The Alshawi family reflects on their time in Oregon before returning home to Saudi Arabia.
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On the cover
At age 19, Fatimah and her husband of two weeks, Mohammed Alshawi, moved 7,430 miles from Saudi Arabia’s burnt orange deserts to the Willamette Valley’s damp greenery. Read their story on page 14. Photo by Erin Huggins ’10.
Master’s in interpreting studies earns award for outstanding program

WOU’s Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies (MAIS) has won the 2013 University Professional & Continuing Education Association (UPCEA) West Region Outstanding Credit Program Award, which recognizes outstanding professional and continuing education programs allowing students to earn academic credit.

“External recognition from an organization like UPCEA is a powerful tribute to the work we do here at WOU in the MAIS. We are deeply honored and humbled to have received such an award,” said Dr. Elisa Maroney, coordinator of the MAIS program and president of the Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education.

The MAIS program provides interpreters and interpreter educators advanced scholarship that focuses on theoretical, practical, and teaching applications to advance the standards and leadership of the interpreting profession via research, rigorous study and practice. The goals of this program are to provide professional interpreters with the opportunity for growth and development beyond the undergraduate level and to participate in observation, practice, and supervision; to add to a growing body of research on interpreting and interpreter education, and to develop highly qualified interpreter educators and leaders in the field of interpreting.

Interpreting professionals will take courses primarily online to enhance their experience and knowledge. These professionals will be uniquely skilled in helping students understand interpreting as a practice profession, educate the next generation on self evaluation and continued growth, and will be committed to seeing quality research to advance the profession. Professionals exit this program with excellent leadership skills to take the field to the next level.

DeVolder Family Science Center grand opening unveils new classrooms and science labs

WOU held a grand opening ceremony for the DeVolder Family Science Center on Tuesday, Sept. 24. The event included tours of the facility, a ribbon cutting and remarks from WOU President Mark Weiss, Oregon Senate President Peter Courtney, Interim Chancellor of the Oregon University System Melody Rose, Chair of the Natural Science Division Dr. Steve Taylor, Associated Students of Western Oregon University President Travis Meuwissen, and Ron ’68 and Norma DeVolder (pictured in center, below), the alumnus family whose significant contribution helped fund the facility. WOU also received an anonymous leadership gift of $250,000, to support the construction of this much-needed addition to campus.

Prior to its opening, the sciences were housed in the Natural Sciences Building, which was built in 1969. Since 2006, WOU has seen an overall enrollment increase of 23.3 percent, which has led to a corresponding demand in the sciences. Courses related to health care have been the most popular, particularly the expansion of the nursing partnership with OHSU have seen the highest rate of growth. The biology and chemistry courses have influenced gains of 43 and 79 percent, respectively. The capacity limits of faculty and lab/class spaces are most felt in the 100- and 200-level courses, which are required for all undergraduates as part of the Liberal Arts Core Curriculum. More than 3,500 students take science courses annually.

The DeVolder Family Science Center will house the Chemistry Department and anatomy-physiology components of the biology program. The facility, designed to achieve the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) silver certification, includes approximately 21,000 square feet of new space for science programs. It has six new 1,200 square foot laboratories, as well as ancillary preparation, storage and office space.
WOU Awarded $10,500,000 for National Center on Deaf-Blindness

by Dr. Ella Taylor

There are approximately 10,000 children who are deaf-blind in the United States and about 90 percent of those children have additional physical, medical or cognitive disabilities. This population has great need and the National Center on Deaf-Blindness (NCDB) within the Teaching Research Institute (TRI) at Western Oregon University supports those needs. NCDB received a five-year, $10.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to operate the center. The center will serve as a national hub for professional development, resources, and information to serve children who are deaf-blind, their families, educators and other professionals that serve them.

D. Jay Gense, NCDB director, notes that the new national center will “positively impact the lives of children and students (ages 0-21) who are deaf-blind, as well as their families, across the nation. Deaf-Blindness is the lowest of all low incidence disabilities in the United States. Serving the needs of children who are deaf-blind is highly specialized. Many people think of Helen Keller when they hear ‘deaf-blind,’ however, many children with deaf-blindness have additional disabilities that significantly impact the complexities inherent in providing quality educational services and supports. Expertise is needed not only in vision and hearing, but a host of other areas as well.”

A positive trend that has occurred over the last 10 years is relative to where these children are educated. Not long ago, the vast majority of children with deaf-blindness spent all of their school time in specialized schools. Today the majority of children receive their education in their local neighborhood school.

The percentage of young children ages three to five educated in a regular early childhood education setting has more than doubled in the past decade. Over 60 percent of the children and youth in school age special education are receiving their education in local schools, with 65 percent of elementary school aged children being served at least a portion of their day in a regular classroom in their local school.

Gense explains, “This is a significantly positive shift, but it also means that personnel in these schools need specialized professional development to meet the needs of these children. The continuing trend toward educational placements in inclusive settings is significant and positive for children and families.

The trend does, however, have profound implications on the needs for information, resources, and access to expertise in deaf-blindness being available at a local level.” The National Center on Deaf-Blindness is designed to work with each of the State Deaf-Blind Projects to assist these teachers and other service providers, and to assist each state in developing systems that promote the use of evidence-based interventions and instruction for infants, children, and youth who are deaf-blind.

The NCDB will work collaboratively with the Helen Keller National Center and Perkins School for the Blind, located in New York and Massachusetts, respectively. In this new national center role the NCDB will partner with each of the State and Multi-State Deaf-Blind Projects. The OSEP funds 54 such projects across the country, and provides technical assistance and support to each of the projects, families, state education agencies, local school districts, and early childhood providers responsible for early intervention and education services for the country’s children who are deaf-blind.

Chichester college students take trip of lifetime to USA

Reprinted courtesy of the Chichester Observer

Students from Chichester College have crossed the Atlantic to experience the trip of a lifetime. The college has developed a partnership with WOU to provide opportunities for students’ learning and sharing good practice. As part of the project, four students from Chichester College went to experience life as a student of WOU.

Student president Georgina Reece has shared her experience with the Observer. “When I first knew I was off to America, I had no idea what a dramatic and pronounced effect it would have on me. The whole culture and outlook was so unlike anything I had seen before and something which I never thought I could ever experience.

“We were there to experience the induction process, exactly how the students themselves would be taken into the WOU family. We stayed in the student accommodation to become completely submerged in this experience as this is a requirement of all the freshman students and I found their method of rallying everyone in a block together brilliant. This was to ensure that the compulsory sessions
New additions to the administrative staff
The president’s senior staff has two new additions. First, Dr. Stephen Scheck was recently promoted to vice president of academic affairs, from his position as dean for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS). “We are fortunate to have someone with his skills, knowledge and enthusiasm for the mission of WOU, ready to fill this critically important role,” said President Weiss. The second addition is Barbara Dearing, as WOU’s executive director of intercollegiate athletics, “Barbara Dearing has been successful in all areas of collegiate athletics and I am confident she will be a great asset to WOU,” said Weiss. She comes to WOU with more than 25 years of athletic experience, including most recently at Portland State University.

The WOU administration filled two other important roles. Dr. Susanne Monahan has filled the position of dean for LAS, joining WOU from Montana State University where she served as the associate dean for curricular and program development. Monahan was also the chair for the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. Also, WOU welcomes Daniel Clark as the director for the Division of Extended Programs. He comes to Monmouth from Utah Valley University, where he was the senior director of distance education.

WOU receives generous donation to name new computer science center
WOU has completed extensive renovations to facilities for the Computer Science Division, creating the Edward B. Wright Center for Computing Sciences (EBWCCS). WOU received a commitment of $300,000 from former Oregon State Senator Frank and Linda Morse, in honor of Dr. Wright, who passed away in 2012.

A dedication ceremony and reception was held Thursday, Oct. 17 on the third floor of the Instructional Technology Center, where the new facility is located. Speakers at the ceremony included WOU President Mark Weiss, Senator Morse, Wright’s wife Marge and their daughter, Mary Jo Brock. The event was emceed by Dr. David Olsen, chair of computer science.

