Keith C. Russell, Chair, Department of Health and Human Development

I write this year from the newly renovated Carver Academic Facility, our amazing teaching and learning space. This past year we have been equipping our 10 research labs, and pinching ourselves that the renovation did indeed happen and this is our new work site. The students, faculty, and staff of the Department of Health and Human Development all send you warm greetings and hope you get a chance to stop by and see for yourself the new Carver.

We did welcome one faculty member this past year in Physical Education Pedagogy (Dr. Nicholas Washburn), who came to us from the University of Alabama where he completed his doctoral work on the role of motivation in achieving the mission of physical education. Nick has effortlessly acculturated himself to HHD, with the help of LeaAnn Martin who was kind enough to come out of retirement for a year and help guide the program through some transition. (Joel has indicated that LeaAnn is really retiring this time, which we will all believe when we see it). We are also excited to welcome Dr. Hillary Franks to the PE Pedagogy program. She will be joining us this fall from the University of Northern Colorado. The PE Pedagogy program is back to full strength, and with the newly renovated teaching lab, is poised to meet the demands of developing the best Physical Education and Health teachers in the State of Washington. We are pleased to also welcome Dr. Steven Bennett to the Community Health Program. He comes to us from the University of Minnesota. Steve and his partner, Dr. Doug Sladen (a new faculty member in Communication Sciences and Disorders) have successfully transitioned to Bellingham with their 2-year old twins. Another addition to the HHD team is Taylor Leenstra, a graduate of the Kinesiology (BS) and Sport Psychology (MS) programs, who will serve as HHD’s Advising Coordinator to support faculty and staff in serving our more than 500 students in four distinct academic programs. It was sad to say goodbye to Dr. Senna Towner (Community Health) who has taken a job in Oregon to be closer to family. Her spirit and presence is dearly missed in the department.

In other news, we are working to develop two new Anatomy and Physiology labs in Carver, which will conduct human cadaver prosection to better serve our students in allied health. The labs should be complete by spring of 2019. I wish to thank everyone who made contributions to the various scholarships in the department this past year. Your donations make it possible for us to support and enrich students’ education in the form of scholarships, attend conferences and other learning opportunities, and to be able to work with state-of-the-art equipment in our labs and programs. We rely on and greatly appreciate your support. Please continue to help us assist the next generation of alumni who go out into the world to create change and bring happiness and joy to others through their dedicated work in health and human development.

Finally, please keep an eye out for a department and program alumni gathering in May of 2019. We will be sending out save-the-dates through our various program alumni networks and we hope we will be able to see you in Bellingham and get an opportunity to show off Carver. Best wishes to a healthy and adventurous year!

Keith
Professor and Chair
Department of Health and Human Development
Dr. Harsh Buddhadev

Dr. Buddhadev’s third year at Western was both productive and busy. Four research papers he was an author on were accepted for publication in peer reviewed journals. These papers were about asymmetry in cycling mechanics shown by people with knee osteoarthritis, higher metabolic energy expenditure demonstrated by older adults during cycling,

Dr. Jessyca Arthur-Cameselle

Dr. Arthur-Cameselle finished another action-packed year at Western, which included the exciting move into the new Carver facility and welcoming in a new cohort of graduate students in sport and exercise psychology (SEP). The new facility and state of the art equipment have already improved the services offered in the Center for Performance Excellence. Dr. Arthur-Cameselle and Dr. Keeler also spent time this year updating the graduate SEP curriculum in order to offer courses that are now required to become a certified mental performance consultant. Dr. Arthur-Cameselle will be teaching one of those courses, Individual Counseling Techniques, to Western SEP students for the first time in the fall of 2018. She continues to conduct and publish her research on eating disorders in athletes and mentors graduate students as they conduct their own original thesis research. One of the highlights of the year for Dr. Arthur-Cameselle was presenting research with several Western graduate student alumni at the national Association for Applied Sport Psychology conference in Orlando in October of 2017.

