

CRIMSON & BLACK

Central
Washington
University
Spring 2024



State's largest College
in the High School
program still growing
— Page 16

Cultural wealth defines
success for many
CWU students, alumni
— Page 4

CWU history graduate Roberto Chavez dons a custom-made mask called "tastuan" at the 2023 commencement ceremony. The mask, made of Mexican red clay, pig leather, and pig teeth, was created by his grandfather, also Roberto Chavez, a well-known mask-maker in Mexico.

"It's meant to look scary," said the younger Chavez, who also earned minors in Latino and Latin American Studies, Asian and Indigenous Studies, and anthropology.

"It has a double meaning: to represent the people who died during colonization and to strike fear into the conquistadors, who brought illness and strife with them. The mask's significance to our people is 'even though you made us sick and we are constantly fighting against you, we're not going to give up.'"



"I asked my grandfather if he could make me a mask for graduation, but he sent it to me during my freshman year. That motivated me to keep going, and I figured, 'I can't drop out now.'"

Roberto Chavez ('23)





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Connect with CWU



On the Cover: CWU anthropology alumna Raelynne Crow is using her education and research experience to honor her indigenous heritage. Read more about Crow on Pages 4-6. Photograph: David Dick

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Dear CWU community,

Central Washington University is a truly special place, and we continue to build upon our stellar reputation year after year. From our programs to our people, I can't express how proud I am of the progress we are making as an institution.

Thanks to our dedicated faculty and staff—and countless key partners around the state—we have come a long way on our journey toward being a model learning community of equity and belonging.

We still have work to do, but we continue to move in a positive direction. By encouraging every member of the campus community to make their voices heard, and welcoming a wide variety of perspectives and worldviews, we have created an environment where our faculty, staff, and students feel valued and respected.

With support and feedback from our community partners and shared governance groups across campus, we have built a solid foundation that is helping us live into our vision, mission, and core values—a future where the success of our students forms the basis of every decision we make.

We are reminded every day that the work we are doing is making a difference in the lives of our students and the communities we serve. As all of you know, CWU provides students with opportunities for experiential learning and relationship-building that they can't find anywhere else.

One of the best examples of this relational approach can be found in our internationally renowned music department, which continues to build upon its rich tradition of excellence. As you will read in this edition of *Crimson & Black*, CWU has been the pinnacle for music educators around the Northwest for the better part of the past century. We also train many top performers, including some who have gone on to earn national and international acclaim.

Another huge success story has been the growth of our state-leading College in the High School program. As you will discover in the following pages, the mutually beneficial partnerships Central has forged with more than 150 schools on both sides of the state—along with the teachers who impart the knowledge students need to continue their educations—are helping put CWU on the map in new and exciting ways.

We also want to share our many successes outside the classroom, such as the growing number of alumni athletes who are making their mark as professionals. Recent standouts like Samantha Bowman, Mae Sagapolu, and Reilly Hennessey are excelling at the next level, and they proudly point to their CWU experiences for helping them reach new heights.

A number of equally inspiring stories about our students, alumni, and programs await you in the latest edition of our signature publication. We have much to be proud of at CWU, and it starts with all of you. Thank you for your support, and we look forward to seeing you again in the fall.

Sincerely,

A. James Wohlpart
President

CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Central Washington University acknowledges the people who have been on this land since time immemorial. The Ellensburg campus is on lands ceded by the Pshwanapum and other bands and tribes of the Yakama Nation in the Treaty of 1855. The Yakama people remain committed stewards of this land, cherishing it and protecting it, as instructed by elders through generations. We are honored and grateful to be on their traditional lands, and give thanks to the legacy of the original people, their lives, and their descendants.

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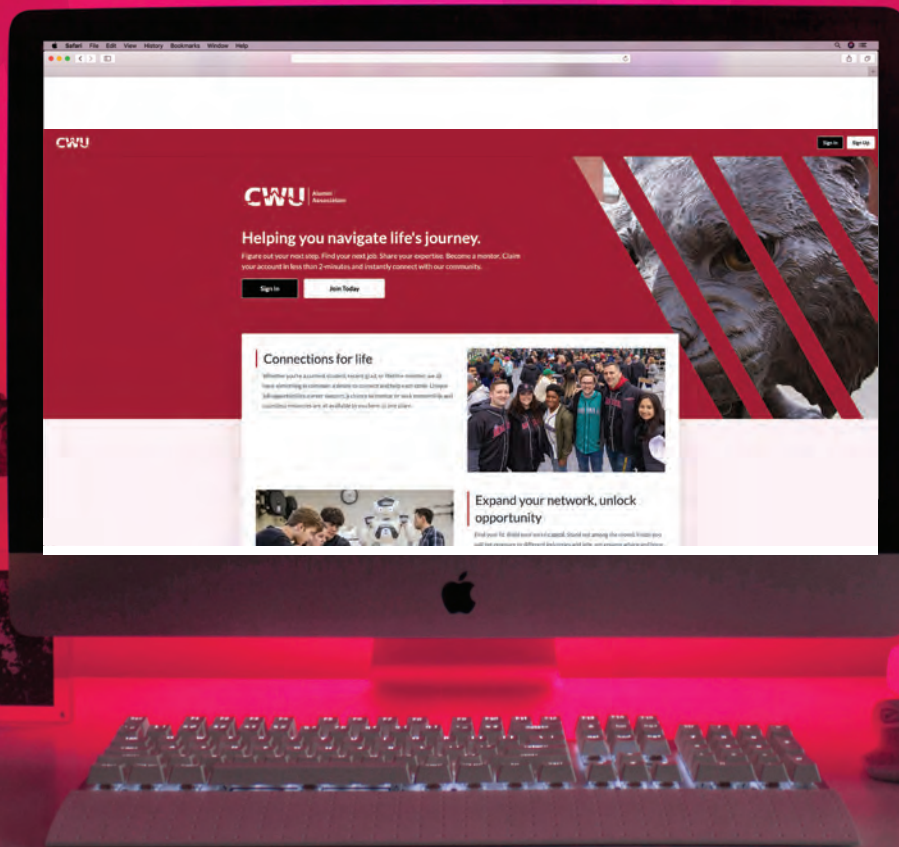


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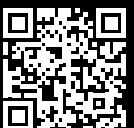


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A young woman with glasses and a light blue puffer jacket stands barefoot on a rock in a rushing stream. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The water is dark and turbulent, creating a sense of movement and energy. The background is a dense forest of trees, with sunlight filtering through the leaves, creating a dappled light effect on the water and rocks.

CWU Community Rich with Cultural Wealth

Many students and alumni don't measure success in dollars. They prefer to give back.

By Tara Roberts



Imagine you're giving a commencement speech. You're not likely to talk about your paycheck or promotions. Instead, you'll probably tell stories of the people who support you, the experiences that shape you and the values that guide your life.

Those things are part of your cultural wealth: “the reservoir of personal and community resources an individual may have beyond their income or accumulated financial wealth,” as described by Every Learner Everywhere, a national higher education collaborative.

Rather than pointing out the resources a person lacks, cultural wealth “illuminates an individual's abilities and assets,” the organization says.

This wealth may come from family and community values, meaningful social connections, or challenges like racism or inequity. The results of unlocking this sense of cultural wealth include traits like perseverance and resistance to injustice. It shapes goals such as supporting a hometown community rather than moving to a big city.

Universities traditionally focus on individual accomplishment and measures of success that are more easily quantified. But students often come to Central Washington University with community-focused cultural wealth—and those resources should also be recognized, celebrated, and leveraged for student success.

Encouraging students to see their own cultural wealth may require patience, perseverance, humility, and a willingness for people serving within the university to overcome their own biases, according to Rob Ogburn, executive director of Central's new Business and Community Services department and former College of Business clinical faculty member.

“What it really implies for us as a university is it's not just an option; it's a requirement,” Ogburn said. “If we're going to meet our vision and mission in a meaningful way and help people create futures they are passionate about, we have to meet people where they're at in their cultural context, not the other way around.”

The following profiles show how the concept of cultural wealth has helped shape the lives of three Wildcats, who are using what they have learned to give back to their communities.

Alumna Brings Indigenous Perspective to Her Profession

Raelynne Crow's ancestors have been in the Pacific Northwest since time immemorial. Majoring in anthropology at Central helped Crow find a passion for studying her ancestral home and advocating for her community.

Crow, a descendent of the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, was the first person in her mother's family born off the reservation.

Her father is White, and growing up with a mixed-race background made her curious from a young age about “how cultures worked, how they changed, how they adapted, how families thought about their own culture,” Crow said. It also made her acutely aware of racism and interested in how to dismantle racist structures in society.

She originally planned to become a teacher, but a custodian in Barto Hall, where Crow lived, encouraged her to try anthropology. From the first class, Crow knew she'd found her career direction.

Anthropology helped her understand her identity and personal goals in a new way. Her advisor and mentor, Anthropology Professor Patrick McCutcheon, encouraged her to explore what she could bring to anthropology as an indigenous person.

“When you grow up Native, you're taught to be ashamed of that, because there's a lot of cultural stigmas that are super harmful,” she said. “When I learned that the Yakama Nation, where my family's from, had such a rich cultural and spiritual connection and history, it was the first time I'd ever seen my culture in such a positive light.”

She learned not only about anthropology's dark history of exploitation and colonialism, but also how she could fight such racism. For her senior project, she worked at the Manastash Pines archaeological site in Kittitas County.

Anthropologist Raelynne Crow is a descendant of the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation.



Raelynn Crow

“An indigenous person working on their own ancestral site and using their own cultural views in the work is something that’s really new,” she said. “Just the existence of me being in archaeology is already an act of decolonization.”

Crow is now earning her Master of Arts in heritage archaeology at the University of Washington. For an internship this spring, she took on an archaeology survey project in Ellensburg, studying an area along the Yakima River for potential archaeological and historic resources. The project is designed to create opportunities to engage local people in their area’s history.

In her career, she plans to continue research and advocacy in the Northwest, combatting racism in her ancestral home.

“I want to put archaeology in control of the tribes and in control of indigenous people and other marginalized communities,” she said. “That’s something a lot of archaeologists miss; that they have to be advocates, and they have to find ways to serve marginalized communities.”

Care for Others Started with Those Who Cared About Him

As a young teenager, Alvaro “Gonzo” Gonzales always knew how important it would be for him to graduate from high school. After seeing his family members struggle in school, he understood the value of earning his diploma.

“Graduating from high school was the biggest hurdle that I knew,” he said. “But I saw it as the culminating event in life that would allow everything to flow.”

Gonzales grew up in a family of farmworkers in the Yakima Valley and started helping with harvest in middle school. By the end of eighth grade, he’d been expelled twice.

Then, during his freshman year, Gonzales’ uncle encouraged him to join the wrestling team. His uncle died shortly after, but his advice changed Gonzales’ life.

He realized that he still wanted to compete, so he got serious about school. His teachers gave him opportunities to catch up, and his coaches encouraged him and gave him rides home from practice.



Alvaro “Gonzo” Gonzales

“I always got a lot of advice and wisdom from my coaches, Jim and Jeff Powers,” he said. “At the time, I didn’t really understand what they meant. But now I do.”

Wrestling gave Gonzales a found family and a place to prove his resilience and learn from failure. He was never a superstar, but it didn’t matter.

“Those coaches didn’t really care about how successful I was on the mat. They saw the things I overcame in life,” he said.

Gonzales graduated with a sense of confidence and purpose. He enlisted in the Marine Corps the day after high school graduation in 2013, after joining the Marine Corps Reserve, he enrolled at Yakima Valley College while working full-time at McDonald’s. Seeing how McDonald’s operated sparked his interest in business, and the restaurant owner encouraged him to follow his curiosity.

By the time Gonzales enrolled at Central, his life had taught him the joy of giving back to others, the importance of listening to people, and the skill of being a servant-leader. He drew together a circle of classmates, professors, and alumni who shared his values, regardless of how their backgrounds differed from his.

He pointed to his many mentors in the CWU College of Business, as well as former Center for Leadership and Community Education Director Andre Dickerson.

“He always made me feel like a million bucks,” Gonzales recalled.

To further give back—and to help address the shortage he noticed of business professionals who looked like him—he founded Central’s Association of Latino Professionals for America (ALPFA) chapter.

“It took me a while to figure it out, but I started to see that my network was getting built up, not because of what I had to offer, but because of the mindset or aspirations I had,” Gonzales said. “I had no money, no rich family, or family in high places where people could benefit from me. But, rather, they helped me because they saw my potential or saw how I was supporting others. They saw that by helping me, they could support my ALPFA student members or others that I was empowering.”

After earning degrees in accounting, economics, and business administration (finance) in 2020, Gonzales returned to the



Erica Lua-Alonzo

Yakima Valley. He's now a senior audit/assurance associate at PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), a multi-national accounting and auditing firm. He also serves as a volunteer wrestling coach for his old teams in the Toppenish area, while also working as a WIAA referee.

Thinking back on his life, he remembers all he's learned and everyone who has helped him—and he knows how much farther he can go with the help of others.

"I tend to be a lone wolf, but I have gotten far due to the support of others," Gonzales said. "A lot of times people want to wait for somebody else to do the hard work. But when I see something that I believe is wrong, I just put in the work to create change for the things that are important to me."

CWU-Yakima Student Finds Inspiration from Her Family

Family and culture are at the heart of Erica Lua-Alonzo's mission to become a teacher.

She was first inspired by her mother, who worked multiple jobs as a single parent, then earned a college degree when Lua-Alonzo was a teenager. Years later, when she was married with children of her own, she knew she wanted to pursue higher education, too.

"I figured, if my mom could do it, being a single parent with two kids, then I can do it. I can go back to school," she said. "Will there be sacrifices? Yes, but people do it all the time."

Lua-Alonzo was talented and driven as a teenager. She'd lost her childhood Spanish skills but was determined to reconnect with her language and culture. She re-learned Spanish through music, TV, and audiobooks, as well as speaking with her high school sweetheart, Jose Lua Lua, now her husband.

