

GCU

APRIL 2018

MAGAZINE



Their values are in place

Students share
why they came here,
what they do here,
how they love it here

WHERE ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES AND INNOVATION DRIVE EDUCATION

FUTURE NURSE
RN TO BSN MAJOR

PASSIONATE ABOUT I.T. + BUSINESS
BUSINESS INFORMATION MAJOR

CYBER DEFENDER
I.T. WITH A CYBERSECURITY
EMPHASIS MAJOR

GRAND CANYON
UNIVERSITY™

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For more information about our graduation rates, the median debt of students who completed the program and other important information, please visit our website at gcu.edu/disclosures. Please note, not all GCU programs are available in all states and in all learning modalities. Program availability is contingent on student enrollment. Grand Canyon University is regionally accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. (800-621-7440; <http://hlcommission.org/>) Important policy information is available in the University Policy Handbook at <https://www.gcu.edu/academics/academic-policies.php>. GCU, while reserving its lawful rights in light of its Christian mission, is committed to maintaining an academic environment that is free from unlawful discrimination. Further detail on GCU's Non-Discrimination policies can be found at gcu.edu/titleIX. The information printed in this material is accurate as of MARCH 2018. For the most up-to-date information about admission requirements, tuition, scholarships and more, visit gcu.edu. ©2018 Grand Canyon University

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Mallory Denson is one of 30 members of the Worship Team, which performs before Chapel every Monday morning.

PHOTO BY GILLIAN REA

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Features

14 Stories of the year

The No. 1 GCU story of the 2017-18 academic year was an easy choice, but there's a lot of variety on the list – including a trend that carried a ring of importance.

16 Hoop scoop

Paul Coro embedded with the men's and women's basketball teams at the Western Athletic Conference Tournament. Read what he saw and heard.

20 Degrees = hot jobs

In an effort to help students better transition into the job market, GCU administrators met with experts in the field and created career-focused degrees.

24 Spirituality travels

Some might be surprised to learn that online students feel as spiritually connected to GCU as ground students. But that's what makes the online program click.



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ON THE COVER: The spirit on campus, the Christian worldview and the innovative curriculum are three major reasons why many students come to GCU, but the chance to work in the community can be just as important. PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY BILLIE WORTH

Sports Camps

www.gculopessportscamps.com

(All are at GCU except where noted)

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Individuals: June 4-7 and June 18-21 on campus, June 25-28 at Scottsdale Community College

Elite players: June 12

Teams: May 31-June 2 and June 14-16

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Parent/kid: May 19

Teams: June 8-10

Individuals: June 25-28

Elite players: Aug. 11

MEN'S SOCCER

Day: June 11-15

Overnight: June 21-24

WOMEN'S SOCCER

Resident ID: June 8-10

Day: June 11-15

MEN'S VOLLEYBALL

Individuals: June 2-3

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL

Offense, Defense,

Elite: July 10-12

All Skills: July 13-15

Team: July 16-18



April

26-28

SPRING COMMENCEMENT

Another sign of GCU's growth: There will be a record eight ceremonies.

Dr. Rick Rigsby, whose dynamic talks were a highlight of winter commencement, again will be the keynote speaker.

gcu.edu/commencement

May

29

SUMMER INSTITUTE

Free opportunity for high school juniors and seniors to stay overnight at GCU to experience campus life and explore academic growth programs, such as engineering, computer science, hospitality and business.

gcu.edu

June

22-24

ELEVATE MUSIC FESTIVAL

In its first appearance in Phoenix in six years, the event features 19 bands and artists spread over three nights. Headliners include Building 429, Phil Wickham, For King & Country and Tenth Avenue North. gcuarena.com

July

9-13

SUMMER DANCE INTENSIVE

Weeklong, overnight camp taught by dance faculty and guest instructors and assisted by teacher candidates from the University's Dance Department. Courses range from jazz and ballet to flamenco, West African and hip hop. gcu.edu

16-19

STEM CAMPS

Four single-day camps for students entering seventh and eighth grades. Each day covers a new set of topics. gcu.edu

August

20-24

WELCOME WEEK

The 2018-19 academic year gets off to a rousing start with five days of volunteers wildly greeting arriving students and their parents, plus tons of activities once the newcomers get settled in on campus.

5 QUESTIONS WITH

Dina Higgins

Mechanical Engineering Technology Professor

Because she's from Motown, it seemed like a given that Dina Higgins would jumpstart a career in the auto industry. She has worked not only in Detroit but for five years in London, where her two sons were born. It was the auto industry that brought her to the Phoenix area, where she also has served as a Mesa city councilwoman and worked for wastewater management firms (she can talk water as well as she can talk cars). But she also was the carpool mom for a while, helped start a women's homeless program and is a metal sculptor. She has been at GCU since 2016. Outside the classroom, she loves golf and proudly tackles GCU boot camp twice a week. "When it comes to planks, I'm occasionally the last one standing," she said.

1 Why the auto industry, and what did you specialize in?

In Detroit, you pretty much never thought of doing something else. I was at General Motors and they were doing big downsizing. I took a buyout and went to TRW Automotive during the expansion of airbags and seatbelts. I said, "Ugh, I'm never going to leave Detroit!" The next week I went from my moaning and complaining to an offer to move to England. I was there for five years. Ford was designing a car for the world market, and TRW Worldwide had all the seatbelt and airbag content.

2 How did you end up in Phoenix?

My job (in London) moved back to Detroit. I didn't want to go back to Detroit and ended up in Arizona to work with TRW here at the time. I worked with TRW in a job share with another woman engineer. We split a job working two days one week and three days the next and trading. We shared the same nanny. The nanny worked full time either at my house or her house, so it worked really well. It was a way to not have to work full time but still be in the game.

3 Why did you want to become a city councilwoman?

I was active on zoning cases in Mesa, like neighborhood stuff. Once you volunteer for these things the city says, "Hey, you're really involved. Would you like to be on this advisory board?" And so, "Sure!" I ended up being on the board of adjustment,

which is a board that looks at variance requests. They made me the chair in my first six months, which was really funny. From there, I saw that a council seat was opening and I thought, "Yeah. I've got to get involved." I was on the Mesa City Council for five years and am contemplating running in the summer for the fall. The city of Mesa had never had an elected engineer — ever. I was the first one.

4 How did serving as a city councilwoman enrich your life?

I was just able to do lots of stuff. We started a women's homeless program. It's called IHHELP (Interfaith Homeless Emergency Lodging Plan), and it's for women without kids. We didn't have a shelter for them. It's a program where there are different churches enrolled in the program. A van takes them to whatever church is on for the night and they spend the night in the church. Local services come to them, like if they need help finding their paperwork, birth certificates, drivers' licenses. I am also on the board of directors for Sunshine Acres Children's Home. There are big houses where 10 foster kids live with a set of parents. The parents take them to sporting events, concerts, parent-teacher meetings. The kids never get kicked out at a certain age; it is their home. Through the GCU Foundation, the University has offered seven full-ride scholarships every year to students who qualify. There are so many things you can learn.

5 How did you get into welding and metal sculptures?

The short story is I wanted a coffee table. I went to countless stores and could not find one. Then I found one, and it sold for \$3,000. That's a lot of money for a coffee table. I said, "I'm going to go to Mesa Community College and learn how to weld for myself." So that's what I did.

— Lana Sweeten-Shults



Inspiration hits home

He's using his dedication to Students Inspiring Students to give back to his old school district

BY JOSE MONARREZ

EDITOR'S NOTE: My LopeLife is a GCU Magazine feature in which students and staff share enlightening experiences about life at GCU. To be considered for a future My LopeLife, please submit a short synopsis of your topic to GCUToday@gcu.edu with "My LopeLife" in the subject field.



Jose Monnarez
PHOTO BY RALPH FRESO

Grand Canyon University has become a beacon of hope for high-achieving students in the Phoenix area with its Students Inspiring Students initiative, which gives them an opportunity they probably wouldn't have had otherwise – attending GCU on a full-tuition scholarship.

I know. I am a Students Inspiring Students recipient.

But GCU's passion for trying to make the community around it a better place has created another initiative – assisting the Murphy Elementary School District in southwest Phoenix.

I know all about that one, too. That's where I grew up, and I am one of the learning advocates (LEADs) from GCU working with students at Arthur M. Hamilton Elementary. I went to another district school, Sullivan.

Hamilton Elementary is located near 19th Avenue south of Buckeye Road. Most people probably don't have many nice things to say about that neighborhood, but the bottom line is that the schools in this district have not had the aid necessary to grow and become successful.

A wise person once said that we must play the cards that we are dealt, and some of us have gotten better cards than others. When we see someone studying or walking down the sidewalk on campus, we probably don't think about what that person has gone through to get there. They probably would think we're weird if we asked them.