KPE FACULTY UPDATES

The KPE program is very excited to announce that we completed a successful faculty search this spring in the area of Physical Education, Pedagogy. Dr. Hillary Franks will begin her position as an Assistant Professor of Physical Education in the fall of 2018. Please read her faculty profile for more information on her educational background, research interests, and areas of expertise. Welcome back to Washington, Hillary!

During the 2017 – 2018 academic year, the KPE program could not have run smoothly without the support of several outstanding part-time instructors, including: Paul Horne, Debbie Henrichs, Jen Leita, Daniel Crisafulli, and Christine Airoldi. We thank them for their time and effort in providing exceptional classroom instruction to our students. We would also like to acknowledge the continued excellent work of Stacy Halbakken, who helps keep the pedagogy program in top shape!
creatine-electrolyte supplement improves repeated sprint cycling performance, and effects of hip flexor stretching techniques on knee joint position sense and dynamic balance. This year, he will travel to Rochester, Minnesota to present his research at the annual conference of the American Society of Biomechanics. At the conference, he will present on the number of crank cycles required to achieve stable pedal force data during submaximal cycling. Dr. Buddhadev also taught his first graduate class this year on biomechanical gait analysis and had a wonderful experience. Apart from work, Dr. Buddhadev and his family are enjoying exploring outdoor activities around Bellingham. In June, he and his wife celebrated their daughter’s third birthday.

Dr. Lorrie Brilla
Dr. Brilla attended the 2018 American College of Sports Medicine national meeting in Minneapolis where a former WWU graduate student presented their thesis project research. Much of Dr. Brilla’s time this year was focused on outfitting the renovated Carver laboratories with new equipment. There were a number of equipment training sessions before Fall classes, and even some trainings in Winter term. The major new instruments for the laboratories, three with an Exercise Physiology focus, included a metabolic cart to replace a 20-year-old machine, wet lab analyzers for specimen testing, and a DEXA. The present application for the DEXA is for body composition measures instead of the usual bone density measurements. Dr. Brilla and Dr. Buddhadev had to “go back to school” to get the training required by the Washington State Department of Health to operate the DEXA. The improvements to Carver’s laboratories should improve students’ experiences and help graduates of the program to be even more competitive as they seek employment. Finally, in June 2018, one Dr. Brilla’s WWU studies she completed on exercise recovery postures was trending on Twitter! So, watch for impact of instruction and research from your alma mater.

Dr. Gordon Chalmers
Dr. Chalmers continues to lead the growing Kinesiology and Physical Education faculty. New additions of faculty in Physical Education have led to growth in that essential program, which serves the youth and the future health of our state. Dr. Chalmers has also benefited by the recent move into the improved Carver Academic Facility, by continuing his studies of the neurophysiology of balance control in an improved research facility that facilitates a greater range of research options.

Dr. Hillary Franks
Dr. Franks will join the HHD department in the fall of 2018 as an Assistant Professor of Elementary Physical Education (PE). She completed her Ph.D. in Sport Pedagogy at the University of Northern Colorado (2018), where she also taught elementary PE part-time for two years. Prior to receiving her Ph.D., she coached soccer at various levels spanning youth to college and also worked as an outdoor educator. During her time at the University of Northern Colorado, Dr. Franks was as a teaching assistant, research assistant and an active board member of the Society of Health and Physical Educators of Colorado, providing her many opportunities to work with preservice and in-service PE teachers. The research Dr. Franks has been involved with has largely focused on physical education teacher education (Pete), specifically: utilizing technology in PE, preservice teachers’ perceptions of disability, and content relevance in Pete programs. Her dissertation examined the participation and beliefs of physical education cooperating teachers as teacher educators during the student teaching experience. Dr. Franks’ professional goal is to advocate for PE’s role in schools and communities and to do her part in preparing the next generation of physical educators to help K-12 students to be physically active for a lifetime. Dr. Franks enjoys being active in the outdoors, spending much of her free time skiing, hiking, biking and paddling with friends and family. She is excited to be back in Washington state to begin her career at Western and life in Bellingham!
KINESIOLOGY AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

KPE FACULTY UPDATES continued...