She wasn't able to afford college right after high school, but she learned hard work and grit from years of working at Taco Bell and supporting her family.

"I was extremely motivated and ambitious, and I always have been," Lua-Alonzo said. "I've always wanted a little bit more."

What Is Cultural Wealth?

Every Learner Everywhere describes the concept as:

"The reservoir of personal and community resources an individual may have beyond their income or accumulated financial wealth. Cultural wealth illuminates an individual's abilities and assets."

I think that those sets of skills and qualities have really pushed me to be where I'm at now."

Lua-Alonzo earned her associate's degree from Yakima Valley College in 2018, with a special endorsement in Spanish. She became an administrative assistant at a school in Yakima and soon began working as a translator for the district.

"Being in education gives you a new perspective," she said. "I really enjoyed being with kids and being part of that process of them learning and asking questions and just diving deeper into what motivates them, what struggles they face, why they do what they do. I was like, 'I want to make a bigger impact.'"

At CWU-Yakima, she found encouraging, caring staff and faculty in a program that allowed her to take classes at night while continuing her day job.

Juggling school, work, and home life has been challenging, but Lua-Alonzo's husband and children, now teenagers, keep her motivated.

"I'm not saying I want to hand them everything on a silver platter, but I do want them to not struggle as much as I did," she said. "I love being Latino and Hispanic, but Latino women don't just need to be moms. We can be career women, we can hold important positions and roles, and that's important for my daughters to know."

After student teaching in the fall and earning her degree, Lua-Alonzo hopes to teach in a dual-language program in the Yakima Valley, bringing her love for education and language to the community that has always been part of her family's life. ■



Perfect Harmony

CWU Music is proud of its rich tradition of producing the best educators and performers in the Northwest

By Savannah Tranchell



Bruce Walker applied to Central Washington University for one reason: John Michel.

It was the spring of 2004 and Walker was getting ready to graduate from Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville the following spring. He wanted to pursue a conducting/cello performance path, but he didn't know where his dream would take him until he met Michel that summer.

"Musically, I was like a fire hydrant: Super creative, but not very technical," Walker recalls.

That desire to hone his skills led him to apply to the Marrowstone Music Festival, a three-week, intensive summer experience in Seattle, where he would get to work with "Master Michel," a renowned cellist who has taught at Central for more than three decades.

"He's one of the most inspirational people I've ever met, especially when it comes to teaching. Getting to meet him was everything," said Walker ('07), who now teaches music at Columbia Basin College (CBC) in Pasco. "He fixed my bow hand during those three weeks. I said to myself, 'If he can do this in three weeks, what can he do if I get a graduate degree?'"

Faculty Excellence

Almost all alumni from Central's music program have a similar story about what initially drew them to study at a small state college in a rural community: They came for the expert faculty.

Over more than 100 years, the Department of Music has curated a talented group of professors and instructors devoted to the student experience. Maintaining that excellence over decades requires intentionality.

"We owe a lot to the people who came before us and their vision," said Department Chair Mark Goodenberger.

Key to that vision was Wayne Hertz, who served as department chair in the 1930s. Hertz was instrumental in building the music department into the signature program it is today.

His legacy lived on in Hertz Hall, the former concert hall on the Ellensburg campus where the Health Sciences building now stands.



A Legacy of Firsts

- Music instruction has been part of Central's history since classes began in 1891.
- Founded in 1906, the orchestra is the third oldest in Washington state.
- The Central marching band, founded in 1939, was one of the first in the nation to perform while maneuvering at football games.
- The jazz program is one of the first in the U.S. to feature tenured music faculty instruction, beginning in 1947.

Source: "Music at Central Washington University with Emphasis on the Years 1891-2000" by Norman D. Wallen

But it isn't just about talent; the department is careful to hire musicians who want to be part of the Wildcat family.

"You can't be a jerk and work here," Goodenberger said. "We hire people that are great at what they do, but also are good team members."

When he joined the faculty 22 years ago, Goodenberger was a career percussionist looking for stability.

"I was looking for a job in music, and what I found was that I was as passionate about teaching as I was about performing," he said. "You feel you belong to something right away."

That inclusive feeling carries across the classroom, in one-on-one lessons and the department's two dozen ensembles, not to mention the high school and middle school students who visit campus for state competitions in the McIntyre Music Building. Even those auditioning find a robust community.

"Recently we had a pianist from Iran who really wanted to audition, but he couldn't pay for the audition fee. Our piano faculty was working to find them resources," Goodenberger said. "People really look to problem-solve and help students when they have a need."

Paying It Forward

Walker often encourages his students graduating from CBC to look to Central to finish their degrees. One student lost his luggage on his way to audition, and the cello students got together to find him what he needed to get through his audition.

"That kind of community is something that's special. You can't put a price on that," said Walker, who has gone on to a successful music career, both as an educator and performer.

Early in his career while working as an orchestra director in Sunnyside, he joined what he called the "Freeway Philharmonic,"

driving all over the Northwest to share his passion with others.

Walker joined the Walla Walla Symphony, the Mid-Columbia Symphony, and the Oregon East Symphony, spending all of his free time playing and teaching music. He also served as an assistant conductor to the Oregon East Symphony in Pendleton, cover conductor for the Yakima Symphony, and music director for the Yakima Youth Symphony.

"If an orchestra had a spot, I wanted to be in it," Walker said.

That love for music has continued for him as an educator, and he can trace his love for teaching back to his days in the CWU music department.

"I've always been a very student-centered professor, and I want to know what my students are thinking about when I ask a question," said Walker who teaches music appreciation and music theory, and conducts the orchestra.

Much like his professors at Central, he says, "I'm very focused on taking a real-life approach to teaching."

Foundation in Education

Scott Peterson ('76) was the first student to receive a graduate degree in choral conducting from Central. After more than 30 years directing choral activities at Yakima Valley Community College (now Yakima Valley College), Peterson returned to CWU as a non-tenure track faculty member.

The department offers master's and bachelor's degrees along two main tracks: education and performance. Students can choose from four-year degrees in performance, composition, music education in choral or instrumental music, or general music. Graduate students choose from composition, piano, conducting, performance, pedagogy, and music education.

No matter which direction students choose, they'll find education becomes a part of their experience.

"Central has always had a good idea of what it takes to be a good music teacher," Peterson said. "At one point, most of the music teachers in the Northwest came from Central. It's not just about being able to get up in front of a bunch of students and have them perform; it's also teaching them about music, about history, about how to be a better musician. We teach students how to think critically to explore what they can learn about the music."

That approach has continued to prove successful in the five decades since Peterson graduated. The new generation of music educators all look back fondly on the guidance and mentorship they received during their time in Ellensburg.

Brittany Stevens ('16) always knew she wanted to become a music teacher, dating back to her freshman year in high school.

"My courses at CWU really helped me understand my voice, and I grew in leaps and bounds in my understanding of the anatomy of singing. I use that knowledge daily," said Stevens, who currently teaches music at Eastmont High School in East Wenatchee.

"Most of my students don't take private voice lessons, but because of the high caliber of education I had, I'm able to teach them and see huge improvements in their voice just from being in my class."

She credits her Central professors with giving her a well-rounded knowledge base that she can now impart to her own students.

"The amount of ensemble knowledge I collected from being in Chamber Choir, Vocal Jazz, and University Chorale—I have such a big arsenal of tools," Stevens said. "I feel like I can run a rehearsal at any time for any choir and any piece of music."

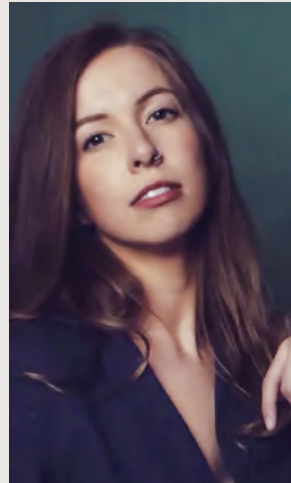
Re-Building Momentum

The department's foundation in music education remains solid as it looks to what the future holds for its students.

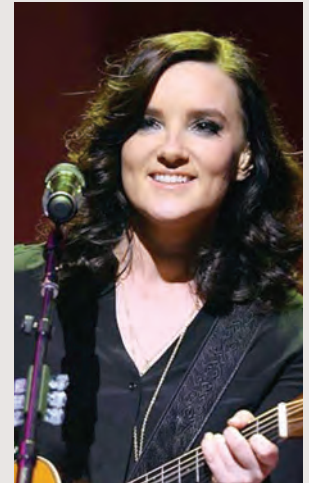
Like many others disciplines across campus, CWU Music experienced higher-than-usual turnover during the pandemic. Now, the department is trying to rediscover its groove with new faculty and a return to more traveling performance opportunities, Peterson said.

That includes showcasing student talents at various regional conferences, where music educators and alumni will see the continued caliber of the program.

"It's exciting to be back to promoting the school and putting ourselves out there. I'm sincerely proud of what we're doing," Goodenberger said. "When you bring all these different students together, and you put them into a group, and you create this performance out of these people who are from all different walks of life—and you find the balance in that—it's such a great analogy for how the world should be." ■



Amanda Taylor



Brandy Clark

Pair of Former Wildcats Win Grammy Awards

Central Washington University was well-represented on the Grammy Awards stage in February, when one alumna and one former student-athlete were honored for their musical talents.

Amanda Taylor, who graduated from CWU in 2013, won her first Grammy Award in 2024, along with her vocal quartet, säje. Their song, "In the Wee Small Hours of the Morning," won for Best Arrangement, Instrument and Vocals. The group received its first Grammy nod in the same category in 2021.

Taylor has become an internationally known composer, arranger, performer, studio singer, and teacher. Her passion for mentoring young vocalists led to the launch of Wicked Pigeon, a Seattle-based vocal arranging company that writes accessible, fresh arrangements for young jazz ensembles.

Brandy Clark, who played basketball for Central in 1994-95, won her first-ever Grammy for Best Americana Performance. She had been nominated 17 times since her debut album in 2013, including six this year. She finally broke through in 2024 for "Dear Insecurity," a duet she sang with Brandi Carlile.

Clark came to Central on a basketball scholarship from the town of Morton, Washington, in 1994. The former shooting guard didn't finish her degree at CWU, choosing instead to pursue a career as a recording artist. She moved to Nashville at the age of 22 to follow her dream of becoming a singer/songwriter. ■

Singing CWU's Praises

CWU Music graduates who have gone on to become professional performers and music educators can't say enough about how Central's programs and faculty set them up for success. We asked three alumni about their experiences, in their own words:

Ashlyn Nicole Wilson

Degree: Bachelor's in music ('13)

Hometown: Seattle

Career: Singer, songwriter, composer

What brought you to Central?

My older brother and I both started Central at the same time; he wanted to study aviation and I wanted music. It's always been a passion of mine, so it seemed only natural to pursue it as a degree. I also came in as a Running Start student, so I had my first two years of general education out of the way and went all-in on music classes.

I really wanted to keep my options open as a student. I wasn't a music education major, and I wasn't a performance major. It was just "music." I wanted to know a little bit about everything so I could go more into recording and sound engineering. I thought a music degree would give me a solid foundation to build on. I went on and earned a certificate in recording technology and just completed my graduate degree in film and game scoring.

Where has your career taken you?

After graduation, I stayed in Ellensburg for several more years. I was really involved with the community and taught private piano and voice lessons. Eventually, I started working in my own music studio.

In 2018, my husband and I moved to Los Angeles for his graduate work. But it was a huge opportunity for me to get more into music production. I also joined an urban folk band, Welcome Home. In 2020, I released my first single, "Just Be." In 2021, I released my self-titled debut album, "Ashlyn Nicole." I'm working on my second album and hope to have that out in the next year.

What's next for you?

I'm spending time building my portfolio and networking. Seattle has a big video game industry, and I'm connecting with other alumni who are working in the industry here. I think that's the beautiful thing about music; there are so many different aspects of it to pursue.



Ashlyn Nicole Wilson

How did Central prepare you for a performance career?

The faculty there gave me such a strong foundation to build on. They worked us really hard. There was this expectation of excellence that makes you rise to the occasion as a musician and take the work very seriously. They challenged me and helped me take ownership of my artistic voice. That's something they can offer to any musician—they care about you and see a potential in you that maybe you don't see for yourself.

I owe a lot to Central and professor Vijay Singh. He really encouraged me and brought out that jazz voice that I didn't know I had. ■

Stephen Pickard

Degree: Bachelor's in music education ('12);
master's in conducting ('20)

Hometown: Everett

Career: 10 years teaching at Rogers High School in Puyallup. Also teaches fifth- and sixth-grade band.

What brought you to Central?

I had middle and high school teachers who were both alumni, and they were people I really respected. They said, "If you want to do music, you want to go to Central." Right from the beginning, I felt like the faculty and staff presented an environment of warmth and positivity. You were drawn to these professors.



Stephen Pickard

When did your love of music begin?

I started piano lessons right before my eighth birthday. I sang in children's choirs in elementary school, and then continued singing. I also joined band in middle and high school. It's been a constant in my life. I've always appreciated the community that music provides.

Did a love of teaching follow?

I originally did not want to teach. I was interested in film scoring and composition. But then one of my professors was taking a group of music education majors to a state music teacher's conference, and I decided to go. To see education as a teacher in training—and not from a student perspective—was a real turning point for me. It made me connect some of the dots—music has provided a lot of opportunities for me, and I'm grateful for those. This is how I give back and foster positive opportunities for students.

Do you perform outside the classroom?

For several years I played with a well-known Seattle group, The Jazz Police. I also play in the Tacoma Concert Band and have a conducting fellowship with them this year. The fellowship builds on the experience I had getting my master's in conducting, which was a very positive experience.

How did your time at Central influence your career?

One thing that I always appreciated about the experience that I carry over to my work now is about rehearsal. The professors made rehearsal spaces thoughtful and a team environment; critique was always positive and motivating.

