework.

“Everyone is on an IM team sometime,” said Michael Egeberg, who has helped manage the program the last two years. “It’s something people see or hear about and want to be a part of. You go to class, work, homework, sports, repeat.

“I knew at GCU I could play a couple sports. I never thought it’d be this big.”

Athletics are an important part of the campus culture, but other students have plenty of options to play sports themselves.





The new seating area between the Lopes Performance Center and Thunder Alley is a wonderfully shady spot to relax.

PART 5: Hanging out here

“I hardly ever leave. There’s food, there’s stuff to do, you can hang out with friends, go bowling, do just about everything. It’s like your own little home away from home.”

Brenda Ochoa, junior Business Administration major

It doesn’t have a catchy name, like GCBC. But the cozy new outdoor furniture under the trees in front of Kaibab Hall, on the north side of GCU Stadium, quickly has become a preferred place to study and relax.

“I call it the ‘couches outside,’” freshman Jannah Gaudia said. “Sometimes I take a nap here. It’s actually very comfortable.”

Faith Brandt, a senior dance education major, was lounging on a sofa with her laptop, the branches of the tree providing shade. She was the picture of late afternoon contentment.

“I like that it’s outside but still has comfy seating. It’s usually pretty quiet unless there’s a soccer game,” she said.

Daniel Hull, a sophomore majoring in Marketing, calls the outdoor lounge “the patio by the taco stand,” referring to its proximity to the Taco Trueno cart.

He said such new hangout spots are one of GCU’s many homey

improvements. “I don’t have to get off campus a lot,” Hull said. “I think they’ve done a good job with it.”

Another new hangout area that has caught on is an even more shaded spot between Thunder Alley and the Lopes Performance Center.

“It’s cooler and shadier,” Desiree Rey said while studying math with another freshman, Vernon Williams.

One of the most social spots on campus, Rey said, is The Grove at night. Students fill the lawn, playing sports, watching sports and other shows on laptops, picnicking and just hanging out.

But there also are plenty of other places to get away from it all. Basketball player Joshua Braun, the most high profile athlete on campus, appreciates that.

“Sitting on my balcony in my North Rim Apartment is nice,” he said, “just to read and relax and quiet down, get in the space, spend some time with the Lord.”

It doesn’t take long for visitors to get caught up in the GCU culture.

When more than 2,600 high school students from across Arizona came to campus in early November for Health Sciences, Engineering and Technology (HSET) Day, Ashley Rios of Tempe High School realized that her dream of entering a scientific profession is within her grasp — and GCU would be a great place to pursue that goal.

“I feel like these are my people, like it’s a place I could fit in,” she said. “I am seriously considering applying.”

Ariana Iturbe gazed at the purple-clad crowd on a near perfect day and said, “I see a happy environment. It’s clean, beautiful.”

A whole different world. **G**

Jeannette Cruz, Karen Fernau, Mark Heller, Laurie Merrill and Rick Vacek contributed to this story



Spirit of giving
outside campus
is shovel-ready

Students dig this

The culture of Grand Canyon University is portable. Students regularly take it with them when they leave the campus boundaries to volunteer in the neighborhood, across the city and around the world.

They get up early on Saturday mornings to help Habitat for Humanity Central Arizona renovate nearby homes and to minister to children who join them at the Canyon Kids program in local parks. They reach out with a smile to the homeless, the abused, the elderly and anyone who just needs a hand.

But that same culture also brings

neighborhood residents onto campus to get the help they need in school and in business, through programs such as the widely acclaimed Learning Lounge.

As much as GCU has developed into a little town within a campus, it is also very much a campus within a city. Full circle of togetherness and inclusiveness. Full circle of benefits. Around and around it goes, where it stops ... well, it doesn't stop.

Serving the City

The program that has gotten the most attention is GCU's partnership with Habitat for

Humanity, which aims to renovate 700 homes in the neighborhood and already has done more than 100.

On Serve the City day in early October, nearly 300 students who might otherwise have spent their Saturday morning sleeping chose instead to pick up paintbrushes, shovels and wheelbarrows and spend the day toiling for their neighbors.

Freshmen roommates Madeline Lindey and Madison Lawson had a dance-off while painting. Junior Kyle Hammond said he wasn't surprised by the positive atmosphere the students carried on.



Helping on Habitat for Humanity projects is one of the many ways students volunteer off campus regularly.

PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB

“I think we all understand the meaning of wanting to give back to a community that has blessed us,” he said.

GCU’s Local Outreach Ministries has eight programs in which students fill a variety of needs outside the campus borders. The students’ inward benefits are equally as important. “Serving teaches people the heart

of Christ, who they are in Christ and who God created them to be,” said Jaci Curran, the program’s manager.

One of those programs is at Colter Commons, an apartment complex just east of campus that students visit twice a week.

Sophomore Tyler Guenette and junior Jonathan Herrell said their Thursday nights in Lanaye Zummallen’s apartment are a highlight because of the way she shares poetry, art and wisdom. “She talks about following the heart,” he said.

But Zummallen looks forward to it just as much. “I’m so excited to have these talented young guys here,” she said. “They fix everything! They are going to make great husbands.”

Friday mornings, the GCU Best Buddies expand the bounds of servant leadership by volunteering their time to serve as mentors and buddies for children and adults with developmental disabilities at the local Arizona Centers for Comprehensive Education and Life Skills.

For freshman Brisa Castro, the social interaction re-establishes her career choice in education and reminds her of being told as a sixth-grader that she couldn’t take advanced-placement courses.