ABOUT JOSE MONARREZ

Jose Monarrez is a GCU freshman majoring in Engineering. Originally from Sinaloa, Mexico, Jose moved to the United States when he was 5. In his free time, Jose enjoys playing soccer and working on cars. His favorite soccer teams are Real Madrid C.F. and the Mexican National Team.

Yes, everyone faces some struggles and some have it harder than others, but those are simply the cards we are dealt. How we choose to move forward is up to each one of us.

When GCU moved forward with its work in the Murphy district, I was one of several students called upon to work closely with the kids there in an attempt to steer them in a more positive direction.

Growing up there has taught me to make the most of what I have and also to share as much as I can with others. Being at GCU has helped me find a way to give back to my community by assisting the kids sitting in the seats I once occupied.

As LEADs, we go into Hamilton with the sole purpose of helping these kids grow not only academically but also as citizens. By acting as role models to these kids, we hope to seep change into their developing minds.

A typical day with the kids includes an academic activity to stimulate and challenge their minds, accompanied by another fun and more enjoyable activity. Over the course of the past few weeks, we have grown close with the students, forging strong friendships and assisting the kids as much as we can.

Since most of these kids are Latinos, I take pride in helping my brothers and sisters overcome the struggles we all face together, especially now during a time where families are being broken apart and the struggles are great.

Without the help of my parents, I wouldn't be where I am today. Now I have a special interest in doing in doing for other students what was done for me.

Led by Dr. Joe Veres, Vice President of Student Development and Outreach, and Shari Stagner, Program Manager at GCU's Learning Lounge, Students Inspiring Students is helping kids not blessed with riches. And thanks to GCU's willingness to bring the Learning Lounge to Hamilton Elementary, the students there are being given opportunities that someday could help them make a big impact in this world ... and right here in this neighborhood. **G**

MORE ABOUT ...

STUDENTS INSPIRING STUDENTS

The Students Inspiring Students Initiative, a collaboration among GCU, the Grand Canyon University Scholarship Foundation, local high schools and business and philanthropic leaders to improve K-12 education in west Phoenix, annually awards 100 full-tuition scholarships to students from inner-city schools who meet academic criteria and demonstrate financial need. The students then pay it forward by volunteering for 100 hours per academic year in the Learning Lounge, GCU's on-campus source of academic assistance for students of all ages.

MURPHY DISTRICT OUTREACH

- Aspiring teachers from GCU's College of Education spend three days a week at Garcia Elementary School in a pilot program to help teach kindergarten through third-grade math, social studies, science and art.
- Volunteers from GCU and Habitat for Humanity Central Arizona have embarked on a plan to clean up and paint schools and homes in the Murphy Elementary School District.
- Three dozen GCU students travel to the Murphy district twice a week to provide after-school academic assistance to underperforming students at each of the district's four elementary schools.
- Leadership coaching for district administrators.
- GCU students tutor and mentor kids at Hamilton Elementary School in a set-up similar to the Learning Lounge.

Cover Story





GCU, IN THEIR VIEW

Community treasured:
Four students share
their thoughts about
life on campus

BY RICK VACEK

JEANNETTE CRUZ CONTRIBUTED TO THIS STORY

As their car turned onto Camelback Road toward Grand Canyon University on that fateful day in 2014, Bethany Egeler and her parents quickly formed strong opinions about the campus they were about to visit for the first time.

Strongly opposite opinions.

Her parents were thinking about the family's recent visit to another Christian university, one in far more bucolic surroundings, with rolling hills and a postcard-perfect town nearby.

Her father's overwhelming thought about GCU, he told her later, was, "There's no way she's going to like this place. It's so sketchy around here. This place stands no chance."

But Bethany felt overwhelmed in a vastly different way.

"I remember seeing the freeway sign for Bethany Home Road (one mile north of GCU) and I thought, 'You know, that sounds about right for some reason – Bethany's home,'" she said. "I didn't feel scared or pushed away or anything. It made me feel at home. I was like, 'These people need somebody to help change their lives. They need a chance to change their futures.'"

Then she got a look at the campus.

She went to a Chapel service, at which the speaker, Terry Crist, talked about "warrior women." "My parents just kept looking at me, and I was like, 'Gosh, he's talking to ME right now. God wants me to come here and be this warrior woman and do amazing things here,'" she remembers. "That message hit me really hard in the heart."

She met with administrators who told her about GCU's passion for the

community and suggested ways she could get involved – a head start on the mission work she hopes to someday do in the Third World. “My heartstrings were just being super tugged,” she said.

When they returned to their Colorado Springs, Colo., home, Bethany had a shocking announcement for her parents: She was canceling their trips to two other universities. She was saying no to that prominent college back east. She was going to GCU.

Now she’s set to graduate after just three years, and she is incredulous about what has happened to her.

She manages the Thunder Vision program, which brings third-through eighth-grade students to campus to walk the facilities, talk to GCU students and learn how college can increase their future opportunities.

She has worked with sex-trafficking victims in the Dream Center, not far from campus.

She chose Hillsong Church Phoenix, mainly because she was so impressed with the sermons. She couldn’t put her finger on why they sounded so familiar, but then she realized it: The pastor is Terry Crist.

And she’s now Bethany Huffman, her husband, Noah, having moved down from Colorado Springs to join her here as a GCU student.

She wonders how all this could be. She can come to only one conclusion: God’s hands are all over it. It was meant to be.

Most students come to GCU under far less dramatic circumstances, of course. The affordable Christian education and the vibrant campus are big lures, but you don’t have to look far – like, just outside the fences of campus – to see that community outreach is a major factor, too.

But even more important is what they do with the opportunity once they get here. This story is about four of them who got here against all odds and have made the most of it. It is a story that should resonate with incoming freshmen, prospective students, graduating seniors and current campus residents – and all of their parents, too. It is life at GCU wrapped up in all its many facets and yet with many recurring themes.

But, this time, we’re getting out of the way and just letting the students talk. Compiled from one-on-one interviews, the next four passages feature their takes on the GCU experience ... in their own words. As you’ll see, they have a lot to say.

BETHANY HUFFMAN

MAJOR: CHRISTIAN STUDIES

“You’re not forced to do anything here – it’s all up to you.”

I was born in Quito, Ecuador, and was raised there for a part of my life as a missionary kid. And so I definitely have a heart for the nations and Third World countries. I’d love to move to one one day.

When I visited GCU, I kept thinking, “What better opportunity to do mission work and live out my calling for the Lord than actually living in it?” I got so excited, being in a different culture. I was super excited to be around somewhere that’s completely different.

I got set up to meet with Tacy Ashby (GCU’s Senior Vice President of Strategic Educational Alliances) and Lorin Marchese (SEA’s Administrative Coordinator). They took me under their wing even though they hardly even knew me and I was this punk rock high school kid. I remember them saying, “If you come here, we’re going to get you involved in this and this, we’re going to help you do this.” They helped me change my major when I got there. They did so much for me.

I felt that hospitality around campus, not just through them. I felt like anybody I connected with here for my visit had an attitude of, “Welcome to GCU, I’m so glad to have you here and I’m going to go above and beyond to make sure you feel at home here.” That environment drew me in so much.

PHOTO BY SLAVEN GUJIC



When I started doing Thunder Vision, I got to lead the program and do two presentations a day to 200 seventh- and eighth-graders. I didn't have a lot of experience with public speaking, so it was intimidating, but I knew it would be rewarding. I was able to pour into their lives, love on them. Just hearing them out, their worries and their fears, I got to tell them, "You have a chance to change the world."

I wanted to go into counseling, especially with sex-trafficking victims, so my freshman year I got involved with the Dream Center. It was such a humbling experience to be around sex-trafficking victims and realize, "That could be me. These girls are just like me."

Definitely one of the big things at GCU, one of the driving factors, is helping the community. That was something that completely pulled me in. Everybody wants to make a difference here and do some kind of change.

It's moved mountains in Phoenix and this community because these students have this heart. I think it's partly the school, but most of it, it's the students. Without the students driving all the community service, it wouldn't be happening. The students have the heart for it. The school pushes it, but we take it with open arms.

The options here to be involved in the Christian lifestyle and ministry are really cool. That's another thing I love about it. You're not forced to do anything here – it's all up to you. If you want to go to Chapel, if you want to go to The Gathering, if you want to be involved in anything on campus, volunteer-wise, you have to make that decision to do it. That shows that the people here really have the heart for it because so many people actually do volunteer, so many people actually do go to Chapel and The Gathering.

God has blessed my time here tenfold. I know that God blessed my decision to come here. I don't think I'd have the cool stories anywhere else.

I'm a completely different person than I was three years ago in the best way possible. It's prepared me for life, for relationships, for marriage, for a future career, personally, emotionally, spiritually, my friendships. It's monumental how much I've grown.

