Researching the declining populations of Rocky Mountain Trumpeter Swans
I first became interested in scholarship-giving opportunities at WOU after attending the President’s Club Dinner in 2011. I had always thought scholarships were gifts from wealthy individuals and foundations. At the dinner, I read through the list of all the scholarships funded and noticed a predominance of smaller scholarships, many in the $1,000 range. I realized then that I could afford to fund an annual scholarship through the WOU Foundation.

After the dinner, I contacted the foundation staff and they arranged a meeting to discuss funding opportunities. We discussed the grant title, amount and parameters. I wanted to honor my father, who spent a long career in local government. I also wanted to direct the scholarship to someone following a possible career path similar to my own. I have a geography degree from Southern Oregon University and work as a local city planner.

In 2012, I funded the first Leo S. Fancey Geography Scholarship. The $1,000 scholarship is available to upper division geography majors interested in a career in planning. It’s been rewarding to me to help students fund their dreams – particularly the planners of tomorrow. In the coming years I hope to increase the amount of the scholarship.

I wanted to mention how wonderful it is working with WOU Foundation staff. They are very attentive and provide great service in developing a scholarship and payment plan to meet my needs. I look forward to working with them for years to come. Although I only give a $1,000, they always treat me like I give $1,000,000.”

Mark Fancey, Monmouth community development director

Interested in creating or supporting a scholarship? Contact us at:

WOU Foundation
Western Oregon University
345 N. Monmouth Ave.
Monmouth, OR 97361
This issue of the Western Edge focuses on opportunities provided by Western Oregon University faculty and staff to involve students in research and projects. Research opportunities for undergraduates is something special about WOU, and not widely practiced at many universities.

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Richard Woodcock Education Center made possible by generosity of renowned educator

A STRONG REPUTATION of educating high-quality teachers has been a part of Western Oregon University’s identity since the school’s creation in 1856. Approximately 80 percent of Oregon school districts have an educator trained at WOU. That important tradition is being honored through the creation of a new College of Education building that will feature high-tech learning spaces. The facility has become a reality thanks to a generous gift of $1.4 million from former psychology professor and education leader Dr. Richard Woodcock and legislative support with $17.2 million in state bonds.

The $1.4 million gift is the third largest single donation in school history and will help create the Richard Woodcock Education Center, a 58,000 square foot facility scheduled to open in fall 2016. The facility will continue to expand the university’s academic footprint as part of its strategic plan to meet the growing needs of Oregonians and assist in the state's 40-40-20 initiative to provide a better educated Oregon citizenry and improved economy.

To meet the rapidly changing needs of classroom teachers, the Richard Woodcock Education Center will incorporate state-of-the-art teaching tools, which include SMART Boards, avatar simulations, and live-streaming connections with real classrooms in partnership with Salem-Keizer School District and other surrounding partner districts. In addition, the three divisions of Teacher Education, Special Education, and Health and Physical Education will come together in the new facility to promote enhanced collaboration across disciplines and improve instructional delivery.

On par with WOU’s recent construction projects such as the LEED platinum-certified Ackerman Hall, the Health and Wellness Center and the DeVolder Family Science Center, this new facility will be constructed with long-term sustainability in mind. The education facility recently received Oregon Governor John A. Kitzhaber’s designation as a demonstration project under Executive Order 12-16. This order promotes innovative use of wood products as a green building material and increases markets for Oregon wood products. The new building will feature creative usage of wood products and timber hybrid structures, as well as promote the use of cross-laminated timber.

“I am personally grateful for Dr. Woodcock’s investment in Western Oregon University, the WOU College of Education, and its students — our future generation of teachers. This action is a testament to his fine work as a world-renowned educator and his commitment to Oregonians,” said WOU President Mark Weiss. “Additionally, his personal interest in both bilingual education and special education needs is a demonstration of Dr. Woodcock’s commitment to challenging today’s teachers to exceed the needs of tomorrow. We are quite blessed to have had him teaching our students for even a brief stint in his illustrious career, and we hope he fondly remembers his days here in Monmouth. We are proud to have a college of education building named after his ongoing legacy.”

Woodcock served as an assistant professor of psychology and the Reading Clinic director from 1957 to 1961 at WOU. His background in education and psychology includes serving as an elementary teacher, school psychologist, director of special education, neuropsychologist, and holding posts at educational institutions including the University of Northern Colorado, Vanderbilt University, University of Arizona, University of Southern California, and the University of Virginia. Most significant is his work to create the Woodcock-Johnson battery of tests, which grew from his desire to improve and measure an individual’s learning ability.

“My time as a faculty member at the Oregon College of Education is among some of the fondest memories of my career. Over the years since then I have continued to see the university grow and have been aware of its expanding academic programs. The university has maintained its mission of providing quality education on its own campus and across the state. When I heard about the plans for a new College of Education building and the opportunity to become involved, it sparked my interest. I believe my investment in this facility and its students will have a continuing impact even beyond Oregon as WOU continues to produce highly effective and inspiring educators.”
WOU receives approval for institutional governing board

WOU RECEIVED APPROVAL on April 4, 2014 to become an independent state university from the Oregon State Board of Higher Education (OSBHE). Currently, WOU is governed by the OSBHE, but with this affirmative decision, the institution will begin transitioning to full self-governance and its own governing board to be effective July 1, 2015. This is the same governance change taking effect on July 1, 2014, for the three largest state institutions – Oregon State University, University of Oregon, and Portland State University – as part of the state’s transition to a decentralized public university system.

“This decision positions Western to pursue its vision of innovative academic initiatives and programs that best help us continue to do what we do best: educating Oregonians in a smaller, personalized setting,” said President Mark Weiss. “Western appreciates the board’s confidence in our mission, strategies, and financial sustainability conveyed through this endorsement. Furthermore, we want to thank members of the OSBHE and the Oregon University System Chancellor’s Office who have spent the better part of the last year focused on discussions and analysis in order to reach an informed decision.”

WOU will now begin identifying potential board member candidates, from whom the governor will make his selections and submit to the Oregon State Senate for confirmation. The board’s role will be to define policy for the institution; specific authority allows it to hire/fire the president, endorse the creation of new academic programs, approve tuition increases (up to five percent), issue revenue bonds, and approve biennial budget requests before they are submitted to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission.

WOU invited to host 2014 Western Psychological Association Convention this spring

THE 94TH ANNUAL Western Psychological Association conference will be hosted by WOU and held in Portland, Ore., in late April. This convention will be a significant opportunity for WOU to gain well-deserved recognition for its psychology department, as approximately 2,000 educators, graduate students and practicing psychologists will attend. Dr. Ethan McMahan, assistant professor of psychology, and Dr. Eric Cooley, professor emeritus, are serving as convention program chairs, and have been working with the department faculty to create a vibrant program of outstanding speakers and panels. WOU psychology students will be able to attend the convention and assist as volunteers. “This is one of the largest regional conferences in psychology,” said McMahon, “and it is important to me that WOU is represented well.”

“Some of the most prestigious colleges and universities on the West Coast have served as host institutions for this conference,” McMahon continued, “so this is quite an honor for us. I hope and expect that our serving as host institution for this conference will set WOU apart as one of the best universities in Oregon for undergraduate education in psychology.”

Sonia Kovalevsky Math Day

Sonia Kovalevsky Math Day (SK Day) is an annual program of mathematics activities for high school girls and their teachers, and has been an annual event at WOU for 10 years. Participants come from regional high schools, and as far away as Coos Bay and Newport. Attendance has more than doubled in the last few years as WOU alumni who participated in SK Day as undergraduates have started bringing groups of their own students to the event. In previous years, the attendance averaged between 40 to 50 girls and six to eight teachers. This year, 14 teachers—and more than 100 girls—participated in the day’s activities. For information about next year’s event, go to wou.edu/math/sk.