“The students here are being told by society that because of their disability they’re not able to go into the work field, just like my own teacher was telling me that I wasn’t allowed to go into a pre-AP class because I wasn’t qualified,” she said. “If I didn’t trust in God, I would’ve never pushed through. I believe that God will be able to redirect at least one of these students, even when it seems like the odds are against them.”

Conscious business help

The Small Business Consulting Center was created this year by the Colangelo College of Business to help local entrepreneurs get the know-how and community-consciousness principles they need to thrive.

But it also helps students. They are taught



The smiles of the student volunteers at Habitat for Humanity projects paint a picture of a group that’s having fun.

the principles of “Conscious Capitalism,” which emphasizes doing business with a higher purpose in mind, then get to apply them as they assist community businesses. Students also help operate GCU’s hotel and golf course.

“Instead of students working on fictitious problems, here’s the real thing,” said Eduardo Borquez, manager of the Small Business Consulting Center.

The outreach of GCU students isn’t limited to the neighborhood. Nearly 300 full-time undergraduates will go on GCU Global Outreach-sponsored missions to 20 countries this academic year, but it will have extra special meaning for one of them, Christine Barna.

The first time Barna met an American missionary, she was a 9-year-old in a Russian orphanage. She was prepared to meet what she’d been told were “rich Americans,” but Barna remembers the missionaries for their hearts, not their wallets.

“I only remember their kindness,” said Barna, who was 8 when her mother died and she was sent to an orphanage. She was adopted by a couple in California at age 10, and next summer the sophomore counseling major will return to Russia, this time as a missionary.

“We will find common ground,” she said, “and then I will introduce them to Jesus.”

The heart of Jesus through the spirit of a GCU student. Full circle again. It just keeps going around and around. **G**

Jeannette Cruz, Karen Fernau, Laurie Merrill and Rick Vacek contributed to this story

VIDEO



See what Havocs with Heart, the community-outreach wing of GCU’s cheering section, did for Hope Kids. It’s detailed in this video at news.gcu.edu.



Uncommon bond

BY RICK VACEK

Relationship between basketball players, Havocs is more than just meet-and-greet, both on and off the court

The most public example of Grand Canyon University's unique campus culture is played out at men's basketball games. But there's a lot more to the interaction between the Havocs and the players than meets the eye (and ear, for that matter).

It's as if they're teammates. As the players line up and circle the Arena floor after a game to shake hands with fans, especially members of GCU's nationally renowned cheering section, it's an excellent example of the good that comes from two groups of students

uniting for a common cause. They act like friends because, well, they are.

"It's really cool because we get to see them around campus," senior guard DeWayne Russell said. "They become more than just the student section. We know a lot of them. It's more like a friendship between us."

The president of the Havocs, Steve Hunsaker, said, "There's a mutual respect between the basketball players and the diehard fans, and I don't mean just the leaders. You'll see DeWayne and these guys on Lopes Way and you'll get high-fives from everybody."

Friends and roommates

Hunsaker has taken the high-fives one step further: He rooms with three players — Gerard Martin and Matt Jackson, both from Australia, and Kenzo Nudo, who's of Mexican and Italian descent. To commemorate their heritage, they have four flags, including the Stars and Stripes, in the living room of their unit in the new Roadrunner Apartments.

"It's like the United Nations in there," Hunsaker said.

Except that they're a lot more united. Martin, who spends about 11 months a year on



DeWayne Russell leads the Lopes around the Arena as they greet fans after a game. PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB



Coach Dan Majerle says the Havocs' pregame chants and rituals get him "ready to roll," and it has the same effect on the players. PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB

campus, said he was taken by the GCU spirit as soon as he saw it during the recruiting process.

"The students here are unbelievable," he said. "That's what I tell everyone back home and all my friends: 'You don't understand until you come here and you talk to the kids.'"

"You see the passion, and not just at basketball games. At anything. Whether it's Chapel or it's Mr. GCU, all the kids go nuts and they just love the school. Everyone's so loving — that's one thing that makes it easy to move over here and live here."

The cultural exchange ranges from vegemite sandwiches ("Actually pretty good," Hunsaker said) to good old-fashioned kidding. "If you're friends with an Aussie, they just rip you apart," he said. "That's, like, friendship. You've got to

have thick skin. But they're the happiest, nicest people."

"We bully him a little bit," Martin admitted. "He's smaller than us."

Along for the ride

The living arrangement has made Hunsaker appreciate the grind that student-athletes face daily, and they, in turn, are thankful for something Hunsaker has that they don't — a car.

Well, a car more or less. Mostly less. Hunsaker calls it his "1999 Ford Exploder," with a "d." Hey, it's transportation when they want to go out to eat on Sundays.

"This thing makes so many weird noises, has three doors that don't open and doesn't have a back window," Hunsaker said. "But they don't have any other options."

Noise is a constant at GCU Arena as well during basketball games. This season, the Havocs will loudly greet the two most high-profile teams ever to visit — Louisville on Dec. 3 and San Diego State on Dec. 7 — and coach Dan Majerle can't wait.

Majerle knows all about noisy arenas. He played in some great ones for the Phoenix Suns, including Arizona Veterans Memorial Coliseum, aka the "Madhouse on McDowell."

"It was one of those old-style buildings where the acoustics were unbelievable," he said. "For an NBA arena, they were right on top of you."

"This is close. Madhouse, I don't know how many it sat, maybe 15,000. For 7,200, this gets

just as loud. The student section, obviously, is more rowdy, more energetic as far as the hopping around. The stuff they do before the game, right before we tip off, that always fires me up. That gets me ready to roll."

Atmosphere made it clear

It's also a recruiting tool. Martin knew he had found the right place the first time he visited.