I know that people say that you have to change in college, but I don't think they mean this. It's been life-changing, and I think it's been really inspiring for my parents to watch, too.



PHOTO BY SLAVEN GUJIC

DOMINIQUE BROOM

MAJOR: HOSPITALITY

"GCU has transformed me as a person."

I didn't even know that GCU existed, and then in my senior year of high school a GCU representative came and offered a day to tour the campus. For the fun of it, I signed up – I had never been to a college campus and was pretty positive I could never go to a university.

I was considered a ward of the state. I hadn't done very well in school, I had terrible attendance and I had gone to four different high schools. I hadn't taken my SAT and ACT. I had never seen anyone in my family go to college. I didn't even know what that was supposed to look like.

But as my friends and I were walking around campus, I had this really strong intuition that this was the place I needed to be. I take my gut feelings pretty seriously, and this feeling was so overwhelming.

My GCU advisor heard my story and did everything in his power to help me. When I was accepted, he and another person on the board came to my school and personally told me how excited they were for me to come in. I have my essay and acceptance letter still saved.

I couldn't wrap my head around it, but in the moment I was so excited and I didn't care about the money. I was ready to take out as many loans as I needed because I knew that going to college was going to break a cycle in my family. I was scared, but for the first time in my life, it was a happy scared. I wanted to show God that I

deserved this blessing He had given me.

I haven't had support in a lot of my life, but GCU gave me a sense of community. Automatically, I was embraced with open arms and I knew I had made the right choice. Being around so many kids who had had a lot of opportunities gave me a lot of drive. I felt blessed to be around them because it pushed me to work harder.

I had no idea what I wanted to do, and I randomly picked marketing. At the beginning of my sophomore year, GCU opened the hospitality program, and I made the switch immediately. I realized that's what I needed to do. I can't sing. I can't dance. I'm not extremely smart. I don't play instruments. I don't play sports. The only thing I'm good at is people, and so hospitality was the perfect fit for me.

Since then, I've grown exponentially. I really found what I love, and the support I've gotten from my professors is unmatched. They saw potential in me that I hadn't even seen in myself, and I gained a lot of confidence, a lot of direction. I do volunteer work and I am a happier person since I came to GCU.

GCU has transformed me as a person and that's why I work hard for the University. I feel like GCU has done so much for me, and I'd like to give it back. I tell everybody how much I love my school.

I wasn't supposed to be here. All of a sudden, I have a commercial, I work for GCU Hotel, I'm speaking at the hospitality classes and it just became so much bigger. It still shocks me. When I say I love GCU, I mean it.

JEDIDIAH WOODS

MAJOR: BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

"One of the things I love about GCU is that there's a lot of diversity."

It makes me sad to see people I grew up with who have lost their dreams. They had so much ambition in high school, but I think part of it is that they didn't have the atmosphere around them to push them toward that.

I'm grateful that I was able to go to a place that allowed me to follow my dreams but was affordable, too. When I first visited GCU, I immediately felt a vibe of innovation, both on the campus and in Phoenix as a whole. I thought, "Man, people DID follow their dreams in places like this!"

I didn't have any family to plug into here, so it's like you have to find yourself. I love new chapters, but it takes time to get your feet underneath you, to see the atmosphere and what to do. But then sophomore year I got plugged into this ecosystem of taking your passions and building them into something sustainable. That's been the reason why I really loved GCU.

It was the people who got me going. Luke Amargo was my resident assistant my freshman year, and we became really close friends because of the Writing Club. Then he brought me on for this business idea, Storage Together, that eventually won the Canyon Challenge. That really kickstarted it for me.

I also helped bring TEDx to GCU, and now I'm involved in a project for the Admissions department – telling the stories of people on campus. The coolest thing about our campus is the people. People look at it and say, "I want to be in a place with those kinds of people."

Last September, we launched Thoreson Watches, which we want to use to raise money for tutoring and mentoring of refugee children – a \$60 watch equals 60 minutes of tutoring. It doesn't just read time, it gives time.

I've been a resident assistant the last two years. The cool thing about that is that it ties together a lot of my passions. To me, it's not necessarily a job. It's a good excuse to go in somebody's room and just say, "Hey, how's it going?" It's given me a sweet platform to reach out to people.

Recently, a guy came to me because he's converting from Islam to Christianity and is preparing to get shunned by his family. It's

just wild to see someone who saw me and said, "I want advice from that guy." It's cool to see that people see Jesus through me and see the blessings I've had.

One of the things I love about GCU is that there's a lot of diversity. There are Christians, there are non-Christians, there are people who don't care about Christianity. There's not really a Christian bubble, and that's a good thing.

My dad's a pastor and I come from a Christian high school – to be able to plug into the Christian atmosphere but also interact every day with people who aren't Christians, that's been amazing.

I would tell incoming students to be prepared to listen. Listen more. Listen to people. Listen to people that you know you disagree with. And don't listen to them out of contempt. Listen to them with sincerity, actually trying to see what the world looks like through their eyes.

Listen to people whether they're homeless right outside our gates, whether they're refugees down the road, whether they're classmates, whether they're teachers. Talk less and listen more. That's been the best thing in my life. I've learned the most from that. I've grown the most from that. I feel like most of my ideas have come from that.

PHOTO BY RALPH FRESO





PHOTO BY RALPH FRESO

ESMERALDA MASCORRO

MAJOR: PUBLIC POLICY

"I'm a Latina woman, and I found my place here."

When I was 12 years old, my biological mom passed away. I was placed in a home with my biological father, but he was very abusive. I got to get out of the home and was placed in foster care, and then I lived in three or four different homes in Stockton, Calif., where I grew up.

It was really overwhelming. As a young girl, I felt like I had no future, like this is my reality and there's no one who's going to advocate for me or be there for me. I was very alone. I was very depressed. It was very hard. I remember praying, "God, please just give me a normal family, a normal life."

Then shortly after that came what was like a miracle: When I was 16 I was adopted by a Christian family — my maternal mom's sister, whom I had not known.

My senior year of high school I came to Discover GCU. I thought GCU was so fun.

I was just blown away. But then I just felt really scared as a foster youth, living that far away from my family, and decided to go to a California university instead.

After one semester there, though, I felt like I couldn't find any place for me, I couldn't find my purpose and I couldn't find any sense of community. A friend from Stockton was a GCU student, and when I came to visit her I already knew that I liked GCU because it was really nice. But just coming here again, it was reassuring that maybe this was the place I was supposed to be. I figured I was already going to a school five hours from home, so I was like, "What's another five?" I felt like God was telling me that GCU was where I was meant to be.

When I first got here, I was overwhelmed. I was a sophomore living in the freshman dorm. But I was able to find two close friends and find a little bit of community on campus, and then it was a lot better for me.

Now I'm a senior leader and am on track to graduate in 2019. I'm also working with the New Business Development Center as a research analyst. I'm in pre-law, so most of what

I do is research laws and assist the center in the initiatives they want to pursue.

I'm volunteering with Arizonans for Children. They pair me with a foster youth who lives in a group home and comes from crazy circumstances. I would like foster youth to know that they can come to college, too.

I'm also a member of the Latino Student Union and work part-time as a server at Paradise Valley Country Club.

I'm a very extroverted person, so I just will say hi to whomever I see. I made a lot of friends through Welcome Week as a volunteer, and this year I'll actually be in charge of the Welcome Week volunteers.

When I drove down to GCU for my first experience with Welcome Week, it was so crazy and exciting. At my other college, you have to carry your stuff to your room, and I lived on the third floor — there were no volunteers. I came here, and I was like, "Oh my gosh, they're so nice!"

I would tell incoming students that there's a place for everyone at GCU. I'm a Latina woman, and I found my place here. I just feel like GCU has open arms for all students. I can't believe that I'm part of something so special. **G**

2017-2018 GCU Year in Review

Move back to non-profit highlights a year filled with giving and growth ... and romance

GCU's campus was ranked eighth in the country for 2017. PHOTO BY SLAVEN GUJIC

1 Non-profit application OK'd

GCU takes a major step toward reverting to a non-profit university when its application is approved by the Higher Learning Commission. As part of the transition, expected to be completed by the end of June, Grand Canyon Education will sell certain academic-related assets to a non-profit entity that will carry the Grand Canyon University name. Following the sale, GCE will operate as a third-party provider of educational and related services to GCU and potentially, in the future, to other universities.



2 A night at the museum

Friends, family and celebrities celebrate the opening of the Jerry Colangelo Museum, a tribute to the man who put Phoenix on the sports map and has been a major contributor at GCU.

3 Where there's a need, there's GCU

GCU's pilot program assists the struggling Murphy Elementary School District in southwest Phoenix: Aspiring teachers help at Garcia Elementary, about 300 GCU students turn out at Serve the City to provide the Garcia campus with a new coat of paint and other improvements, and learning advocates (LEADs) from the Learning Lounge work with district students after school.