Another thing I use all the time is trumpet professor John Harbaugh's motto: "Nothing is difficult; only unfamiliar." If you go into anything with the right mentality, you are going to overcome it much faster. ■



Brittany Stevens

Brittany Stevens

Degree: Bachelor's in music education with a choral emphasis, minor in middle-level math ('16)

Hometown: Moses Lake

Career: Third year teaching music at Eastmont High School in East Wenatchee, and seventh year overall. Also taught ninth-grade math at Wenatchee High, and elementary school music.

What brought you to Central?

I was really involved in choir in high school, and we spent a lot of time in Ellensburg. We went to the Fall Choral Classic every year, and then the solo and ensemble state competition each spring. When I started looking at colleges to study music, Central already felt like home.

I didn't want to get lost in a big university sitting in a big lecture hall. Sitting in my first-year music theory class with 25 other students, I could feel how invested my instructor was in me. They knew my name.

Did you always want to teach?

I knew from my freshman year of high school what I wanted to do. I've always enjoyed helping people and I try to make sure everyone is learning together. When I took my first year of choir in high school, I knew I didn't want to do anything other than music.

How did your time at Central influence your career?

Central really acts like a hub, which is so important in the music industry. You have to have that network. I have so many colleagues now that I met during my time as a student, people who were students with me, or professors or visiting artists, or alumni—even other teachers who came to the festivals.

What do you love about teaching?

I love working with teenagers. I love watching them grow into capable, compassionate young adults. I love seeing the way music changes their lives. There's a lot of people who say choral music is dying, but I don't see that. If you have teachers who are passionate about what they do and they love the work, then there's no reason for students to not continue pursuing choral education. ■

Multi-dimensional Music Career Started at Central

By David Leder

Ashia Grzesik had no idea she would be running off to join the circus during her junior year at CWU, but that's exactly what ended up happening.

Even before the multi-talented cellist and vocalist had completed her musical performance degree, she moved to Las Vegas to perform with the internationally renowned Cirque du Soleil production of "O."

Grzesik ('04) spent four years in the band for the iconic stage production, completing her remaining CWU credits during her free time. While she genuinely enjoyed being a Cirque du Soleil cast member, she couldn't ignore the feeling that something was missing. Deep down, she missed connecting with the audience.

"It was an incredible experience, and I'm really glad I had the opportunity to be part of such a large production, but I missed feeling the energy from the audience," Grzesik said, explaining that she and her bandmates were situated above the crowd in the theater. "I decided that I needed to branch out, so I moved to Portland, joined the Portland Cello Project and Vagabond Opera, and became a solo artist."

After exploring her versatility for a few years in the Pacific Northwest, Grzesik began transitioning her solo project to Central Europe, signing with a label in Germany. She moved to Berlin in 2014 and has been there ever since, recording, performing, and teaching music.

"For the first couple of years, I was writing pieces and performing them for various production shows in Berlin while touring my solo project," said Grzesik, a native of Poland who moved to the Seattle area with her family when she was 10 years old. "But after my son was born in 2016, there came many changes to my career. I still do some traveling, but I mostly stay close to home."

Over the past few years, Grzesik has been spending a lot of her time teaching cello through a music school in Germany. All the while, she continues to explore a number of side ventures, including her acclaimed Bison Rouge project, which combines electronic, symphonic, and ambient influences to create a sound all her own.



Ashia Grzesik ('04) has enjoyed a successful, rewarding music career in the U.S. and Europe. Photo courtesy of Ashia Grzesik.

"Bison Rouge is an artistic concept—an entirely new sound—that I've been developing over the past couple of years," she said. "It's a really vivid and intense show that I perform in techno clubs and festivals around Berlin. It's becoming more a special events thing, and I always enjoy getting out and performing for people whenever I have the chance."

Creating music and bringing it to life for others has been Grzesik's lifelong passion, and she points to her CWU training as a catalyst for what has become a wide-ranging and deeply satisfying musical career.

The ability to explore various forms of artistic expression—and being encouraged by her professors to pursue multiple musical disciplines—provided Grzesik with the foundation she would need to carve out an eclectic path as a musician.

"John Michel encouraged us to not just stick to only classical styles," she said of her CWU cello professor, who helped her land the audition with Cirque du Soleil.

"He supported me in taking singing lessons and learning composition, in addition to exploring different ways of playing the cello. Having so many different influences helped me become a multi-dimensional musician, and I have been able to create a style of my own. Even after all these years, CWU is a big part of who I am." ■

A Musician's Journey from CWU to Everywhere

By Rune Torgersen



Gary Hobbs has been involved in music for over 50 years.

Photo courtesy of Gary Hobbs.

Once Gary Hobbs graduated from high school in Vancouver, Washington, he knew he had to chase his passion for drumming wherever it took him.

He enrolled at Mount Hood Community College in Oregon and began making a name for himself as a drummer in the school's jazz band in the late 1960s. Hobbs' teachers found his love of competition to be a key motivator for growth, and soon he was earning praise on the band festival circuit.

"I had a sports background growing up, so I thrive on competition," he said. "The teachers I had saw that and used it to push me to grow."

After defeating Central Washington State College's jazz band at a festival in Bremerton, Hobbs was approached by former CWSC Director of Jazz and Percussion John Moawad—his primary mentor—about enrolling. His decision to attend classes in Ellensburg in 1971 was the first step in what would become a globe-trotting 50-year career in music.

Hobbs looks back on his time at CWSC with a sense of awe.

"I have literally hundreds of really fond memories of my time there," he said. "My mentors and peers really helped shape who I am as a musician."

At CWSC, Hobbs found a music department dedicated to the collaborative element of the art form. As a music education major, he worked alongside fellow students to create the atmosphere necessary to move the medium—as well as how it was taught—forward.

"The whole atmosphere at Central was just so creative at the time," he said. "The friendship and mutual support within the music department was just really conducive to absorbing everything around you and making huge strides, both musically and intellectually."

During those years, the inclusion of the jazz genre in academia was being reevaluated on a national scale, and CWSC was no exception. Hobbs witnessed the birth of the legendary CWU jazz program firsthand, and its continued success is a point of pride for him.

"I remember thinking what a phenomenal cultural shift I got to witness," he said. "In the time I was there, jazz became much

more accepted, both within the music department and in the Ellensburg community. We put Central on the map in that genre, and that was really special."

In 1974, Hobbs left CWSC to pursue a spot in Stan Kenton's touring big band. That opportunity evolved into a decades-long career touring with some of the biggest names in jazz, until Hobbs turned his focus to education in the '90s.

He had decided to keep traveling to a minimum so he could spend more time close to home and not miss time with his daughter.

The Portland area offered a healthy environment for playing creative music with great musicians without touring. By the time he received an offer to teach music at Prairie High School in his hometown, Hobbs found himself emulating his college professors.

"Even though I didn't finish my degree, I was able to draw on what I'd learned at Central to help run that program," he said. "Not just the education classes, but the kind of hands-on support that my own professors had modeled for me during my college years."

Hobbs then accepted an offer to teach percussion at the University of Oregon, a job which lasted 22 years.

Having spent the last 30 years teaching a variety of workshops, masterclasses, and clinics around the world, Hobbs now keeps his life closer to home. He visits CWU occasionally to mentor students, and he enjoys supporting his grandson as he learns to play the trombone.

Following a career that has taken him across the world and back, Hobbs is content to watch the new guard continue his work.

"I started to realize that I didn't actually enjoy taking 18-hour flights to Beijing or Shanghai anymore," he said. "I love those places, but the travel is just not in the cards anymore. I stay local, playing and doing a few workshops here and there, but mainly, I watch as the next generation takes over and takes the music in a new direction, just like we did." ■

Peering into the Future

College in the High School works with teachers around the state to show future CWU students the way forward

By Rune Torgersen

It's no secret that college is a different beast from high school, placing more responsibility on students to define their own path and reach for the learning they wish to achieve.

Through CWU's College in the High School (CiHS) program, students are able to take college courses without leaving their school campus or altering their day-to-day schedule, earning college credits in a variety of classes as they go.

Made possible by a far-reaching partnership between Central and hundreds of high school partners statewide—182, to be exact—the program trains and supports teachers by giving students an early experience with college-style classroom settings and workload expectations.

Since the Washington Legislature made the credits earned through the program free last year, it has exploded in popularity, with more than 10,000 individual students expected to participate by the end of the 2023-2024 school year.

Through groundbreaking collaboration and genuine care for the next generation of college students, as well as their teachers, CiHS is helping to shape what education can be.

Charlene Harper's CiHS classes at Cle Elum-Roslyn High School have helped her students find their path to college.





Lindley Schmitt says working with CWU has helped her grow as an educator.

A Step into Tomorrow

Sadie Melhorn knew she wanted to grow as a student, and thanks to her teacher, she found her next step close to home.

“I wanted to advance in English, so my teacher suggested College in the High School,” said Melhorn, a senior at Cle Elum-Roslyn High School. “I loved it so much that I just kept doing it, and now I’m getting done with English 105 before I’ve even graduated from high school.”

Melhorn’s teacher, Charlene Harper, is one of over 400 teachers in Washington who have chosen to partner with Central in order to bring CiHS to their students. Harper works with her CWU liaison to structure her English 101, 102, and 105 courses to match what is taught at CWU, with some special tweaks to make the content accessible to her students.

“Our course objectives are very clear, but at the same time, the personal nature of the CWU partnership allows us to customize our own lesson plans with books and subjects we think would be best for the students in front of us,” Harper said. “It’s so incredibly freeing to be trusted as a professional to make those content decisions that we know will enhance the material’s impact.”

By customizing the content to better engage her students, Harper has found they are more able to grasp and apply the concepts on display, as opposed to simply memorizing and regurgitating the information.

“It’s so enjoyable to be able to bring in modern literature, in addition to the classics like *Beowulf* or *The Green Knight*,” she said. “Showing students that reading doesn’t have to be painful or boring—and that they can find pieces to really connect with if they look—that’s very gratifying as someone who’s seen too many students give up on reading entirely.”

“I feel like I’m absorbing so much more information this way,” Melhorn added. “Class feels more interactive and free-form; it’s a structure that really suits me.”

At Delta High School in Pasco, students in Clare Miller’s English 101 class were able to flex their passion for learning through the national Stossel in the Classroom essay contest in 2023.

Miller based an assignment around entering the contest, and two of her students walked away with prize money. Senior Nolan Bray claimed the \$2,500 grand prize for his video submission, and senior Nicholas Baker earned a \$100 honorable mention for his essay.

Bray says the experience taught him the value of taking a chance on the unknown.

“I wouldn’t ever have entered this contest if it wasn’t for Mrs. Miller’s assignment,” he said. “Knowing that I have the skill to create something that works on a national level like that is going to give me confidence for a long time to come.”

Both Bray and Baker got their introduction to CiHS through Sociology 101, and they have taken full advantage of the opportunity to enrich their academic journey.

“I always knew I wanted to go to college, which is why I started College in the High School in the first place,” Baker said. “With this experience, I’m not just walking into the unknown when I graduate; I’ll have an idea of the workload I’m facing and what my professors are expecting from me.”

Constructive Collaboration

At the core of CiHS’s success lies a shared collaborative mindset between the network of partnered teachers and the university. College in the High School Director Kyle Carrigan explained that the flow of experience and support goes both ways.

“High school and college feature two very different styles of teaching that can complement each other quite well,” said Carrigan, who taught seventh-grade language arts before joining

Central in 2016. “We have CWU faculty return from high school visits with new ideas for their own classrooms, as much as high school teachers pick up new strategies from our institutes and other support systems. It’s an ongoing cycle of learning and teaching for everyone who’s involved.”

CiHS Math Liaison Steve Stein agreed, citing his many visits to partnered classrooms as a source of inspiration for his own work as a professor of mathematics at CWU.

“Imagine yourself visiting 100 classrooms in a year, with the specific purpose of observing them and learning about them in order to give proper feedback,” he said. “You’re going to walk out of there with some new ideas, whether you want to or not. Even with my extensive background in K-12 teaching, I always learn something new about what makes a great classroom work that I can then bring back to my own students.”

Stein supports partnered classrooms through consultation rather than dictation, working with teachers on a case-by-case basis instead of enforcing a standard classroom model. This approach builds the goodwill necessary to keep that all-important spirit of collaborative success alive.

“The impact we have isn’t because we, in our infinite wisdom, have all the answers,” Stein said. “It’s because the teachers in these classes are willing to work with us, and we, in turn, get to learn from them. Together, we move forward and grow as a profession.”

Moving Forward, Together

As a 22-year veteran of CiHS, Lindley Schmitt has watched as the roadblocks keeping students from pursuing higher education have fallen one by one before the transformative power of access and opportunity.

“What I’ve seen in my last 20 years of teaching is those barriers just breaking down further and further,” she said. “That’s thanks to the kind of work that Kyle (Carrigan) and his team are doing, which I’m very proud to be part of.”

Schmitt teaches CiHS at the Science and Math Institute of Tacoma, where she has been able to leverage the continuous support and peer network offered by the program to improve both the lives of her students as well as her own approach to education.

Even when faced with the unusual circumstances of the last few years, that network continues to provide a space for community-led problem-solving through its summer workshops and regular contact with its members.

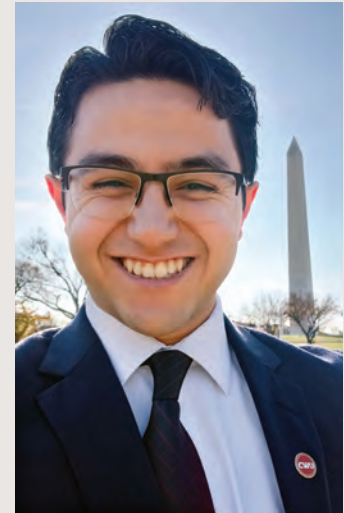
“The education world is always going through some crisis or another,” Schmitt said. “What the CWU network and summer workshop offer us is the chance to re-ground ourselves as a group of teachers who share the same hopes and dreams for our students. We want what’s best for them, and we work together to get there.”