"That's a big part of why I came here," he said. "Obviously, it was Coach Majerle, too, but I wanted to play somewhere where it's a crazy atmosphere."

"Back home, you see college atmospheres like Ohio State and Duke on ESPN, and that's what I think of when I think about college basketball. When I came and saw this crowd, I couldn't say no."

It makes it only natural to spread the post-game love with those handshakes and high-fives and slapped palms. It has become a winning tradition.

"To be able to go around and see them face to face, give them a high-five and thank them personally is definitely something that's unique," Martin said. "It's great for us basketball players to meet the fans and relate with them because they're students just like us."

This is far more than just oral support. This type of interaction could only happen at a place like GCU, where the culture brings out the best in people ... and the people bring out the best in the culture. **G**



Sharp and cutting edge

BY LAURIE MERRILL



New engineering building gives students the tools to build on their ideas

Sprawled out in chairs in Grand Canyon University's newly expanded Lopes Lab, a group of students jotted ideas on a floor-to-ceiling whiteboard with red and blue markers as they brainstormed intently.

Across the lab, Brock Nelson, a senior Entrepreneurial Studies major, peered table-level at his skateboard as he carefully fitted it with Legos, pipe cleaners and clay. His goal, he said, is to build a model for a skateboard lock.

"If he attaches the (wheel assembly) truck and the board together, they can't be taken apart," said Ben Encinas, engineering lab coordinator.

Though at different stages of the creative process, Nelson and the brainstorming bunch were taking steps toward a similar goal: making products that solve problems and can be engineered on campus.

With the much anticipated opening of GCU's new engineering wing, models like Nelson's can be transformed into larger-scale prototypes in engineering machine shops and labs.

After years of planning and construction, the College of Science, Engineering and Technology is prepared to officially unveil the engineering wing of Building 1, adding an important piece to the academic environment

of the campus. The east-west section of the enormous L-shaped building will welcome students in January for the start of spring semester.

"We are championing a very intensive, hands-on experience with new shops and labs that correspond to our teaching technique," said CSET Associate Dean Dr. Michael Sheller, the head of GCU's two-year-old engineering program.

He is also on the team of faculty, staff, industry, architect and laboratory consultants who helped develop and nurture the new engineering building from concept to reality.

The four-story, 170,000-square-foot structure is a giant, not only in sheer size but also in the cutting-edge nature of the sophisticated shops and labs in which engineering majors and others can apply their learning and create products as massive and complex as they can imagine.

The engineering building is integral to GCU's goal to rise as an Arizona mecca for science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), a University whose top-notch faculty prepare highly trained students to help fill a



The new 170,000-square-foot engineering building, scheduled to be fully open in January, is an important step in GCU's continuing push in STEM education.

void in STEM jobs and attract more top-tier businesses to the state.

"It will be exciting to see the labs and the machine shops come alive," CSET Dean Mark Wooden said. "It's also exciting that our engineering students are at the phase that they are taking lab courses."

Thriving Lopes Lab

Formerly part of the Colangelo College of Business (CCOB), the Lopes Lab has been integrated into the engineering department while maintaining its entrepreneurial core. It's a place where students collaborate, tinker with ideas and create concept models.



Lopes Lab highlights:

- An engineering materials lab on the second floor is equipped with an atomic force microscope, which can chart the surface of a silicon wafer.
- An engineering power lab will allow students to experiment with generating and distributing electricity to GCU. As part of this, solar panels will be connected and installed on the lawn outside, Sheller said.
- A physics electromagnetic lab will feature an antenna and involve transmitting signals with waves containing magnetic fields.

Engineering shop highlights:

- Sheet metal working, with a machining center, milling machine, lathe, plasma cutter and 3D printer.
- Woodworking shop, with saws, drills and hand tools.
- Finishing shop, with paint booth, sand blaster and hand tools.

It's bigger and better and in a new location on the first floor of Building 1's north-south wing. Designed by and for GCU students, the "makerspace lab," as it is called, has projectors and a large Makerbot 3-D printer as well as CNC/Laser cutting and etching, programming, and electronic component creation.

"It's given us freedom to expand our capabilities," said Christian Clifton, a Lopes Lab student worker who spends hours in the lab and whose enthusiasm is contagious.

He spoke glowingly of the Team Innovation Experience, co-taught by engineering and CCOB. Students create concept models and prototypes in labs while learning about

business in lectures, he said.

The engineering shops — one of the highlights of the shiny new space — will be finished before January. They are located on the natural-light bathed first floor, which has soaring ceilings and hallway windows that allow passersby to peek inside.

Wooden welcomes the wing's spaciousness. It will add 33 more offices and meeting places, which will come in handy for the 15 additional CSET faculty and staff that were hired this year to accommodate the college's increasing popularity.

Seven of the new employees were hired for the engineering program, including Cheryl

Kooijmans, who came aboard in April to fill the newly created position of engineering program manager.

One of Sheller's favorite features is a fourth-floor gallery/student hangout created in collaboration with the College of Fine Arts and Production. Large monitors will display student art and design work, mobiles will hang from the ceiling and paintings on the walls. Add to this lounge furniture and piped-in music.

How innovative are the new facilities? Compared with engineering programs at other teaching universities, Sheller believes that GCU's stands out, and the new wing is one reason why. "It will put us in the top tier," he said. **G**



GCU.TV is on the air

Find sports, spiritual life and 'Tatum's Purpose' on University's new digital video platform

BY KAREN FERNAU

Tatum Sorrelman sits alone on her dorm room floor, staring tearfully into a video camera while talking about her acute case of homesickness.

It's her second week as a Grand Canyon University freshman, and it's the second episode of "Finding Tatum's Purpose," a documentary by GCU.TV, a new digital video platform showcasing the University community.