4 Range of options in cybersecurity

As part of GCU's commitment to innovate cybersecurity education and meet the growing need for experts in the field, the Arizona Cyber Warfare Range-Metro Phoenix opens at 27th Avenue and Camelback Road. The University also continues to expand its bachelor's and master's cybersecurity degree offerings.



Residence halls are lined up along the east side of campus, and two more are expected to be ready by August.

PHOTO BY SLAVEN GUJIC



VIDEO ON NEWS.GCU.EDU

The 10 most visual GCU moments of the year

6 A lot to build on

The opening of the new baseball and softball stadiums is only the start of another highly constructive year. Also sprouting up, all on the east side of campus, are two more apartment-style residence halls, the new Colangelo College of Business building, a club sports center and a parking garage.

7 A decade of frozen tuition — cool!

Talk about a perfect 10: For the 10th consecutive year, GCU freezes tuition on the ground campus. “Cost should not be a deterrent to earning a college degree,” GCU President Brian Mueller said. “Instead, universities must be innovative in their approach to higher education.”

8 GCU on list of best campuses

It certainly isn't a surprise to any students who live here, but GCU's campus is named the eighth-best in the country by Niche, a company that specializes in data on educational institutions. GCU finished just ahead of Stanford (ninth) and Yale (10th) in the 2017 rankings.

9 The race to dissertation 500

The College of Doctoral Studies approves its 500th dissertation and also breaks its single-year record for graduates. The lucky No. 500 belongs to Melissa Beddow, a member of the College of Science, Engineering and Technology faculty.

5 One game from the Big Dance

In its first shot at the Western Athletic Conference Tournament, the men's basketball team comes up just short of qualifying for the NCAAs, losing to New Mexico State in the WAC championship game. Also, pole vaulter Scott Marshall (second team) and swimmer Mark Nikolaev (honorable mention) became the first GCU athletes to earn NCAA Division I All-American honors.



Katie Peterson became Keonta Vernon's fiancée on Senior Night.

PHOTO BY SLAVEN GUJIC

10 Love is all around us

A little more than a month after GCU senior Levi Conlow draws national attention with his marriage proposal to Rachel O'Brien before a huge crowd of classmates in front of the Student Union, basketball player Keonta Vernon gets down on a knee to do the same with his girlfriend, Katie Peterson, during the team's Senior Night at GCU Arena.



What happened in Vegas

Lopes made a lot of noise in 1st trip to WAC Basketball Tournament — here's the inside story

BY PAUL CORO

Grand Canyon University's regular-season basketball finale at GCU Arena took on the usual look.

Seniors were honored. Havocs were colorful. Lopes were victorious.

But it sounded different.

GCU students chanted, "On to Vegas!" The men's and women's teams were previewing their first doses of March Madness rather than reviewing a season.

The Lopes were on the cusp of their first Western Athletic Conference Basketball Tournament in Las Vegas.

"We're finally there," men's head coach Dan Majerle said. "Our guys are excited. You can just see it in their faces. It's going to be tough."

Was it ever.



Tuesday Majerle guides players through their final practice at GCU before they leave for Las Vegas – “a business trip,” as he reminds them.

The Lopes are typically hard workers, but the gym atmosphere is even more serious because an NCAA tournament bid awaits the WAC Tournament champion.

“If you’re not going hard, it never works,” Majerle says as they practice their offense.

The Lopes open the tourney against Missouri-Kansas City, which they already routed twice by 17 points. Complacency could

The Havocs were the most visible (and vocal, of course) feature of GCU’s participation in the WAC Tournament. GCU President Brian Mueller said later that at least a hundred people approached him at the tournament to say how impressed they were with the way the GCU students acted.

PHOTO BY TRAVIS NEELY

encroach if not for so much talk of being three wins from “The Big Dance.” GCU expects to hurt UMKC again with its size advantage.

“We’ve got to crush them on the boards,” Majerle says. “And I mean CRUSH them!”

|||||
Wednesday GCU’s WAC tournament era begins with a women’s game against Utah Valley. Costumed GCU students already are settling into Orleans Arena, facing the Lopes bench.

After an off-site morning practice, the men’s team joins fellow students to watch GCU’s 72-56 win.

“That doesn’t surprise us,” head coach Nicole Powell tells her team in the locker room. “We were *supposed* to kick their butts. We made history.”

GCU’s first victorious WAC tourney team gathers hands and breaks on, “WAC champs!”

|||||
Thursday The men tip off their first game at noon, their earliest start of the season. Associate head coach Todd Lee teaches a pregame locker room class on UMKC, detailing each player’s tendencies and reviewing color-coded defensive schemes.

“I want you guys to play loose today,” Majerle says after a coach’s office visit from Jerry Colangelo. “No matter what we face, we’re more than prepared. We’ve waited a long time for this.”

An hour earlier, the Havocs began to fill one of the baseline’s bleachers, chanting “Where’s your pep band?” at UMKC. The Lopes gather beneath the bedlam, which builds their huddle into hops and chants.

It proves to be nervous energy. GCU misses 12 of its first 13 shots to trail 20-4. The Lopes do not lead until the game’s 26th minute and fight for their season down the stretch. A Damari Milstead steal sets up Gerard Martin’s layup,

cutting UMKC’s lead to one with 2:21 left.

“It’s winning time,” assistant coach Chris Crevelone tells the Lopes huddle.

GCU survives and advances. Majerle, Alessandro Lever and Oscar Frayer head to the press conference with the Havocs’ cheers still audible.

“Can you say this all in Italian, please?” Majerle asks Lever, his Italian freshman.

|||||
Friday Semifinal day doubles the Lopes’ intrigue with the women and men playing to reach their respective championship games.

The men stage a morning shootaround at a local YMCA before the women play at noon against Cal State Bakersfield, a team that they had beaten six days prior. This time, with star Brie Mobley making one shot, the Lopes trail 35-32 at halftime.

“Exactly like last game, y’all,” assistant coach Nikki Blue says in a locker room where the dry erase board reads “FIGHTING LOPES” atop tactical information. “We’re right where we need to be.”

Once “I Like to Move It” plays, the Havocs feel at home and Mobley likes it, too. She scores 13 of GCU’s first 23 second-half points for a 55-54 Lopes lead, but Bakersfield scores the game’s final seven points to win.

The women sit crushed and quiet in the locker room, but the sounds of joy (Bakersfield) and anticipation (Seattle) are unavoidable in nearby locker rooms.

“They played so hard,” Powell says alongside her star seniors, Mobley and Jessica Gajewski. “They left it all on the court.”

More Havocs hit Vegas by the evening. A purple pregame pep rally welcomes fans to the men’s semifinals, which proves to be GCU’s finest moment.

The morning’s hands-on coaching becomes a heart-to-heart pregame talk in the evening.

“I want you to play fun and loose, but I want you to play fundamental,” Majerle says. “You guys



“It just wasn’t our time”
–Dan Majerle

Coach Dan Majerle consoles Casey Benson in the final moments of the Lopes’ loss to New Mexico State in the WAC final. PHOTO BY TRAVIS NEELY

deserve it. You worked really hard so have fun.”

He draws up the Lopes’ first play, adding, “Josh (Braun), go to work.”

GCU fans fill the section behind the bench. Havocs take over the baseline bleachers. Braun scores on the first play and the Lopes leap to a 27-9 start. Majerle claps and yells at the Havocs as Lever makes three consecutive 3-pointers. Majerle sweats through his shirt, expending the emotion and energy of a 40-minute player.

GCU wins 72-56 with exceptional defense against the WAC’s top offense.

“We’re going to the ‘ship!” the Havocs chant before Majerle enters their celebration.

With arms around each other, Braun and Vernon walk down an arena hall.

“I love you,” Braun says.

“I love you, too,” Vernon says.

“One more.”

||||| **Saturday** The “business trip” atmosphere continues for a championship-day shootaround at a local high school. There is levity when the team cheers Lee’s return from the restroom, but focus quickly returns.

“We’ve waited five years for this,” Majerle says. “Be prepared.”

Eight hours later, the Lopes sit in an arc of chairs before a game that could put them in the NCAA tournament. Their opponent, New Mexico State, beat GCU twice during the season, but each loss felt like a win that got away.

“After we score on that ...” Majerle says about an opening play.

GCU has won five in a row and has reached the championship of its first WAC Tournament.

“Honest to God, you guys are already rock stars,” Majerle says.

On national television, the Lopes grind defensively to lead for most of the first 16 minutes. The Aggies catch rhythm, overtake GCU and win 72-58.

The postgame locker room is as silent as a grave with players’ heads buried in their hands.

“You should be proud,” Majerle says. “You had a good year.”

Vernon and Lever head for the press conference with Lever pulling Vernon’s head to his chest. An official delays them with the trophy ceremony within earshot and visible on a nearby laptop.