Dr. Kari Jo Hilgendorf
Dr. Hilgendorf finished her second year at Western, one highlight of which was beginning to obtain equipment for her research in the beautiful and functional Carver Wet Lab space. She plans to continue the research program she began in 2017 and will spend this summer analyzing salivary analytes (cortisol and C-reactive protein) from the samples she collected the previous summer. Dr. Hilgendorf also continues to work with the Nutrition and Physical Activity Programs for Residential Care interest group and the Association of Children’s Residential Centers research board. Outside of work, Dr. Hilgendorf and her husband welcomed the birth of their first child. The learning curve of being a mother has turned out to be an exceptional challenge and a joy. She is looking forward to spending more time with her child over the summer.

Dr. Linda Keeler
Dr. Keeler and the sport and exercise psychology (SEP) crew are loving their new space in the renovated Carver facility. The start of the year was filled with moving into the building and trying to get all the remaining new equipment set up for the Center for Performance Excellence (CPE), which is now housed on the second floor near the KIN faculty offices. She is still smiling about what the new space and equipment allows for the program. Dr. Keeler continues to supervise the Western Wellcat program on campus, a peer-supported exercise for mental health intervention. With the valuable help and coordination of Samantha MacDonald, the current SEP TA, the WW program took on four undergraduate kinesiology interns this year who helped 10 enrolled students complete the program. The feedback from the participants is really encouraging as the social support and exercise combination appears to be the key recipe to keep them engaged and help them feel better. Dr. Keeler also attended and presented work with former graduate students at the AASP conference in Orlando, FL in the Fall and is looking forward to seeing some alumni at this year’s conference. Dr. Keeler and Dr. A-C were busy with a new graduate student cohort who have started both their theses and internships and have welcomed their first clients into the new CPE this past Spring.

Dr. Jun San Juan
Dr. San Juan started the academic year moving his office and lab to the new Carver Academic Facility. In the winter of 2018, Dr. San Juan welcomed his newborn son Kai and enjoyed spending time with him in Spring quarter during his paternity leave. In May of 2018, he co-organized and helped host the 2018 Northwest Biomechanics Symposium at Western. It was a very successful symposium, with over 150 participants and 83 presentations from Universities across the Pacific Northwest. A couple of his graduate and undergraduate students presented their research study at the symposium. Dr. San Juan also attended and presented at the annual meeting of the Philippine-American Academy of Science and Engineering held at the University of Arizona. During the summer of 2018, Dr. San Juan’s graduate student will present her research study at the annual conference of the American Society of Biomechanics hosted by the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. Dr. San Juan co-authored three research publications that were published in peer-reviewed journal articles this academic year. Lastly, he is happy to announce that he is involved with planning the new Cadaver Laboratory in Carver. The cadaver lab will be used for the Functional Anatomy course that he teaches and

Dr. Dave Suprak
In 2017-18, Dr. Dave Suprak completed his tenth year of service at WWU. In 2018, he was promoted to the rank of Full Professor. He continues his research in the area of shoulder neuromuscular control, and is expanding into the area of hip joint position sense. He also continues to publish his work on the biomechanics of upper extremity rehabilitation exercises, collaborating with Drs. San Juan and Buddhadev on a paper to be published in BMC Musculoskeletal disorders. Dr. Suprak also continues his work on the Academic Technology Committee, where he helps in the process of guiding the many technical decisions for the university. He is also still active on the National Strength and Conditioning Association’s Washington State Board of Directors.
Dr. Nick Washburn

Dr. Washburn’s first year at Western has been wonderfully enjoyable and productive. In collaboration with the students in his physical education methods class, Dr. Washburn presented at the annual Washington State Society of Health and Physical Educators Conference on the concept of autonomy-supportive instructional techniques. Dr. Washburn has begun to infuse motivationally-supportive concepts and instructional models into the coursework in the physical education program at Western. Currently, Dr. Washburn is working on validating a self-report measure of physical education teachers’ motivating styles and he is collecting qualitative data on the influence of secondary field experiences on pre-service teachers’ perceptions of physical education. Aside from research, he is extremely proud of his students’ efforts in the pedagogy program and is excited to continue the successes from his first year into his second. Outside of work, Dr. Washburn and his wife, Alena, have purchased a home and welcomed their first child, Lila Marie, to their family. They are extremely happy and thankful to call Bellingham home!