Similarly, Harper of Cle Elum-Roslyn High School noted that “it’s really powerful whenever educators from different

Full Circle: Abner Ramos Navarro

Abner Ramos Navarro knew he wanted to be a teacher, and he found an opportunity to start down that path through CWU Teacher Academies. The education-focused subsection of College in the High School, launched in 2009, provides students with real classroom experience before graduating from high school.

“The whole experience was super helpful, because it showed me what college is actually like,” Navarro said. “I always knew I wanted to be a teacher, but up until I took those classes, I was super nervous about the rigor of what I was going into. They taught me that I can really do just about anything I set my mind to.”



Abner Ramos Navarro

Navarro is currently serving as a student ambassador for Teacher Academies while completing his biology and Teach STEM degrees at CWU. As part of his role, he helps run outreach events and campus tours for visiting high school classes, providing students with insight into the CiHS journey.

“Central knows what they’ve got, and they make a great effort to let students know about the incredible opportunity they have,” Navarro said. “Doing that outreach, knowing that someone like me is just waiting for this chance—that makes it all worth it.”

Once he completes his degrees, Navarro hopes to partner with CiHS to keep the cycle of support going and encourage the same college-going culture that led him to where he is today.

“Once I’m out there teaching, I really hope to be able to run a Teacher Academy class,” he said. “The positive impact it’s had on me and my journey can’t be understated, and I’m excited to bring that to the next generation of educators.” ■

districts get together to help each other out. Every district has its own policies, beliefs, and norms, and hearing what has worked and what hasn't in other places is quite often a valuable source of inspiration."

Beyond the essential opportunities for information-sharing, the continued influx of new ideas and information through CiHS liaisons over the course of the school year puts every partnered teacher in the unique position of growing as a professional in time with the rest of their network, bringing the teaching profession forward as a whole.

Miller, of Delta High School, sees herself continuing to evolve with the times through the work she does with CWU.

"I like to think of myself as a learner, and that's what makes this fit me so perfectly," she said. "My appetite for learning is

insatiable, and CWU's College in the High School program offers me more new ways of growing as a teacher and a professional every year."

In the end, it all comes back to the students, and creating a self-sustaining cycle of great teachers helping them get where they need to go. As Schmitt sees it, the only thing left to do is continue raising the bar.

"What College in the High School has done for us is allow us to equitably put these opportunities wherever they need to go, regardless of proximity to a university or access to high-speed internet," she said. "The only thing left is for it to keep going. Keep accepting strong teachers, keep helping each other learn and grow, and keep showing our students that a life-changing education is within reach." ■



Kyle Carrigan (top right) and the CiHS team offer support to CWU's rapidly growing network of partnered teachers.



OFF AND RUNNING

Program prepares high school students for campus life

By Rune Torgersen

In the state of Washington, students have a number of opportunities to earn college credit before graduating from high school.

Some, like College in the High School, meet students where they're at and offer a curated selection of courses to help put them on the right track to higher education. Others, like Running Start, give participants the chance to explore a full college course catalog while getting used to a higher education environment.

CWU's Running Start program pairs an opportunity for free college credits with our signature student-faculty connection for a one-of-a-kind learning experience.

"Through Running Start, our students are better prepared to communicate with their instructors and advocate for themselves," said Associate Director of Running Start Angelia Riviera. "That face-to-face connection is key to the CWU experience, and getting started on it early puts students on the path to success."

Running Start welcomed 433 high school students into CWU classrooms during the 2023-24 school year, spread out between the Ellensburg and Sammamish campuses, as well as online. The Running Start program works with 38 partnered high schools statewide to make sure students know about the opportunity they have to get an early start on their higher education futures.

"There's always some level of nervousness for high schools when their students come to campus, because there's the risk of the students not being successful," Riviera said. "Being able to develop those relationships with students and their high schools is essential to providing good advising, as well as the resources and services that our students need to succeed."

Mason Skeath, a Running Start student and senior at Naches Valley High School, has found the CWU

community to be the helping hand he needed as he figures out how college works.

"I didn't really know what to expect as a 16-year-old just jumping into the college environment, but I was pleasantly surprised," Skeath said. "The community here is just so kind, and they all take an interest in my story and how they can best support me. It's intimidating at first, but it gets better and better as you keep going."

In addition to learning how to navigate the college experience, Running Start offers students the opportunity to learn life skills they might not pick up as part of a normal high school curriculum. Ellensburg High School senior and two-year Running Start student Shyloh Bowen found that the experience prepared her not just for college, but for life in general.

"Running Start has really helped me mature and get a better idea of how the world works," said Bowen, who will be starting her four-year degree program at CWU this fall. "I'm taking a finance class right now, and there is so much stuff about money that I wouldn't have known otherwise. It's really getting me ready to take care of myself as an adult."

Ultimately, Running Start is designed to provide students with a more gradual transition to college, which is incredibly valuable for students like Riviera. She admits that without the program, she may not have otherwise experienced success in higher education.

"I was the first in my family to go to college, and so while I had a lot of support, my family didn't really know how to guide me through it," she said. "Running Start was really helpful for me, because suddenly I had this pathway to college and a whole team of advisors ready to answer all my questions and point me in the right direction. I'm glad to be able to pass that on." ■

CiHS'S EXPLOSIVE GROWTH!

Since the Washington Legislature made the credits earned through College in the High School (CiHS) free last year, the program has exploded in popularity at CWU, with more than 10,000 individual students expected to participate during the 2023-2024 school year.

PARTNERED SCHOOLS

2022-23: 144

2023-24: 155

Year-over-year increase: 9.02%

PARTNERED TEACHERS

2022-23: 394

2023-24: 450

Year-over-year increase: 14.2%

ENROLLED STUDENTS

2022-23: 5,174

2023-24: **Over 10,000**

Year-over-year increase: 93.27%

“Central knows what they’ve got, and they make a great effort to let students know about the incredible opportunity they have. Doing that outreach, knowing that someone like me is just waiting for this chance, that makes it all worth it.”

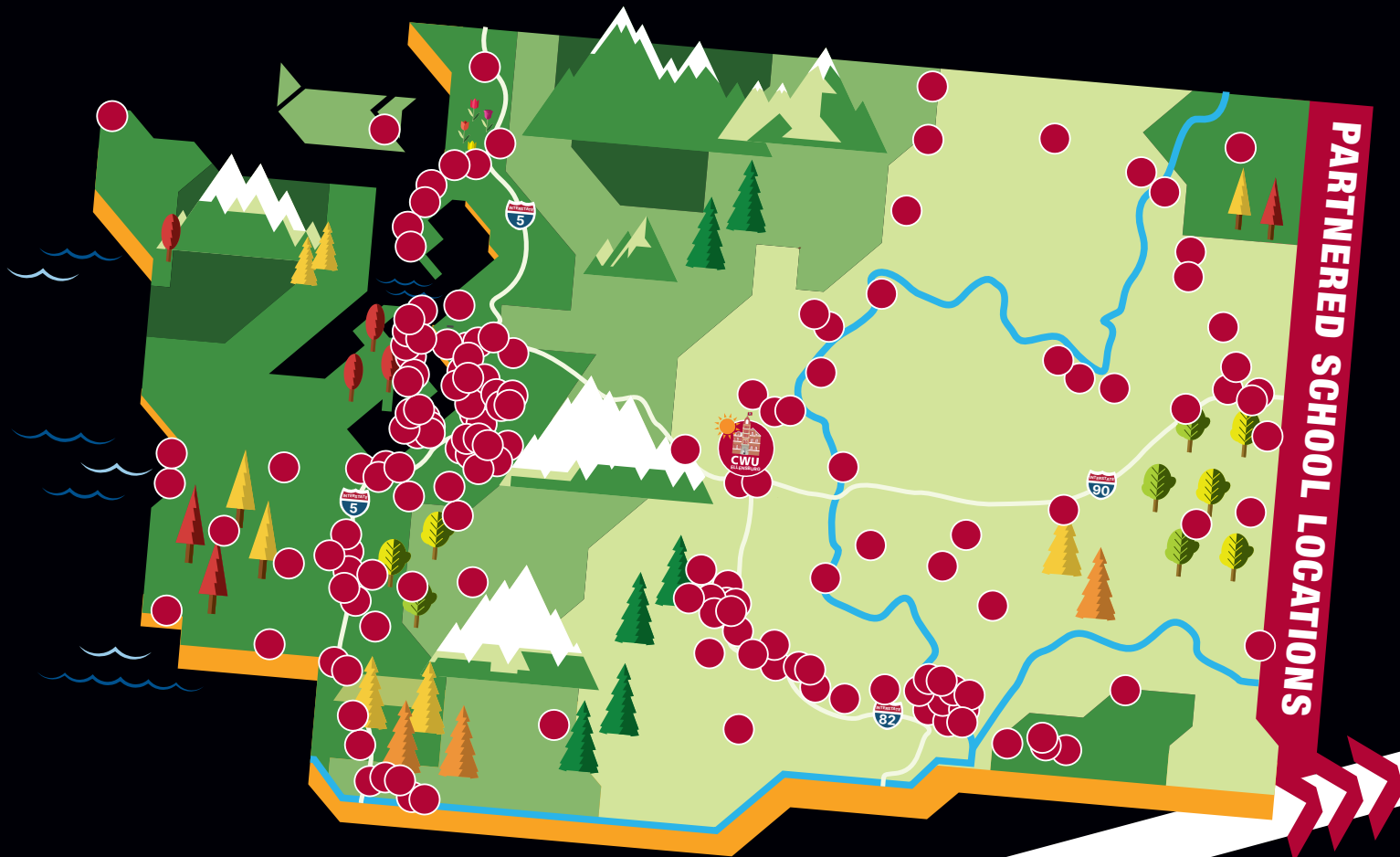
Abner Navarro, CiHS alum and CWU CiHS Ambassador

“It has been amazing to see this program unfold and become the enormous network of educators it is today.”

Lindley Schmitt, CiHS teacher,
Science and Math Institute

“I always knew I wanted to go to college, which is why I started College in the High School in the first place. With this experience, I’m not just walking into the unknown when I graduate. I’ll have an idea of the workload I’m facing and what my professors are expecting from me.”

Nicholas Baker, CiHS student, Delta High School



“I wanted to advance in English, so my teacher suggested College in the High School. I loved it so much that I just kept doing it, and now I’m getting done with English 105 before I’ve even graduated high school.”

Sadie Melhorn, CiHS student, Cle Elum-Roslyn High School

“Showing students that college can be accessible to them regardless of their situation is a game-changer, especially in rural communities like ours. A few decades ago, college was this mysterious event happening in the distant future, so being able to demystify it and make it less scary helps our students see themselves continuing their education.”

Charlene Harper, CiHS teacher,
Cle Elum-Roslyn High School

Putting Law and Justice



The CWU Law and Justice program gives future legal professionals a well-rounded foundation that helps them make an impact in a variety of fields.

Justice into Practice

CWU teaches aspiring legal professionals how to serve their communities By Jodie Nicotra

Big. Diverse. Holistic.

Adjectives used to describe CWU Law and Justice don't fit the typical profile of university programs seeking to prepare their students for careers in the legal and criminal justice fields.

Department Chair Cody Stoddard explains that, compared to more prevalent undergraduate majors like criminal justice (response to crime) or criminology (causes of crime), the Law and Justice (L&J) program at Central is a relatively rare breed.

"We're broader than that," Stoddard says. "Our program focuses on our legal systems and how they interact with society and what those impacts are. Basically, we study how law interacts with social systems."

The unique focus of the L&J program prepares students for work in a wide array of law and justice professions. Many students want to pursue traditional careers in law enforcement or law; others hope to work in corrections or pursue an advanced degree in order to become criminologists.

Due to the holistic nature of the program and the research focus of some faculty members, however, many students lean into social justice and community advocacy.

"A lot of our students have started to gain those types of skill sets and have gone on to do work in social causes," Stoddard says. "These may not be jobs you'd typically find an ad for, but our graduates tend to discover these types of opportunities in nonprofits and other organizations."

With 450 majors and minors, the L&J major is one of CWU's largest. It's also arguably one of the most diverse departments on campus.

“We have individuals from all over the world, all over the United States, from many different backgrounds,” Stoddard says. “If you’re talking about first-generation, or racial and ethnic diversity, I’d say everyone on our faculty touches one of those areas.”

The diversity within the faculty is reflected in the student body, and it has allowed CWU to train a growing number of effective, ethical law and justice professionals.

“The melding of backgrounds creates a kind of alchemy when it comes to our department,” Stoddard notes. “We really do have a true crossing of paths. And this gives our students better tools—when they become a law enforcement officer, for instance, and interact with people from any number of backgrounds.

“They can be purposeful about their work and much more effective when they go into their communities, run into problems, or just interact with people.”

Many students from underrepresented backgrounds initially become interested in the law and justice profession because they have identified problems in the justice system they would like to address, or they see hope in the law as a mechanism for change.

Senior Lecturer R. Shaffer Claridge, who was a practicing lawyer in Florida before coming to CWU, conveys the message that the law can serve as a social equalizer in courses such as Great American Trials.

“I think the law is a mechanism that for a long time has served to give a voice to people whose voices have been ostracized, culturally or politically,” he said. “And I think that’s something a lot of students see and respond to as an opportunity to change things for the better. Ours is one of the few professions where the potential exists to really change the status quo, and I think students see this.”

L&J offers several different high-impact practices where students can build professional experience, make connections, and put their classroom learning into practice.

The Mock Trial Team, which Claridge revived in 2017, gives students a chance to put their legal chops to the test.

“You can memorize and learn everything about the rule against hearsay and know it and understand it,” he says. “But in Mock Trial, people are competitive; they want to win. So, they don’t just want to do what they have to do to get through the assignments; they want to be a master of that rule so they can use it to potentially win in a high-stakes, competitive environment.”

As a way of helping its students prepare for their future careers, L&J also offers a number of mentorship opportunities, such as networking with alumni who are recruiting for jobs and internships, and conducting research alongside the faculty.