Majerle paces. Vernon sits on the floor. Lever covers his face.

As Majerle predicted, it was tough.

“It just wasn’t our time,” Majerle says. **G**

THEY'RE BOTH A HIT: Baseball, softball stadiums open

Two Grand Canyon University diamonds have become facility gems.

The University opened Brazell Field at GCU Ballpark and GCU Softball Stadium to be the Lopes' new baseball and softball homes, respectively.

Brazell Field remains situated as it has been since 1962, when baseball program founder Dr. Dave Brazell designed the field on the campus' western edge. Since last offseason, GCU constructed a new 3,500-seat stadium around the field, and the reigning Western Athletic Conference champions drew an overflow crowd for the Feb. 16 opener against perennial power Texas Christian.

GCU Ballpark includes chairback seating, grandstand shading, a concession stand that tripled in size, dugouts that doubled in size, a team shop, a 1,000-square-foot press box, 21 new LED field lights, 37 restroom fixtures, a platform viewing area and an elevator. Field seating sections will be renovated next offseason, but the current design already includes a right-field seating berm.

"To see it keep moving and come to fruition has been amazing," said GCU's seventh-year baseball coach, Andy Stankiewicz. "It's the jewel in the desert. It's got a spring training look about it with the batting cages, the (practice) half-field and the stadium. Baseball fans who have gone to those big-league spring training sites, I

hope they see a comparison to here."

The softball venue had its new field and batting cages for the 2017 season, but the defending WAC champions now have a 1,200-seat stadium with canopy shading. The grandstand features chairback seating in the middle and benches with back supports on the sides.

A crowd of 1,249 attended GCU Softball Stadium's Feb. 8 opener, and 1,403 fans came a night later when reigning national champion Oklahoma visited.

"It's eye-catching," 15th-year softball coach Ann Pierson said. "You don't have to know anything about the sport. You look at everything from the fence line back. Having been here as long as I have, I know what the changes were and the transition is. I love that people get to see it now."

The openings concluded GCU's "10 in 2" initiative, in which 10 new athletic facilities opened in two years – GCU Stadium, GCU Ballpark, GCU Softball Stadium, GCU Basketball Practice Facility, GCU Tennis Facility, GCU Beach Volleyball Stadium, Lopes Performance Center expansion, GCU Golf Course practice areas, an athletics equipment room and GCU Student-Athlete Development Center.

— PAUL CORO



GCU Softball Stadium can seat 1,200, and everyone has a great view of the field.

PHOTO BY SLAVEN GUJIC

Brazell Field at GCU Ballpark has seating for 3,500, which includes a berm down the right-field line.

PHOTO BY DAVID KADLUBOWSKI





Degrees do a 180

GCU better serves students by adapting curriculum to evolving job market

BY LANA SWEETEN-SHULTS

You've spent four years taking Botany 101, the History of Rock 'n' Roll and similar courses while wracking your brain over which character has more pride and which has more prejudice – Mr. Darcy or Elizabeth Bennet.

You've spent thousands of dollars to gain that knowledge.

You picked a major you love.

But now what are you going to do with that English degree?

"Although humanities are near and dear to my heart, the reality is we have to make sure that all of our students get good, quality jobs when they get out of college. Otherwise, what's the point?" said Dr. Sherman Elliott, Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

During the Great Recession, and for a few years after that, headlines read that college graduates were drowning in debt. Even worse, they

couldn't find jobs. While the outlook these days seems rosier — the unemployment rate for those 25 and older with a bachelor's degree is only 2.5 percent, according to the January 2017 report by the Bureau of Labor Statistics — colleges still are under pressure when it comes to making sure students are in the best position to get a job once they earn that degree.

"The Department of Education said, 'Why is it we have so many students graduating from different programs, but they don't necessarily have a job waiting for them?'" said Dr. Kevin Walling, CHSS lead in justice studies, government and history. "They said, 'American universities and colleges, you should be doing a better job educating students in a way that leads to employment.'"

CHSS is focusing on just that.



Naomi Primeau, who works at the Arizona Capitol Museum, is one of the students who have benefited from GCU's career-focused degrees.

PHOTO BY RALPH FRESO

"It's been a passion of mine for almost 20 years," Elliott said. "Outside of working for Grand Canyon University, I've always felt that the academic realm was too focused on academics for academics' sake. ... I loved my undergraduate experience in college, but I don't remember a professor ever talking about a job; never once was I guided toward a career."

One example of what he calls the college's approach to career-focused degrees is the Bachelor of Arts in History with an Emphasis in Public History.

"We realized that history was dying across the country," Elliott said. "There always are teaching jobs, right? But there are jobs in what we call public, or applied, history. So we changed our program. We met with curators, preservationists, archivists. These are people who have worked in museums. They work for state and national parks. They work for private foundations."

Naomi Primeau, who graduated from GCU in 2016, is one of the first graduates of that program, launched just three years ago. After internships at the Phoenix Historic Preservation Office and the Tempe History Museum, she has been working as a curatorial assistant at the Arizona Capitol Museum since January, where she helps install exhibits, does research and leads tours.

"I knew I didn't want to do education," she said.

As serendipity would have it, Dr. David Dean, faculty lead for the history program, pulled her aside and told her she would be a good candidate for the new academic track in public history.

"I said, 'That's it!'" Primeau proclaimed of her light-bulb moment and changed her major to include the public history emphasis.

When it came to her job search, "it (the career-focused degree) has definitely helped. One thing about public history is it is a graduate program at most schools. I think we are the only ones that offer an undergraduate degree."

The college has done the same kind of humanities degree reshaping for the psychology program, not only offering the traditional psychology degree but an

emphasis in performance and sports psychology.

"That one's been taking off. ... Not only do kids love sports and performance, but it's where the jobs are," Elliott said.

In government, CHSS offers two emphases, one in public policy and another in prelaw or legal studies.

"A lot of kids end up either not going to law school, or they go to law school, they don't like it and they drop out. We wanted to make sure the degree was something useful, so we created a program so that even if you don't go to law school, you can still get a job as a paralegal."

The college did the same for English majors, where jobs, again, aren't so plentiful. The degree now includes an emphasis in professional writing, added two years ago, to go along with the B.A. in English for Secondary Education.

GCU does not offer a journalism program.

"Enrollment statistics for journalism majors, and employment opportunities that journalism majors have, have dramatically decreased in recent years," said Brian Raftery, Program Chair for English.

Professional writing students can still pursue journalism but also advertising, public relations, media relations or organizational communication. Some students in the program — it touts 100 students in just two years — are doing internships as ghostwriters, website content creators, and in digital content writing and marketing, to name a few.

Raftery said the college keeps up with the job market by looking at Department of Labor statistics and meeting with advisory boards. The English and communications advisory board, for example, is made up of business leaders, literary agents and people in the advertising and newspaper industries.

"We want to make sure that our programs are meeting the needs of the marketplace because we need to keep our fingers on the pulse," he said. "We want our students to find careers in their majors. We don't want them to have to end up at Starbucks after four years." **G**

Reshaping the degree



Bachelor of Arts in English: Now

two tracks are offered — the B.A. in English with an Emphasis in Professional Writing and the B.A. in English for Secondary Education.



Bachelor of Arts in History:

You can still get a B.A. in History or you can pursue the B.A. in History with an Emphasis in Public Education.



Bachelor of Science in

Behavioral Health Science: In addition to the Behavioral Health Science Degree, CHSS offers three emphases, one in Childhood and Adolescence Disorders, a second in Family Dynamics and a third in Trauma.



Bachelor of Science in

Counseling: Has become the B.S. in Counseling with an Emphasis in Addiction, Chemical Dependency and Substance Abuse.



Bachelor of Science

in Psychology: Students can pursue the original degree, a B.S. in Psychology, or could choose a B.S. in Psychology with an Emphasis in Performance and Sports Psychology.

The Worship Team performs at the start of Chapel every Monday in GCU Arena.

PHOTO BY TRAVIS NEELY



Well-composed

Worship Team strikes a chord at Chapel with its weekly inspiration

BY LANA SWEETEN-SHULTS

Quinn Turner puts her heart into a Chapel song.

PHOTO BY TRAVIS NEELY



It's 9:30 a.m.

Do you know where your rock band is? If your rock band is of the typical rock band ilk, then the lead singer, axe man and the rest are likely asleep in a hotel room after an eardrum-decimating concert that ended around midnight.

But at 9:30 a.m. on Mondays at Grand Canyon University, with the sun's rays just spilling over Camelback Mountain, the Lopes know where their band is, though calling it a rock band isn't at all accurate despite the electric guitars.

By that time, the group has dug its heels into the stage at 7,000-capacity GCU Arena, the same stage where the Beach Boys, Casting Crowns and Third Day have played. The musicians are in the midst of Monday morning rehearsal as they prime their vocals, oil their musicianship and smooth out any kinks before the beginning of Chapel, the wonderfully

unique thing that happens most Monday mornings at GCU.