Girls work on tangrams at the Game Fair.

A WOU mathematics/computer science major helps a girl with the Queens of Vanity, a math logic game.

Photos by WOU student Cindy Chow (Xin Zhou)
Do we need a comma here?

**COMMAS HAVE THE** bad rap of the punctuation world. There can be too few commas in a sentence, too many, or they can be placed in a weird spot and the sentence no, longer makes, any sense. With some errant commas, a great sentence can quickly go bad.

WOU faculty members and published authors Kate Ristau and Maren Bradley Anderson recently published a pamphlet that will teach anyone ever wanted (or didn’t want) to know about the most common punctuation mark in the English language. *Commas: An Irreverent Primer*, is an easy-to-read guide with practical lessons and examples to ensure any reader will finish the book a comma aficionado.

And to jazz it up a bit, they chose to use fantasy themed examples in the book, such as Barry the Mantecore, which draws from their personal interests in folklore and fantasy. “You learn more if you’re laughing,” said Ristau. The humorous tone is apparent in the first lines of the book: “You see the words ‘Let’s eat Grandpa,’ and you immediately think we are planning on feasting on Grandpa tonight, spectacles and all. But, with one small comma, we can save Grandpa’s life: ‘Let’s eat, Grandpa.’” Clearly, they are pro Oxford Comma.

They decided to focus the book on comma basics of sentence structure as opposed to stylistic tips for using them. The project started as a pamphlet created by Ristau, which she used this past fall as a test run for the book. It contains eight major comma rules and a few extra tips, as well as exercises to make sure the information sinks in. “The point is we’re only covering what you need to know,” Bradley Anderson said.

As English teachers, they have a front row seat to witness what students do and don’t understand about punctuation and sentence structure. While writing the book, they thought about the most common errors they have found in student writing and have learned that many students do not understand the basic structure of a sentence. “We teach students how to use commas and then use that knowledge to teach sentence structure,” Ristau said. “I don’t like learning about grammar so I tried to think about how I’d make it interesting to me.”

Bradley Anderson said that understanding how to use commas is the first step of making one’s writing better. “You can’t fix a car if you don’t know the name of the parts,” she said. Not only do readers learn about sentence mechanics in *Commas: An Irreverent Primer*, they will also get to know the difference between Malaysian and Sri Lankan unicorns.

Ristau has taught at WOU since 2010 (mostly composition classes) and at University of Oregon prior to that. She graduated from the University of Oregon with a Master of Arts in Folklore, which continues to be integral to her work as a writer. She is represented by Betsy Amster Literary and is currently working on a young adult novel. Visit kateristau.com to learn more.

Bradley Anderson has taught for 17 years, with 12 of those at WOU, where she teaches writing, literature and novel writing classes. She has a Master of Arts in Literature and Teaching Writing from Humboldt State University. She has a published novel, *Liz A. Stratton Closes the Store*; continues to write novels, short stories and poetry; as well as raising two girls and a herd of alpacas. Visit marensc.com to learn more.

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**Elementary math specialization approved**

**WOU NOW OFFERS** Oregon’s only elementary math specialization program, which is similar in structure to the Elementary Reading and Autism Spectrum Disorder specializations already established in elementary schools. The new Elementary Mathematics Instructional Leader (EMIL) program received unanimous approval from the Oregon Teacher Standards and Practices Commission in March.

During the 2014-15 academic year, full implementation of the Common Core State Standards and Practices for Mathematics (CCSSM) will take place in Oregon schools and will create a pressing need for elementary school teachers to have training and practice in this area. WOU’s EMIL program incorporates not only the Common Core State Standards, but the Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators (AMTE) Standards for Elementary Mathematics Instructional Leaders as well.

“We have long understood the value of having teachers who specialize in the development of reading or who specialize in meeting the needs of children with disabilities. However, in the era of the Common Core State Standards and increasing emphasis on high stakes assessments, it is critical that Oregon schools be staffed by instructional leaders with advanced study in the teaching and learning of mathematics,” said Dr. Rachel Harrington, associate professor of teacher education. WOU’s program was developed as a collaborative effort by Harrington and Drs. Laurie Burton and Cheryl Beaver of the Mathematics Department.

Those interested in earning this specialization for Oregon can take the required five mathematics courses and three education courses at WOU as a non-admit student. The classes can also be taken as electives as part of the Master of Science in Education program. All teachers seeking the specialization must have three years of teaching experience before completing the program.
Annual Spring Dance Concert

Each year the highly anticipated Spring Dance Concert features a guest artist, as well as performances created and performed by WOU students and faculty. This year’s guest artist is Brian Enos, who created a new work titled “Aerie,” which will be performed by eight WOU dancers who auditioned for the opportunity. Melding ballet technique with modern movement creativity, Enos created an abstract modern dance that includes broad strokes of kinesthetically pleasing phrases with the nuance of detailed movement. As a dancer, Enos spent several years performing with The Houston Ballet before embarking on an eight-year career as a dancer and choreographer with Hubbard Street Dance Chicago.

“The student pieces in the concert represent the culmination and application of skills gained over a year long series of composition courses the students have taken. All of the dances reflect hours of commitment from both choreographers and dancers to bring inspiration into the visible form of expressive movement, which is the artistry of dance,” said Deborah Jones, dance professor and director of the Spring Dance Concert.

Dance faculty Deborah Jones, Sharon Oberst and Darryl Thomas have created performances for the event, along with student choreographers Amelia Douglas, Cy Higashi, Jenni Bowker, Angel Stromberg, Emily Aalbers, and Rachel Britt. Performances run May 8 to 10, admission is $12 (general), $10 (seniors) and $7 (students). For tickets, contact the box office at 503-838-8462.

WOU faculty, students and professional musicians playing together at Portland venue

Student Performers Studying in the Music Department have the special opportunity to play alongside professional musicians as part of their academic training. It’s a skill building experience, according to Dr. Tom Bergeron, professor of music at WOU. “You always play better when you play with people who are better than you.

On May 15, students in WOU’s Orquestra Brasil, a 16-piece Brazilian repertoire orchestra led by Bergeron and Cassio Vianna, music instructor at WOU, will open a show at The Secret Society in Portland at 7:30 p.m.. The Tom Bergeron Brasil Band will also perform, which features Bergeron on saxophone, Rosi Bergeron singing, Vianna on piano, Tim Gilson on bass, and Jason Palmer on drums. Rosi Bergeron and Vianna are both from Rio de Janeiro. Keller Coker, WOU music professor, will sit in with both groups.

“Students will have the opportunity to play in a professional venue with an experienced sound engineer,” said Bergeron. “I think it’s exciting for them to have an opportunity to play off campus in a venue that’s part of Portland’s nightlife.”

“It’s a safe way for them to be in a type of venue they may have not had a chance to play in before.” Some of the orchestra students are also currently enrolled in Bergeron’s business of music class, which has students work as publicists for the performances over spring term. They are able to experience both sides of such an event. For more information visit brasilband.com or reverbnation.com/orquestrabrasil.
When thinking about populations who need food support, college students probably don't spring to mind. But this is a population often overlooked and in need of support. A May 2011 study found that 59 percent of WOU students reported being food insecure at some point during the previous year. There were 354 students surveyed, according to an article "Prevalence and correlates of food insecurity among students attending a mid-size rural university in Oregon" published in the Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior, co-authored by Dr. Megan M. Patton-López, former WOU professor Dr. Daniel F. López-Cevallos, WOU assistant professor Dr. Doris I. Cancel-Tirado and Leticia Vazquez.

Among the general population in Oregon, food insecurity is reported among 15 percent of the population, and other college student populations report smaller numbers than WOU’s 59 percent as well. Cancel-Tirado believes this is the case at WOU because the student population has a higher number of first-generation students that come from low-income backgrounds or rural areas highly affected by food insecurity.