2018 Northwest Biomechanics Symposium
Pictured left to right: Dr. Harsh Buddhadev, Dr. Irene Davis (keynote speaker), Dr. Jun San Juan and Dr. Dave Suprak
For more on symposium, see page 8.
Kinesiology Awards for Graduating Seniors

Most Inspirational Graduating Senior
Heidi Olsen

Most Outstanding Graduating Senior
Stephanie Arroyo

Kin Undergraduate Student Notes:

Emily Stadt, a Kinesiology major specializing in pre-physical therapy, was named as the presidential Scholar for the College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Grad students Sarah Perry, Gary Wiley and Julianna Johnson entertaining at the Graduate Banquet.
KIN Graduate Student Notes

Graduate Student Thesis News

Five Kinesiology graduate students in the exercise science option and one in sport and exercise psychology option successfully defended their thesis projects in the academic year 2017-2018:

**Patrick C. Castelli:** Deter mining the Maximal Recoverable Volume of Resistance Training in Tonnage during a Strength Phase

**Deanna Marlene Emnott:** Effects of Thoracic Spine Position during Cycle Sprint Recovery

**Nicole Yvette Kelp:** Effect of Distance on Lumbar Flexion and Erector Spinae Electromyography on a Slide versus Fixed Base Rowing Ergometer

**Donnelly R. Miller:** Six Weeks of Creatine-Electrolyte Supplement Effects on Muscle Fatigability

**Mason B. Nichols:** Effects of a Single Diaphragmatic Breath on Anxiety, Gaze, and Performance

**Jayson Shepherd:** The Effects of an Ankle Strengthening and Proprioception Exercise Protocol on Peak Torque and Joint Position Sense

Other Graduate Student News:

**Nate Wolch,** a Sport and Exercise Psychology graduate student, was named as a student delegate for the Association for Applied Sport Psychology. In this role, he is helping to organize the annual graduate school fair at this fall’s annual conference and he is also gathering information from leaders in the field, via interviews, in order to contribute to the association’s “best practices” initiative and written materials.

Alumni Notes:

**Arianna Martignetti,** MS, ‘17 was hired as a full-time visiting professor in sport psychology at Manhattanville College for 2018-2019.

**Taylor Leenstra,** MS, ‘17 was hired as the first HHD academic advisor for the department.
2018 Northwest Biomechanics Symposium

The Kinesiology department hosted the 14th Annual Northwest Biomechanics Symposium in May with approximately 130 participants. It was a successful turn-out that included keynote speaker, Irene Davis, Ph.D. Please see link for more information regarding our symposium: https://wp.wwu.edu/nwbs2018/.

Symposium attendees pictured at Western Washington University
2018 Northwest Biomechanics Symposium

Pictured above:
Department Chair, Keith Russell
with welcoming remarks

Pictured left:
Graduate students
with their poster presentations
2018 Northwest Biomechanics Symposium

KIN graduate students at symposium

Professor Jun San Juan & Professor Dave Suprak
The Center for Performance Excellence (CPE), which is staffed by Dr. Keeler, Dr. Arthur-Cameselle, and Kinesiology graduate students who are specializing in sport and exercise psychology, has moved to its new home in the Carver Academic Facility. The new CPE suite offers a spacious group meeting room for hosting sport psychology workshops as well as team-building sessions.