Unlike most universities, GCU likes to start off its week with a 45-minute Chapel service that includes a 25-minute talk by a guest speaker — usually a Phoenix-area pastor — and 20 minutes of praise and worship songs by the Chapel band, or as Spiritual Life Worship Manager Jared Ulrich calls it, the Worship Team.

"We try to avoid the word 'band' because it suggests a more 'rock star' connotation," Ulrich said. "There's so much more work that goes into what we do than just a band playing music."

Musicians from one band on the team are on stage for sound check, dressed in jeans and T-shirts, like their fellow GCU students.

The technical crew has been at the Arena even earlier, since about 7 a.m.

The band is zipping through its set: "Your love never fails, never gives up, never runs out



**VIDEO ON
NEWS.GCU.EDU**

What goes into preparing
for a Chapel worship set

**Luke Robinson says of the
Worship Team experience,
“You live alongside one
another. You become
best friends.”**

PHOTO BY GILLIAN REA

on me,” the vocalists harmonize to “One Thing Remains” by Jesus Culture.

Then the group stops mid-song. Vocalist, guitarist and worship leader Mallory Denson, a Worship Arts major, pipes in, “Chapel band crew — can we get batteries for Garrett? His pack is cutting out.”

Soon after, guitarist and vocalist Luke Robinson, co-worship leader and fellow Worship Arts major, asks the crew, with a smile, “If I scratch my mustache, can you guys hear it?”

The band wraps up rehearsals an hour later, and by 11 a.m. team members are backstage for the preservice prayer. Then the bright lights come up, the drums reverberate and the Worship Team launches into its set.

The group is one of three eight-member bands that are part of the Worship Team, which lends inspiration to Monday morning Chapel and Tuesday night’s The Gathering.

More than 100 students audition annually to be part of one of the bands, each of which includes two worship leaders, a worship leader apprentice and five musicians. In addition, a six-student tech team is responsible for sound, lighting and video for the 30-member Worship Team.

“It’s a pretty rigorous audition,” said Robinson, who didn’t make it onto the team his

freshman year. “Definitely a lot of people want to be on the Worship Team.”

Musicians and vocalists fill out a questionnaire online and submit a YouTube video of a performance. Those who get a callback do an interview with a panel of judges who “take into consideration personal talent, personal devotion and walk of life,” Robinson said. There’s also a live audition with the band.

“We look for musical talent but also spiritual maturity. Those go hand-in-hand,” Ulrich said.

The bands’ format hasn’t changed much since Ulrich’s arrival in 2014 (before then, a staff member led the worship music).

Much like Chapel is unique at GCU, so is the Worship Team, which is entirely student-led.

“If we have issues, we talk to Jared, but it’s really up to the leaders what we do with that conflict,” Denson said, adding that another unique aspect is that the team performs in an arena. “Not a lot of colleges get that.”

Also, the bands stay together for a year.

Robinson wanted to join the Worship Team for the great opportunity. “I thought, how incredible this is to play alongside one another. You live alongside one another. You become best friends.”

Those relationships continue offstage. Worship team vocalist and sophomore

performance major Brooklyn Peterson said with a smile, “They all come over to my apartment and we make breakfast burritos together. It’s like team bonding.”

Denson added, “We’ll buy our team lunch sometimes. We’ll buy them coffee. We have two-on-ones, meetings that we have with everyone on our team ... see how the semester’s going.”

Drummer Michael Joy said the best thing about being in the band is that Worship Team members become family.

“But also, seeing the progression throughout the years. I’ve been here since 2013, so seeing the progression and the hearts of the students and how much they want worship ... it’s awesome.”

Guitarist Garret Crane said, “I feel like, especially in The Gathering on Tuesday nights, there’s such a connection with the student body and the band. I feel like we’re just one. It’s not just a band playing for people; we’re playing together. That connection is so unique among every other church or university that I’m aware of.”

Peterson said being part of the Worship Team is not just a big opportunity — it’s prime training ground for future worship pastors. But, she added, “The friendships that I’ve formed with them are really strong and valuable.”

Robinson said simply of being with the band, “I am forever changed.” **G**

Faith knows no bounds

Survey shows that GCU's Christian foundation reaches students in all sectors

BY JEANNETTE CRUZ



"Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be." – 1 PETER 5:2

Sarah Millers first came across that Bible verse when a Grand Canyon University instructor posted it to her classroom's discussion forum.

The online health administration student was asked to think about how she could apply the verse to her job as manager of an emergency room at a local hospital. She felt moved.

"It really sat with me, and I realized that my objective as a manager is to be the quality shepherd at all times, strengthen and to fully

understand the flock in my care," she said. "That was just one of many professors who have contributed to my success."

It's an example of how GCU's Christ-centered curriculum and service beyond the classroom provide a foundation for the community with an intention to bring all individuals together regardless of their backgrounds or beliefs. But it's also an indication of how online students feel as spiritually connected to GCU as ground students.

"A biblical perspective of life means that if you are going to grow then you need to be in community of others who will help you grow," said Dr. Tim Griffin, GCU's Pastor and Dean of Students.

"Community is an overused word at GCU. In an academic setting the idea is typically framed around 'engagement.' Students have to be engaged with other students and in their classrooms to be successful. What I see here is that when students are prodded to think about faith issues, they are engaged."



“Coming from an education perspective, I challenge students to think about how they will continue to show forgiveness and grace in the classroom. How is it that in a world where teaching strategies and standards constantly change, there is one thing (God) that never changes?”

— Sonya Berges, College of Education online professor

What is now called the One Foundation mission continually guides the University’s learning and working communities toward faithfulness, excellence and service to God.

Students have access to many sources to live their faith daily — from classroom instruction, to university counselors, to GCU’s True North video devotionals on a YouTube channel, ranging in topics from honoring parents in spite of human failures to peace, thankfulness and a life of constant worship.

“We’re educating from a Christian perspective in a way that raises questions and encourages inquiries,” said Dr. Jason Hiles, Dean of the College of Theology. “There’s no fear in opening up that conversation about faith and allowing questions to arise in the different disciplines.

“We have a large number of students who say they come here because this is a Christian university. When they come, however, even a person who identifies as a Christian might not be expecting the University to cultivate anything in relation to their faith.”

To gain insight on One Foundation’s impact, the University reached out to students with a survey on GCU’s distinct Christian worldview and integration of faith. More than 80 percent of campus, online and evening students identified as Christians. Almost 85 percent of campus students had a positive perception of faith integration and almost 87 percent of online students had a positive one.

“We really have a number of superstar faculty in each college who are really passionate about these things, and that makes

a difference,” Hiles said. “Everybody is coming together. We are talking and we are seeing what Christian worldview looks like using their expertise in their fields.”

Michele Pasley, an online instructor in the College of Theology, teaches with a purpose beyond academics.

“Grading papers is the other stuff we have to do because it’s there,” she said. “But that’s not what life is about — life is about helping people encounter Jesus in a way that really changes their life.

“As a Christian university we are able to love God, love our students and love our neighborhood around the campus.”

Pasley sees her students making connections in classroom discussion forums and in writing assignments. She hears it from other faculty, too.

“We really have a heart and a passion to help students have life-changing encounters with Jesus,” she said. “Typically, mid-course (in Christian Worldview, a required class no matter what their major), students have an assignment where they write about who they believe Jesus to be, and a lot of them really begin to see faith statements and changes in their view of God.”

Nearly 75 percent of all students said their faith has grown while at GCU. Survey responses indicated that more than 80 percent of all students felt well supported in the University process of integrating faith.

Pasley likes that students at GCU don’t always share the same worldview and faith backgrounds.

“We try to set up a safe, warm and inviting

place, and we let students know that they don’t get graded based on their beliefs,” she said.

“When we create that kind of place for civil dialogue, students really enjoy learning from each other, including those who don’t hold a Christian worldview.

“We not only talk about Christian beliefs, but we also talk about the real, hard things in life — suffering, pain and rough experiences.”

Pasley remembers when she and a student were on the phone for two hours. She listened as the student sobbed and explained her pain.

“She walked away from God because of who she thought God was. Who He is is somebody she wanted to be. As she began to take steps dismantling false beliefs and diving into the Bible, I began to see a radical shift in her and the way she wrote and the kinds of comments and questions she asked in class. That was really special,” Pasley said.

Sonya Berges, an online professor in the College of Education, noted the rich Biblical and prayer components that help form followers of Christ.

“Coming from an education perspective, I challenge students to think about how they will continue to show forgiveness and grace in the classroom,” Berges said. “How is it that in a world where teaching strategies and standards constantly change, there is one thing (God) that never changes?