“I think we will always have vulnerable populations at WOU, so it’s something we have to protect them from.” Cancel-Tirado said another issue for the student population is that access to fresh fruits and vegetables is low, and there are many fast food restaurants in the area. Also, parent support can be an issue. If parents struggle with food insecurity themselves, it is difficult when a student calls to say they are running a little low on food.

“Meeting the 40/40/20 goals is not just about education, when someone is hungry they can’t do well in school. We need to strengthen access, education and policy.”

Doris Cancel-Tirado, assistant professor of community health

Senior and community health major Courtney Wemple volunteers at the WOU Food Pantry. Items include canned and boxed food, as well as bulk grains and cereals. The pantry also stocks clothing items for those in need. It is located on the second floor of the Academic Programs and Support Center. For more information, call the Associated Students of Western Oregon University office at 503-838-8553.

It is not true that someone needs to have completely bare cupboards and be starving to go to a food bank like the WOU Food Pantry. Food insecurity is actually much less extreme. A diet low in protein or fresh fruit and vegetables, or high in peanut butter and jelly sandwiches or Top Ramen may signal a need for assistance with proper nutrition to maintain health. Food insecurity can be temporary. Unexpected car repairs, for example, can create the need for short-term help with groceries.

Cancel-Tirado believes the first step to fighting food insecurity and providing stronger support for students at WOU is to educate the community on what it is. There is a stereotype that students waste their money on alcohol and frivolous things when they could be buying healthy food. “I think that tends to be a stereotype of college students. If you think about Western and the surrounding area, it’s not a party school. I can see this maybe becoming an issue at another type of institution, but at Western, many of our students work. One of the things our study highlighted was that students are working an average of 19 hours a week. If you add that to the credit hours, I don’t think our students are giving up food for alcohol,” she said.

This is a big issue and there is a lot of work to be done. “I don’t think just having the food pantry is enough; we have to address the food desert issue. How can we improve the local food system with improved access to quality food? I think it’s a matter of policy too – we need to take it to the Oregon Legislature and discuss how meeting the 40/40/20 goals is not just about education, when someone is hungry they can’t do well in school. We need to strengthen access, education, and policy.”

Cancel-Tirado added that it’s critical to normalize the experience of using resources outside one’s own means and make students feel like it’s okay to use the food pantry or access other resources available.
Got mulch?

ERICA WILLS, a graduating senior and member of the Honors Program at WOU, is proof that one person can make a difference. She knows that change comes from the power of one—one individual, one school, one community—choosing to take simple, daily, sustainable actions in any way possible.

In 2012, as part of Dr. Mary Pettenger’s 400-level course on environmental politics and policy, students were tasked to complete a civic engagement project focused on sustainability. Kevin Hughes, landscape maintenance supervisor and recycling manager at the Physical Plant, discussed some of WOU’s sustainability efforts and potential project ideas with the students.

One such project was to investigate what the Physical Plant would need to do to take the yard debris generated on campus and compost it for future use. This would not only save Western thousands of dollars from not having to purchase new compost material every year, but would also have a good effect on the environment, as composting yard debris rehabilitates the soil and reduces methane production in landfills, among other ecological benefits. Wills was eager to take up the challenge.

“Kevin mentioned that this was a dream of his that was close to his heart. His obvious desire to see this dream become a reality is what drew me to be its champion,” said Wills. “Beyond that, I thought this would be a unique angle from which to tackle the topic of waste, and it would allow Western to go green and save green at the same time.”

To get more details, Wills got in touch with Rexius, the company Western had been purchasing compost from since 2001. Jack Hoeck, the vice president of environmental services, offered to drive to campus to look over the pile and give his expert opinion on what equipment might be required based on how much and what kind of material was out there.

Hoeck’s visit brought unexpectedly great news: based on the small size of the material (grass clippings, leaves, bark dust and wood chips), large equipment such as a grinder wouldn’t be necessary for WOU to generate its own compost. In fact, some of the material at the bottom of the pile was practically ready for use. There were about three years’ worth of material (approximately 50 tons) piled up in the compost heap, which is located in an empty field west of Arbor Park and the softball field.

Thanks to Wills’ investigative efforts, Hughes was able to immediately begin making the necessary changes to turn that pile of yard debris into a genuine, functioning compost heap. As of March 2014, Western had 83 tons of compostable material, with one-third of it ready to use and the rest still being turned and sifted. The Physical Plant will be using some of Western’s home-grown compost for turf top dressing and plant beds later this spring. A significant amount of the compost will be used in the

continued on page 21
On May 29, WOU will celebrate student academic excellence. The entire day will be dedicated to the presentation of student scholarly activities, including original research papers, projects, artwork, performances, and upper-division course projects, presentations, and papers. The showcase will again be organized by the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi and the Program for Undergraduate Research Experiences (PURE).

The primary objectives of the showcase are to provide an opportunity for presenters, giving them experience that will be useful in furthering their education and careers, and to expose the entire student body to the breadth and importance of the scholarship that is being conducted across campus.

This event is free and open to the public.

wou.edu/events/academic_excellence

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**Faculty/staff publications 2013-14**

**CONFERENCE PAPERS AND PROCEEDINGS**


**CHAPTERS IN EDITED VOLUMES**


**JOURNAL ARTICLES**


Haber, David. “Three Silver Linings in the Cloud of Old Age.” Gerontology & Geriatrics Education.


Fiction and Poetry


NONFICTION BOOKS

Beaver, Cheryl, Laurie Burton, Maria Fund and Klay Kruceck, editors. 2014. Resources for Preparing Middle School Mathematics Teachers. The Mathematical Association of America.


REVIEWS


THAT STATEMENT ALONE can tell you who Emily Plec is. The WOU communication studies professor has seemingly questioned everything, from the rhetoric of work, immigration, women leaders, and the environment to capital punishment, animal communication, and how universities are governed. She described it all as falling within the larger framework of “communication and social justice.” Nothing is outside her sphere of inquiry.

Plec won the 2013 Christine L. Oravec Research Award in Environmental Communication for Perspectives on Human-Animal Communication: Internatural Communication (available in hard copy or as an e-book from Hamersly Library). In her introduction to this collection of essays, she explained the use of internatural communication.

“Internatural communication includes the exchange of intentional energy between humans and other animals, as well as communication among animals and other forms of life.” What this seemingly strange decade-long exploration has revealed to Plec and others engaged in similar research, is that human-animal communication is “at its core...about the construction of meaning and the constitution of our world through interaction.”

This pointed to the fundamental notion that it is only through communication that we define, create and come to know our world. For all who still think that communication studies in college is a speech class, Plec dispelled that with her teaching and research, as well as with how she lives her life.

As an example of a life lived by conviction, she and her partner of 18 years, Jackson Stalley, agreed not to marry until there is federal marriage equality. “We are getting married this September,” she said with a satisfied grin.

One of Plec’s deep commitments at WOU is gender equality. She is an ally trainer for the campus Safe Zone, a network of students, faculty and staff committed and trained to provide safe, non-judgmental and supportive contacts for all WOU community members regarding LGBTQ issues and lifestyles. Plec was on the original committee to create this now seven-year-old organization.

To find out more about WOU’s safezone, go online to wou.edu/student/sla/safezone.php.

In pursuit of knowledge and balance

One of her passionate pursuits has always been unions. “I grew up in a union household with union values,” she said. Because of that, Plec has served over the years as state vice president of the American Federation of Teachers - Oregon, a delegate to the Oregon AFL-CIO convention, and a vice-president and two-term president of WOU’s faculty union, WOUFT. “Pursuit” is the right word for everything Plec does, and she often brings it back to her classroom.

“Because of what I learned about labor and the role of communication in economic change, I now include the rhetoric of work in my communication and social change class,” she noted.