The generous gift from the Morses’ was used to establish a scholarship endowment in Wright’s honor for current and future students studying computer science, information systems or computer science/mathematics. Those interested in giving to the scholarship should contact the WOU Foundation at 503-838-8134.

EBWCCS is home to the Computer Science Division, following a two-year $1.3 million renovation. The center’s open floor plan contains two computer labs, a smart classroom and faculty offices. Adjacent to faculty offices are student areas designed to promote a community feel between students and faculty as well as informal seating and several large wall mounted monitors to promote collaboration on projects.

“The creation of this facility is a fitting honor for Dr. Wright,” said Olsen. “During his career, he had an enormous influence on both faculty and students. He literally brought the university into the ‘computer age.’

Wright came to WOU, then Oregon College of Education, in the summer of 1979 as the academic computing coordinator. In addition he was charged with developing a computer science major. Wright established the first computer lab on campus in the basement of the library (now the Academic Program Support Center).

In 1982, as one of the authors of the NSF CAUSE, he began offering summer workshops for faculty to integrate computers into their courses. The school began teaching courses, which would apply to the major in computer science in 1980. In 1984, WOU hired its first assistant professor of computer science. At that time, Wright served as the department chair for Computer Science. The first class graduated in June 1985. He was also instrumental in the conversion of the Campus Elementary School into the Instructional Technology Center as well as the hiring of most of the current faculty in the division.

Wright, who retired in 1999, continued teaching part time until 2003. He also worked as a policy advisor to Morse, who said of Wright, “He was an invaluable source of insight in the creation of public policy.”
WOU recognized for outstanding academic advising for sixth consecutive year

Western is honored to have four NACADA (The Global Community for Academic Advising) awards, which marks six consecutive years of our faculty and staff receiving such honors.

Dr. Karie Mize, associate professor of teacher education, has been awarded the Outstanding Certificate of Merit in the faculty advising category. Tamie Saffell, associate director of the Academic Advising and Learning Center (AALC) received the Certificate of Merit for Advising Administrator, Osvaldo Avila, academic advisor in the AALC, received a Certificate of Merit Primary Role Advising, and Alexander Kunkle in the AALC received an award for Outstanding New Advisor.

AALC Director Karen Sullivan-Vance said, “WOU has a strong commitment to academic advising and NACADA has once again recognized WOU for the outstanding job our faculty and staff advisors do in supporting students.”

NACADA has recognized WOU’s strong tradition in academic advising for several consecutive years:

2012 Dr. Steve Taylor: Outstanding Advising Certificate of Merit for the faculty academic advising category

2011 Associate Provost David McDonald: Pacesetter Award
Dr. Bryan Dutton: Certificate of Merit

2010 Karen Sullivan-Vance: Gail Rola Memorial Award
Dr. Marita Cardinal: Certificate of Merit

2009 Dr. Kevin Walczyk: Certificate of Merit for Outstanding Faculty Advisor.

2008 Dr. Michael LeMaster: Outstanding Faculty Advisor
Tamie Saffell: Certificate of Merit
Bobbi Weber: Certificate of Merit

Dr. Karie Mize
“I believe students are navigating what can frequently seem like a mysterious and complex system to achieve their personal and professional goals, and it is my quest to arm them with knowledge. Their time is valuable, and I endeavor to make each conversation as meaningful as possible,” said Mize. “My advisees deserve respect for their efforts, especially those who tackle all that is involved in the teaching field. Learning to become a professional who will be working with children and impacting the community is a multi-layered and dynamic process, and I hope they see me as a partner they can turn to now and in the future.”

Tamie Saffell
“Every day I have the opportunity to work with some of the most incredible students. I am continually amazed by their accomplishments and dreams. It is an honor to be part of their development by helping students to reach their goals.”

Osvaldo Avila
“I’m thrilled to have been nominated and to actually be selected validates the time and effort that I put in with every student here at WOU. The work I do is not for me, but for each student and their future success.”

Alexander Kunkle
“Advisors work as teachers to these students, preparing them to be successful not only at WOU, but beyond graduation. Receiving this award is important to me, because it recognizes the passion I have for helping students succeed beyond just a checking a box on a list.”

Art installation for Bellamy Hall
The aesthetic beauty of campus has been complemented by an outdoor sculpture outside of Bellamy Hall. The artist, Jesse Small, was inspired by the symmetry of nature, which he finds to be filled with perfect imperfections. “Trees, rocks, rivers, and planets all generally symmetrical but looking closer, not exactly. I think this creates an aesthetic experience that is very grounding and centering but also provides a direction...The setting of the sculpture amongst the great trees and classic architecture is so perfect for this piece and provides a lot of clues about it. I really couldn’t think of a better place for the sculpture to be,” he said. To see more of Small’s work, visit jessesmall.com.
Stan Kenyon graduated from Junction City High School in 1955 and entered OCE that fall. OCE had approximately 800 students and was renowned for its teacher preparation curriculum. He was a secondary education major with biology and English as his minors, and was chosen to appear in Who’s Who in America’s Colleges and Universities.

Kenyon participated in basketball, football and track—coaching and teaching in one of Oregon’s high schools was his goal. He began his career at Waldport High School in 1959. After earning his master’s degree, he returned to OCE in 1963 as assistant registrar and then registrar and director of admissions. He completed a doctoral degree in education at Oregon State University.

During his role as Monmouth’s city manager, a new library was funded, streets were resurfaced, the city park refurbished, community parks developed, the water system rebuilt and many other projects proposed. He received an award for prudent and best use of taxpayer’s money. Other recognitions included hall of fame awards from WOU and Junction City High.

Kenyon loved to golf and be with his two children and five grandchildren, and was married 47 years before his death in 2005. He fought cancer bravely and uncomplainingly. His sense of humor never left him. He shot a nerf basketball into a rigged-up net to impress his grandchildren and laughed as he said, “I told you I was sick.” His memorial service was held in the WOU football stadium with hundreds of people attending.

Dedicating the sculpture to Western in his memory was a highlight. Earlier he and other football players of the 1950s funded the 50s football scholarship. It continues to help young men live a dream. If you lived the 50s (or at least remember them!), send a $50, $500 or $5,000 check to the WOU Foundation to honor a student from your hometown. It’s a “pay forward” experience or perhaps something to add to your “bucket list.”

It is appropriate to place a memorial to Kenyon in the Hamersly Library. Wayne Hamersly and Kenyon were teammates on the football team and remained friends over the years.

A bike rack has been installed in memory of Dr. Hank Bersani, former professor of special education at WOU. Bicycling and the College of Education were two of his passions and it’s fitting that this bike rack, bearing his name artistically, was placed at the rear of the Education Building on campus. Funds for the rack were raised through the efforts of the American Sign Language Service Learning course and friends of Bersani.
“Theatrical Heartscape” and the Friends of Mattingly’s Mural

by Bonnie Hull and Eileen Cotter Howell

In 1983, WOU art professor Jim Mattingly submitted a proposal to paint a mural in downtown Salem. The mural was to grace the rear wall of the Historic Elsinore Theatre, then a movie theater, but with a long history of vaudeville.

Mattingly’s proposed work, Theatrical Heartscape, was chosen and in the summer of 1984 he went to work. His idea was to “enrich and beautify the wall facing a major access route into Salem.” Professor Mattingly chose “…universal figures from vaudeville, early theater and film.” We can still recognize W.C. Fields, Theda Bara, Marlene Dietrich, and Charlie Chaplin. The mural, of course, has become a beloved landmark for most of Salem…seen daily as we go about our business…but was slowly fading away.

The mural was refurbished this summer under the auspices of the Friends of Mattingly’s Mural (FOMM) with the full support of the Historic Elsinore Theatre Board of Directors, and with a restoration plan approved by Salem’s Historic Planner Kimberli Fitzgerald. The work was done by muralist Dan Cohen, and involved cleaning and scraping the mural to remove loose paint, applying an anti-peel product, filling holes and cracks with silicone, matching colors and applying two coats of high quality oil base paint, finishing with a clear coat (UV) to preserve the mural. The FOMM group includes Nancy Lindburg (chair), Frankie Bell, Jon Christenson, Eileen Cotter Howell, Donnie Mattingly, and Ellen Stevens. The Mattingly Mural was spotlighted in the fall issue of Preservation, the national publication of the prestigious National Trust for Historic Preservation.