Sorrelman talks bluntly about feeling alienated. "I've been having a hard time relating to anyone around me right now, because most of the people I am around, my

roommates, people in my classes, aren't really as upset about leaving home as I am. It is really hard not to have anybody to relate to."

Thankfully, by the next episode Sorrelman tells a different story. In a segment that captures her smiling, rock climbing and volunteering, she shares her cure for knee-buckling homesickness: "It's important to find people to surround yourself with, in college and in general, that have the same set of values and what you want out of life."

Sorrelman, a business management major from Scottsdale, was selected for the documentary, which will chronicle

in segments her four-year journey from freshman to graduation.

But her motivation was not to parlay GCU fame into a movie career. Instead, she hopes to help others.

"I felt it was my calling to share my story, to let others know about the stuff I am going through. By showing how I am dealing with college maybe will help someone else," said Sorrelman, the first in her family to attend college.

She's braced herself for criticism but is committed to being an open book.

At least once a week, or whenever something worthy occurs, Sorrelman sits in front of her camera and shares an experience, a



Gina Sandoz (left) and Connor Brinton get valuable experience producing a GCU.TV broadcast.

PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB

The action-packed videos of both men's and women's sports reach a wide and distant audience. For example, viewers in 34 states and 50 countries watched the first men's soccer game.

All games are broadcast live and archived on GCU.TV to allow viewers to watch in real time or later. They are shot with multiple cameras, instant replay, graphics and on-air talent.

One of GCU.TV's early hits is "The Dan Majerle Show," featuring the popular GCU men's basketball coach. Another must-see sports program is "The GCU Lopes Report."

The University has been broadcasting games and events for more than three years, but GCU.TV allows them for the first time to be warehoused together.

"GCU.TV is one-stop shopping for all our videos," Buetel said.

Along with sports, GCU.TV captures the University's spiritual commitment. On "Trending Faith," Dr. Jason Hiles, dean of the College of Theology, and Dr. Tim Griffin, GCU pastor and dean of students, field questions about faith, God and Christian life.

Unable to attend Chapel? Watch it live or later on GCU.TV.

Buetel, Niedzielski and videographers Jake Jackson, Scott McDonald and Gina Sandoz work with 14 students to produce, edit and broadcast the programs.

For students, GCU.TV offers invaluable hands-on experience.

"It is hard work and heavy lifting, literally," Niedzielski said. "If they mess up, it's live."

GCU.TV expects its videos to appeal to students (including the 60,000-plus enrolled online), parents, faculty, staff and alumni.

In addition, the videos educate those unfamiliar with all that GCU offers, from its hotel and 18-hole golf course to its concerts, plays, charitable projects and academic fields such as STEM (science, technology, engineering and math).

GCU.TV also posts videos on YouTube and shares videos with other TV stations. In three years, the number of YouTube subscribers has increased from about 1,500 to 10,000.

"We are getting the word out to those who might not know what GCU is all about," Buetel said. "We are showing the success, the values and the integrity of the University." **G**

VIDEO



Find out more about the mission of GCU.TV in this video at news.gcu.edu.

joy, a fear, an emotion. A new video is posted monthly on GCU.TV.

As she nears graduation, GCU.TV plans to compile the segments into a documentary film.

Sorrelman is not the only star of GCU.TV. The station's lineup features athletes, coaches and ministers, and coverage includes games, concerts, plays and other events, such as the weekly Chapel session.

"We are capturing a vibrant picture of GCU," said Steven Niedzielski, GCU.TV associate producer.

The videos also show what can be difficult to explain.

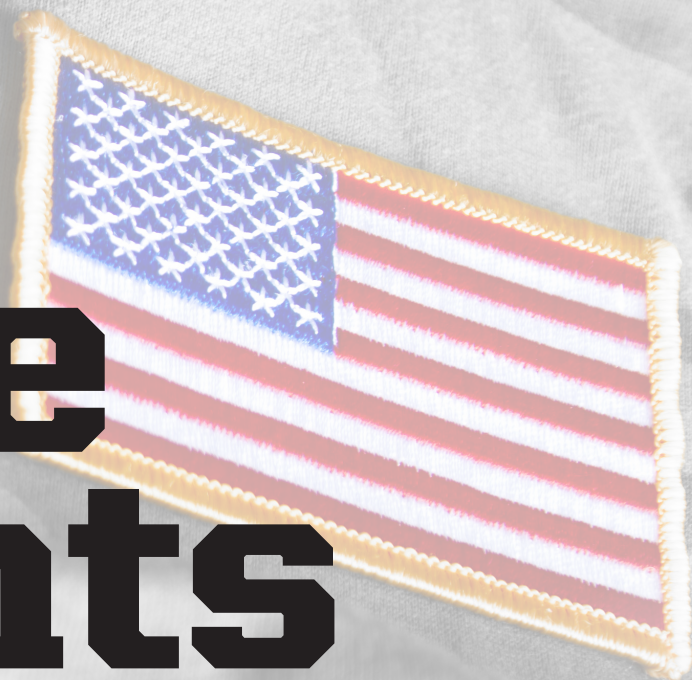
"You can tell folks about a basketball game, but by watching it on TV they can see what I am talking about — the color, the excitement that you have to see to believe," said Barry Buetel, GCU.TV executive producer.

Live sporting events are the bulk of the station's programming, with 100 athletic competitions on track to broadcast this academic year.



Tatum Sorrelman says she wants to help others by sharing her story in "Finding Tatum's Purpose."

PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB



He fights on

Vietnam War and PTSD have left scars, but Morgan is more than just a survivor

BY JEANNETTE CRUZ

“Oftentimes, I fear going to sleep because of my flashback nightmares. Other times, I feel like I have a fairly normal life. But, of course, normal for me is a couple standard deviations away from the norm.”

— Ralph Morgan

Ralph Morgan was 19 years old when he was drafted to serve in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War — an era when the country was deeply divided about the military and war veterans often were treated with disdain.

The Saline, Mich., resident, now a doctoral student at Grand Canyon University, had just graduated from high school and was starting a life for himself in Albuquerque, N.M. He was a college student and engaged to be married. Being called to serve meant leaving all of that behind.

“It was absolute fear,” remembered Dan Carroll, a childhood pal of Morgan. “A number of our friends had been killed while we were still in school and before we even graduated. We were just kids, and that was part of growing up at the time.”

During Morgan’s yearlong tour of Vietnam as a



Ralph Morgan sustained many injuries, both physical and emotional, during his time in Vietnam (below), but now he's working toward his doctorate at GCU. Morgan also is a devoted fan of the Tampa Bay Lightning (left, with former Lightning star Dave Andreychuk).



“My PTSD was so bad that I once hit my mother while having a nightmare, and I didn’t know I’d hit her until the next day when I saw her at the breakfast table.”

— Ralph Morgan

member of the Fifth Special Forces group, the Green Beret experienced heat, injuries, blood and horror — an experience, he said, that profoundly affected his identity and life after war.

“The war was a topic of every conversation we had,” Carroll said. “At one point it became unpleasant, and I knew he had to be troubled by all of this because he shared with me stories about the battlefield, death and how someone had saved his life and carried him out of the jungle.”

No matter whether they felt proud of their service or sustained war injuries, the soldiers often found hatred, not love, when they returned. Morgan’s fiancée, for example, told him she could not be seen with a “baby killer.”

Vietnam was an unpopular war in which more than 58,000 U.S. soldiers were killed and more than 300,000 were wounded. Morgan came out of it with injuries to his knees, back and neck because of two awkward landings disembarking from aircraft — one time parachuting out of a plane, the other when he jumped off a helicopter carrying a machine gun and at least 800 rounds of ammunition.

“It was a war no one believed you could survive, but I managed to get through it, and then I resented being tossed into it,” he said.

Morgan left the military in 1972 and moved back into his parents’ home in Montague, N.J., but what he saw, felt and heard in the war took its toll. As time went on, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) dominated his life.

“My PTSD was so bad that I once hit my mother while having a nightmare, and I didn’t know I’d hit her until the next day when I saw her at the breakfast table,” Morgan recalled. “I could kill myself — my mother was a saint. I was hit by this dismal feeling — not just from the negativity of the country but my own guilt — and as these things evolved my dad threw me out. It was a crazy time.”

Eventually, Morgan sought counseling and returned to school at Glassboro State College (now Rowan University) to earn a bachelor’s degree in Humanistic Psychology and a master’s in Psychology from GCU. Nearly 42 years after his service, Morgan was awarded a Silver Star, the third-highest award given to service men and women for bravery and courage under fire.

“It was an award he really deserved, and his response was very humble — ‘I was just doing my job,’” said Bill Gastmeyer, who first met Morgan in junior high. “That’s the way he was in high school — co-captain of the football

team, a good-looking guy that all of the girls liked, a practical joker, but always humble.”

In many ways, Morgan said, he has been able to move on quite successfully. But his larger quest in life is to nurture his faith and to be a change-maker.

His passion for psychology enabled him to write “Simple Truth: The Whole Is Greater than the Sum of Its Parts,” a book discussing the individual relationship between personality and performance. He believes the way to help those with PTSD is by encouraging them to feel more comfortable with themselves.

At 65, Morgan decided to return to GCU for his doctorate after retiring in 2012 from the Michigan Department of Corrections, where he was a counselor.

“I’ve had a very strained career with one event after another, but it’s been lively and full of learning,” Morgan said. “This Ph.D. is the toughest intellectual thing I’ve ever been through, but I feel like I am getting a second wind in life and I am not going to close the door on these possibilities.

“I am dressed in flesh, but spiritually I am much more than that — GCU supports that concept — and I don’t want to run from that. I want to experience it.” **G**



The circle of GCU life

Brandon Juarez is still around thanks to a teacher who helped him shape his future

BY JEANNETTE CRUZ

Brandon Juarez first walked the grounds of Grand Canyon University 15 years ago as an out-of-state student. Today, he walks through celebrating his first year as a full-time assistant professor.

“It all is really special,” Juarez said, sitting behind his desk with a shy grin. “Within three years of having attended GCU,

my life had been filled with meaningful connections, and who was to say it would have such a great impact on my life?”

To bring things full circle, Juarez, who teaches in the College of Education, now sits across the hall from the professor who helped him decide GCU was the right place for him at a time when he was overwhelmed and scared.



Brandon Juarez (left) credits his former instructor, William Kuehl, for helping him complete his education and become an assistant professor at GCU.

“The way Bill taught made me feel at home. He didn’t sound like a teacher giving his students a lecture – there was much more of an interaction.”

— Brandon Juarez

fence. Then his tour guide caught him by surprise when he scheduled him to sit down with a professor, William Kuehl.

The one-hour meeting was climactic, Juarez recalled.

He shared his educational experiences and future plans, and in exchange Kuehl handed Juarez a tentative schedule and glimpse into his future at GCU. Then everything clicked.

Fast forward 15 years, and Juarez still marvels at how it all evolved.

“That’s the nugget really worth noting. I’m still working on my emotions, to be honest, but I knew then that I could own my education at GCU and seek support when I needed it,” he said.