And, because she needs to examine issues from all sides and is passionate about public education she accepted appointment to the Oregon State Board of Higher Education. She has learned many things from this huge commitment. “This offered me many opportunities for professional development,” she said, indicating the big learning curve for effective board membership.
She continued, explaining how she has gotten as much benefit from the charge as she has given. “Knowing what I do about the labor side of things, I have learned a great deal more about what it takes, both financially and politically, to run a university.”

Perhaps most important, however, she “has learned what I do not want to be, and that teaching is where my heart is.”

Why WOU?
When asked why she chose to work at WOU, she answered immediately with “the culture of my department has kept me here, along with the particular student population we serve. Our largely first-generation students do not arrive feeling they are owed a college education. Rather, I find them willing to explore and really earn their education.” She always teaches fall term freshman because “I enjoy seeing the transformation as they progress through to seniors.”

Collaboration
Plec is one of the founding members of PURE, the Program for Undergraduate Research Experience at WOU, which is dedicated to encouraging and celebrating student scholarship as well as collaborative research between faculty and students. She is currently working with former students on two projects: a study of Angela Davis’s rhetoric and a collection of stories of community members who correspond with death row inmates.

Amanda Litzinger, winner of last year’s Julia McCulloch Smith award, started the work on Angela Davis as an independent study last year. She and Plec are co-writing what Plec hopes will become a conference paper this year. “We hope to publish this. I can’t think of a better way to teach than having students apply their analytical skills to the world around them.”

So, if communications studies is not about giving speeches, what exactly is it? “I think all in the department will agree that this is a discipline that teaches us to ask questions and think critically about the world and our interactions in it,” she replied. “We train students to be good listeners, writers and communicators so they can translate their skills to any area of study. Understanding communication is essential to navigating career, family and community,” she said, leaving no doubt of her belief in what she teaches.

“Internatural communication includes the exchange of intentional energy between humans and other animals, as well as communication among animals and other forms of life.”

Emily Plec, communication studies professor

Social media and communication
While people everywhere are grappling with social media, embracing it or proclaiming the end to everything, Plec examines it as she does all things. “It’s not the technology” she said, “it’s what you do with it.” She saw how it is useful as a professor. “I can respond more efficiently to many more students with email or Moodle.”

She said this does not supplant the need for one-on-one contact with students, but that it gives her a chance to adapt to her students’ questions and learning styles. “For example, if one student emails me a question, and it’s important to the class, I can answer it to all of them.”

Asked how social media have changed communication, she sees both good and bad. She started with an overall concern. “It has so rapidly eroded and transformed interpersonal interactions and some technologies can be addictive. We need to think strategically about how to maintain intimacy,” she cautioned. “At the same time, it has the potential to keep us connected to each other in new and interesting ways which are worth examining.”

“Through social media, there is a potential to heighten awareness and responsiveness to the problems and conditions of others.”

Plec says communication research shows how some media uses can make a dramatic difference in socialization and helping avoid feelings of being alone and isolated. She points to spontaneous fundraising through Kickstarter or the “It Gets Better” campaign as examples of the ability of new media platforms.
Trees have been rhapsodized in poetry, have endured the carving of lovers’ initials, have held secret clubhouses for children, have supported lazy summer swings, have been climbed and fallen from, have provided shade for dreamers, have given of themselves for building shelter, have borne “strange fruit” and great pain, and one is considered the cause of original sin.

People have sat in or strapped themselves to trees to protest having them cut down. There are catalogues of historic trees, and main streets have been transformed by the planting of a parade of just the right ones. It’s obvious how proud people and cities can be of their trees.

That brings us to Monmouth, Ore. and a project the city leaders collaborated with Western Oregon University to take on. The university’s Natural Science Club, working with biology professor, Dr. Bryan Dutton, has been conducting a detailed tree inventory of the city’s planter strips and parks for almost two years.

Alexandra Harding (holding tape) and Aquilegia Leet use inventory project equipment to gather data.
The project, which began as a service project for the club, soon included students from Dutton’s Systematic Field Biology class. The two-year project has expanded to also include the students in a class taught by Erin Baumgartner, biology associate professor, Science Inquiry and Design for K-8 Teachers. News of Monmouth’s two-year project has spread, and inventory work will begin on Independence’s street trees in the near future.

One of Dutton’s students, Alexandra Harding, has been working on this throughout, and presented a poster session at the 2013 Academic Excellence Showcase.

Dutton explained the overall focus of the inventory. “Plant demographics, the study of population characteristics, provides historical information and is useful for future planning of green spaces in a city.” The study involves a skill set with botany at its core, but with additional skills that put the inventory into perspective. “To make this meaningful to the city, the students use survey techniques, including photography, GIS (geographic information systems) and Web design. And they also develop the patience it takes to get all this done.”

There is a surprising amount of data to be gathered about each tree. These include location, species, condition, any maintenance needs, any damage to sidewalks or interference with wires, notation about adjacent property, and conflicts with other vegetation.

This sounds like tedious work, but Dutton said “the level of excitement from the students surprised me. They really saw the practical application of classroom learning.”

Armed with kits containing a tape measure, digital camera, hand-held GPS and data sheets, teams of three to four students go out with an expert leader for up to four-hour sessions.

After the first two years (2012-13), a total of 1,051 trees/shrubs have been inventoried, and 3,869 photographs have been taken. A website is being developed that will include an encyclopedia of Monmouth’s street trees with photographs, maintenance and care information and descriptions of each species. There will be an interactive identification key and GIS visualizing and interacting with the data. Important reference links will guide searchers to further information.

“This is interesting to me to see how students take this all so seriously. They do come to understand how this intense study relates to a city’s quality of life. And they see this as a great service to the community.” Dutton hopes this will be a sustainable and useful tool for the city.

Mark Fancey, Monmouth’s community development director, saw the utility of such a project, and is looking forward to its completion this spring. “I will say that having a street tree inventory is an important first step in development of a management plan for trees in public spaces. The inventory includes a health assessment for each tree and allows us to plan for eventual removal and replacement.”

**Taking science outside the classroom**

Baumgartner and her general science methods students have joined the study. But, while they are doing some of the same work as are Dutton’s students, they are also learning some practical applications to employ as elementary school teachers.

In winter term, her students collected data for a national research project. Project BudBurst data is collected in a consistent manner across the country so that scientists can learn more about the responsiveness of plant species to changes in climate locally, regionally, and nationally.

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A delicate balance

Shedding light on the declining population of Rocky Mountain Trumpeter swans

by Cheryl Gaston

Sometimes the most tedious work can be exciting and very rewarding, especially when that work has the potential for restoring populations of magnificent wildlife.

Joe Lewis ’11 and Karli Clark ’12 sample aquatic vegetation at the Harriman State Park Trumpeter Swan wintering grounds (main photo). Early morning arrival of Trumpeter Swans (inset). Photos by Jeff Snyder.
WHEN JEFF SNYDER, biology/ecology assistant professor, got some of his students involved in discovering why some Trumpeter Swan populations are dwindling, he gave them a view of how even minor changes in complex ecosystems can have devastating effects. For the past three years, this research has centered on both the summer breeding grounds at Grays Lake National Wildlife Refuge in the Yellowstone Ecosystem and a wintering habitat along the Henrys Fork of the Snake River in Harriman State Park in Idaho.
Trumpeter Swans, with wingspans of up to eight feet, are the largest waterfowl in the world. Once common across the North American continent, these birds were nearly eliminated from the lower 48 states and Canada during the 18th and 19th centuries. By 1929, habitat loss and slaughter by commercial skin hunters had left biologists considering Trumpeter Swans extinct outside Alaska.

There is a special irony in knowing that John James Audubon, famous for his bird illustrations and cataloguing all known birds in North America, did not protest hunting trumpeters because he used their quills for drawing pens. Seeing how nature and economic necessity can conspire to create near tragedy led Snyder to his more than 25-year concern for and study of the trumpeter swan population.