“We do a lot of research for agencies in our department, and faculty typically involve students in that research,” Stoddard says. “When their employers find out they can do that type of work, opportunities tend to open up for them. It’s helpful for their careers, and it also helps them better understand the communities they’re working in.” ■

Making the Law Work for Those In Search of a Better Life

For Fatimah Taha, the professors in CWU’s Law and Justice program who taught students how to communicate have made all the difference.

Taha (’23) is now a first-year law student at Seattle University, and she looks back on the mentorship she had at Central as being the catalyst for her ongoing success.

“In law school, we’re all required to do cold calls and have discussions, and having those prior experiences in undergrad helped me to be a lot more comfortable with speaking up in public,” she said.

Taha was drawn to Seattle U’s School of Law, in part, for its International Refugee Assistance Project, a legal aid and advocacy organization for refugees and displaced persons.

Her family immigrated from Palestine, and she has had friends who were refugees. She sees a legal career as a way to help make the world a better place.

“The plight of refugees has always moved me emotionally,” she said. “I think being displaced is one of the worst things that could happen.”

Taha feels fortunate to be able to use her education to help people who don’t know where to turn. In a couple more years, she’ll be making an impact as a legal professional.

“I feel like, as someone who had the opportunity to live in a first-world country where I don’t have to experience displacement, using my love of law to help people who have faced that type of suffering in their lives would be so beneficial and make an impact in those people’s lives,” she said. ■



Helping Make the World a Better (and Safer) Place

Being a woman in the male-dominated field of law enforcement may have intimidated some. Not Jeanne Walford ('96).

"I went through the academy when I was 22 years old, so I was still a baby," she said. "I'm looking around at my class, and I'm one of five women, all King County Sheriff's Office hires. I said, 'well, geez, look around this classroom here.' I could tell it made people uncomfortable to point out the elephant in the room, but I was all good with it."

Walford's persistence paid off, as she recently celebrated her 27th year with the Sheriff's Office. From her early days in patrol, she moved up to detective, progressively solving more difficult crimes. Her current focus is traffic-related homicide.

"We respond to serious injury crashes, fatal crashes—anything that keeps the road closed for hours," she said.

Walford's ace detective work has paid off for Central, too, in the form of a new scholarship fund.

In 2019, she investigated a fatal airport shuttle bus crash, caused by a "phantom vehicle" that fled the scene. The crash caused the death of Bryan Panzanaro, a husband and father of four from New Jersey.

"It was a really complex case, the kind that wasn't really meant to be solved," she said.

Though phantom vehicles are rarely found, Walford worked tirelessly for six months to track down the car and driver. She wrote a 16-page, highly technical affidavit that helped the team uncover the evidence they needed to solve the case.

Walford's findings made all the difference to the criminal and civil litigation cases. In 2023, Panzanaro's family and other survivors established an \$85,000 endowment in Walford's name, to be used for scholarships for CWU Law and Justice majors.

Walford added that she has good news for students who plan to go into law enforcement.

"I think it's the most fun job one could ask for," she said. ■

One Class Was All It Took to Hook 2021 Graduate

Mariah Hogan ('21) didn't want to go to college. She promised her mom she would attend one quarter and then decide whether she wanted to drop out.

As luck would have it, she happened to sign up for Law and Justice 101 with R. Shaffer Claridge. After a few weeks, she was hooked.

"It was the first time I was exposed to what it actually means to be a lawyer," Hogan said. "And it just fascinated me, and I loved it. I remember texting my mom half-way through the quarter and saying 'Mom, I think I'm going to finish college. And then I think I'm going to law school!'"

The L&J graduate was a two-time president of the Mock Trial Team, and, according to Claridge, one of the most decorated team members to date.

"I just remember how much I'd love when the case would drop at the beginning of the season and we'd all tear through it and try to figure out where the little holes and different arguments were," Hogan said. "I really wouldn't have gone to law school if it weren't for my classes and Mock Trial."

As a first-generation student, Hogan was surprised by how supportive the Central faculty were. She appreciated the professors who educated her about the unique challenges of being female in the legal community.

"I couldn't have done it without all that support because I didn't know anybody who went to law school," she said. "It was all of them banding together to help me."

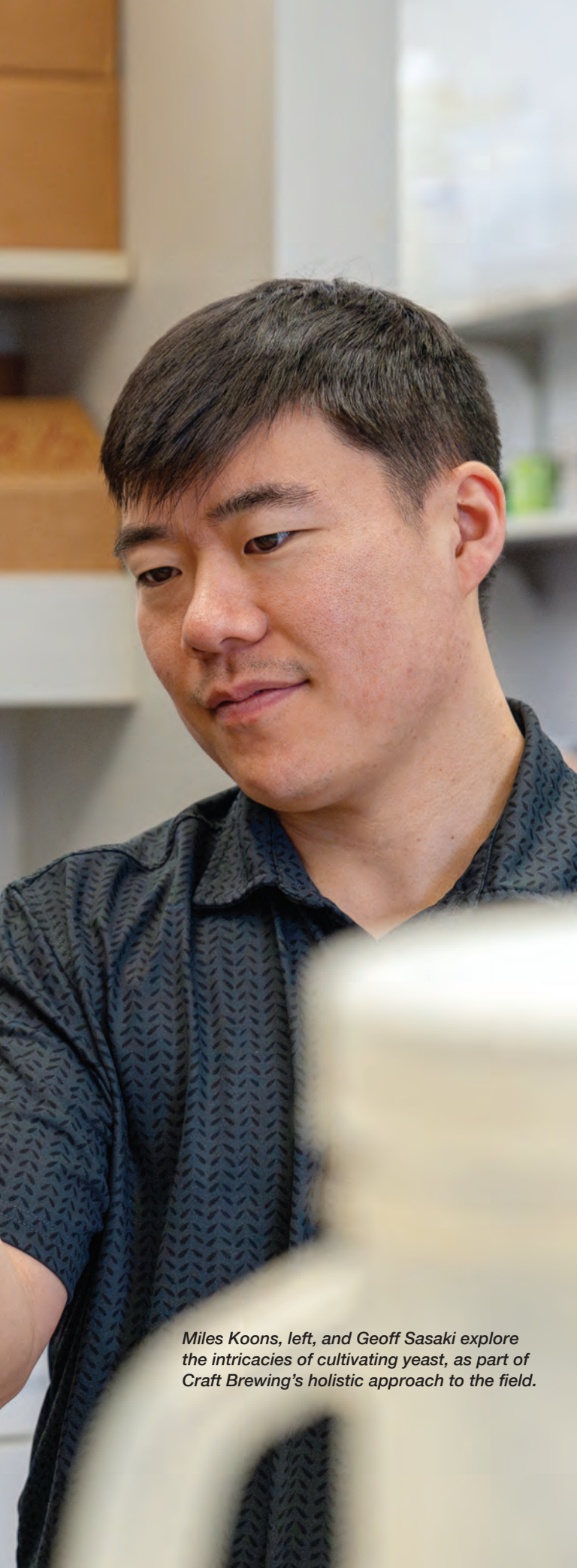
Hogan is now a third-year law student at Lewis & Clark College in Portland, where she is focusing on child dependency cases. Though her intent entering law school was to focus on criminal defense law, Hogan kept finding herself drawn to family law.

"I love a law degree because you can change your mind," she said. "Maybe one day I'll finally make it to criminal defense—who knows? Right now, I'm kind of just going where it takes me." ■





SOMETHING'S BREWING AT CENTRAL



Miles Koons, left, and Geoff Sasaki explore the intricacies of cultivating yeast, as part of Craft Brewing's holistic approach to the field.

Homegrown CWU Craft Brewing program is developing the next generation of industry professionals

By Rune Torgersen

Location, passion, and collaboration have all blended together to drive the ongoing success of the CWU Craft Brewing program.

In the fall of 2023, Miles Koons tended the taps at Ellensburg Brewery, pouring frothy pints of beer brewed by his fellow CWU Brew Club members for his patrons. His job as the brewery's taproom manager helped him grow closer to the community of brewing professionals and aficionados in Central Washington who inspired him to pursue a craft brewing degree in the first place.

"The ability to practice our craft in a brewery setting under the guidance of an experienced brewer, with free rein to explore the beers we're interested in and see them get sold, that's something we'll never take for granted," Koons said of the downtown Ellensburg restaurant, which discontinued its brewing operations in January. "Seeing the whole life cycle of a beer and having an active hand in it is incredible."

As current vice president of the CWU Brew Club, Koons works with the Craft Brewing program, as well as local brewers and hop growers, to develop the hands-on experiences that set graduates of the program apart from the competition in the Pacific Northwest.

For two years, the brew club worked closely with Ellensburg Brewery to produce its own beers in the professional brewing facility and then sell them in the taproom. Even though the partnership has ended, this hands-on experience allowed students to see the results of their experimentation in terms of sales and customer satisfaction.

Ellensburg Brewery's former Head Brewer Eric Foss helped facilitate this collaboration, in the spirit of keeping innovation alive.

"I loved working with students and maintaining that connection to CWU," said Foss, also a former Craft Brewing lecturer at Central. "We got more variety on tap, and they got to brew in a professional environment. There are a lot of habits that you can only really develop through practice, and through messing up once or twice. Having opportunities like this will produce some really well-rounded brewing professionals."



Hands-on experience is a cornerstone of the Craft Brewing curriculum.

An Art and a Science

Getting in the habit of using industry-grade machinery with the precision and care that it demands is half of the two-pronged approach employed by the Craft Brewing program, which became the only four-year degree of its kind in the Northwest in 2018.

Director Geoff Sasaki says the curriculum is designed to marry science with art in a practical setting, creating the multi-talented professionals the booming craft beer industry needs.

“We put the science first, then let the art follow once students have command of the basic principles,” Sasaki said. “The process of hypothesizing and experimentation at a brewery isn’t so different from what happens in a lab, and being able to approach it with that lab-like precision will ultimately make a better product.”

As Craft Brewing Lab Technician Brian Labore noted, that depth of knowledge has proven extremely helpful to businesses across the region. It’s also one of the reasons why CWU Craft Brewing boasts a 100% job placement rate for graduates.

“A solid science background with practical training means our students can show up at a brewery on day one and know how everything works,” Labore said.

Cole Provence, a lecturer in Craft Brewing and Wine Studies, worked with Foss to recalibrate the Craft Brewing program’s curriculum in 2019. In response to numerous industry changes, they redesigned the class offerings around collaboration with regional and national business leaders.

“What we were hearing was that hop and beer companies in Yakima, as well as across the state, were having real trouble finding qualified entry-level employees,” Provence said. “That’s when we realized we needed to work much closer with them to provide the kinds of students that the industry needed.”

In doing so, they discovered that CWU’s strength lies in the focus of its program, which is a full-fledged four-year bachelor’s degree in brewing, as opposed to the brewing-specialized biology degrees offered elsewhere.

“We thought to ourselves that if other universities were already doing a great job producing microbiologists, why should we compete with them?” Provence said. “At other programs in the U.S., students were complaining that they didn’t even get to brew their first batch of beer until their senior year. We wanted to make sure they got their hands on the equipment and started brewing as early as possible, so they’d really have an intuitive feel for it by the time they graduated.”

Graduates of the program are in high demand, sporting the well-practiced skillset and intimate knowledge of the brewing process required to make a dent on the densely packed playing field of the modern brewing scene that has blossomed along the entire West Coast over the past 15-20 years.

“Our reputation started growing in 2019-2020, when we had our first graduating class of 20 or so students from our revamped curriculum,” Provence said. “After they went out and started making their mark, suddenly every brewer in Washington came to us and asked if we had any students looking for work, even during the pandemic.”

Right Place at the Right Time

That network, coupled with CWU's proximity to Yakima, gives graduating students immediate access to the combined connections and experience of brewers working in top positions across the country. Justin Paden ('19), a brewing and sensory science team member at Hopsteiner Research, saw his career take off after leveraging those advantages.

"I got my first internship in Yakima through the Craft Brewing program, and that really set me on the path I'm on today," Paden said. "It gave me a great introduction to the industry, and showed me that the stuff I had learned in my studies was going to translate just fine into the real-world beer market."

The Yakima Valley produces a staggering 40% of the world's hops, an essential ingredient in brewing many popular varieties of beer. The three biggest hop companies in Yakima (Hopsteiner, John I. Haas, and Yakima Chief) are always looking for new talent to drive their businesses forward.

A number of CWU alumni are represented in top research positions, including Jeff Barnes ('15), who serves as brew master at Haas' Innovations Brewery. Having completed his craft brewing certificate, Barnes walked off the commencement stage and straight into a career, thanks to high demand and robust networking.

"I quite literally graduated on a Saturday and started my work with Haas that Monday," he said. "The program had already laid the groundwork for me, reaching out to the big hop companies and other craft breweries in the region to help me set the stage for a smooth transition."

The rapidly growing network of CWU alumni in the beer industry is actively helping new graduates get their foot in the door.

"We all keep in touch and help each other out in whatever ways we can," Barnes said. "I always try to do a tour for CWU students during our harvest, and I know my fellow alumni at the other hop companies pitch in, too. We know that we're an invaluable resource for students, just as much as students bring fresh perspectives and ideas to our work that we need to keep moving forward."

The CWU Brew Club goes to the Yakima Fresh Hop Ale Festival every year to show off their product and learn from their fellow brewers. Craft Brewing senior and Brew Club officer Cameron Nelson says, in the end, this opportunity to put class and practice together is what it's all about.

"As a brewing student, everyone tells you to get as much hands-on time as possible—just brew, brew, brew and then brew some more," he said. "This is absolutely the best way of doing that. We get to work on professional-grade equipment and see our products on the shelf, along with getting feedback from actual customers and beer-lovers. It turns out we make pretty good beer." ■

"I chose the Craft Brewing program because it was different. There's so much science and microbiology, which is super intriguing to me. The brewing technology is really fun."