An educational brochure and a street level plaque are being planned by FOMM and the possibility of night lighting is being explored. Contributions in honor of former professor Jim Mattingly can be sent to The Historic Elsinore Theatre, FOMM (Friends of Mattingly’s Mural), 170 High Street SE, Salem, 97301. All contributions are tax deductible.

“Theatrical Heartscape” spotlights four actors whose careers parallel the early years of the Historic Elsinore Theatre.

- Theda Bara is widely regarded as the screen’s first sex symbol. The mural shows her from the 1917 film Cleopatra.
- German cabaret star Marlene Dietrich came to international attention through her role as Lola Lola in Josef von Sternberg’s 1930’s film The Blue Angel.
- Actor, writer, filmmaker, producer and director Charlie Chaplin first appeared as a child on the English music hall stage. He is pictured in the mural with his fellow outcast, Scraps, from the film A Dog’s Life.
- W.C. Fields honed his juggling and comedy skills on the vaudeville stage. Later in movies, he often portrayed a hard-drinking curmudgeon whose acerbic wit targeted social norms.

Photos (clockwise from top): Jim Mattingly on scaffold painting headdress section of Theda Bara, Dan Cohen working on the restoration, mural after three decades of exposure to the elements—both natural and man-made, current view of restored mural. All photos courtesy of Ron Cooper with the exception of the image of Dan Cohen, taken by David Bliss. Read more about this project online at bonniehull.net.
Adventures in Writing:
When elementary students go to college

By Erin Huggins

One student loves geckos. Another is an expert on fish.

This kind of information leaks out when fourth, fifth, and sixth graders put their imaginations into writing—the kind of knowledge overlooked in other learning environments but absolutely treasured by two college professors giving kids professional writing tools.

A
dventures in Writing, led by Drs. Katherine Schmidt and Cornelia Paraskevas, invited a dozen elementary students from Dallas, Ore., and surrounding areas to explore alternative approaches to writing through a series of systematic monthly meetings, September 2012 through May 2013, culminating with an author’s chair where the students showcased their work.

“ Their imaginations, their fluency is amazing,” said Schmidt, English professor and director of the WOU Writing Center. “I’m hoping that we’re going to help students remember writing as fondly as they remember reading when they’re older.”

Schmidt and Paraskevas, a linguistics professor, both teach WR 440—Teaching Writing—at WOU. From their interactions with college students and personal experience, both professors understand the importance of unlocking writing from its traditional prescriptivism constraints, the grammar do’s and do not’s presented in many classrooms.

“We’re really big on just affirming their development,” Schmidt said. “Earliest encouragements, they last longest and sink deepest. Maybe what we do over the course of this year might be the one thing that might help them through the criticism ahead.”

By teaching these kids about writing in “a non-formulaic way, in a liberating way,” Paraskevas said they could present “a disciplined way of learning to write [that] still encourages a lot of creativity.”

Since the parents sat in on the hour-long Tuesday night meetings, too, the message extended its reach a step further. “We’re educating in a way, also, the parents, that you can do a different way of writing that’s just as good,” Paraskevas said.

For Schmidt, personal parenting was a key component of her involvement in Adventures in Writing. “The first [reason] is I love teaching writing and kids. If I didn’t go for my Ph.D., I would teach fourth grade. Second, it’s something I can involve my daughter in. We’ve been writing together since she could hold a pen,” she said.

In fact, Schmidt’s daughter, Waverly, was the youngest of the little writers. By no means shy, Waverly added her five-year-old flair to the group of 9- to 12-year-olds, negotiating her mom’s new role as “teacher” and enjoying the adventure of the writing process.

“It’s interesting to me to see the difference in her attitude towards writing because she still hasn’t gone through a particular system [of learning writing],” Paraskevas said. “She’s very eager to share, to put her work on the overhead. She’s very proud of it.”

In regards to the rest of the students, Paraskevas hopes they will see the possibilities available in writing when “you do it with a hopeful eye.”

“All they get from us is a lot of praise,” she said. “Because to me it’s important for Western to be visible in the community, to be the ‘go to,’ the resource for anything the community needs. When they think of writing, I want them to think of us.”
That community visibility was, indeed, the reason Kim Conolly, a Dallas mom whose daughter, Caroline, was part of the Adventures in Writing program, had initially contacted Western as a potential resource for supplementing her homeschooling agenda.

“I wanted to instill a love of learning and writing in my 4th grade daughter - sometimes that happens best with others and not mom,” Conolly said in an email. “As WOU is a fabulous resource in our community and of course known as a teaching school, I was very curious to see if they would step up and offer something to the community in regards to elementary and middle school writing. Dr. Paraskevas and Dr. Schmidt jumped right in with a great attitude and a can do spirit.”

Despite her passion for the project, Schmidt was not originally thrilled with its name. Waverly, however, loved Adventures in Writing. “You know that is the perfect name because we’re on adventures as writers,” she told her mom.

Conolly, who coined the name, listed three main program objectives for her daughter and the other students involved: to instill a love of writing, to learn new writing skills and to have a college experience.

“It’s not often that 4th to 8th graders get to have access to college professors, a college campus, and the ability to take a ‘college’ course while still so young,” she said. “I hope and pray it will help them dream for their futures and find their voice in our world, a world in which we desperately need stories of grace and truth to be crafted.”

Kim Conolly

“We treat them like college students. We have really high expectations. The students behave just like college students. There are no management issues,” Schmidt said.

Only a lot of writing.

Although in-person Adventures In Writing meetings took place once a month, students were assigned weekly work via a writing blog. After Christmas, the assignments focused on fiction, building on each other, with the students piecing together information that ultimately led to individual stories.

When the students arrived at the classrooms, Paraskevas and Schmidt helped with issues of fluency and conventions. The professors presented mentor texts and gave the elementary kids tools on how to develop ideas for writing. Practical hints included instruction on the use of Google docs, along with individual face-to-face time with one of WOU’s writing center tutors.

As the students finished assignments, “they realized they could do a different kind of writing that pushed them just a little bit in terms of their range of writing,” Paraskevas said.

“Certainly, it was a commitment for these students and their families,” Conolly confirmed. About eight students finished the year-long program. In the end, though, perseverance paid off.

“Caroline is very proud of her story, and while it was hard for her to invest the time and energy (she had much on her plate this past year)...her own voice came through, and such a great voice she has. The program required her to push out the envelope of herself and invest in both herself and her community—what a fabulous thing for her and our family,” Conolly said. “Dr. Katherine and Dr. Cornelia are and were amazing.”

“I can’t say enough about how much they invested in the students,” she added, “and also how much fun they brought to writing.”
Imagine spending long, lazy afternoons lying on warm, white beaches. The ocean stretches clear and blue in one direction; palm trees dot the shoreline behind. For Hannah Vowell ’11, (master’s in teaching), Amber Geschwend ’11, (bachelor’s in elementary education) and Caelen Bensen ’11, (bachelor’s in early childhood/elementary education/ESOL), tropical paradise transformed from an ultimate vacation daydream to actuality when the trio took teaching jobs at Cap Cana Heritage School (CCHS) in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic.

Picking paradise

Of the three, Bensen was first offered a position at CCHS for the 2011-12 school year; however, she initially turned it down for a different job teaching kindergarten in a rural village in Belize. That meant Geschwend was next on the list—although she was out of Oregon when she got the call, she jumped at the chance to teach in paradise, packing posthaste. Less than a month later, she boarded a plane, on her way to teach ESOL and then, after her first spring break, first grade.

Vowell, hired to teach middle school science in 2011, was simply up for an adventure.

“I had just told [professor Karie Mize] I wanted to teach abroad in a Spanish-speaking country. She happened to know Adam Slaton ’01—he was the principal at the school [CCHS],” Vowell said. “I think I’ll be a nomad for the next many years.”

This particular Caribbean island happened to be as good a place as any to sojourn, maybe better. After their first year in Punta Cana, Vowell and Geschwend both elected to stay for a second year, Vowell continuing with her science classes, Geschwend moving up one year to teach second grade.