WOU students get involved
WOU juniors, Victoria Fliehr and Katherine Dezsofi, have joined these studies during the past summer. Dezsofi has observed the swans and their habitats at both sites. The data collection is the tedious part. This covers everything from mapping aquatic plants to examining the nesting and hatching of swan cygnets to tagging and daily monitoring of the cygnets’ location to the amount of time the adults spend parenting vs. feeding.

A double major in biology and anthropology, Dezsofi said her work at the Grays Lake site shows the potential of all this data. “Because the causes of the declining population are unknown, we watch the family behavior to look at family patterns, cygnet mortality rates, feeding habits, preening and more.”

Very important is the comparison of available food during summer and winter to look for possible problems. The collection of plant species at the Harriman site involves taking samples from at least 17 sectioned off parts of the river. This is important because the river’s health is declining due to changes in the water releases of the upstream dam.

“We are replicating Dr. Snyder’s master’s research from the 1980s, and the current data are being compared to his from that time. This will give researchers a good picture of major and minor changes.”

Victoria Fliehr

“We are replicating Dr. Snyder’s master’s research from the 1980s, and the current data are being compared to his from that time. This will give researchers a good picture of major and minor changes.”

Victoria Fliehr

“...it’s so important to map their locations every day so we are able to follow their family behavior, feeding and more in the critical time leading up to their migration.”

In the future, the research teams will also determine migration patterns. They suspect that the Grays Lake population migrates into northern Utah and western Wyoming, whereas some of the birds overwintering at the Harriman site stay put.

Snyder pointed out the importance of examining every possible factor, from nesting to feeding to water quality to individual and family behaviors, as the best way to find answers. “We examine the entire life history, because it would be so easy to miss one factor.”

As to the experience for his students, he said “these students are getting the whole picture, and it’s authentic. Including this dedicated interaction with the birds is the key to learning how to conduct difficult field research, and to truly understanding all facets of ecological systems.”

Dezsofi highlighted an example. “We found that adult trumpeters at Grays Lake were feeding more than those nesting in other areas with the Yellowstone

Snyder (at right) with students Katherine Dezsofi and Victoria Fliehr

Snyder’s interest in these birds began in the 1980s, when as an undergraduate he first studied nesting swans on the park’s two lakes. A few years later, as a graduate student, he initiated a master’s degree research project studying their wintering and foraging ecology. The apparent abundance of aquatic plants and open water during the winter explain why the swans migrate to Harriman State Park to winter.

During his second winter field season (seventh overall) in the park, flow rates were drastically reduced and winter temperatures plummeted to -40 degrees. Over 90 percent of the area froze and birds starved to death. Snyder collected more than 50 swan carcasses through the wintering area, and there was serious doubt about the ability of those remaining to survive their spring migration to reproduce.
The students see the many benefits of working alongside professors in doing field research. “Most undergraduates never get an opportunity to do this,” said Fliehr. “I chose WOU because it is small and because there are so many chances to see where our studies might lead after graduation.”

“It’s been amazing to get to do this as an undergraduate student and to work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as well.” Dezsofi sees a clear future. “Because of this, I will continue my track in wildlife biology in graduate school.”

Aside from the valuable experience, Fliehr noted “the experience will help me as I apply to veterinary school.”

Asked if he has anything to add, Snyder sat back, beaming. “I’m very proud of them, the work they are doing, and am very glad to be able to offer this kind of opportunity. It’s one of the most enjoyable things I could have imagined doing. I want them to see what they can accomplish and what is possible.”
This isn't Dr. Mark Girod's first rodeo. More than two dozen years ago one might have seen Girod running around Western's campus, just as he does today. But instead of the esteemed member of the university faculty of today, headed for his office or a conference room, it was yesterday’s freewheeling kid, torn jeans and scuffed-up tennis shoes, tagging along after his dad, longtime university professor Dr. Gerald “Jerry” Girod.

As the new dean of the College of Education (COE) though, Girod definitely picked up more from watching his father’s esteemed career than grass-stained jeans and tree climbing tales. He obtained a lifetime appreciation for the value of education. And it’s with no small thanks to both his parents, who met on WOU’s campus, or his two older brothers, who both attended at one time or another, that he is where he is today.

“Learning, growing and challenging ourselves were strong values in our home,” Girod said of his childhood. It was a childhood with formal education beginning right here at the old Campus Elementary School, and extending through two WOU degrees before spanning the country to Michigan State University for doctoral work, where he completed his Ph.D. in educational psychology. He married, a girl he met at the old Campus Elementary, and grew a family. And through all of this the values Girod learned as a child stuck with him, becoming strong threads in his personality today.

Having worked in education all his life, Girod understands its importance, and what it can do for your life. His perspective is also influenced from working with education issues in Vietnam and Thailand, and the differences there. “I believe so strongly in the power of education,” Girod said, “and too often, in the United States, we take our opportunity for education for granted.” He stated that those he encountered overseas view their “opportunity for education very differently than many of us do here.”

“Seize the day,” might be Girod’s cry. Take the bull by the horns. And if you do, come to WOU and learn how to teach others to do it, too.

Girod exudes a personable leadership, an integrity that heralds WOU’s increased influence in Oregon’s education and community. WOU’s reach can already be seen in one area. Girod marvels that 80 percent of the school districts in Oregon’s K-12 system sport at least one COE graduate. Look at
things a little closer and the importance of what Girod is striving for grows even larger. Whether it’s through teacher educator programs, the Special Education Division, which promotes American Sign Language (ASL) among other things, or the physical education component, Girod oversees WOU’s continual graduating of motivated educators to the state K-12 system.

But it doesn’t end there. Programs as diverse as exercise science, which also offers a pre-education track, school health education, and community health education all propel students from WOU’s classrooms to communities as experts in health and living. Once there, they serve in such roles as trainers in K-12 schools’ health improvement, consultants for community fitness programs, health-related small-business owners, and community health program advocates serving anyone from youth to elderly.

At WOU there are many more training options. WOU leads in so many capacities, it can be hard to keep track. For instance, a startling near 80 percent of COE graduates earn an endorsement in English to Speakers of Other Languages, with special training in English Language Learners.

While Girod certainly has his hands full leading the COE in producing Oregon’s next flock of talented, motivated teachers, he isn’t content to just leave it at that. He also serves as a commissioner with the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission (TSPC), which works closely with Oregon’s universities. Girod serves TSPC with the goal of ensuring all new educators from our universities complete programs and endorsements making them a good fit in Oregon education.

“The Forgotten People Foundation
Girod served as executive director of the Forgotten People Foundation supporting disabilities advocacy in rural, northern Vietnam. He worked closely with late professor Hank Bersani, who shared his knowledge and expertise with the foundation—as well as memorable photos of the children they worked with.

“If what you learn doesn’t help you act differently in the world, then the power of that learning is compromised.”
Mark Girod, dean of the College of Education
As both a TSPC Commissioner and the leader of one of Oregon’s primary teacher-education universities, Girod believes he’s perfectly positioned to make a major difference in the lives of tomorrow’s teachers and children. After all, that’s one of the things he values most from his education at WOU: outstanding teachers who challenged him and introduced him to “new ways of thinking, talking and seeing.” That’s where Girod would say the rubber meets the road, whether education changes behavior or not. He reflected, “The true test of learning is whether or not you live differently because of it.”

“I believe so strongly in the power of education, and too often in the United States, we take our opportunity for education for granted.”