Eve Rice, Craft Brewing major with minors in wine trade, tourism, travel management, and business administration, with a specialization in marketing



*Samantha Bowman ('23) now
plays for the Rockhampton
Cyclones in Australia.*

Photo courtesy of Cherryandjun Photography



Next-Level Thinking

Alumni athletes who become pros have been taught the value of earning a degree

By David Leder

Pretty much everyone in the CWU community has heard of Jon Kitna. The former Seattle Seahawks and Detroit Lions quarterback is among the most notable Wildcat athletes to have ever competed at the professional level.

Other Central alumni athletes have made names for themselves in the professional ranks—Major League Baseball players Billy North and Dave Heaverlo, and Canadian Football League stars Mike Reilly and Adam Bighill, to name a few.

By and large, the CWU athletes who end up competing after college aren't as recognizable to the general public. But that doesn't mean they haven't been successful.

"We always talk to our athletes about taking your playing career as far as you possibly can," Athletic Director Dennis Francois said. "Only a small number truly make a living playing professional sports, so we constantly remind them that the most important thing they can do is finish their degree."

Francois explained that his coaches do a good job of helping their athletes remain realistic about their chances of making it big.

"We never want to crush their dreams of playing at the next level, but we also try to keep it in perspective," he said. "For us, it all comes down to getting that education. The more we can prepare them for life after sports, the better off they're going to be."

Francois explained that most CWU alumni athletes who become pros leave Ellensburg with their degree in hand. Earning that piece of paper guarantees them a path forward in case their pro sports aspirations don't pan out like they imagined.

"We definitely encourage our athletes to keep going, but we also remind them that they are one injury away from never playing at that level ever again," he said. "Earning a degree gives

them a safety net that they can fall back on, no matter what happens with their pro careers."

One of CWU's most successful athletes of all time, Samantha Bowman ('23), got on a plane to Australia two weeks after her senior season to pursue her dream of playing professional basketball.

The 2022-23 Division II National Player of the Year hopes to take her career as far as she possibly can, but when the day comes to finally hang it up, Bowman will be armed with a bachelor's and master's degree in nutrition.

"Sam was a real standout and she could keep playing for a number of years," Francois said. "But she is also very grounded and humble. She knows that she will have a bright future, regardless of how far she goes as a basketball player."

A growing number of CWU athletes are finding opportunities to play after college, including two of Bowman's former teammates, Alexis Pana and Cassidy Malcolm. Recent men's basketball stars Marqus Gilson, Xavier Tillman, and Gamaun Boykin are also playing at the next level, along with CWU volleyball standout Tia Andaya, who recently signed a pro contract in Albania.

Francois also pointed to six Wildcats drafted by Major League Rugby since 2021, plus their female counterparts playing professionally overseas. That list includes 2023 National Player of the Year Keia Mae Sagapolu Sanele, who is now playing in the Women's Rugby Premiership in England.

"Having so many high-profile athletes coming out of Central gives our current players something to strive for," Francois said. "Their success shows others what's possible. That's especially true for our underrepresented athletes. When they see people who look like them finding success at the next level, they can dream big and say to themselves, 'I can be that, too.'"



SAMANTHA BOWMAN

Dialing In Her Dominance Down Under



It didn't take long for former CWU basketball standout Samantha Bowman to adjust to playing at the next level.

But the Great Northwest Conference's all-time leading rebounder didn't just "play" in Australia's North Basketball League last spring and summer; she dominated.

Coming off a senior season in which she was named the Division II National Player of the Year, Bowman put up averages of 20.1 points and 15.5 rebounds for the Rockhampton Cyclones while logging 36.5 minutes per game.

"I went down to Australia as soon as our season ended and immediately started playing games," said Bowman, a 6-foot-2 center who won a record nine GNAC Player of the Week awards during her Central career. "It was a bit of an adjustment at first with the climate, but it didn't take long for me to get into a groove."

Bowman played a full 40 minutes in her debut, scoring 38 points and pulling down 20 rebounds. She proceeded to score in double figures in all but two games, recorded six games of 20-plus rebounds, and also averaged 1.7 steals per game.

"It was a pretty easy adjustment for me because I was coming straight off the college season," she said. "I was already in pretty good shape, and that helped a lot."

Bowman has picked up where she left off this season, putting up double-doubles in her first three games in late April. If she keeps up those levels of production, she may one day earn a promotion to the Women's National Basketball League (WNBL).

"My goal is to play in the WNBL," she said. "I definitely think I could play at that level, but I would be severely undersized in the post. That's why I've been working on my ball-handling and creating my own shot. I'd also like to improve my percentage from the 3."

Bowman spent the offseason between Ellensburg and her hometown of Zillah, working on her game and helping her former Wildcat teammates improve as a training assistant for head coach Randi Richardson-Thornley—a mentor she credits for her development as a player.

"I'm someone who always needs to be challenged, and Randi never took it easy on me," said Bowman, who earned a bachelor's degree in nutrition and completed her master's this spring. "I was always asking her what I needed to work on, and she really helped me reach my potential."

Bowman has been able to use the lessons she learned from Richardson-Thornley and Zillah High School coach Brandie Valadez to inspire the next generation of players. Returning the favor to the people who have believed in her over the years means everything to Bowman.

She's not going to let something like playing halfway around the world stop her from being a role model for young girls back home.

"Being able to give back is something I truly value," Bowman said. "It's easy to get caught up in everything going on in your own life and forget where you came from. But I will always go back to my roots. I want people to see that, no matter where you're from, you can achieve anything you want to."



Photo courtesy of Kutaisi



MARQUS GILSON

Love for the Game Keeps His Fire Burning

Playing professional basketball has always been a dream for Marqus Gilson.

The 2022 CWU graduate and former Wildcat standout can trace his passion for the sport back to his childhood in the Salt Lake City, Utah, area.

“There are stories of me in the baby carriage holding a basketball, so no one in my family is surprised that this is what I ended up doing,” said Gilson, who recently completed his second season with Kutaisi of the Georgia Superleague. “I just love it.”

The 6-foot-7 forward/center has enjoyed immediate success in the Superleague, earning starting minutes and becoming a consistent contributor. He remains hopeful that he can take his career to the next level, but no matter what happens, he’s just grateful for the opportunity to keep playing after college.

“Everyone says your first contract is the hardest to get,” Gilson said, adding that his coaches at Central connected him with an agent overseas. “But if you can get your foot in the door and play well, you can keep going.”

Gilson averaged 16 points and 10 rebounds during his 2022-23 rookie season, and he was able to maintain that production during the 2023-24 campaign, averaging 13 points and six rebounds.

He attributes his initial success as a pro to what he learned during his three seasons playing for Central.

“My fifth year of college ball really helped me get better,” said Gilson, who transferred to CWU in 2019 after playing two years at Centralia Community College. “Once I started playing in Europe, I was able to bring a sense of education to the game that I hadn’t developed before my senior season—things like where you should be on defense or what to do in certain offensive situations.”

Gilson said the transition from college basketball to the Superleague has been relatively seamless—likely because he has more court experience than the younger guys around the league.

“Playing college basketball helped me develop a mental fortitude in games that non-college players don’t have yet,” he said. “I feel like I have a different level of basketball IQ now, which has helped me be successful.”

After two solid seasons in the Superleague, Gilson believes he’s ready to move up to a higher-profile league on the European circuit. His goal is to keep playing for a few more years before settling into a career in pharmacy or information technology back in the States.

“I’m always thinking about the next step,” said Gilson, who earned CWU degrees in biology and information technology and administrative management (ITAM). “I already have my pharmacy tech license, and I may even try to pursue another degree. But, for now, I’m just going to keep doing what I love for as long as I can.”



Photo courtesy of Kutaisi

Photo courtesy of Stuttgart Surge



REILLY HENNESSEY

Pro Quarterback Ready to Give It ‘One Last Shot’

Heading into the 2023 European League of Football (ELF) season, Reilly Hennessey figured he was ready to retire from professional football.

But the 2020 CWU graduate enjoyed playing for the Stuttgart Surge so much that he decided to come back for one last hurrah this summer.

“I got a taste of what it’s like to walk off the field, thinking you just played your last game, and it’s wasn’t what you might think,” said Hennessey, who set multiple records playing quarterback for the Wildcats from 2017-18.

“It’s not about the wins and losses. The things you carry with you are the bus rides and hotel stays with your teammates; spending time with guys you have grown incredibly close to. That’s what it’s all about.”

Hennessey has enjoyed five successful seasons playing in Europe, winning the 2022 German Bowl with Schwabisch Hall Unicorns and the 2021 Italian Football League title with the Parma Panthers. The former German Football League MVP brought his talents to Stuttgart last season, leading the Surge to a 10-2 record, a Central Conference title, and a spot in the ELF championship game.

All Hennessey has done since arriving in Europe six years ago is win.

“I’m very proud of the career I’ve had and the goals I have accomplished,” said the 2013 Washington High School Player of the Year from Camas, who spent his first three college seasons at Eastern Washington. “I love playing football, especially in the European realm because it’s the purest form of the game. I’m really going to miss it.”

Once the ELF season wraps up in September, Hennessey plans to return to the States and pursue a teaching career. He spent the 2023-24 school year as a substitute teacher in his hometown, and he could see himself coming back to the Northwest for the next chapter in his life.

“It’s been nice to get a head start on my career after football,” he said. “The nice thing about an education degree is that it will always be there. I’m looking forward to what lies ahead, but I’m also looking forward to having one last shot as a pro quarterback.”

Hennessey added that he looks back on his time at Central as being the catalyst for his post-college success. Former coaches Ian “Shoe” Shoemaker and Chris Fisk (now the Wildcat head coach) taught him the nuances of the run game and how to manage the offense from behind center.

“It wasn’t until I got to Central that I completely grasped the game of football,” Hennessey said. “The skills I learned from Shoe and Fisk are what allowed me to enjoy success as a pro quarterback.”

Hennessey also left Ellensburg with valuable off-the-field skills like how to manage success and failure, and how to conduct himself in a way he wanted to be viewed by others. The character traits he developed at CWU taught him who he was as a person—and he will be forever grateful.

“The close-knit culture at Central teaches you how to carry yourself in all phases of life,” he said, “and being there really helped me grow into the man I am today.”



Photo courtesy of Stuttgart Surge



TIA ANDAYA

Volleyball Standout Learning a New Game, Culture in Albania



Going into her senior season at CWU, Tia Andaya ('23) knew she had what it would take to play professional volleyball.

The NCAA Division II All-American setter had spoken to several agents in Europe, and she entered the fall campaign with realistic expectations about a contract offer.

Andaya felt like she had learned enough during her first four years to take her game to the next level. But it was her fifth year of college ball that really gave Andaya the confidence she needed to pursue a professional career.

"I grew tremendously as a player during all three years in the Central program, but it wasn't until my third year there that I really flourished," said the former Ellensburg High School star and Gonzaga University transfer, who received a fifth year of eligibility due to the pandemic.

"I was able to be more creative and run the offense more effectively," she added. "I figured out my own flow and my own system, and I learned how to isolate hitters better. That really helped me develop as a player, and I'm not sure I would have been ready to go pro if I didn't have that fifth year."

Andaya—the Great Northwest Conference's all-time leader in triple-doubles (assists, digs, and blocks)—signed a contract with KS Tirana at the end of the college season and flew to Albania in early January. She trained with the club for about three weeks and then competed in two matches per week throughout the winter and spring.

"When I showed up, we started playing right away," said Andaya, who lived in a dorm near the KS Tirana training facility, alongside three of her teammates, basketball players, and local college athletes. "It helped that I only had a few weeks off after the college season. That was just long enough for me to clear my head but also stay in shape."

KS Tirana played in a series of championship cups from February through May, and Andaya has returned home this summer with the intention of returning to Europe next winter. She hopes to keep moving up the ranks, but her current club has given her a taste of what's to come.

"I'm hoping to work my way up to a higher league eventually, but this has been a great first stop," said Andaya, a CWU exercise science graduate. "The people here are really helpful, and I've become friends with a lot of the other foreign athletes."

Andaya has had to make some adjustments with regard to her playing style, but not in the way one might expect.

"The game is actually a lot slower than the college game," she said. "I've had to adjust to the speed of the hitters and set the ball higher than I was used to at Central. It's just a different mindset than I was used to back home."

Andaya can't say enough about the court experience she gained at Central. Now, she's learning how to take her game to new heights thousands of miles away from home.

"When you join a professional team, you are *the* person," she said. "They change their program and their game plan to fit your style of play, and that can be a big responsibility. I've had to get used to some things, but I'm really enjoying it so far."





KEIA MAE SAGAPOLU SANELE

Former CWU Walk-On an Emerging Rugby Star

Becoming a professional rugby player wasn't even on Keia Mae Sagapolu Sanele's radar when she started playing for CWU in 2019. In fact, she didn't even know she was good enough to play college rugby until she earned a spot on the Wildcats' roster as a walk-on.

"I just started playing during my senior year of high school," said Sagapolu, who grew up in Tacoma and chose Central because it was close to home. Her decision had little to do with rugby, but her future coaches encouraged her to walk on.

What ended up happening over the next four years was nothing short of miraculous.

Not only did Sagapolu become a team leader for the Wildcats; she ended up winning the MA Sorensen Award for the top women's rugby player in the nation last season. She also earned a spot on the U.S. national team and is currently playing for the Leicester Tigers of the Women's Rugby Premiership.

"It wasn't until my last year at Central that I really made my mark," said Sagapolu, known by her coaches and teammates as "Mae." "The program helped me develop the character traits I needed to get better, and once I started really understanding the game, I just kept improving."

Her ascent started with an invitation to try out for the under-23 U.S. National Team in the summer of 2022. It didn't take long for her to catch the senior national team's attention, and by the time she graduated in spring 2023, she was on the cusp of signing a professional contract in the United Kingdom.

"I already had a job lined up, but when the national team invited me to compete with them, I just had to go," said Sagapolu, who earned a degree in communications, with minors in digital marketing and family sciences. "I almost feel like it was God's plan."