In addition, the CPE suite has a state of the art individual consulting room, which is equipped with video recording and a two way mirror, as well as both a new research lab and a recording studio. These technological improvements have substantially enhanced the training offered to Western graduate students as well as the services the CPE provides to athletes and exercisers at Western as well as those in the community.
Sport & Exercise Psychology Grad Students & Faculty

Pictured left to right:
Nate Wolch, Linda Keeler, Jessyca Arthur-Cameselle, Samantha MacDonald
Dear alumni and friends,

It always feels special to write the annual newsletter to update you about our program because it is a time to reflect on the past and plan for the future. The year 2018 has been eventful for our program with both sad and exciting news. After four years of amazing contributions, Dr. Senna Towner resigned from WWU at the end of March to be closer to her family. It is hard to see Dr. Towner leave, but we all understand and support her decision and believe that the connection between Dr. Towner and the Community Health Program will continue at a different level. With excitement, I am announcing that Dr. Steve Bennett will join our program starting fall quarter 2018 to fill Dr. Towner’s position. We will also have another tenure track faculty search in fall 2018 to fill the position left by Dr. Claudia Wang, who resigned at the end of spring quarter 2018.

As you all know, the Community Health Program has been active in pursuing CEPH (Council on Education for Public Health) accreditation when our SABPAC accreditation phases out. After spending tremendous time and effort, Dr. Towner and I submitted our CEPH accreditation self-study in October 2017. The overall feedback was positive, but they recommended we pause on the site visit—the next step after the submission of self-study—until we have three permanent faculty. Though the accreditation process will take longer than we expected, we greatly appreciated the opportunity to reflect on our program’s strengths and areas for growth. At the same time, we are confident that our program is strong and will meet the CEPH accreditation standard as we are proud of our rigorous and project-oriented curriculum, the cohort system, our close partnership with community agencies, our 400-hour internship requirement, and our strong alumni connections.

With that said, students in the Community Health Program are the most important force that pushes the program to thrive. With their dedication, spirit of helping others, and pursuit of excellence, our students always surprise us with their wonderful achievements. I am proud to share that the junior cohort (2019 cohort) partnered with Oda Foundation, a non-profit organization in Nepal, through our former graduate Taylor Murillo, and raised over $1,000 to support sustainable, locally-driven programs that aim to improve health and education while more broadly reducing regional poverty. Laurel Puffert, one of our seniors, received the Pacific Northwest Society of Public Health Education Student Recognition Award for her involvement in community and outstanding academic standing. Two other seniors, Claire Talbert and Sarah Mills, received the Outstanding Poster Award at Western’s Scholars Week for their excellent research and poster titled "Experience and Perceptions of Firearm Violence."

At the personal level, I was recently promoted to full professor, which is pleasing and humbling at the same time. Besides teaching and service, my research efforts still focus on college student health with an intention to create a program to address food insecurity issues among WWU students. My vision is to create a centralized program on Western’s campus by collaborating with community partners both on and off campus.

I hope you are having a great summer!

Ying Li
News from Dr. Steve Bennett

Hello all,

I am so excited to be wrapping up my first year here at Western and even more excited to have the opportunity to continue here as full-time tenure track faculty next fall. My husband, Doug Sladen, has joined the Audiology Program, and we have truly become a WWU family with our two children, Sawyer Kendall and Rhys Arin. Moving to Bellingham (and now Ferndale) has been a whirlwind experience, but we are happy that we settled here.

Joining the Community Health Program has been truly exciting and eye opening. This group of seniors has inspired me with their work ethic and creativity. They truly are setting the bar high for the next crop of students coming through. This spring quarter, I was happy to work with the students as they continued gaining experience by working with community partners that Dr. Senna Towner had arranged for them. These partner organizations ranged from the Whatcom County Health Department to the Bellingham School District as well as Viva Farms, a local CSA hoping to connect low-income people to fresh farm produce. The projects our students worked on tackled a wide range of important issues, and I was continuously impressed with how they met the challenge. At the end of the quarter, all the community partner organizations and students met in the new Community Health Program suite for a poster presentation event where students had the opportunity to present their work. I could truly see how well prepared they are for their internships this summer and what kind of professionals they will be in the future.

I’m currently taking the lessons I’ve learned from these students and looking to the future. We have some great students that will be entering their senior year next year, as well as many more wonderful students coming up behind them. I hope that, working with Dr. Li, I can continue to help the Community Health Program flourish. My specialties are global health and infectious disease, and I’m looking forward to incorporating that into the program and my research here at WWU. There are some great opportunities that lay ahead for the program, and I’m looking forward to it!