Mark Girod

Girod doesn’t just believe in this philosophy of education for himself and his university. He’s moving forward with Oregon’s ambitious education initiative, 40-40-20, which has also been passed into law by the state legislature. The concept is that of all Oregon students, 40 percent will earn a bachelor’s degree or more, 40 percent will receive an associate’s degree or other certification, and only 20 percent will choose not to further their education after graduating from high school. The purpose of such a focused goal is to maximize opportunities for Oregon’s students, training them to be vital participants in tomorrow’s educational, social and economical wheel, to raise the quality of life across the state.

With 40-40-20, WOU not only wants to succeed at graduating students with bachelor’s degrees. It’s meeting the associate degree challenge head on, too, working with Chemeketa Community College and other community colleges in the area to make it easier to transfer an associate’s degree to WOU’s bachelor degree programs. Recently, WOU’s early childhood education faculty worked doggedly with Chemeketa, smoothing a path for students earning an associate of arts degree to transfer to WOU.

Girod emphasizes the COE’s community health and exercise science programs as much as he does because he’s looking at 40-40-20 from more than one angle. “Too often it gets talked about it down into smaller pieces to see more clearly that his vision leads to the building of partnerships with businesses, communities, and schools, to joining with them to “solve problems in the real world.”

About the real world, each student in the COE completes extensive internship, practicums, or student teaching before graduating. Perhaps that’s the most useful thing of all for Girod’s students to learn: the stuff they’re learning will influence children’s lives one day.

But all of this aside, with Girod, it always comes back to community and how he wants to influence it. How he wants “to be in partnership with Oregon schools…and help all children succeed.” That’s why he’s thrilled that WOU is no stranger to strong leadership and values. Girod emphasized WOU’s responsibility to provide and to train. “Access, success and accountability are moral imperatives in a democratic society,” said Girod, “and our values at Western have been aligned to these for a long, long time.”

Girod is 100 percent behind education’s transformative quality. He learned its value from a young age as he watched his parents live it in their own lives. Education has transformed his life and the life of his family, and with Girod it’s never just education for education’s sake. It’s more than that. It’s about growing one’s life. It’s about “preparing leaders for health, human services, and education systems of the future.”

Relaxing a moment, Girod considered. Then he mused thoughtfully, “If what you learn doesn’t help you act differently in the world, then the power of that learning is compromised.” That’s the truth, plain and simple, yet incredibly complex once you delve into it and start learning.
Learning from trees
continued from page 13

Baumgartner explained that this is an example of free-choice learning, a major push in science education. Free-choice learning is demonstrated when a teacher selects ways for students to do learning activities outside a traditional classroom. “This can lead to a lifelong exploration, as in participatory science, which finds citizens getting involved in an authentic scientific investigation. This is a great way to build scientific literacy and empower people to enjoy exploring science. In education, it's a way to demystify science by showing students how relevant and approachable science can be.”

This way of looking at science is so much more than just accumulating facts. She said that the goal “is to stimulate people who are not scientists to want to be involved.” Another example of putting science into context is the Audubon Society’s annual backyard bird census, where volunteers across the country agree to list (and possibly photograph) the birds in their yard on a specific day. “While this provides valuable information to Audubon, it also heightens people’s interest in birds and in learning more about them on their own.”

Baumgartner wants her students to develop scientific curiosity and to, in turn, pass that on to their students. She said that “my students are responding well and have already thought of ways to do this with K-8 students.”

Both professors noted several unexpected outcomes of the intersection of these two classes. Baumgartner noted how Dutton’s botany students “got to practice communicating with non-scientists, which helps make science more accessible to everyone.”

Dutton said: “I am constantly surprised to see how field work opens students’ eyes. More than studying textbooks, having a specimen in your hand leads to more questions, and that’s a different kind of learning.”

Got mulch?
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surrounding fields when WOU hosts the Division II cross-country meets in 2015 and 2017.

Additionally, Hughes plans to build two new sifters (easily done right on campus) to help with the composting process and create a smaller material. With not having to purchase new compost this year, Hughes says that Western has already saved about $1,200; and as the compost heap continues to grow, those savings will grow as well.

What began as a simple assignment for a fall term class became a year-long project that led Wills to presenting her work at the 2012-13 Academic Excellence Showcase.

“This project started as a mere investigation process to see if generating compost from our yard debris on campus would even be possible, and just one year later we can say that it has been a success,” Wills said. “I am so proud to see that Kevin and his team continue to successfully expand the program and take it to the next level every chance they get. It is a testament to both Kevin’s enthusiastic dedication and the conscientious commitment of Western Oregon University as a whole to taking sustainable action in any way possible. That is how you change the world, and Western is right at the forefront of this movement.”

Erica Wills presenting at the 2013 Academic Excellence Showcase.

“My needs and the needs of the Monmouth Street Tree Project lined up perfectly. I learned field identification of plants, data management and organization, geographic information systems skills, as well as experience with public speaking. I was able to use the skills I learned in botany, research and volunteering with the project in an internship position working with a local resource management agency last summer.”

Alexandra Harding

Leet and Harding measure the circumference of one of Monmouth City Park’s trees.
100 years and still counting:
Maple Hall comes alive through student-faculty research

By Erin Passehl-Stoddart

May pole winding, 1921 (top); May Queen Ruth Stover and her court outside Campbell Hall, 1921 (bottom); WOU dancers from left to right: Kimberlee Bartle, Emily Aalbers, Caitlin Rose, Jay Hall-Schnurrpusch (main image, photo taken by Courtney Martin) To see more photos of May Day celebrations, go online to: digitalcommons.wou.edu/mayday
How will Western Oregon University celebrate the 100th anniversary of Maple Hall, the first gymnasium on campus, this spring? Just ask the WOU Dance Department and Western Oregon University Archives, who are collaborating to re-create dances from the May Day celebrations that once graced this campus as early as 1902 and were considered one of the most anticipated events of the year.

As a dance major, Courtney Martin had to decide between choreographing for the annual Spring Dance Concert and completing a special project. After hearing about the opportunity to work with Sharon Oberst, dance professor, on the Maple Hall centennial dance project, Martin chose the special project and began research this past winter using WOU Archives, located inside Hamerly Library.

“T’ve always been a history geek, I love history,” said Martin. Researching the history of physical education, modern dance influences on curriculum, and campus events such as May Day was the perfect match between Martin’s love of dance and history.

Preparations to celebrate the first gymnasium’s centennial have been underway since 2012. Erin Passehl-Stoddart, assistant professor and university archivist, began researching May Day and found that WOU was the first school in the state to host such an event and that the greater community played a large role. She published an article on Monmouth’s May Day celebrations in Willamette Valley Voices in 2013, available to read at: works.bepress.com/erin_passehl/23/.

Simultaneously, Oberst approached WOU Archives about researching Maple Hall and May Day in order to host a public recreation of the fete. Oberst researched timelines, dances, music, and costuming using photographs and descriptions from a bygone era. She also gathered first-hand accounts of former students who participated in May Day events on this campus from local speaking events, including a former May Queen. Using the knowledge gained from the archives, she moved forward with planning the event for 2014.

Martin began her research for her senior project with materials collected by Oberst, followed by research appointments with Passehl-Stoddart to access course catalogs with descriptions of physical education curriculum and instructors, yearbooks, historical photographs and faculty records.

Martin continued her secondary source research by ordering books through Hamersly Library and reading broadly about the history of May Day. She settled on a research topic of how modern dance infiltrated physical education classes, how May Day pageantry became a part of the normal school curriculum, and how that related to the emergence of modern dance.

“The collaboration between the WOU Archives and the dance program has been even better than I had hoped. They have been there every step of the way, helping Courtney with her research and providing information needed to accurately re-create these historic dances.”

Sharon Oberst, dance professor
Martin remarked, “I love thinking about the changing roles of women in society, what they were allowed to do; you can see examples listed in the course catalogs for physical education coursework, that even deep into the 20th century, men’s and women’s physical activities were not combined.”