Sagapolu admits that the transition from the college game to the national team felt intimidating at first. She knew she could have played better in her debut, so she committed herself to working even harder over the next three months.

Finding that extra gear ended up propelling her to a level even she didn't know she was capable of.

"I told my teammates and coaches, 'I promise you that the next time you see me, it will be a whole new ballgame,'" she said. "I changed my nutrition habits and started spending more time in the weight room and working on my fitness."

Sagapolu went on to earn a starting spot on the senior U.S. national team last spring before signing with Leicester in June. She looks forward to playing there for the foreseeable future.

"This team gave me a home," she said. "They had only seen me play once for the national team, and they took a chance on me. That meant so much to me, and my heart is truly with them. We are really building something here."

Sagapolu is proud of how far she has come in her young rugby career, but she knows there is still much work to be done. She recognizes that, in the end, it's not just about her.

"I want to keep getting better—not just for my teammates, but for all of the people who believed in me," she said. "I want to give back to my coaches and the Central program that helped me become the player I am today. I want to give back to the Polynesian community that has supported me all of these years. I have so many people to thank, and I'm doing this all for them."



Photo courtesy of Urayasu D-Rocks



ALEX MACKENZIE

Transferrable Skills: Football Background Leads to Rugby Career

Alex Mackenzie could have easily gone the college football route.

By the time he graduated from high school in 2016, the former standout linebacker and running back from Seattle was fielding offers from Division I and Division II schools.

But there was just something about rugby that he couldn't ignore. A brief introduction to the sport during his senior year led Mackenzie to start talking to some college rugby programs, including the one at Central, about pursuing a less-traditional athletic career.

After five successful seasons with the Wildcats, Mackenzie ('21) was invited to try out for multiple Japanese professional clubs. Now, he's in the middle of his third season with the Urayasu D-Rocks in the country's highest division, Japan Rugby League One.

He has no doubt that he made the correct decision about his future.

"I was a little bit starstruck my first year over here, but I have settled down the past two seasons," said Mackenzie, whose position of flanker utilizes many of the same skills he developed on the football field. "It's a very different lifestyle than over in

the States—especially in a big city like Tokyo—but I feel like I've adjusted well. Now I'm just cruising."

Mackenzie explained that his options to play professional rugby were somewhat limited when he graduated from Central. Major League Rugby had just launched in the U.S. and wasn't yet established as a professional league.

After talking to an agent, he realized that his best chance to make a decent living would be in Japan—the country where he was born and lived until the age of 5.

"The leagues in Japan, France, and New Zealand pay the best, so I decided to take a shot," Mackenzie said. "It can be hard to get your foot in the door in Japan because they can only take a certain number of foreign players. But, fortunately, I ended up with a couple different offers."

Rugby has become extremely popular in Japan, drawing up to 40,000 fans a night for matches in and around Tokyo and Osaka. The teams are owned by international corporations like Honda, Toyota, Mitsubishi, Toshiba, and Nippon Telegraph and Telephone (NTT), which owns Urayasu D-Rocks.

Mackenzie explained that NTT previously owned two pro teams and combined them at the start of the 2022-23 season, putting all of the best players on one roster. He was proud—and relieved—that he survived the merger.

"I thought I played pretty well my first season, and to be chosen for the new team gave me a lot of confidence," Mackenzie said.

He knows he can fall back on his CWU exercise science degree, but he's not thinking about that yet. For now, he's having too much fun on the pro rugby pitch.

"It really is a dream come true," Mackenzie said. "Everyone wants to be paid well for doing something they enjoy, and I couldn't ask for anything more. It can be easy to take for granted, but at the end of the day, you remember that only a small number of people get to do this. I'm very grateful for the opportunities I've had so far." ■



Photo courtesy of Urayasu D-Rocks

No 'I' in 'Team'

CWU rugby programs embrace 'we before me' culture in pursuit of national elite status

By David Leder



When building a college athletic program, success begins with a winning culture.

Sure, talent is important. But without the right personnel—that is, players who possess the character traits to complement their on-field acumen—it’s difficult to separate yourself from the pack.

Since transitioning from a club sport to the varsity ranks in 2014-15, both CWU rugby programs have wholeheartedly embraced a team-first philosophy—one that challenges every individual to put the success of the program ahead of their own.

As a result, the Wildcat men and women are now competing alongside the best rugby teams in the country as a member of the Division IA (men) and Division I Elite (women) conferences.

“The difference with our program now, compared to when it started, is we decided to build a ‘we culture,’” said men’s head coach Todd Thornley, who took over the program the year it shifted from club status to a university-funded activity. “If you play for us, it’s ‘we before me.’ At CWU, we believe that’s what rugby is all about.”

Thornley explained that he and his coaching staff have spent the past eight years building a culture where everyone is willing

to make personal sacrifices for the benefit of the team. They have created an atmosphere where every player feels like their individual contributions are valued and appreciated.

“We want everyone on our team to feel comfortable being themselves,” said Thornley, a native of New Zealand who came to Ellensburg as a graduate assistant in 2014. “They each bring their own influences and flavors to the team, and that’s what makes our program so special. We truly value every individual.”

The same cultural dynamics are at play with the CWU women’s rugby squad. Head coach Matthew Ramirez isn’t only looking for the best on-field athletes (although he has recruited plenty); he’s seeking players who possess the intangibles required to win at the highest level.

“The biggest things we recruit for are character traits and skill sets, not just raw talent,” Ramirez said. “For me, the most important thing is, can you be a good teammate? We bring in players who can be culture-drivers; people who can help us create standards and hold others accountable.”

Ramirez’s job also involves developing leaders on and off the field. Identifying individuals who can inspire others to achieve their potential is just as important as bringing in players who can make big plays.

CWU’s rugby programs stress sacrificing personal gain for the benefit of the team.





CWU rugby players like Shaylee Coulter-Fa'amafu build friendships “that are going to be for a lifetime,” according to team captain Tessa Hann.

“A big part of winning is having elite players, but we’re looking for a certain kind of profile here,” said Ramirez, who took over the program in 2021-22 after serving as a graduate assistant for three seasons. “If we’re going to win a national championship, it’s going to take everyone. To get there, we need young women who are willing to step up and encourage their teammates to do extra training and stay up on their studies.”

He explained that it’s not about nagging their teammates or pulling people along; more often than not, it comes down to having honest conversations about how everyone can pull their own weight so the team can be successful.

Players who can step into that role don’t come along every day, but CWU has had enough of them in recent years that more young players are awaiting their chance to take on a new level of responsibility.

“We can build skill set; it’s much more difficult to build mindset,” Ramirez said. “What we do here is bring in the right profile of players who can help us grow the culture. When you’re trying to build a national championship program, you have to be selfless. And when you find players who understand the ‘we over me’ mentality, like we’ve been able to do, that’s what makes the world go ‘round.’”

Building Leaders

Two prime examples of athletes who learned to accept leadership roles in the women’s program are 2023 national player of the year Keia Mae Sagapolu Sanele, and this season’s senior team captain, Tessa Hann, who was nominated for the same award this spring.

Neither of them knew they would become star players when they signed with Central, but over time, Sagapolu and Hann assumed the leadership mantle and evolved into more well-rounded players and people.

“I had to learn to become a leader, but once I learned who I was and what I wanted to get out of my time at Central, I started to find my voice,” said Hann, a Denver native who also plays for the under-23 U.S. national team. “I just like to work hard and set a positive example for others. I think the biggest thing for me was just learning to be myself and backing up my words with my actions.”

That individual identity is something Ramirez and Thornley preach to their players all the time, whether they’re established team leaders or unproven underclassmen still looking to make their mark.

Hann said the thing she appreciates most about the CWU program during her five years—and even before she chose to come to Ellensburg—is the family atmosphere, complemented by a high level of shared accountability.

“The friendships you’re going to make here are going to be for a lifetime, but you’re also going to have to work extremely hard,” she said. “What’s been so great is that we’re all on the same page. We’re all really competitive, but in a healthy way, unlike some other programs. I feel like the culture we have built here truly sets us apart.”

Like Hann, Sagapolu joined the roster as a tentative freshman, unsure of what her role might be someday. But, as time went on, the now-professional prop for the Leicester Tigers in England learned how to be the kind of player others look up to.

“It wasn’t until my last year at Central that I truly made my mark,” said Sagapolu, who grew up in Tacoma. “My first year was pretty rough, but once I started to understand the game better, I was able to help the team more. Everything I learned from my coaches and older teammates eventually rubbed off on me, and I was able to take my game to the next level.”

One of the main reasons Sagapolu chose to come to Central was former head coach Trevor Richards. The two have remained



The men's rugby program has built a family atmosphere, where everyone puts the team's interests before their own.

in contact since his departure after the 2020-21 season, and Richards lent his support as Sagapolu pursued opportunities with professional clubs and the U.S. national team. He even visited Sagapolu in England last fall when she began playing in the Women's Rugby Premiership.

Sagapolu looks back on her relationships with Richards and Ramirez as being key to her development as a person and as an athlete.

"Central gave me a chance, and I will never forget that," she said. "It feels good to know you have people behind you doing the little things to help you succeed. My CWU coaches have always been there for me, and I will forever appreciate everything they've done for me. No matter how far I go in my career, I will always remember my roots."

Relationships Are Key

The close-knit atmosphere that has come to define the women's program mirrors that of their male counterparts. Thornley explained that it all starts with building and nurturing lasting relationships.

That's especially true when you have a program the size of CWU's. By maintaining a roster of 30 to 35—compared to lineups twice that size on other Division IA rosters—every Wildcat knows they have a crucial role to play. This dynamic provides players and coaches with bonding opportunities that they may not otherwise have with larger programs.

"I get to know every athlete very well, and they get to know me," Thornley said. "They understand they are part of something bigger than themselves, and for our team to be successful, we need them just as much as they need us."

One of this season's team leaders, Calvin Liulamaga, looks back on the mentorship he received from Thornley as being

pivotal toward his future success. Before ever stepping on the field for the Wildcats, the Auburn High School graduate felt a genuine connection to his coach and the program.

"I lost my brother the summer before my freshman year, and I had to leave for college a month later," said Liulamaga, a senior who earned All-American honors for the Wildcats in 2022-23. "My first quarter at Central was really hard, but Todd was always by my side, encouraging me to keep going. He played a big role in me coming here, but also in me deciding to stay here all four years."

It didn't take long for Liulamaga to jump into the starting lineup. During his freshman season, a veteran player at his position was forced to sit out a few games. Liulamaga made the most of his opportunity, and he never looked back.

"Todd saw my potential and stayed with me," he said. "He believed in me, and we've been on the same page ever since."

Liulamaga explained that isn't just what he has been able to achieve on the field that has kept him engaged. The rich culture that has come to define the Wildcat program continues to be both empowering and invigorating for everyone on the roster.

"It's such a good environment here," he said. "Our team is really tight-knit on and off the field. I see how hard guys work for each other, and that's something I've always admired about this team. I would do anything for these guys."

Liulamaga conceded that he doesn't know where he would be without the support of Thornley and his teammates.

In many ways, CWU rugby changed his life.

"This school and this program gave me life again, and I owe it all to Todd and my boys," Liulamaga said. "They set me up for success on and off the field, and I wouldn't want to play for anyone else." ■

WildcatsConnect Helps Alumni Build, Maintain Relationships

By Robin Burck

The CWU Alumni Association recently introduced a new engagement platform called WildcatsConnect, designed to foster meaningful connections within the Wildcat family and provide an opportunity for alumni to stay engaged with their alma mater.

Those who sign up for a free account can rekindle old friendships, create new connections, expand their professional networks, and stay informed about upcoming activities on campus and in their area.

“It is important to stay connected to CWU because it provides a network of resources,” alumni couple Rob ('00, '05) and Stacey ('01) Thomas said. “It provides connections with other alumni in social settings, but also creates professional connections. It’s great to see the number of alumni succeeding in different fields.”

From sharing valuable insights and career advice with students as part of the new WildcatsConnect Mentorship Program to creating your own professional network, WildcatsConnect facilitates a seamless exchange of knowledge and experience between Central alumni at all stages of their lives and careers.

To help further alumni engagement and connectivity, the alumni association also has been hosting in-person events in different regions of the state called CWU AlumNights. These free events give Wildcats the opportunity to enjoy informative presentations from faculty and fellow alumni, while engaging with other alumni and friends of the university in their area.

“The Yakima Chapter is growing, and we have met some great people and made some friends along the way,” said Bill Splawn, a

1994 alumnus. “It’s a wonderful way to network and share similar experiences with others in the community.”

As more regional alumni leaders step forward, the alumni association plans to host regular CWU AlumNights throughout the Northwest and beyond.

With more than 100,000 alumni worldwide, WildcatsConnect and CWU AlumNights provide an opportunity for the Wildcat community to connect with each other and maintain a lifelong connection with Central.

The WildcatsConnect platform is not exclusive to alumni; it also welcomes faculty, staff, friends, supporters of the university.

In addition, students are encouraged to join WildcatsConnect and take part in programs like our mentorship program so they can gain valuable insight from alumni working in their field of interest.

“All are welcome to join in this exciting venture as we redefine the alumni experience, offering a space where connections are reignited, knowledge is shared, and the legacy of CWU lives on through the collaborative efforts of our proud alumni,” Director of Alumni and Constituent Relations Casey Ross said.

Visit WildcatsConnect.cwu.edu to sign up for a free account.



Central Welcomes New Provost Patrick Pease

CWU hired Dr. Patrick Pease as its new Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs in February after a nationwide search that began last fall. Pease, who started April 16, comes to CWU from the University of Northern Iowa (UNI), where he served as the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs since 2017. He received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in geology from Indiana State University, and he earned a Doctor of Philosophy in Geography from Texas A&M University.



Football Standout Earns Prestigious National Honor

CWU football standout Tanner Volk was named the winner of the 2023 Cliff Harris Award as the top defensive player in NCAA Division II. Volk led the nation with 13 interceptions and 182 interception return yards, helping the Wildcats advance to the quarterfinals of the NCAA Division II Playoffs—the team’s best finish since 2009. Volk, who also led the nation in total tackles with 124, is the first player in program history to receive the honor.