Kuehl, a professor and director of exercise science in the College of Science, Engineering and Technology, has experienced GCU at the forefront of change. He began his career in 1983 as an adjunct professor for the University’s first Care and Prevention of Athletic Injuries course.

“I’ve taught a total of 28 classes here, I’ll be 65 next summer and I have no indication yet that I’m called to go somewhere else,” he said with a good-humored grin. “Plus, the students think I’m good.”

He added that, while teaching now includes different approaches and methods than when he was getting started, GCU’s mission and well-known slogan — “Find Your Purpose” — always have fit with his focus. As someone for whom a high school coach helped him unlock his full potential, Kuehl is passionate about bringing that philosophy to light.

Kuehl didn’t set out to be a teacher, but when he was a 13-year-old benchwarmer on his high school baseball and basketball teams, a coach encouraged him to look into

athletic training. After his first course, Kuehl never looked back. By age 17, he was working as a conditioning and rehabilitation trainer for the Phoenix Suns and the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim (then the California Angels).

Looking back on how far he’s come, Kuehl said he learned the true meaning of education.

“I knew I was good at what I did at a very young age, and it was because I had studied all of it,” he said.

Over the years, Kuehl has strived to help his students through their college degree.

“It’s a God-given thing to realize your full potential, and I can’t think of another way to do my job,” he said. “I’m good at taking care of injuries, but my calling and gift is to be able to help when students have no clue what to do — that was Brandon’s situation. He was in crisis, so I gave him direction.”

Juarez and Kuehl never completely left each other’s lives after that initial meeting. As a student, Juarez frequently stopped by Kuehl’s office. As a professional, he found himself transferring Kuehl’s teaching philosophies into his classroom.

Juarez considers himself an introvert, and Kuehl challenged him to invest outside of himself.

“You can be reserved, but then you really are missing out on one of your callings in the teaching world, which is to serve the students in your classroom,” Juarez said. “The way Bill taught made me feel at home. He didn’t sound like a teacher giving his students a lecture — there was much more of an interaction. He’s got that constant smile on his face and a genuine desire to wish people well.

“I’ve yet to find what he taught me in any textbook.” **G**

Juarez had just received his associate’s degree in liberal arts from Fullerton (Calif.) College. He had never lived anywhere other than Fullerton, his hometown, but that changed during the process of looking for an elite four-year university, which eventually led him to GCU.

“During my experience at the community college, I was well-immersed into connecting with my faculty and my counselors, and I had people who poured into my success,” Juarez said. “Going forward, I felt I still needed that, but growing up in California, I found universities to be saturated with students.”

Juarez signed up for a tour of GCU, but after his visit, he found he was still on the



Bob Eckel shows off one of his many paintings, which are on display all over the world. PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB

Great track record

Eckel's railroad paintings have brought him fame up and down the line

BY MARK HELLER

Bob Eckel's life is a work of art. His retirement after more than 30 years in engineering was a nod to his lifelong love of trains and railroads. At age 82, he's still oil painting railroad scenes from coast to coast, including ones presented to United States presidents and country music legends.

And, judging by his dozens of stories, each of those scenes is worth a thousand words.

"It takes a lot of work," he said. "Painting railroad tracks alone is a full-time job."

Born in Connecticut in 1934, Eckel moved to Pennsylvania with his family after his father "lost our house on a poker bet." It was there that the famous Reading Railroad became part of his future passion.

More than 20 years into his engineering

career, he earned his bachelor's degree in art from what was then Grand Canyon College in 1977.

By that point, he already had been commissioned to do an oil painting for former president Richard Nixon that hung in the White House (Nixon's father was in the railroad business), one for Arizona governor and presidential hopeful Barry Goldwater, and another for Johnny Cash when "The Man in Black" rode West to Arizona by train during a 1976 tour.

"Two days before Watergate I get a letter of thanks," he said of Nixon. "You'd have never known there was a problem."

After 34 years in the steel and aircraft industries, he retired in 1989 to pursue painting (and reading). These days he paints

out of his Peoria, Ariz., home for a couple of hours each morning and has artworks that hang in six continents.

Since becoming one of the first GCU graduates of an evening degree program, he's been a survivor — his doctor gave him 90 seconds to live seven years ago when Eckel had a stroke, and he was struck by lightning five years ago.

"I let go of the metal door handle (on his car), and lightning hit the neighbor's house and traveled into me," he said. "Sparks flying out of my hand. I was numb, didn't feel a thing."

Perhaps lightning can strike twice. It already has in his career.

"Guys (on the railroad) taught me right and wrong and about life," he said. "They were very good. I love railroad people." **G**

CLASS NOTES



What's new with you?



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

1980s



Keith Boepple, B.A. in Speech/Theatre, '85, has been named Area 32 director for District

25 of Toastmasters International, a nonprofit educational organization that helps improve the communication and public-speaking skills of its members. Boepple is in his fourth year of teaching at Reed Middle School in Duncanville, Texas.

2000s



Katja Schaper, BBA in Accounting, '01, has been named a principal at Lucas Horsfall

Accountants and Advisors. Schaper is also an audit manager at the Los Angeles firm and has more than 12 years of experience in the profession.



Chris Raymond, B.S. in Secondary Education, '04, is the head baseball coach at Liberty

High School in Peoria, Ariz. It is his first head coaching position. He was an assistant baseball coach for 13 years at Sunrise Mountain High School in Peoria.



Robert Isbell, B.S. in Public Safety Administration, '07, and M.S. in

Executive Fire Leadership, '08, is the new fire chief for the city of Round Rock, Texas. Isbell has been in fire service for more than 30 years, in every position from firefighter to chief. He previously was the fire chief in Midland, Texas.