In addition to the written thesis, Martin also used historical research to create the dances that will be performed this spring. Martin read about and watched videos of traditional German folk dances and waltzes that were used in May Day performances. She found a handful of German folk dances to have something historically accurate and added her own dance sequences to the maypole waltz.

“Since college students will be performing these dances, I wanted to make them technically harder with more formation changes compared to the past, where children attending the training school would perform in the spring event. This way, one dance can be historically accurate and the waltz can have some modern twists,” Martin explained.

Martin’s “toolbox” also included music selections, which she obtained from reading accounts of what music was used in the past, and then found music samples through the iTunes store. Costuming was also part of her research; using materials purchased from the dollar store. “While the original May Day performances used fresh flowers, we needed to use fake ones due to the number of performances we will be doing this spring,” commented Martin. “Those garlands are nothing but cut hula hoops, fake flowers, and a lot of hard work!” The 2014 performances will feature eight female dance students from WOU and a traditional eight-foot tall maypole.

Student-faculty collaborative research projects, such as the Maple Hall centennial, offer students the flexibility to work at their own pace, freedom to choose a topic of great interest, and one-on-one interactions between student and faculty. Martin commented, “working with Erin throughout the process was extremely helpful and fun. Before I began I thought I would be digging through materials alone, just me and the dust, but instead we worked together as a team to tackle my research question.”

Through both Martin’s thesis and the dance performances, there is an opportunity to bring awareness to both the University Archives program and the types of historical materials available for research and scholarship to the campus and greater community.

“I have worked with students in both their research and as interns,” said Passehl-Stoddart, “but this is the first time it has resulted in a creative performance. I am very proud of Courtney’s work and look forward to having her scholarship introduced to University Archives for future researchers.”
There’s a lot to love about Western Oregon University: the small class sizes, breathtaking campus, rural location that’s still accessible to Oregon’s population centers, and research opportunities for undergraduates to work with outstanding faculty. The History Department is one area of campus where faculty make it a priority to incorporate student research.

Dr. Kim Jensen has made it a priority to provide her undergraduate students with research opportunities, something that is reserved for graduate students at most institutions. In spring 2014 she is teaching a class on women in Oregon history, which stemmed from her own research on public health activist Dr. Esther Lovejoy and Jensen’s collaborative work with people around that state for the woman suffrage centennial in 2012.

Through that work Jensen learned of Dr. Laura Colby Price, a physician who served as Monmouth city health officer in the early 20th century. For part of the class, students will continue the research Jensen has begun on Price by using primary sources such as the Monmouth Herald newspaper. Price graduated from a Chicago medical school and came to Monmouth in 1909. She served as city health officer from 1914 until her death in 1921 and was buried in Fir Crest cemetery south of Monmouth. Phyllis Bolman, Monmouth city recorder and WOU alumnna, has been providing sources such as city council minutes.

“It’s an adventure because you cover such a variety of sources, and newspaper sources have already been so helpful. One of the things I really hope for the students is to take a project like this from the bricks, if you will, from the individual sources and try to put together a life and have interpretation,” Jensen said. “These are skills they can take to any workplace, graduate school, or profession to find and analyze information.”

The goal for this class is to map out Price’s professional work and other aspects of her life in Monmouth and they are hoping to find a photo of Price in the process. She was among a number of women physicians who were early health officers in Oregon.

“One of the things I really hope for the students is to take a project like this from the bricks, if you will, from the individual sources and try to put together a life and have interpretation.”

Kim Jensen, history professor

In addition to researching Price as a group project, students in the class will have their own projects. “People are interested in local history and the history of our state. Oregon women have done really interesting and important things that were firsts, but also lots of diverse women have contributed to our history. It’s a great opportunity for us to uncover more of our history, so that student research piece is very important,” Jensen said.

“For their individual projects, students will be able to do oral history interviews and other research projects to uncover more about women. The class will be valuable because of the student research adding to what we know about Oregon women.”

If you have information on Laura Colby Price—or a photograph to share—please contact Kim Jensen at jenseki@wou.edu.
The Big C

by Lisa Catto ’10

I’VE WRITTEN NUMEROUS articles for this publication and other venues at Western Oregon University over the past nine years. The nature of my job in the public relations office allows me to keep my name off of most stories, but this time I wanted to take a more personal approach. I have a story to share, some gratitude to give, and I’m hoping it may help others in the WOU community.

In February 2013 I learned I had a five-inch-long tumor on my right kidney. Fourteen days later I was under the knife, and both the tumor and my kidney were removed. Until that day I’d never had even minor surgery, never even broken a bone. Let me pause a moment here and knock on some wood. Just before checking out of the hospital on the fifth day after my nephrectomy—fancy word for kidney removal—my surgeon told me he believed the tumor was malignant and thought it could be a Wilm’s Tumor, meaning I had Wilm’s Cancer.

Cancer.

Not the word you ever expect to hear yourself, especially at 30 years old. That combination of six letters sure packs a punch. You prepare yourself to hear that loved ones may be diagnosed, but are we ever really prepared to hear it ourselves? I know I sure wasn’t. After some significant testing at Oregon Health & Science University it was confirmed. Surgery swiftly followed, I started chemo a month later. Wilm’s is a rare form of children’s cancer that is even less common in adults. My parents always told me I was special, but I would have preferred not to be that “rare-kind-of-cancer” special.

Life felt like it was spinning out of control. Each week seemed to be a string of doctor appointments and chemo treatments between work hours. You know what helped me through? My Western Oregon University family. People came out of the woodwork to support family and me. Students, faculty, staff, alumni, even friends of WOU helped me with kind words, flowers, meals, visits and so much more. I had always considered WOU a community, but it hadn’t occurred to me that the place I’ve been a part of

decided to donate all funds they received at the game to the campus Cancer Support Group. We walked away that day with more than $700 and big ideas of how we could use that to help others.

In March, the team generously did the same thing and raised $3,044 in donations for our group. I am extremely thankful for the kindness of all who contributed. These donations will help us provide gas cards to those who need financial assistance to support loved ones dealing with cancer, or those undergoing treatment themselves. We’ll also be able to create care packages for members of the campus community dealing with cancer on some level. Other modes of support are being developed as well, and we would appreciate any ideas you have.

From the bottom of my heart, I would like to thank the WOU softball team and all of those involved who have helped the Cancer Support Group reach out to those on campus who are dealing with cancer in their lives. If you would like to help the Cancer Support Group, please visit wou.edu/giving and designate the organization you’d like to give to. To learn more about the group itself and how we can help you, email cattol@wou.edu or call me at 503-838-8163.
Tell us a bit about your background and education.
I graduated from OCE in 1979 then hung around for one more term and worked at the College Center (now the Werner University Center) as a custodian and began my graduate work. I left to put my undergraduate degree to use (math education) and was substitute teaching. I then was asked to come back and become the assistant director for programming and activities and worked in that capacity for six months before completing my master’s at OSU.

Any favorite memories you’d like to share?
One of my main memories was the many hours spent in the student senate at the college center. We played a major role in being able to get a volunteer tutoring center here on campus, and working to get a Math 40 class for students who suffered from math anxiety. Many people influenced me during my time here, including the morning custodian at the college center who was in the building by 6 a.m. each day. She was a dedicated soul, and always made time to talk.

What were your career goals, and what are you currently doing?
I originally came to college to become a doctor. I ended up in the Math Department and discovered that would not be the best option for me. I did graduate in Math Ed, but my true love was student activities. From high school to community college to OCE, I was always in the thick of it and did my master’s in college student services administration, with the ultimate goal of coming back to WOU. When state funding issues came up, I began working for the Oregon Education Association, where I spent 20 years advocating for educators and education.

What got you involved with the Alumni Association?
I contacted the Alumni Association Office and expressed interest in getting involved, and let them know I loved my time here and had experience running these sorts of things. I went to lunch with the previous director and before I knew it, I was on the board. It has been a great experience.