By 2012, Bensen, too, had returned from her position in the Central American jungle, ready for a new place and a new job—naturally, international. Based on her ESOL endorsement from WOU and other experience, she was hired as CCHS’s ESOL specialist, working with third grade through high school.
Teaching
As new teachers, all three women agreed CCHS had both perks and challenges. The small classes, for example, were ideal for forging close connections with each student. Some activities have to be downsized, though, because there are not enough participants. The abundant preparation time was also a luxury, especially in comparison to time given to teachers in the US.

Geschwend, who has taught the same group of kids for two years, said the project-based curriculum provided multiple laughs. For example, each elementary class picked themes for different units.

One time, her students decided to focus on espionage: “My kids chose like spies,” she said. “For the whole month, we would walk from my class to art, to PE.—we would walk like spies. They’d randomly roll, they’d crawl.”

While the non-verbal aspects of teaching provided entertainment, verbal cues were equally important. These spoken commands could prove challenging, though, particularly when the students didn’t understand English well. Geschwend and Bensen both said strategies gained from WOU’s ESOL endorsement were pivotal in their teaching success at CCHS.

“I had a couple kids that were from Russia who didn’t speak any English. That’s when the ESOL endorsement helped a lot,” Geschwend said. In the beginning, she taught “without words.” Before long, one of the students was picking up unique vocabulary. “The first project he did was on seals,” she said. “Now everything he does is about seals: ‘Dear Santa, for Christmas I want a seal.’”

Almost everyday, Geschwend’s students made endearing English blunders—stemming either from overconfidence or confusion—and she loved them.

They loved her, too. At the end of her second year of teaching, Geschwend’s students pooled together to give her an REI gift card—perfect for a girl who is most at home in the Pacific Northwest.

Island living
Of course, living along the Caribbean coast, the women found time to get their feet wet in more than teaching. Since CCHS is an elite private school, the teaching jobs came with multiple perks, such as access to several private resort beaches, free kayak rentals and discounts to popular tourist destinations.

During their first year, Vowell and Geschwend went on a whale-watching excursion where, according to Geschwend, “the whales were three times the size of the boat.” These up close and personal encounters with nature delighted Vowell, an amateur photographer.
Amber Geschwend, Hannah Vowell, and Caelen Bensen in the Dominican Republic.

“I’m the crazy [person] that will sit there for three hours just to get a good picture,” she said. “I like to be outside just watching all the time.”

Whether that meant observing bird patterns, including seasonal and time-based appearances, or taking long walks to study local flora and fauna, her outdoorsy streak serves her well, especially during her extra-curricular science and photography lessons; she enjoyed always gathering new things to learn and new subjects to teach.

Although CCHS provided one round-trip plane ticket per school year, going home for most holidays was not feasible. Thankfully, the island itself offered plenty of adventure. Longs holiday weekends—Dominican or American—often framed mini-excursions to the northern, southern or middle regions of the Dominican Republic.

“We went up to the mountains over Thanksgiving [break],” Bensen said. “I started crying when I saw Bob’s Red Mill [products in the store],” Geschwend said.

At the school and at their apartment, the three women spoke English exclusively, but getting around the rest of the island required more creative communication. Technically, the local language is Spanish. Practically, the shortened expressions and slang words mean the local dialect has a steep learning curve.

 “[The language] has been one of the hardest adjustments because I speak Mexican Spanish, then the Dominicans come along and chop all their words off,” said Vowell, who attended a bilingual elementary school and took Spanish through high school.

Bensen, too, took Spanish in college, including study abroad, but her most recent experience was in Belize, where she became accustomed to a Creole of Spanish and English. “There’s so much slang in every country you go to, that even if you speak Spanish, you have to start over,” she said.

Geschwend, who took only one term of Spanish at WOU, said outside the “bubble” of Cap Cana, communication hurdles have a domino effect. “I don’t know how to ask for directions, the roads are different, and driving, you have to be way more aggressive,” she said.

And that’s just when they rent a car. Usually, public transportation suffices—to an extent. Schedules, unfortunately, were not always convenient.

“You can take a bus on Saturday mornings to the grocery store, but maybe you want to go get eggs a different day,” Geschwend explained.

Ultimately, figuring out how to get around is part of life abroad, Bensen said. “It’s the independence thing. It’s ok. That’s what you do when you’re travelling.”

However, even asking for help was not hard. “The actual culture is just a warm culture, very welcoming, friendly, and helpful. Plus, I love the music,” Vowell said.

Moving on

Despite the beauty of island living, Geschwend, Bensen and Vowell have all set their sights stateside for next year. Bensen plans to explore the ways service dogs can help children with special needs or emotional traumas; she has an internship with Autism Service Dogs of America lined up.

Geschwend is interviewing with Portland area schools. She’ll miss her extra prep time, but she is anticipating the return of the rain. Vowell wants to build on the middle school experience she gained in Punta Cana—“I love the students here,” she said—and to further her ESOL and Spanish skills, eventually finding a similar science or ESOL position in the Northwest.

Bensen encourages all future teachers at WOU to keep CCHS in mind. “If they need a year of adventure, independence, this is a really good school to come to,” she said. “If you’re someone who doesn’t feel comfortable with [being] thrown into a new culture you don’t understand, it’s an Americanized area we live in…it’s a good stepping stone.”

WOU’s presence remains in the tropics, though. Stephanie Burns, another Western grad, will continue working at CCHS, and Paul Neiffer will replace Vowell. Of course, Adam Slaton is staying, too.
From Ghana to Monmouth: A Journey of Service

Sammy Aggro has come a long way from his home in Ghana to pursue higher education at Western Oregon University. He’s looking to make a difference in Oregon, and ultimately, the citizenry of his home country. While at WOU, he earned a bachelor’s in American Sign Language studies and is currently entering his last year in the master’s program for rehabilitation counseling.

He worked at a high school for Deaf students in Ghana and decided he wanted to learn sign language. “I had a passion for both teaching and sign language so I started looking at schools in Canada and the United States,” he said. “Tuition had me somewhat discouraged, but I had a friend who was teaching deaf education in Ghana. He had studied in the U.S. through scholarship and gave me five states I should look at to study.”

Discovering that WOU had a bachelor’s and master’s program he was interested in, Aggro applied for admission and scholarship and made his way across the globe seven years ago.

While reflecting on his time on campus, he most enjoyed knowing the language and communicating with Deaf people. “I learned the language from the teachers who are Deaf. That gave me the foundation that I really needed and I found that very cool.”

He even decided on his master’s program once he came to WOU for his bachelor’s. “When I came to Western, I saw the rehabilitation counseling program. What made me decide to do that is that I wanted to help people who need my services, and I have a passion for talking with people and wanting to help people with their situations.” He added, “I thought rehabilitation would be good because back in Ghana when I was in the high school for the deaf as a counseling figure, the principal set up counseling committees and I saw that there is always resolution through communicating. When I came to Western, since my freshman year, I had that goal.”

Not only has he dedicated himself to academics, Aggro spent a year between his degrees to gain practical experience in the field. He worked for Work Unlimited in a group home for adults with disabilities. He also worked for the Ron Wilson Center, skill building with clients with disabilities.

But none of this has been easy for an international student. His time has been challenging, but he’s found it to be exciting and positive. “My goal is to come here and learn something. I know in life you always face challenges but I feel positive completing my undergraduate degree and now going for my Master’s degree,” he said.

Once he completes his degree, he wants to give back to the people of Oregon for supporting him through his college career, then he plans to go back home and use his skills to help the people of Ghana.

Aggro has advice for students considering ASL or rehabilitation counseling. “First and foremost, consider your passion and interest. Be sure you know why you are going in and what you are going in for. My advice to any student is look at your passion and interest — it will be easy for you to succeed.”

He also has advice for international students. “I will always say it is very difficult to be an international student as there are cultural differences, but it’s always good to learn new things.” He believes students should focus on the positive cultural differences. He also encourages them to ask questions as he’s found faculty and students are always willing to talk to him and answer questions. “You can always talk through your problems with them here and I feel like that will help make a lot of progress.”