Nate Chandler, M.S. in Leadership, '09, has joined Barbeck

Communications in Decatur, Ill., as a senior account manager. Chandler has a history of sales and customer service experience, including eight years in the medical device industry as a territory manager and product director.



Ken Jefferies, B.S. in Public Safety Administration, '09, has been hired as the safety

engineer for Hexcel Corporation in Casa Grande, Ariz. Jefferies will be responsible for management of the plant's occupational safety.



Melissa Steffan, MBA with an Emphasis in Finance, '09, and M.S. in Health Care

Administration, '14, has been hired as the vice president of operations, focusing on strategic and administrative services, for ABQ Health Partners, a member of the DaVita Medical Group in Albuquerque, N.M. Steffan previously was the administrator for specialty care at Presbyterian Healthcare Services in New Mexico.

2010s



Eric Griffin, M.S. in Leadership with an Emphasis in Disaster

Preparedness and Executive Fire Leadership, '10, has been appointed by the North Carolina Department of Public Safety to the Urban Search and Rescue Technical Advisory Committee. Griffin is the Greenville (N.C.) Fire-Rescue chief and has worked for the department since 1993.



Tracy Stachniak, M.S. in Leadership with an Emphasis in Human Resource Management, '10,

has been promoted to director of human resources and training and development of Toyota Material Handling, USA. Stachniak has been with the company since 2005 and previously was the national manager of human resources.



Tonya Bolden-Ball, M.S. in Leadership, '10, is the owner of Renewed Perspectives in

Lafayette, La., a consulting firm that specializes in leadership and character development,

SPOTLIGHT

Kristina Anderson, '14

There's beauty in fighting cancer



A routine doctor visit and ultrasound turned into Kristina Anderson's worst nightmare. A former athlete, cheerleader and academic scholar, Anderson was diagnosed with a rare, Stage III form of ovarian cancer in 2013 at age 25. The diagnosis and ensuing nightmare of trying to receive approvals from her health insurance coverage to begin treatment inspired her to create the SaveHerLife.org nonprofit support

organization with her former nurse, Sandy LeDuke.

Three weeks after her last round of chemotherapy, Anderson competed in the 2014 Miss Arizona pageant, but the cancer that was believed to be in remission instead returned in March 2016. Another six months of chemotherapy followed until her last treatment in September. She'll continue "maintenance" chemotherapy treatments periodically in hopes of limiting any future reoccurrence.

Anderson earned her bachelor's degree in community health from the University of Illinois, her Master of Business Administration from Grand Canyon University in 2014, and recently completed a Master of Science in Accounting from GCU.

See more on Anderson's story in a video at news.gcu.edu.

Sam Strasser, '09

He turns startups into successes



Sam Strasser's grandfather owns his own investment company. His mother runs an interior design business.

Entrepreneurism is a family affair.

"That's definitely in our DNA," the 2009 Grand Canyon University business graduate said from his Santa Monica, Calif., home base.

Strasser's trail of startup successes continues to branch out. He began and built

Weezlab, developing business-specific applications and websites, for five years before leaving last summer. He also co-founded Curby, a software app for business valet services, before he sold it to Curbstand in 2015.

He's currently working on Treasury Market, an investment technology concept for small- and medium-size businesses (\$15 million to \$50 million in revenue).

Business-to-business is where Strasser has focused most of his energy, dating to high school. It's why he embraces the exhaustion of starting from scratch.

"I like the grind," he said. "It's where I excel — the thrill of 'That can't be done,' and seeing if I can do something to create value where there wasn't before."

—MARK HELLER

teambuilding, professional mentoring and motivational speaking. She serves as the project director of the Family Tree Healthy Start Program, a federal infant mortality reduction initiative.



Nick Jones, B.A. in Communications, '11, is the new head pastor for Central Baptist Church in

Altavista, Va. Jones felt called into full-time ministry after overcoming drug addiction and hopes his story inspires the congregation and the community.



Brian Simpson, B.A. in Christian Studies, '12, has been hired as the head track and field

coach for Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va. Simpson previously was head coach of the Wilson (N.C.) Track Club for eight years.



Shane Keith, B.S. in Business Management, '13, and MBA, '16, is a

finance professional for the Vanguard Investing Group in Payson, Ariz. Previously, Keith edited and interpreted financial policy and procedure to ensure the group was within regulatory requirements. He is using his obtained skills to apply for a position on the Payson Unified School District board.



Matt Love, B.S. in Public Safety and Emergency Management, '14, and M.S. in

Leadership with an Emphasis in Disaster Preparedness and Executive Fire Leadership, '15, was named the new fire chief of Fort Myers Beach (Fla.) Fire

Control District. Love was with the Colorado Springs Fire Department for 11 years before getting his first fire chief position at Cimarron Hills (Colo.) Fire Department.



Lori VanDerveer-Hand, BSN, '15, is a staff RN at Hunterdon Medical Center (HMC) in

Flemington, N.J. VanDerveer-Hand recently was selected to be a member of the nursing optimization team, which improves the charting system for nurses at HMC.



Valeria Wright, B.S. in Elementary Education with an Emphasis in English, '15, is a

coordinator for the Title One Parent Center, a home base early literacy and parenting program in the Florence (S.C.) Public School District. Wright will focus on building a team environment for the support of home visitors and the program's families.



Jeremiah Lofthus, B.A. in Digital Film with an Emphasis in Production, '15, is

co-owner, editor and videographer for Volente Videography in Washington state. Lofthus has produced many genres of video and photography, including wedding, music videos, graduation and special events.