What does being the Alumni Association president mean to you?
I consider it a truly humbling honor to be the face of all those graduates who have come, and those who graduate each year. The school districts in Salem-Keizer view me as a connection to the university and I hope that WOU views me as that connection, as well. If people see me or recognize me from pictures or events, I hope they will stop me and say “Hi”! It’s such a thrill to hear about other people’s experiences and meeting other graduates.

What are some ways to get involved with the Alumni Association?
When I meet people at events, one of my first questions is when was the last time you were back on campus? I try to encourage as many people as possible to come back and check out how the campus has evolved and the exciting things taking place. We host regional events throughout the year and find ways to reach out to people and reconnect them back to the university and former classmates. These informal events are very family oriented. The board gets together once each quarter to look for ways to connect all alumni, to keep them informed, and to create more opportunities for involvement. One thing is for sure: whether we are ONS, OCE, WOSC, or WOU graduates, we are all Wolves.

Q&A with Paul Kyllo, president, WOU Alumni Association
IN REMEMBRANCE

1930s
Arahnell Brickey '32 on January 26, 2014. Arahnell earned a teaching certificate from ONS and returned to teach pupils nearly the same age.

1940s
Carrie J. Griffith '42 on October 16, 2013. Carrie attended OCE where she earned her elementary teaching credential and went on to teach in Lakeview, Ore.
Gloria L. Bradford '44 on November 10, 2013. Gloria received a degree in elementary education from OCE and also worked at the Salem State Library.
Esther A. Simmons '46 on December 13, 2013. Esther graduated from Albany High School and OCE, and began a 37-year teaching career.

1950s
Dick Shearer ’50 on February 5, 2014. Dick was part of the Army Air Corps stationed in Europe during World War II. He attended OCE after receiving an honorable discharge.
Wanda Fruits ’53 on October 30, 2013. Wanda graduated from OCE in Monmouth. She was an elementary school teacher in Roseburg, and enjoyed art, writing, photography and music.
Emily E. Hoyser ’53 on November 3, 2013. Emily received her bachelor's degree from OCE. After earning her doctorate, she taught in the School of Education and retired as a full professor from Western Oregon University.
Bert W. Becker ’58 on February 1, 2014. Bert served in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War, and following his service graduated from OCE and worked as a teacher at Gardner Middle School in Oregon City.
Alice C. Davis ’59 on December 21, 2013. Alice received her bachelor's degree from OCE. After receiving her master's degree in special education Alice taught most of her career at Tucker-Maxon Oral School in Portland.

1960s
Sandra L. Bierly '64 on November 21, 2013. Sandra received her bachelor's degree in education from OCE and taught from 1962 to 1969. She also was employed as a general accountant for Varicast Inc.
Robert O. Johnson ’64 on July 6, 2013. Robert, a survivor of polio, graduated from OCE. During the 1970s, he was a high school teacher and wrestling coach in Oregon.
Dec. A Whyte ’69 on October 27, 2013. Dee earned a master's degree from WOU. Dee was a librarian for the Vancouver, Fife, and White River, Wash. school districts.

1970s
Marilynn M. Austin ’72 on November 28, 2013. Marilynn received her master's degree from OCE, and taught in the Dallas School District. After retirement, she traveled extensively.
Steven J. Strauch ’74 on December 12, 2013. Steven earned his bachelor's degree at OCE. He made a career in the military, serving in the U.S. Army and Oregon Army National Guard. One of his proudest accomplishments was his trek on foot across the entire state of Alaska.
Roger W. Boedens ’75 on December 20, 2013. Roger earned his degree at OCE. He worked at the Oregon State Hospital for 35 years.
Randy L. Kidder ’76 on October 28, 2013. Randy earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education from OCE. Randy began teaching in Detroit and worked with the Lebanon School District.

1980s
Rosalind Tompkins-Peterson ’81 on November 16, 2013. Rosalind attended WOU, received her master’s degree in counseling at OSU. She retired early from her position at the Polk Adolescent Day Treatment Center, which allowed her to travel and pursue her spiritual interests.

1990s

2000s
Jeffrey E. Lamoreaux ’05 on December 2, 2013. Jeffrey graduated from Silverton High School in 2001 and received his bachelor of arts in business from WOU. He was the owner of Jericho’s Lawn Maintenance and also worked as a caregiver.

Friends of WOU
Anna E. Brown on December 6, 2013. Anna taught in the teacher education departments of PSU, Western Oregon University, and Queens College. Anna was an accomplished harpist, loved to travel and visited most of the countries in the world.
Robert L. Mulder on November 10, 2013. Robert was director of Western Oregon Speech and Hearing Center for OCE, coordinator for the Speech and Hearing Unit for the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped U.S. Office of Education, consultant for the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs.
Dan G. Cannon on January 7, 2014. Dan was the chairman of the Art Department, and worked at WOU for nearly 30 years. He and his wife, Gail, funded the Dan and Gail Cannon Gallery of Art, granting scholarships to art students at WOU.
James W. Gallagher on January 7, 2014. James was a geography graduate assistant at OCE from 1969 until his retirement in 1990. He played golf five days a week when he was able, and on the days he didn’t golf, he enjoyed great times at gin rummy with his golf friends.
Celebration of life held for Jon Apgar

ON MARCH 16, a moving celebration of life was held at Western Oregon University for a young man who was taken far too soon. Jonathan Dean Apgar, known for his athletic abilities as a linebacker for the WOU football team, his academic intelligence, motivation, charisma, as well as for being a loving husband and new father, was diagnosed in 2013 with an aggressive form of kidney cancer. He passed away on Dec. 7, 2013.

Old PE was filled with people paying their respects; several of his family members, good friends and teammates spoke about his life and who he was. There was a slideshow, with wonderful pictures and short video clips in remembrance of Jon.

After people shared stories about his life, there was a potluck and a room full of balloons on which people could write messages for him. They were later released outside so the messages from his friends and family would get to him. It was a wonderful celebration of a wonderful person who unfortunately was taken far too soon.

Class notes

Tyler Bergeland ’10 and Melissa Ineck ’12 will be married in Antigua on August 8, 2014. Tyler is finishing his paramedic degree and Melissa now has her Masters of Education degree and is the assistant director of programs at WOU’s Health & Wellness Center.

Jim Osterman ’58 has been appointed to Board of Directors at Powin Corporation. Osterman is also the president of JSO Ventures, LLC, Oregon City, Oregon, a real estate investment and management consulting firm.

Dena Minato ’78 and husband, Dave Kullowatz ’78/’85, retired in June after 35 years of teaching. They celebrated their retirement with a nine-week journey throughout Italy in the fall and plan a twelve-week trip across the southern United States in the spring.

Reid Robinson ’77 completed a solo cross country bicycle ride in 2013, departing August 1, from Salem and arriving October 5 in Washington, DC.

Tell us what’s going on!

Send us news of yourself, your relatives, your friends—anyone who ever attended WOU/WOSC/OCE. Please include your current address.

Western Oregon University
The Western Edge • The Cottage
345 N. Monmouth Ave.
Monmouth, OR 97361

Or send your news via e-mail to: alumni@wou.edu

Name, class year
______________________________________________________________

Address
______________________________________________________________

City  State  ZIP
______________________________________________________________

Occupation
______________________________________________________________

Telephone  E-mail
______________________________________________________________

Here’s what’s happening with me (add more paper if needed!):
The Wolves Athletic Auction is WOU’s premier fundraising event in support of our student-athletes. The money generated from the auction greatly aids our student-athletes by providing critical funds for scholarships for their exceptional efforts both on and off the field.

Join the fun and come help support student-athletes at the 2014 Athletic Auction on May 31, 2014 at the Salem Convention Center. Check online at wouwolves.com for more details.