Steve Bennett

Joseph Sanchez, Kaylee Wells, Sarah Bray, and Alex Taylor presenting their social marketing project for Viva Farms at the end of the quarter event.

Vanessa Doyle, Alissa Parker and Jake Thompson presenting their social marketing campaign for the Bellingham Whatcom County Commission Against Domestic Violence at our end of the quarter poster presentation event.
Brian Aylward (2012)
After 10 years of working in direct patient care settings, Brian made a career shift and joined Socra-ta (now Tyler Technologies) to help drive government program outcomes forward by making existing data discoverable, usable, and actionable. He is the Community & Association Marketing Manager at Tyler Technologies and works on thought leadership strategies with agencies like the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services and the City of Cincinnati to help manage the nation’s opioid epidemic; the City of Miami and Maui County to support emergency response services; the Cities of Santa Rosa and Seattle to address homelessness; and the Cities of Little Rock and Chattanooga to support diversity in police recruitment. He helps take the stories out of data and get them into the public eye.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

2011 Graduates

Briana Brewer (2011)
Briana can announce that she officially graduated from the University of California San Francisco’s Adult/Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Program!

Amelia Cave (2011)
Amelia is a marketing specialist for SAP Concur, a tech company in Bellevue that sells travel and expense management software (among other cloud-based products). She gets to travel a little bit for the job and work with people from around the globe. She really likes living in Seattle and is thinking about her next steps as she nears her one-year mark in the position.

Emily Schmuhl Jenkins (2011)
Emily and her husband are having a baby in August! She has been enjoying learning about maternal and child health, especially how American traditions and practices influence health for better or worse. They have also loved learning from the international students they work with about their countries’ traditions. In Thailand, for example, you’re supposed to say a new baby is ugly so that evil spirits won’t harm the child!

Celeste Kahn (2011)
Celeste had a great 2017-2018 year! In June 2017, she graduated from Bastyr University with her master’s degree in nutrition. She was accepted into Oregon State University’s Dietetic Internship Program and has been a full-time intern since September 2017, gaining dietetic experience in a wide variety of settings. She graduated from the program at the end of June 2018 and then will sit for the exam to become a registered dietitian. Then the job hunting begins—fingers crossed!

Anne Massey (2011)
Anne was with Seattle Children’s Hospital from 2012-2017, but just started the University of Washington’s Master of Public Health epidemiology program last fall. In addition to classes, she worked on an adolescent health and immunization improvement project with UW epidemiology faculty and Public Health - Seattle & King County. Currently she is working on a project related to firearms and suicide prevention at the Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center. Anne is also a member of the Student Epidemic Action Leaders (SEAL) Team which provides training on outbreak investigation and response in preparation for state and community field assignments.

Hallie McLean (2011)
Hallie and her husband had their first baby, Madilyn, in April!

2012 Graduates

Brian Aylward (2012)
After 10 years of working in direct patient care settings, Brian made a career shift and joined Socra-ta (now Tyler Technologies) to help drive government program outcomes forward by making existing data discoverable, usable, and actionable. He is the Community & Association Marketing Manager at Tyler Technologies and works on thought leadership strategies with agencies like the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services and the City of Cincinnati to help manage the nation’s opioid epidemic; the City of Miami and Maui County to support emergency response services; the Cities of Santa Rosa and Seattle to address homelessness; and the Cities of Little Rock and Chattanooga to support diversity in police recruitment. He helps take the stories out of data and get them into the public eye.
Prior to joining Socrata, Brian worked as Community Development Manager for Iora Health, a disruptive healthcare tech startup changing the way Medicare patients are served and cared for. In this position he designed education programs, managed business development initiatives, and established local partnerships to help increase awareness of a new era of primary care. Prior to Iora Health, Brian worked as a health education specialist at Swedish Health Services (3 years) and Emergency Technician at Peace Health St. Joseph Medical Center (5 years).

2013 Graduates

Brittany Jones (2013)

Last summer Brittany got involved with the Whatcom County Coalition to End Homelessness (which meets every other month to discuss all subject areas that pertain to homelessness in Whatcom County and is open to the public and professionals) and then with the Community Engagement Committee, and found herself working with a group of people, housed and unhoused, to create a secure place for people experiencing homelessness to store their belongings.