To support Aggro, and students like him, donations can be made via wou.edu/giving with the notation of International Student Scholarships.
Lured by beautiful nature and excellent educational opportunities, two people arrived in Oregon in January 2006, ready to face yet unknown challenge and adventure. Called back by a lucrative job, the now family of seven packed their bags and headed home to Saudi Arabia in early May 2013, grateful for everything they experienced and learned as international students.

Educational adjustments
Initially, Mohammed and Fatimah settled in Salem, enrolling in Pacific University’s English language program. A year and half later, they transferred to WOU, where they both earned bachelor’s degrees in business (’11) and master’s degrees in education, focusing on information technology (’13). The process was far from simple, however. Especially for Fatimah, the transition to an American university meant a radical departure from the Saudi Arabian educational system to which she was accustomed. Among other differences, men and women are educated separately, so not only did Fatimah face an initial language gap when attending classes in Oregon, but she also struggled to relate to male students and professors in an educational context vastly different from her upbringing.

“[When] I came here, I got embarrassed to be with the boys [in class] because that was first time for me,” Fatimah said. “Also, I never had a man teach me [before coming to WOU]. It was different. I was shy when I wanted to ask him questions. If I couldn’t understand, it was embarrassing for me...to communicate with a man.”

Her timidity, however, did not last. “Now that’s ok for me. I don’t get shy like before,” she said. In fact, she recalled a conversation with her undergraduate advisor Hamid Bahari-Kashani, professor of business and economics, when she successfully pleaded her case.

“[Bahari-Kashani] always told me what classes should I take,” Fatimah said. “He got mad at me when I got more [credits] than what they [wanted] me to have, more than 15 credits.”

Prior to an especially busy term when she needed a signature on her course overload petition, Fatimah said Bersani-Kashani “wouldn’t sign [the form] for me, but after I told him, ‘Please, I need to take this class now because I need to be with my husband, he just signed it for me.’”

“I’ll always carry the beautiful memories [of WOU] wherever I go...It’s one of the best places that I have ever been.”

Mohammed Alshawi
Bahari-Kashani, who was born and raised in Iran, said that he is always ready to help all students—domestic or international—on their journey to graduation. Personally, he experienced the difficulty of learning English in order to complete his education. Professionally, he has watched WOU’s international students face similar challenges, both linguistic and cultural.

“Living in a country with different standards and norms is always difficult. It is easy when we are only a tourist. It is not easy when you are student,” he said. “Even some of the Oregonians, at the beginning, become homesick when they leave their family and stay on campus. For the international students, it is much bigger challenge.”

Bigger, but not impossible.

Fatimah, for instance, “probably has noticed our norms and expectations and she acts more the way we expect,” Bahari-Kashani said. Often, international students “are young people who learn fast. They have come to U.S. to become educated, well informed, and to be a more sophisticated individual when they go back.”

Cultural connections

Before the Alshawis came to Oregon, Fatimah wondered about the people: the Americans they always saw on TV “looked like cowboys.”

She thought she would have a hard time communicating with people—because of her race and because of her religion.

Nonetheless, Mohammed said it was not hard to be a Muslim in Monmouth: “In fact [other students] were respectful, and…willing to learn and see how Muslims practice their religion, and whenever they have questions, they ask—whether it’s about the Middle Eastern countries or Islam,” Bahari-Kashani said.
And although Fatimah had questioned how the outward sign of her Muslim faith—she wears a headscarf—would impact others’ perception, her actual experience was overwhelmingly positive.

“I like the people here: they always smile, they are friendly,” Fatimah said.

Like Mohammed, she also noted that students at WOU were more interested in than condescending toward her culture. She made friends on campus, through visits to the International Office and her involvement with clubs.

‘International students can be and often are very successful in our setting. Rather than asking them to understand us, we should try to understand them too. This would make the life much easier for them,” Bahari-Kashani said.

Stepping out of her comfort zone to teach others, Fatimah participated in multiple aspects of student life, adding cultural enrichment on campus. International students and scholars advisor Adria Zampich-Gibbs, said Fatimah’s energy and love for Western and her family always made their time together enjoyable.

During one of the international night events, Fatimah and several other female Saudi students adorned attendees with henna tattoos, elaborate flowering designs curved into ornate swirls. For Fatimah, the temporary body artwork resulted from years of childhood doodling combined with traditional technique picked up along the way. Especially for weddings and other celebrations, the henna tattoos are to Saudi women what manicures are to Americans: a vibrant, visible display of culture.

Other aspects of the Alshawis’ culture, however, were practiced more privately during their time in Oregon.

Adria said during her visits to the Alshawi house, Mohammed would sometimes roll out his prayer mat, kneel, and start saying the Shalat, Muslim prayers corresponding to specific times of day. Despite the Alshawis’ continued devotion to their religious practices, the daily ins and outs of Islam took intentional—and sometimes time-consuming—effort.

For Fatimah, seemingly simple tasks like grocery shopping took several hours because she had to painstakingly read each label, scanning for ingredients that would violate the family’s religious doctrine. Obtaining meat required even more planning, since Mohammed and Fatimah had to purchase special cuts from Halal suppliers in Portland, which also meant a long drive up I-5.

“International students can be and often are very successful in our setting. Rather than asking them to understand us, we should try to understand them, too. This would make the life much easier for them.”

Hamid Bahari-Kashani

Driving itself was a new adventure for Fatimah. Before coming to Oregon, she had never sat behind the steering wheel since it’s illegal for women to drive in Saudi Arabia. As a student at WOU, though, she earned her driver’s license in 2008 and enjoyed splitting pilot duties with Mohammed on subsequent trips during their studies.

In the end, although Arabic and American cultures do differ considerably, the Alshawis’ experience at WOU balanced the same mix of study, family and fun that all students strive to create. Mohammed’s list of small town inconveniences also mirrors most American students’ opinions: Monmouth lacks viable nightlife activities, it can be boring during holidays, and you definitely need a car to get around.
Family time
Most significant to their time in the U.S., Mohammed and Fatimah said the opportunities their children had—to learn English, to attend WOU’s childcare classes, to experience life in America—were priceless.

According to Fatimah, Monmouth was perfect for raising a family: small enough to be safe, nice enough for frequent park excursions, friendly enough to feel welcome.

During academic holidays, the Alshawis ventured further away, jetting to Disneyland three times as a combined birthday celebration for their children, all born in the spring. To celebrate their final months in the U.S., the family flew to Florida this April, treating their kids to Orlando Studios, SeaWorld and Disneyworld—the happiest place on earth.

The oldest four Alshawi children (Sarah, Nora, Reem, and Sami) all speak English fluently, though on sunny days in Monmouth, they loved running around outside, exploring, climbing, swinging, and laughing, more than practicing their second language.

Amirah, the baby, preferred snuggling with her parents, watching the world with her beautiful big eyes. She’ll have to wait for the Alshawis’ return visit to truly understand the life they’ve had here—when she’s a little older.

And return, they will, someday.

“I want to do the best thing for my kids...I am glad they are here now,” Fatimah said shortly before the Alshawis’ return to Saudi Arabia. Some of her best memories—playing with her kids at the local parks, shopping together in Salem and riding the OHSU tram on visits to Portland—happened during her family’s formative years in Oregon.

“I want to stay here forever. The weather, the people, the place, everything here is good,” she said.

Al-Hasa, the Alshawis’ city in Saudi Arabia, dwarfs Monmouth in size with a population of approximately 1,150,000. Though the sunshine there is nearly constant, Fatimah said it’s not green: “[Monmouth] is a good place. There are trees everywhere and grass.”

Even the buildings at WOU are more colorful compared to the ubiquitous cement structures cropping up from her hometown’s desert sand.

“I think one day I will come back here will all my kids,” Fatimah said.

Presently, though, the best opportunities await the Alshawis on the Arabian Peninsula. Mohammed’s job as commerce inspector with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in Saudi Arabia will provide financially for the family; there, too, they will reconnect with the grandparents and siblings whom they only saw on a handful of visits over the past seven some years.

Still, out of sight does not mean out of mind.

“I’ll always carry the beautiful memories [of WOU] wherever I go,” Mohammed said. “...It’s one of the best places that I have ever been.”