Distinguished Alumni Class Makes CWU Proud

By Robin Burck

Each year, the Central Washington University Alumni Association recognizes a group of individuals for their personal accomplishments, professional achievements, community service involvement, and/or contributions made to the university by presenting them with a Distinguished Alumni Award.

“Our newest group of Distinguished Alumni awardees have made remarkable contributions to their respective fields that bring immense pride to our university,” Director of Alumni and Constituent Relations Casey Ross said. “These outstanding individuals exemplify the spirit of excellence and innovation that defines Central, serving as inspirational role models for current and future generations of students. We are fortunate to have them as part of our Wildcat community!”

Meet the most recent group of CWU Distinguished Alumni honorees who were recognized in fall 2023.



Major General Richard Appelhans ('93), Political Science

Major General Appelhans serves as the Commanding General of the U.S. Army Intelligence Center of Excellence and Fort Huachuca in Arizona. Earlier in his career, he served as the Director of Intelligence for U.S. Forces Korea and the Deputy Director of Intelligence for the Combined Forces Command.



Brigit Clary ('92), Law and Justice and Sociology

Clary was named the first female police chief for the City of Richland in 2022. Before she retired in early 2024, she secured several grants to support new officer wellness programs and was responsible for the successful rebrand of the Richland Police Department in early 2023.



Madalon Lalley ('64), English

Lalley was named professor emeritus at CWU after teaching in the Department of Education for 12 years. She helped the department flourish by holding many different roles and later served on the CWU Foundation Board. Lalley and her husband, Rod, are active members of the Wildcat community, generously supporting the university and the next generation of Wildcats in many ways, including the support of student scholarships.



Richard Wang ('08), Business Administration

Wang founded Coding Dojo, a virtual software development coding bootcamp, and is committed to creating economic mobility for underserved communities. The goal of his business is to increase opportunities for people to participate in the digital economy. In 2021, Wang was named an Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year for the Pacific Northwest. He also was recently recognized by the Puget Sound Business Journal with a 40 Under 40 Award.

Kittitas County Funding Helps CWU Reopen Mental Health Clinic

The Kittitas County Board of Commissioners and CWU entered into a partnership that will reinstate critical mental health services for local youths over the next two years. In late 2023, Kittitas County earmarked funds generated through its one-tenth of 1% Mental Health and Chemical Dependency Tax to the Department of Psychology so it can reopen the Community Counseling and Psychological Assessment Center (CCPAC), which closed in late 2022. In total, the county will commit \$333,392 to CWU in 2024-25.



'Exonerated Five' Member Speaks to CWU Community

The CWU community welcomed one of the members of “The Exonerated Five” to campus in early February for a town hall-style speaking event. Raymond Santana was one of five African-American teenagers wrongfully convicted of a violent attack in New York’s Central Park in 1989. He and four other young men were tried and convicted of rape and assault, and they served between five and 13 years in prison. In 2002, their convictions were overturned when DNA evidence linked a convicted murderer and serial rapist to the crime, to which he also confessed.

Journalism Alum Living Out His Dream as a Big-City Sports Writer

By David Leder

Times have definitely changed since Tim Booth ('00) was hired by The Associated Press two decades ago.

When the Ellensburg native joined the AP's Seattle bureau as an editorial assistant in early 2004, he was part of a team of sports writers that covered teams and events across the Northwest.

As the news industry changed, so did AP's business model, eventually leaving Booth as the organization's lone full-time sports reporter in the region.

"After the Sonics relocated (to Oklahoma City) in 2008, the company did a reallocation, which took one of the remaining sports writing positions out of Seattle," said Booth, who started his career at a small California newspaper. "At the end of all that, I was the only sports writer left in the Seattle bureau—and that's how it has been now for about 14 years."

Today, Booth relies on a team of freelancers in the Puget Sound area and east of the mountains to help the AP maintain a wide coverage area. Most of his current story assignments are in the Seattle metro area, but he also enjoys the occasional travel opportunity.

"One of my greatest memories was being on the field at MetLife Stadium when the Seahawks won the Super Bowl," Booth said, referring to the team's 2014 championship. "I was in Vancouver when the U.S. women's soccer team won the World Cup, and I was in Sochi (Russia) for the 2018 men's World Cup. Sometimes, I have to pause and look back because those experiences were pretty amazing."

Despite the long and inconsistent hours, Booth doesn't take his good fortune for granted. He knows he's doing a job that most sports fans could only dream of.



Tim Booth

"When I'm at games, I sometimes think to myself, 'this is pretty cool,'" he said. "This can be a never-ending job—that's just the nature of sports. But it's also very rewarding."

Booth credits his wife, Kerri ('99, '00), for her endless support despite the many late nights and early mornings required of a big-market sports journalist. There are weeks where he doesn't get a single day off, but Kerri and their two teenage kids understand.

There's not much Booth would change about his 24-year sports writing career. Looking back, he wishes he had taken more classes at CWU to complement his journalism degree, which is something he tells current students when he returns to campus.

He encourages them to explore what else is out there because you never know where your career might take you.

"I tell them to build a wider range of knowledge that will make them more marketable," Booth said. "If you are ever looking to change careers, that could be the deciding factor that gets you in the door." ■



College of Education Hires Second Associate Dean

The College of Education and Professional Studies (CEPS) hired Dr. Selena Castro as its new associate dean in February. Castro brings extensive experience in higher education leadership and strategic planning to CEPS, serving alongside Dean Sathy Rajendran and the college's other associate dean, Jenny Dechaine-Berkas. Castro earned a bachelor's degree in sociology, master's in communication, and PhD in higher education leadership, all from Washington State University. She most recently served as Director of Student Success and Transition Programs at WSU.

CWU Exercise Science Alum Wins Prestigious National Award

Last year, Ryan Fowler became the second CWU exercise science alumnus in a row to win the Tactical Strength and Conditioning Coach of the Year Award from the National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA). The 2007 alumnus, who works as a strength and conditioning coach for the U.S. Navy, joined 2022 NSCA national award winner Joseph "Reilly" Kelleher ('08). In his current job, Fowler—who served with the Army in Iraq—spends much of his time on location, training instructors from elite military units, such as the Navy SEALs.

Distant Dream Morphs into Career Path for Physics Alumna

By David Leder

As a first-generation college student, Natalie Velez ('22) didn't understand all the ins-and-outs of the higher education system. She wanted to create a better future for herself, but she lacked the resources—financial and otherwise—to take the leap right out of high school.

Her parents encouraged her to apply to different colleges, even though they weren't in a position to pay for her education.

"I knew I would have to put myself through school, which was the hardest part about my decision," said Velez, a native of Tacoma.

It wasn't until about 18 months after high school that Velez realized that she could, in fact, afford a post-secondary education. She enrolled at Bellevue College in 2018, and one class was all it took.

"I took an astronomy class and absolutely fell in love with it," Velez said. "I never realized that becoming a scientist would be a career option for me, but the more I thought about it, I decided, 'why not me?'"

On the advice of a family friend who had attended CWU, Velez transferred to Central in 2019 to pursue a degree in physics.

"The financial aid opportunities made it affordable, so I decided to move to Ellensburg," she said.

Velez became involved in the McNair Scholars program, and by the time she graduated, she had also earned minors in astronomy and math. Along the way, she supervised a small student research team and managed a high-powered telescope in Discovery Hall.

Now, Velez is completing the second year of her six-year graduate program at the University of Oregon, and is well on her way to earning a PhD in physics.

"McNair is what set me up for all of this," Velez said of the federally funded program that connects first-generation, under-represented, and low-income students with graduate school opportunities.

"The whole process of applying for grad school would have been overwhelming without their help. It's just a giant support system that makes students like me realize anything is possible."

Starting with the experience she gained at Central—and now the U of O—Velez is on track to become a university professor someday.

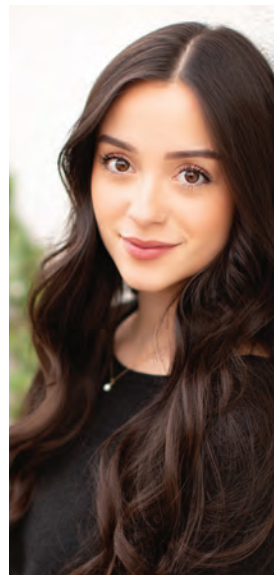
During her first two years in Eugene, she has been working as a teacher's assistant for a class of 200 undergraduates. She's also teaching introductory physics to non-majors and has gotten involved with research groups that explore advanced subjects, such as dark matter, trapped ions, and molecular spectroscopy.

So far, her experience has been other-worldly.

"The main thing that got me interested in physics was learning about unknowns," Velez said. "Now, I'm being exposed to all different types of research and figuring out which direction I want to go. It's been a pretty amazing experience."

If everything goes according to plan, Velez will be leading her own lecture halls and research projects someday. But it's not all about her; she's on this path to show others that they can overcome any obstacles they encounter in life.

"I would love to work for a student-focused university like Central where there's lots of one-on-one help," she said. "I want people to know my name and know my story—someone others see and know what they can become." ■



Natalie Velez



CWU Senior Makes History with Win at National Trumpet Competition

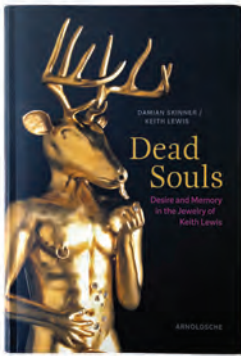
Corinne "Corie" Williamson etched her name in the history books this spring when she won the undergraduate solo division at the National Trumpet Competition. Williamson outperformed other collegiate trumpet players from around the country at the March 8-11 event in Kingsville, Texas, walking away with \$3,000 in prize money. She performed the first movement of *Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra* by William Lovelock. About 70 trumpeters competed in the undergraduate solo division, including fellow CWU students Gregory DeArmond and Dylan Thompson.

Aviation Chair and Husband Receive National Award

The University Aviation Association (UAA) last fall recognized CWU Department of Aviation Chair Sam Pavel with its highest honor, the President's Award. Pavel and his husband, Scott Keirl, were honored in September at the Collegiate Aviation Education Conference and Expo in Florida. Pavel was chosen for his diligent work in guiding the UAA through the rough waters of the pandemic as president of the organization, a job he was called upon to accept one year earlier than anticipated due to his predecessor's resignation.

Survival, Change, and the Art of Keith Lewis

By Rune Torgersen



Lewis discusses 35 years of his work in *Dead Souls*.

Keith Lewis is having a fantastic year. The CWU Distinguished Professor of Jewelry, Metals, and Design has received international acclaim for his art, with six of his pieces being on display at the New York Museum of Art and Design, and a solo exhibition in April at the Jewelry Library in Hell's Kitchen.

Lewis' monograph, *Dead Souls: Desire and Memory in the Jewelry of Keith Lewis*, written in collaboration with art historian Damien Skinner, chronicles his 35-year career as a jeweler and examines his work from a modern perspective. It was presented at Munich Jewelry Week in Germany in March, alongside selections from his extensive catalog of art.

Lewis' experience working on the monograph led him to reflect on his lifetime's work from a new perspective, one often mired in ongoing political and cultural conflict.

"I came out as a gay man and began making jewelry about that experience in the '80s, in the midst of the AIDS epidemic," Lewis said. "That created a kind of clarity, a focus on survival that really shaped the way I think about things to this day.

"As we have moved through the last several decades, we have developed a truer and more nuanced understanding of the intersections of gender identity and sexuality, which includes trans issues and non-binary issues and, in general, a better idea of the range of sexualities within those broader and more multitudinous sets of identities."

"We all walk through misery. The trick is in learning how to create objects that establish a connection with other people about those shared experiences, or shared pain."

Keith Lewis



Lewis uses a variety of jewelry-making techniques, which require a broad range of tools.



Lewis' work establishes dialogue with the viewer through thoughtful, intricate craftsmanship.

As a member of the heavily marginalized LGBTQ+ community during a time of repression and underrepresentation, the importance of Lewis' artwork resides not only in expressing his own internal turmoil, but also in helping build bridges between people forced to keep their true selves to themselves.

The lessons Lewis learned from holding this delicate balance are passed on to his students.

"The thing with our individual problems is that they're all very important and salient and painful to us, but they also happen all the time," he said. "We all walk through misery. The trick is in learning how to create objects that establish a connection with other people about those shared experiences, or shared pain. How do you expand that discourse so that people with non-identical experiences can still find communion through your art?"

In Lewis' classroom, he prefers to teach the delicate craft of creating dialogue through art using other artists' pieces, as opposed to his own.

"I'm a perfectly egotistical teacher, but I almost never teach from my own work," he said. "Rather, I try to bring my experience as a jeweler working with controversial subjects and narratives; things that people often get very fired-up about. I try to teach my students how to grapple with that without just making propaganda or bleeding all over their artwork."

Lewis' accolades over the past year come on the heels of decades of networking, inspiration, and thoughtful reactivity to changing times. His art has, over the years, been featured in exhibitions across the world, and his unique talent recently led to his induction as a Fellow of the American Craft Council.

"There are all these threads you spin over the course of a career as long as mine," Lewis said. "It feels like those threads are really coming together now."

As the steward of the only dedicated four-year jewelry degree in Washington state, Lewis builds on CWU's extensive record of excellence in the field.

Since the 1950s, each professor who taught jewelry at Central has earned international acclaim for their work, starting with Ramona Solberg, remembered as the grandmother of Northwest found-art jewelry. The post was then held by Don Tompkins and Ken Corey, both prolific jewelers in their own right. Looking back at this heritage of excellence, Lewis is proud to continue that legacy.

"There's no modest way to say this, but four internationally renowned jewelry professors in a row with no breaks since the late '50s is no mean feat," he said. "I'm honored and elated to have been able to continue that tradition." ■





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Daniela Rojas
Aviation Management Student
Wildcat Promise Scholarship Recipient