Louie DeDonatis, B.S. in Sports Management, '15, is a producer for the Lax Sports Network

in Boston, the first ever 24/7 lacrosse network. DeDonatis is a former member of the GCU men's club lacrosse team.



Jennifer Smestad, B.A. in Communications, '15, recently recorded her first

music single, "It's Only Rain," at the GCU recording studio. Smestad, who has Tourette Syndrome, says the song is intended to share the healing power of music.



Claudia Barrientos, MPA with an Emphasis in Government and Policy, '15, is an

accountant with Elbit Aerospace Systems of America in San Antonio, Texas. Barrientos has worked with the city of San Antonio for 17 years and served on the East Central Independent School District board for the last eight years.



Linda Anders, MBA and M.S. in Nursing: Nursing Leadership in Health Care

Systems, '15, has been inducted into the International Nurses Association with her publication in the Worldwide Leaders in Healthcare. Anders is a clinical nurse educator for UnityPoint Health Trinity Muscatine (Iowa).



Keith Rogers, B.S. in Justice Studies, '16, recently completed an internship on

Capitol Hill with congressmen from District 1 of Indiana. Rogers worked on a team for Northwest Indiana's Fundraising for Demolition, a project that helps eliminate abandoned homes to make room for financial growth in low-income areas.



Eric McFee, Ed.D. in Organizational Leadership: Effective Schools, '16, is the new

superintendent of Murray County (Ga.) Schools. In his more than 28 years in education, McFee has held multiple positions, including physical education teacher, Spanish teacher, athletic director and principal.



Christy Kiser, B.S. in Accounting, '14, and M.S. in Accounting, '16, is a tax accountant at

REDW LLC, a public accounting firm with locations in Albuquerque, N.M., and Phoenix. Kiser's primary responsibilities include preparing tax returns and reporting foreign assets for clients of the firm.



Dr. April Williams, Doctor of Nursing Practice, '16, is a nursing faculty member at

Lenoir-Rhyne University in Hickory, N.C. Williams started in the medical field when she was 19 and has worked in ophthalmology, neurosurgical intensive care, clinical nurse education and as a travel intensive care nurse.



Kristy Sedlacek, M.Ed. in Educational Administration, '16, is principal of

Learning Bridge Charter School in Ely, Nev. Sedlacek was born and raised in Ely, where she attended the local elementary and high schools.

GCU NEWS & NOTES

Students turn storage idea into a world-class concept



The GCU contingent in Barcelona. From left: Braeden Scheer, Chelsea Evans, Luke Amargo, Josh McGuire and Jedidiah Woods.

Even world champions don't have time to rest on their laurels.

Grand Canyon University alumnus Luke Amargo turned a car accident that destroyed his belongings into a business idea. Namely, connect people in need of storage with those who have space to spare.

Amargo enlisted three current GCU students — Josh McGuire, Jedidiah Woods and Braeden Scheer — and Storage Together was born. The startup concept won best overall honors along with the "Best Solution" category at the Smart City App Hack International Expo on Nov. 16 in Barcelona, three weeks after they won the Phoenix Smart City Hack competition.

Given the numerous networking opportunities in Barcelona, the group began crucial steps toward finding and securing funding, business development and partnership ideas to begin and sustain their business.

"We also experienced something few startups do: a global platform where people from all around the world come together to collaborate and learn," Woods said. "This is one of the most valuable things we took home."

Colangelo College of Business assistant professor Tim Kelley called the victory "a tip of the iceberg" with the way startup ideas and concepts are coming out of the Colangelo College of Business.

"It's an idea. It's an alpha or beta test but hasn't yet proved it can be a company," Kelley said of Storage Together. "That challenge is making the business real, which is much different than just doing (idea or sales) pitches."

The team is eager to take the next step.

"We met so many global businesses people who could very potentially be partners, and we already have started reaching out to them as well as many connections already communicating with us," Woods said.

—MARK HELLER

Parting Shot

GRAND CANYON UN



IVERSITY ARENA



Getting in the spirit is cheer delight

It starts during Welcome Week, when Lope-A-Palooza (left) teaches the new freshmen what a big GCU activity is all about. But there are so many other ways — Midnight Madness, Lip Sync, Mr. GCU and numerous games and events — for students to join in the campus fun, and when they do, the cheer and dance teams will make sure the spirit moves them.

PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB



UPCOMING EVENTS

DEC. 5
7 PM

5TH Annual
**Handel's
Messiah**

featuring **Crowder** and **Mac Powell**
with special guest **Unspoken**

DEC. 13
6 PM

2016 **KLOVE**
CHRISTMAS

A for **KING & COUNTRY**

CHRISTMAS
WINTER 2016
featuring **LAUREN DAIGLE**

Dec. 18
6 PM

SOUTHWEST GOSPEL
Music Festival

2 DAYS, 5 SESSION MUSIC EVENT
FEB. 19 - 20, 2017 • 3 PM

PRESENTED BY
IMC
MANAGEMENT

COMPASSION INTERNATIONAL
PRESENTS

**THE ROCK & WORSHIP
ROADSHOW**

MAR. 22
7 PM

2017

FEATURING

PASSION • FAMILY FORCE 5
JORDAN FELIZ • DEREK MINOR
URBAN RESCUE • CARLOS WHITTAKER

REND COLLECTIVE
STEVEN CURTIS CHAPMAN
FRANCESCA BATTISTELLI

APRIL 1 - 7 PM
WITH **DUSTIN NICKERSON**

Tim Hawkins

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT GCUARENA.COM | 602-639-8979 | GROUP DISCOUNTS CALL 602-639-8972
Looking for a place to stay? Book your reservation at GCUHotel.com