“One colleague mentioned how in her welcome calls she often ends with, ‘Can I pray for you?’ I think it works. I think God truly listens to us.” **G**



Jim Carter (right) is presented his Hall of Fame plaque by Kevin Walling of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. PHOTO BY SLAVEN GUJIC

Easy decision

Evidence is clear: Carter acquitted himself well thanks to Grand Canyon, God

BY JEANNETTE CRUZ

Every time Jim Carter visits the Grand Canyon University campus, he thinks about the impact it has had on his life.

“It all started right here,” said Carter, who was inducted into the GCU Alumni Hall of Fame in March. “I’ve gone from a teacher to a prosecutor to an attorney to a judge – all because of what Grand Canyon University did to start with.”

Carter never envisioned that career path as a teenager in the early 1950s, when he had nothing more than big dreams and a determined spirit.

“I was a kid from south Phoenix who had

no clue where I was going to go,” he said. “I was raised by a single mom. I had no money to go to school.”

After graduating from high school, Carter was working as a laborer, wielding a 12-pound sledgehammer, when he quickly realized that “this isn’t going to be for me.”

Fortunately, God had other plans, too.

Carter was playing softball at his church, Southern Temple, at the same time Dr. Dave Brazell was starting a baseball team at what was then Grand Canyon College. Brazell invited Carter and his friend Sam to try out.

Carter remembers the day, right down

to the time (2 p.m.), date (Aug. 3, 1953) and place (Monterey Park) – emphasis on the time and date.

“Boy, was it hot,” he said.

He also was a hot prospect, as it turned out, and Brazell gave him a scholarship. But not only was Carter an athlete; he also was a Christian and a servant leader – perfect for Grand Canyon. As a junior and senior, he served in student government and became vice president. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Physical Education in 1957.

After graduating, Carter was a teacher and coach at Sunnyslope High School for four years

while earning a master's degree. Then God pointed him in a different direction when he decided to go to law school.

"I really thought I could make a difference by going through the teaching route," he said. "God had a change of heart and a change of mind because He turned this completely around. I took the LSAT on a whim, and a month later I was in."

Carter went on to become Assistant City Prosecutor for the City of Phoenix and held that position for seven years before he was appointed Chief Prosecutor for two years. He quickly ascended to the civil side, where he was in charge of the real estate division.

Through that experience, Carter was appointed to the judicial faculty of the limited jurisdiction courts, handling criminal cases. Carter retired in 2005 and recently decided to serve once a week as a pro tem judge.

"Through these years of teaching to law school to the city attorney's office to municipal court judge – that really shows you God's humor," he said. "As a judge you have a chance to make some impact in people's lives that come before you because they come in already with trouble. So I prayed every morning from the bench for wisdom and sensitivity, and I applied the law as best as I could."

He added half-jokingly, "You don't want to see me on Fridays."

Faith Weese, Chief University Relations Officer, has known Carter for years.

"He is very honest, loving and more emotional than people think because he is a tough judge," she said. "But under all the toughness, he is a softie."


"He is probably one of the most sincere, dedicated and positive people I know. Jim knows that the world changes, life changes but God never does."

While Carter's professional accomplishments are remarkable, Carter credits his wife, Ginger, for his success and happiness. He gushed about his love for her with no hesitation.

"She should have gotten a Ph.D. – Putting Hubby Through," he joked. "She is dear to me. She is God's gift to me, no question."

The couple met at GCU when Carter was a sophomore and Ginger was a freshman. They were married by Carter's bible study professor on March 7, 1957, and raised two daughters. They now have three grandchildren.

Carter's connection to the University remains strong, and his hope is that the generations to come never lose sight of the legacy that was started by its alumni.

"We are the root," Carter said. "My purpose is to represent this University wherever I am and with my Christian values day to day." 

"As a judge you have a chance to make some impact in people's lives that come before you because they come in already with trouble. So I prayed every morning from the bench for wisdom and sensitivity, and I applied the law as best as I could."

— Jim Carter



**VIDEO ON
NEWS.GCU.EDU**

The Hall of Fame ceremony

OTHER HALL OF FAME THOUGHTS

Mystie Johnson Foote

CEO, Banner Medical Group

"I'm humbled and I am honored to be recognized. There are a lot of fun memories of the campus. There is a connection here that I don't think very many other universities share because of the experiences students get to have here."

Dr. Michael Baird

Retired Theology professor

"It is a great honor to represent the people I have worked for for over 35 years. ... I believed in the cause and I believed in teaching."

Cathy Poplin

Executive Director, Arizona Technology in Education Association

"There was a time we didn't know if Grand Canyon was going to survive. I'm thrilled that it's here and is as exciting as it is. Most important, I am glad that it still has its strong, Christian focus."

Eric Rasmussen

First Team All-American in baseball

"I know I've been blessed to have my experience at Grand Canyon — whether that's baseball or the interaction with people. I miss this place."



The five inductees (from left): Cathy Poplin, Dr. Michael Baird, Eric Rasmussen, Jim Carter and Mystie Johnson Foote. PHOTO BY SLAVEN GUJIC

1-2-3-4, they're a GCU corps

Come one, come all: The Knotts kids have something in common – they're all Lopes

BY RICK VACEK

Bill and Jenny Knotts and their four children are tied to Grand Canyon University in so many ways, the family tree is purple and the branches reach all across the community.

First, their oldest daughter, Brittany, went to GCU. She was followed by younger sister Andrea. Then brother Trevor. Then the baby in the family, Chelsea.

Four for four. Three graduates, one current student. Once the others saw the experiences Brittany was having at GCU, the path from their former home in nearby Chandler, Ariz., was clear.

"The family's very tight," said Bill, whose uncle was actor Don Knotts and who now is Executive Pastor of Heights Church in Prescott, Ariz., "and all four wanted to stay close to home."

Brittany arrived on campus in 2003 and was one of the first students to live in Hegel (now Cypress) Hall. She got her education degree and now teaches second grade, and she gave birth to her third child in January.

Andrea was in the nursing program and now is a paramedic in the emergency room at Phoenix Children's Hospital.

Trevor got a business degree from GCU and was a highly visible figure on campus – he was vice president of the Havocs and also was Thunder for three years. But now he's in a much more serious role: He's a Phoenix police officer. His wife, Rachael, also is a GCU grad.

Chelsea could have gone to another college, but her memories of family picnics on the grass where GCU Arena now stands were too vivid. She's a junior majoring in nursing, just like Andrea.

"I saw my siblings and all the great things they did at GCU," she said. "I looked at other schools but kept coming back to GCU. I loved the environment and the Christian atmosphere."

Trevor had wanted to be a police officer since he was in high school, and his selfless attitude of servant leadership is right out of the GCU handbook. "If I do it, it means someone else doesn't have to," he said. "I'm very service-minded. It's just how I was raised."

And Trevor also noted that GCU's spirit of community outreach had a noticeable effect on all four kids: They all want to help in the community. "GCU taught us to love Phoenix," he said.

Basketball games have become, as Brittany put it, "a really neat family tradition for all of us and all of our kids, too."

Her 6½-year-old son, Ryan, already has his college picked out.

Guess which one.



GRAND CANYON

The Knotts family's involvement in GCU has included Trevor's stint as Thunder and producing four Lopes: (middle photo, from left) Andrea, Chelsea, Trevor, Brittany.

CLASS NOTES

What's
new with
you?



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

1990s



Mike Irving, B.S. in Physical Education, '99, is the founder of

Canada's largest baseball school, Batter Up Baseball, which focuses on kids having fun as they learn to play. The school offers summer and winter camps, team camps, private training, coaching clinics, employment for student-athletes and more.

2000s



Kathy Loscheider, B.S. in Applied Management, '02, and MBA with an Emphasis in Health

Systems Management, '07, has been appointed to the role of executive director of fellowship at Square Surprise, a not-for-profit assisted living senior community set to open its doors this spring in Surprise, Ariz. Loscheider is also a state-licensed skilled nursing administrator and assisted living manager and is a certified HUD assisted housing manager.



Dr. Kim Neal, M.Ed. in Education Administration, '07, is an instructor and department head

for mathematics at Piedmont Technical College (PTC) in Greenwood, S.C., and recently was honored as an Outstanding Educator for the 2017-2018 academic year at the annual South Carolina Technical Education Association Convention.

2010s



Angel McNeil, M.Ed. in Elementary Education, '10, and M.Ed. in Curriculum and

Instruction: Reading — Emphasis in Elementary Education, '12, is the founding principal of Rocketship Public Schools' Ward 5 school in Washington, D.C. McNeil first joined Rocketship as an assistant principal at Rocketship Fuerza Community Prep, then served as a founding assistant principal at Rocketship Rise Academy, the first Rocketship school in Washington.