During one of the annual International Night events, Fatimah and several other female Saudi students adorned attendees with henna tattoos, elaborate flowering designs curved into ornate swirls. For Fatimah, the temporary body artwork resulted from years of childhood doodling combined with traditional technique picked up along the way. Especially for weddings and other celebrations, the henna tattoos are to Saudi women what manicures are to Americans: a vibrant, visible display of culture.
The new treatment used the language of energy and focused on the power of human touch. Rosimery Bergeron, adjunct professor of rehabilitation counseling and a licensed professional counselor (LPC), was immediately hooked. “I am a play therapist. I am also a body psychotherapist. In Brazil, I was used to working with touching people,” she explained.

Now, as a contractor with Western’s Teaching Research Institute (TRI), Bergeron is implementing the treatment she found so intriguing—Qigong Massage—as part of an Autism Research study aimed at confirming the effectiveness of parent-administered massage.

“I train parents to do daily a patting massage - Qigong massage,” Bergeron explained. This massage focuses on acupuncture points related to Autism issues, like difficulties with language, communication, eye contact, and touch.

Total, the research, which began in November 2012, will involve 150 children over the next three years. For the first two years, participants will be children between the ages of two and six, 50 each year. The third year, researchers will focus on 50 children aged six to 11.

As one of 19 therapists involved in the research, Bergeron presently has trained six families at their homes in Salem. Through 20 sessions over a five-month period, she teaches the parents how to administer the 15-minute daily massage in a setting familiar to the child. The families commit to follow through with the research for a year. Thanks to a grant from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration, the treatment is free for participants.

“It’s harder for children with autism to process emotions, Bergeron said; “This massage helps them to calm down, to be in touch with their sensations.” In addition, “children start to sleep better, [and] they reduce tantrums,” she said.

Dr. Louisa Silva, lead researcher and trainer on the Qigong Sensory Training protocol, brought the Qigong massage therapy treatment to Oregon from Italy, where it had been used by parents of children with autism. She started incorporating Chinese medical techniques into her practice in 1990. In 2008, the QSTI was incorporated as a private non-profit. Silva’s current project with the TRI, seeks to confirm the results of previous research, completed on a smaller scale in 2009.

“It’s amazing. I love it,” Bergeron said about the technique.

When Bergeron first heard about Silva’s research, she was living in Brazil where she was a self-employed licensed clinical psychologist and body psychotherapist.
Due to the nature of having a private practice, she constantly looked for ways to improve herself. “I worked with Orgonotherapy [a type of body psychotherapy] in Brazil,” Bergeron said.

Orgonotherapy works to restore physical and psychological health to clients by addressing underlying emotional and bioenergetic issues. For Bergeron, Qigong Massage, a therapy based on Chinese medicine and developed for early intervention for autism, seemed like a perfect fit. Incidentally, professional and personal circumstances collided, facilitating a move to Oregon in 2009, when Bergeron planned to become a qualified therapist through the Qigong Sensory Training Institute (QSTI) before applying for the American LPC credentials. After that, she intended to keep working as a professional counselor—a job she’d been practicing for the last 20 years in Brazil.

“My goal was to continue to be who I am and to continue my professional life in private practice,” she said. However, a change in LPC licensing protocol in January 2010, meant that in order for Bergeron to keep working as a professional counselor—a job she’d been practicing for the last 20 years in Brazil.

“When I applied for the LPC to become licensed, I figured out I would have to have a master’s degree in Oregon, recognized in the [United] States, even though I had already completed a graduate program in clinical psychology in Brazil,” she said. Applying for and completing her master of science in rehabilitation counseling at WOU was a logical choice, Bergeron said. First, the program was accredited by the Council on Rehabilitation Education and recognized by the Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists (LPC) board in Oregon. Secondly, it prepared her for the national Certified Rehabilitation Counselor exam, which is one of the national exams required to become a Licensed Professional Counselor. Beyond that, the rehabilitation training would expand her expertise, particularly in the field of disabilities and vocational counseling, and complement her interest in working with children with Autism.

“Everything was matching,” she said. Having completed the degree program, Bergeron sees multiple benefits: “I love the community. I’ve made friends…I identify myself professionally with the goals of this program.”

While she did learn about cultural differences and American counseling procedures, the actual process of studying initially felt like several steps down the career ladder. The difficulty was not having my autonomy to work in private practice, becoming a student when I already had professional skills as a counselor,” she said.

“The program was very supportive in understanding my circumstance and helping me to achieve my goals.” Ultimately, personal participation in the program provided another upward rung for Bergeron: “This degree allows me to teach, [and] I have great interest in helping students to become counselors.” She now teaches the practicum class and supervises current counseling students at WOU, affirmation of her professionalism and practical expertise. Completion of her master’s degree in spring 2012 also allowed her to take the licensing exam and begin her private practice in Monmouth. Added to her contract work with the TRI Autism Research and her aspirations to become a trainer for Qigong massage therapists, Bergeron is well on her way back up the ladder—leading others to the same success.

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Rosimery Bergeron is married to music professor Tom Bergeron. He teaches Brazilian music and she helps students with the Portuguese lyrics. “I also sing there, just for fun. It helps me a lot to maintain my culture,” she said. “I have a very good connection there with students.”
Growing the Pack
How alumni coaches influence the next generation of Wolves

Coach Stuart Chaffee and the Larson brothers
Located four and half hours north of Monmouth, Lake Stevens, Wash. is not exactly next door. However, after graduating from Lake Stevens High School, three brothers, Kyle, Drew and Scott Larson, decided Western Oregon was the perfect place to study and run. First Kyle, then Drew, and later Scott moved south to compete on the WOU track and field team. In fact, they were completing a cycle started years before by the mid-distance coach at their high school, WOU alum Stuart Chaffee ('03, B.A. English).

Western’s NCAA Division II status gives the school a unique opportunity to balance academics and athletics. But when competing with big name schools and even bigger scholarship budgets, word-of-mouth is crucial to the recruiting process.

“I wouldn’t have gone to WOU if it weren’t for Stuart. Nobody really knows about Western Oregon University here in Washington,” said Kyle Larson ('12, B.A. in Spanish and English literature), who ran the 800m and 1500m for the Wolves.

When Kyle paired down his college choices to two—both track related—WOU won. “It just seemed like the only viable option,” he said. Concerning track, Kyle “was able to get a lot of face time with coaches, which was very valuable...outside of the athletics at WOU, in the real world, so to speak.”

As far as academics, he also enjoyed his time in Monmouth: “Education-wise, I was thrilled. I figured out what I wanted to do.”

And he absolutely flourished under the coaches. Kyle said he loved to work out in high school, but he “never understood that [he] could do something in track and field until college.”

Something being a conference championship in the 800m, that is.

In fact, Kyle’s success on the track led his brother Drew to Monmouth, too. “I came down because my older brother ran for Western Oregon. He really liked the coach,” Drew said. “If you know the person you’re talking to did well with that coach, you have a good feeling about it. I probably wouldn’t have come if my brother hadn’t had a good experience with [Track and Field Head Coach Mike] Johnson. It comes to be one of those things where because of Stuart and Kyle knowing who Johnson was, it influenced me.”

Coach Josh Holloway and Emmi Collier
Emmi Collier, a standout freshman thrower (shot put, weight, hammer, discus) for the Wolves during the 2012-2013 season, has a similar story. She discovered WOU while competing at the state track meet during her time at Warrenton High School. She also knew her coach, Josh Hollaway ('06, B.S. physical education), was a WOU alum.

“He wasn’t like pushing me towards any certain college, but he always talked well of Western. He went there and enjoyed his experience,” Collier said. “He wanted to look out for the best for what I wanted to do. He was excited when I told him I was going there.”

Thinking about the future, Collier said she would follow Hollaway’s example when working with her own track and field team: “I would probably do what my coach did—not necessarily pressure my athletes, but encourage them to check [WOU] out.”

For Collier, the cycle of former Wolves training future Wolves is a good thing. “It’s probably going to repeat itself,” she said. “If [the high school coaches] had a good time [in college], their athletes are going to want to know where they went.”

From high school to college, Collier said the people running the workouts make a difference: “The coaches have a big influence on me personally. If they’re having a good time, you’re having a good time, too.”

In fact, the workouts themselves make a difference. Hollaway said he drew heavily from his college workouts—and the work ethic instilled by WOU coaches—when designing his own high school practices. Last spring, he came back to Western to watch Collier throw at the John Knight Twilight meet.

“[Collier] thanked me. She said, ‘I was really prepared for college practices. We do a lot of the same things we did in high school,’” he said.

Whether from Lake Stevens or Warrenton, small town athletes have big opportunities at WOU, according

“I had a great time at Western, I loved it there. If we ever have standout athletes, Western’s always the first place I look.”

Josh Hollaway '06

By Erin Huggins
to Hollaway, who has been volunteer coaching at Warrenton High School for six years. “I think Western’s a really good fit for kids that are from small towns, small schools,” he said. “You meet new people all the time. I had a great time at Western. I loved it there,” Hollaway said. “If we ever have standout athletes, Western’s always the first place I look.”

“If you’re competing in track at the collegiate level, you’ve been pretty successful throughout your career. It’s important to give kids that same experience, to give back to the community.”

Chaffee, starting his eighth season coaching at Lake Stevens, wants his high school athletes to know their options for collegiate sports, especially at WOU. “Western’s off their radar. A lot of kids, when they’re getting into their junior and senior years, they’re looking at local schools [in western Washington]. With the undergraduate exchange program, Western Oregon is really a great option,” he said. “I had a fantastic experience down there. I encourage kids to think about it and check it out. Once they do, they end up really liking it.”

For all Wolves—past and present—relationships on and off the track, with coaches and with peers, cap their track and field experience. “I’m still in really close contact with my college teammates,” Chaffee said. “Three of five of my groomsmen were on the track team with me. My closest friends were guys that I ran in college with.”

Hollaway, too, said, “a lot of the friends that I still keep in touch with I met on the track team. I really enjoyed every moment, especially the bus trips. I think just the friendships I gained out of competing in track is most memorable for me.”

While many memories involve people, they also focus on athletic achievements—winning conference championships, competing at nationals, running against Olympic gold medalists. After all, as Drew Larson said, “Success is fun.”

WOU offers plenty of both. ■

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**Jon Apgar Day**

*by Devin Lowrey*

The 2013 home football season ended on a powerful note with a game that will be remembered for both the hard fought victory on the field (32-26 Wolves) and for the heartfelt, collective hopes of the team and crowd for a victory for Jon Apgar off the field.

In 2001, Arne Ferguson, now head coach for the WOU football team, recruited Apgar from Toledo High School to play linebacker. He played for Western from 2002 through 2005 and was known for being a good student and athlete with a work ethic that stood out on and off the field. After graduation, he went on to play arena football for a few years before playing for the Danube Dragons in NFL Europe for two years. After moving back to the United States, he married Megan. The two of them have recently expanded their family with the birth of their little girl, Addison. It would appear as though everything was falling in place for this young family.

Unfortunately, the Apgar family faced a devastating and unexpected blow over the summer when he was diagnosed with stage four kidney cancer. If attitude and determination have anything to do with surviving cancer, Apgar’s friends would say that he has what it takes. He has been through two surgeries and is currently undergoing chemotherapy.

Daniel Sims, one of his best friends, former teammate and roommate from college, put together “Jon Apgar Day,” which took place before and during the final home game, on Saturday, Nov. 9. This event was a celebration (as stated by Ferguson) and a fundraiser to help with the extensive medical costs being incurred by the Apgar family. There were t-shirts with #51 (Jon’s college number) on them, donation boxes and raffle tickets.

“He’s a guy that you always really, really loved being on your team, you knew he would always have your back and was there for you,” said Sims. “He became a brother as quickly as you met him.”

The game was full of black shirts with Apgar’s number, orange bracelets saying either “no one fights alone” or “Team Apgar.” The players wore black uniforms with orange socks and orange bows on the back of their helmets (orange is the color for kidney cancer awareness). Apgar, accompanied by his wife, daughter, and an ICU nurse, came from Salem Hospital, where he is currently receiving care, to tailgate and watch the game. One of the most memorable moments occurred at the beginning of the game when a large group of people created a tunnel from the gate to the center of the field. Apgar, who is currently in a wheelchair, and his family came through the tunnel to the center of the field where he was presented with a signed ball and honored before the start of the game. A jersey with his number was hung on the track during the game.

It was clear to me after talking to friends, teammates, coaches, and acquaintances that Jon is the kind of friend you would want to have and a family member you would be proud to claim. ■
How far can you run? One mile? Five? Ten? What about 13.1
miles along a country creek, south of Lincoln City?

Elka Asleson, physical education professor, has gone that distance many times. This time, though, she wasn’t alone. In March, 83 students and community members represented Western by completing the 13.1-mile Lincoln City half marathon, building determination and camaraderie.

Competing in the half marathon has multiple perks—some students choose to complete the race for part of their grade (Asleson gives students in all of her physical education courses this option); some are drawn to opportunities to shop at the Lincoln City outlet stores or hang out at the beach afterwards; some simply want to test their endurance.

A few runners competed seriously, the fastest finishing in just over an hour and a half. Some took longer, though, crossing the finish line after about three hours and 50 minutes. Most importantly, all finished.

According to Asleson, that feat alone supersedes other motivational factors.

“Having students realize that they can accomplish what they set their minds to” is one of the major highlights for her. “I have students that haven’t done more than a three mile run or walk. Because they finished [the Lincoln City half marathon], they were amazed,” she said.

Part of WOU’s Health and Physical Education Department’s goal is promoting healthy lifestyles and communities. Creating a strong visible presence in events like the Lincoln City Half Marathon equals a win-win for the school and the broader community.

Race coordinator and Lincoln City community center director Gail Kimberling has worked with Asleson for the past four years, providing a discounted race entry fee to Western students and staff who register through her. Additionally, Chris Rupp from the WOU Bookstore has also priced WOU logo shirts at $10 for race participants each year, helping the runners and walkers promote school spirit while on the course.

Most students buy shirts a size or two too big and wear them over their clothes. “We were pretty visible, [and WOU runners made up] almost a quarter of the field,” Asleson said.

“The marathon is definitely part of our Western Oregon experience,” Asleson said. “Everyone’s welcome.”

This year, the WOU community competed with a total of 83 entries.

“We were pretty visible, [and WOU runners made up] almost a quarter of the field,”

Elka Asleson
In fact, Asleson’s own son also ran the half marathon. “It was really special for me and the students,” she said.

As far as courses go, the Lincoln City route is pastorally beautiful, following a creek along a looping path, which means you generally see most runners twice—once on their way out and again heading back in. Additionally, the post race adds to the fun: there’s clam chowder, finisher’s medals, and ribbons for the fastest runners in all age groups.

Although the race is walker-friendly and finishing is a feat, regardless of time, Asleson does challenge some students to beat her. A seasoned marathon runner, with 24 full-length marathons to her name and a handful of half marathons, Asleson runs the course in two hours and five minutes.

“I enjoy the students pushing me, and I enjoy pushing the students,” she said. In the end, it’s about opening students’ eyes to athletic opportunities outside the classroom and apart from organized collegiate sports. Providing them with an “overall feeling of wellness and well-being and stress relief” will last, even after they’ve completed their college careers. Having exciting out-of-classroom exercise experiences helps students commit to lifelong fitness.

Of course, this half marathon’s proximity to the beach is also a powerful draw. “Staying at the beach and just enjoying the ocean [are] probably the main reasons why we go there [to run],” Asleson said.
Alumni of the Western Oregon University men's basketball program have come together to support a scholarship for current and future WOU players. The scholarship honors beloved alumnus and former player Bruce Bradshaw, who tragically died after suffering a head injury during an away game at Eastern Oregon University on Jan. 20, 1968.

Bradshaw, from Pleasant Hill, Ore., was a 23-year-old senior guard on the team and well-liked by his teammates and friends in the campus community. Double majoring in physical education and mathematics, he cared about his academics as much as athletics. He was a member of the men's scholastic honor society Theta Delta Phi and was in the National Reserves.

"Bruce was a man of great integrity, extremely organized, a man of faith with a dry sense of humor that I miss today," said his roommate Dave Sturgis.