Julie Stephens, M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction: Reading — Emphasis is

Elementary Education '11, is an interrelated special education teacher at Lakeside Middle School in Cumming, Ga., and has been named Middle School Instructor of the Year in Forsyth County Schools. Stephens has taught in the district since 2011.



Tracey Gilbert, M.S. in Addiction Counseling, '12, is a therapist at Pathways, one of the

largest providers of behavioral and mental health services in Arizona. Gilbert started at Pathways as the young adult team lead, then transitioned to a case-management supervisor position.



Samuel Hindi, B.S. in Secondary Education with an Emphasis in Math, '12, and M.Ed. in

Curriculum and Instruction: Technology, '15, teaches science

classes to grades 7 through 12 at Corona (N.M.) High School. Hindi uses model wind turbines built by students to teach them about renewable energy.



Christine Marsh, M.Ed. in Educational Administration, '15, is an English

honors/international baccalaureate teacher at Cactus Shadows High School in Scottsdale, Ariz., and was named the 2016 Arizona Teacher of the Year. Marsh has been awarded one of two Lopes for Literacy Grants and a one-year free membership in the Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society in education at GCU.



Connor Piche, B.S. in Finance and Economics, '15, was recently hired as a sales recruiter for

SkyWater Search Partners, rated by Forbes as the No. 1 recruiting firm in Minnesota.



SPOTLIGHT

Jeff Orr, '89

Home is where his heart and his master's degree both are

When Jeff Orr was considering where to get his master's degree, he decided to go back to a place filled with good memories — albeit on a campus that is much bigger than what he knew.

He went home ... to Grand Canyon University.

Orr, a Phoenix leadership coach who was one of the speakers at the TEDx event on campus in February, transferred from another college to Grand Canyon and got his Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree in 1989.

"It really was God directing me through those kinds of circumstances — I ended up with a much better education, smaller class sizes, better grades," he said. "That's what drew me back, was that experience. I just had a draw to come back here."

Orr, who has worked as a corporate trainer for Fortune 500 companies and is the author of "Succeed in the New Normal: Winning Strategies to Succeed in an Unfamiliar World," completed work on his Master of Business Administration in January and now is working on his Master of Science in Leadership.

He also is an accomplished musician, thanks in part to his commercial music minor from GCU. He has released three CDs.

Here's how different things were when he first was on campus: He was one of three people in his music class, and when the other two dropped out he was able to receive one-on-one instruction on "business, music, arrangements, everything."

"I only wanted to do two things when I was growing up: Be a rock star and be a CEO of my own company. I guess I've kind of done both," he said. "I've performed on large stages in front of thousands and I've performed in coffeehouses. I speak in front of groups and I run my own company."

And he's proving that you can go home again.

— RICK VACEK



Todd Hinnenkamp, Ed.D. in Organizational Leadership with an Emphasis in

Instructional Leadership, '16, is a district instructional coordinator for the North Kansas City (Mo.) School District. The district's students have outperformed those in similar Missouri school districts in recent years thanks to its innovative model. Hinnenkamp will make his second presentation at the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Annual Exposition when it meets in April in Washington, D.C.



Billie Bell, M.Ed. in Educational Leadership, '16, is a finalist for Apache County (Ariz.)

manager. Bell is the business manager and chief financial officer at Concho (Ariz.) Elementary School, a position she has held since 2007.



Alexandra Davis, B.S. in Sports Management, '16, is the administrative coordinator for the

Arizona Coyotes. As a GCU student, Davis did internships with the Coyotes and the Arizona Diamondbacks.



Bryan Kelsen, M.A. in Christian Studies with an Emphasis in Urban Ministry, '16, left a 30-year

career as a photographer for The Pueblo (Colo.) Chieftain and became the teaching minister at Christ Church in Pueblo West, Colo. His emphasis at the non-denominational church is community and youth outreach.



Alexandra Biggs, B.A. in Dance Education, '16, is the new dance teacher at Maricopa

High School in Phoenix, where she teaches beginning, intermediate and advanced dance. Biggs also teaches jazz and tap at CYT Phoenix, a non-profit youth organization where she soon will be choreographing "Shrek the Musical."



Christina Rice, B.S. in Marketing, '16, is a marketing assistant at Gannett Fleming in Phoenix.

She is the lead designer and produces marketing collateral for the west region.



Mona Clayton, M.S. in Nursing with an Emphasis in Nursing Education, '16, is the CEO of

Nurses Roc 2, a publishing company focused on promoting careers in nursing. Clayton's goal is to reach 100,000 future nurses, and in May she will spearhead her #future100000 campaign, hosted by the Los Angeles Unified School District. She is targeting high school students, men and single mothers from South Central Los Angeles and the nearby Housing Authority community for her seminar, "Walking the Red Carpet to a Successful Nursing Journey."



Lauren Abraham, B.A. in Communications, '16, is a blogger and editor at Bloguettes,

a creative strategy and design studio in Phoenix. Abrahams has created her own lifestyle blog, "Love, Lauren Michelle."



Ronda Katzenmeyer, B.S. in Nursing, '17, was named Chief Nursing Officer at

the Colorado Mental Health Institute in Pueblo, Colo. Katzenmeyer has worked there since July 2014 following a 12-year career with the Colorado Department of Corrections. She is pursuing a master's degree in Nursing Leadership at GCU.



Karen Shofron, M.S. in Professional Counseling, '17, was a volunteer for the

American Counseling Association (ACA) and twice has been elected to represent Arizona at a national conference in Washington, D.C.



Trent Godfrey, B.S. in Sports Management, '17, accepted a position as Professional

Sports Program Manager for the National Center for Drug Free Sport in Kansas City, Mo. While a student at GCU, Godfrey served on the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee and was captain of the men's swimming and diving team.



Sarah Engels, B.S. in Marketing, '17, has volunteered for Feed My Starving Children, a Christian

non-profit organization, since she was 10 and is serving in the Dominican Republic.



Erica Kennerknecht, B.S. in Nursing, '17, has been named a nurse manager at the St.

Elizabeth Campus of the Mohawk Valley Health System, based in Utica, N.Y. Kennerknecht has

been employed by MVHS since 2013 and has served as a staff nurse for the Neuro Peds, 3A and 3B units.



Ann Cherryholmes, B.S. in Elementary Education with an Emphasis in English, '17, teaches

language arts and social studies to fifth-graders at Gateway Pointe Elementary School in Gilbert, Ariz. She was awarded a \$200 grant by the school's PTA to buy curriculum for her classroom.



Taylor Armer, B.S. in Marketing, '17, is a public relations associate at

Knoodle, an advertising, public relations and marketing agency in Phoenix. She did an internship there during her senior year at GCU.



Monique Ealey, M.Ed. in Educational Leadership, '17, is the Assistant

Director of Programs at Mississippi Children's Museum in Jackson, Miss. Her outreach programs include professional development for teachers and literacy outreach in Jackson and the Mississippi Delta.



Katie Casteel, B.S. in Hospitality Management, '17, began her career by

launching new internship programs at Desert Mountain Country Club in Scottsdale, Ariz. She hopes to recruit hospitality students from GCU.

GCU NEWS



Supporters of Harmony Mosier donned their tutus for Run to Fight Children's Cancer in March. PHOTO BY BRANDON SULLIVAN

Watch out, cancer: Support for race is getting tutu good

Terry Velasquez and a dozen others donned shimmering ballet tutus March 10 at the eighth annual Run to Fight Children's Cancer, which has called Grand Canyon University home since 2011.

"We have a little girl in our neighborhood. ... She's still fighting cancer," Velasquez said.

That little girl, Harmony Mosier, had a bump in her mouth that her parents thought was a tooth coming in.

It wasn't a tooth. It was a rare cancer in the soft tissue that would spread to her lungs.

Friends and family raised more than \$26,000 in just two weeks in 2016 to help Harmony's family, and they haven't stopped, still supporting Harmony at Run to Fight.

For Mike Baumgardner, the run — the largest in Arizona dedicated solely to pediatric cancer — has become home.

The Baumgardners have been participating in the event — a 10K, 5K and Cancer Survivors Walk — for Mike's daughter, Olivia. She was just 3 years old when she was diagnosed and became Run to Fight's first race starter. Olivia, now 10, just hit her five-year, cancer-free mark.

"Our kids have grown up being here," said Baumgardner, sans tutu but wearing a green Team Olivia T-shirt along with about 40 other supporters.

Run to Fight, which was founded by GCU, was managed for the first time this year by Children's Cancer Network, the beneficiary of the event along with Phoenix Children's Hospital.

It was another successful year for the event, which touted 2,325 registered runners/walkers, 511 volunteers and 23 vendor booths and has raised more than \$500,000 since its inception.

Stephanie Chudy, who beat Hodgkins lymphoma when she was 15, was at the run for the first time. She looked at the boundless support and said, "It's meaningful to me."

— LANA SWEETEN-SHULTS



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