One of Bradshaw's teammates, Dave Pappin, spoke of him, "Bruce lived life exactly the way he played basketball. With integrity." He was posthumously given the Most Inspirational Award for his dedication and contribution to his team, and work as a senior guard.

More details about the Bruce Bradshaw Scholarship will be announced at the men's basketball alumni night on Feb. 8, 2014.

For more information contact Executive Director of Athletics Barbara Dearing at 503-838-8094 or dearingb@wou.edu.
This year's inductees featured:

**The 1996 Women’s Basketball team**
Assistant Coach Rob Pridemore, Joan Peterson, Sandie Graves, Tiffanie Lydick Baker, Tracy Parker Phipps, Assistant Coach John Dixon

**Megan Inglesby Cooper**  
Volleyball

**Wes Tilgner**  
Track and Field

**Kipp Archambault**  
Men’s Basketball

**Alicia Marshall [Smith]**  
Track and Field

**Ervin Garrison**  
Track and Field, Football

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### Class notes

**1950s**

Dee Ann Bogue ’56 has recently published her first book, *Tansy and the 2000 Earthquakes*. This young adult historical fiction novel is set in 1811 New Madrid, Mississippi, when 2,000 earthquakes continued over a period of one year.

**1960s**

Tom and Pat Whitaker ’64 are celebrating 50 years of marriage on Dec. 16. The Whitakers are still traveling full-time in their motorhome and enjoying every minute as they see America and Canada while visiting family and friends along with some volunteering at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

**1970s**

Randall Franke ’73, ’98, Alumni Award of Excellence recipient, was selected as executive director of the United Way of the Mid-Willamette Valley serving Marion, Polk, and Yamhill counties effective December 2012.

**1980s**

Valerie Tenney ’82 and her husband Michael, both retired, recently returned to the Monmouth/Independence area from The Dalles. They purchased, with their daughter, Susan Maule, a farm home and 20 acres near Buena Vista. Sharing the home and land are Maule’s four daughters.

**2000s**

Angela Palmer ’01 and her husband Steve welcomed their second baby girl, Kiana Leigh on July 28.

Rebecca Rousculp ’07 has been working with children, youth and their teachers to establish a culture of reading and literacy in the Dominican Republic since 2011. While books are a rarity on the island—especially children’s books—Rousculp is working to change that in her current community, San Francisco de Macoris. Named after her grandfather, a world-renowned otolaryngologist and inventor of the cochlear implant, Biblioteca Comunitaria Dr. William House (Dr. William House Community Library) opened in May 2013.

Andy A. High ’02 was recently elected to the Bend-LaPine school board.

Andrew C. Akerson ’07 recently moved to Phoenix, Arizona where he is an award-winning LGBT fundraiser.
In remembrance

1930s
Gwen Thompson '30 on March 26, 2013 at age 102.
Alice D. Kampfer '36 on Dec. 16, 2012 at age 96.
Delma C. Falk-Drinkard '36 on July 27, 2013 at age 98.
Clara M. Dalbey '39 on June 9, 2013 at age 93.

1940s
Melba N. Black '40 on Jan. 5, 2013 at age 92.
Esther I. Brush '41 on Sept. 22, 2012 at age 94.
Rudy Rada '42 on July 29, 2013 at age 95.
Herbert W. Schlappi '44 on May 13, 2013 at age 91.
Doris T. Paldanius '45 on Aug. 13, 2013 at age 89.
Betsey A. Branigar '48 on Aug. 17, 2013 at age 87.

1950s
Nola R. Millhouser '51 on Feb. 28, 2013 at age 83.
Lois M. Anderson '52 on April 12, 2013 at age 80.
Louise T. Meiling '52 on Feb. 4, 2013 at age 87.
Donald W. Dinsmore '52 on Sept. 17, 2013 at age 88.
Barbara L. Sackett '53 on Sept. 21, 2012 at age 80.
Marion F. True '54 on Aug. 16, 2013 at age 86.
Dewey K. James '57 on Nov. 4, 2012 at age 82.
Arleen M. Hauser '57 on Feb. 9, 2013 at age 90.
Willie C. Hardin '59 on Oct. 8, 2012 at age 83.

1960s
Orville J. Linn '60 on July 14, 2013 at age 75.
Rex Brown '61 on May 3, 2013 at age 75.
Wayne B. Young, Jr. '62 on June 24, 2013 at age 77.
Idel I. Cahill '63 on Oct. 7, 2012 at age 81.
Karlene R. Halstead '64 on Aug. 25, 2013 at age 70.
Clarence A. Reeser '64 on April 24, 2013 at age 86.
Calla J. “CJ” Church '67 on May 17, 2013 at age 70.
Ernest Stroup '67 on Nov. 15, 2012 at age 76.
Ruth D. Beach '68 on March 29, 2013 at age 95.
Terrance O. Gray '68 on Sept. 15, 2012 at age 69.
Kendall D. King '69 on Feb. 12, 2013 at age 74.

1970s
Bonnie L. Tufts '70 on Sept. 26, 2013 at age 64.
Gertrude M. LeMond '71 on Feb. 16, 2013 at age 94.
Patrick C. Thornton '71 on Jan. 27, 2013 at age 64.
Charlie Crawford '71 on June 13, 2013 at age 85.
Marguerite M. Peery Chambers Bartruff '71 on July 11, 2013 at age 91.
Reginald Gardner '73 on July 4, 2013 at age 65.
Helen M. Hamilton '75 on Oct. 17, 2012 at age 91.
Peter B. Roth '79 on Feb. 20, 2013 at age 65.

1980s
Marie R. Kelnhofer '80 on March 8, 2013 at age 88.
Stephen Baisch '81 on Nov. 12, 2012 at age 56.
Christine Elisabeth Hanson '87 on Oct. 11, 2012 at age 53.
Colleen E. Greenwade '87 on Oct. 24, 2012 at age 53.

1990s
Amy A. McFarland '94 on Nov. 17, 2012 at age 43.

2000s
Emily S. Iott-Campbell '05 on March 22, 2013 at age 33.
Sarah A. Slegers '05 on July 10, 2013 at age 31.

Faculty, staff and students
Travis W. Dillingham on Dec. 28 at age 25.
Carl B. Wagner on May 27 at age 88.
Barbara A. Baxter on Aug. 13 at age 76.
Doris M. Costello on July 2 at age 96.

Edward B. Wright on Dec. 18 at age 71.
Ed joined WOU in 1979, where he developed of the first computer science major and helped grow the department until his retirement in 1999. A new WOU computer science center was named in honor of Ed (see story on page 3).

An expanded version of the In Remembrance section can be viewed online at wou.edu/magazine.
My oldest friend at WOU celebrates 126th birthday

Twenty years ago, I met one of my best friends at WOU. It is the sequoia. The 1887 graduating class planted it, outside Campbell Hall, and since then, it has grown non-stop.

Close to it, the maple trees are always changing color. They are contemplating us. Their blue, yellow, silver or purple leaves reflect every day the different shades of the human adventure.

The sequoia does not change. In the middle of the university campus, it is an expression of wisdom and eternity. Its presence and its silence reveal to us that modesty is the best expression of a radiant self.

This tree teaches professors and students alike that we must become the change that we want to see in the world.

Storms, exasperating winters and some infernal heats surrounded the sequoia but it remained immutable. Its teaching in this case, shows us that envy and hatred are irrelevant while wisdom and silence of being exist forever.

Twenty times I have seen the lights of the tallest Christmas tree of all US. universities. Its sheen inspires my confidence in the rationality of miracles and hope.

For me, the sequoia represents the people of Western.

According to Winnie the Pooh, "Lots of people talk to animals... May be, but... not very many listen though... that's the problem."

I propose that we apply this insight to trees as well. Sometimes, like in Monmouth, a tree incarnates the soul of a great human community who will be always in my memory.

See you forever!

Dr. Eduardo M. Gonzalez-Viña
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 and providing support 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.
This is a great chance for families to reconnect with students following their winter holidays. Family weekend features an entire weekend filled with activities, games, and school spirit. For more information contact Ed at enunue@wou.edu or 503-838-8514.
wou.edu/student/sla/family