Since then, she has created a non-profit organization, BasicsPNW (awaiting their 501(c)3 status), to host this project and hopefully many more innovative programs in the future that can help create a more healthy and happy community and empower people so they can reach their fullest potential and thrive.

The Safe Storage pilot project is set to begin this fall. The lockers will be located in scatter sites around the downtown Bellingham area and provide 24-hour access through a personal key code and a monthly lease agreement. This locker project is different than most storage options available to people experiencing homelessness due to the program aspect that goes alongside the lockers. This program piece will allow people using the lockers to work with a peer counselor to help navigate the system and work on personal goals. The goal of Safe Storage is to provide a safe place for people to store their belongings so they can go about their daily life and work toward transitioning off of the streets and into permanent housing.

Brittany has used just about every skill she learned in the Community Health Program to help develop this project and knows that she will soon be using many more (grant writing, specifically). Creating this program and a non-profit has been rewarding, exhausting, and thrilling. She has made relationships with people she never would have otherwise had the chance to and has learned so much more about her own community. She is excited to see where it all leads and cannot wait to see the first lockers go up this fall.

And yes, they are still fundraising; they have gained immense support from individuals, the city, the county, and more. They have a GoFundMe set up as their primary way for people to make individual donations right now. Check it out: GoFundMe.com/SafeStoragePNW and Facebook.com/SafeStoragePNW. Please share with your network!!

Taylor Murillo (2013)

Taylor accepted an Education and Wellness Fellowship with the Oda Foundation in April of 2017. She quit her job as a health education specialist in Seattle three months later, packed her bags, and boarded her first ever international flight! After landing in Nepal, it was an additional two days of travel by plane, jeep, and eventually a trek on foot before she arrived in the remote village of Oda. Taylor and two other Fellows worked day in and day out for nine months to support sustainable, locally-driven programs that aim to improve health and education while more broadly reducing regional poverty. In the spring of 2018, the Oda Foundation partnered with the WWU community health cohort to raise funds to support the powerful mission of this small NGO. Through various fundraisers, the WWU students were able to raise
ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT continued...

over $1,000 for the cause! This is a beautiful example of how we as community health professionals can move mountains if we advocate for and support one another in our efforts to promote health and wellness around the world.

Harveen Sandhu (2013)
Harveen spent the past year working as a medical scribe consultant in Portland, OR. She was recently accepted to the University of Washington School of Medicine and will be starting in August 2018 in Spokane, WA. Prior to this, she obtained a bachelor's degree in general science at Portland State University and worked as a project management specialist at Boston University Medical Center in Boston, MA. She will be spending her summer in New York City and has plans to visit Thailand and Australia this winter.

2014 Graduates

Meghan Jacobson (2014)
Meghan graduated in May with her Master of Public Health from Eastern Washington University. She currently works in the health promotion division at the Spokane Regional Health District implementing a community health worker peer-to-peer model based in low-income housing. Spokane Regional Health District has been implementing a CHW initiative within ten low-income apartment complexes across Spokane County for the past four years. As trusted natural helpers within their communities, twenty resident CHWs volunteer to implement health education activities, gather and share resources relative to their needs, attend trainings, and hold weekly office hours where tenants can access their assistance. The goal of the CHW initiative is to increase health and wellbeing among tenants. Meghan works to meet the needs of the residents and secure funding for barriers such as preventative care, transportation, healthy eating, and active living. She also is the project coordinator for the My Healthy Life social marketing campaign which has expanded to reach eleven counties in Washington.

Mackenzie Lynch (2014)
Last February Mackenzie fulfilled a dream to be certified as a PADI dive master in Utila, Honduras. After certification she was hired onto staff and worked for six months taking tourists scuba diving on the beautiful Mesoamerican Reef. After returning back to the states in August, she moved to Park City, Utah. She is currently studying for the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) Certified Group Exercise Instructor exam, which she will sit for this August. She plans to work in the fitness and wellness field for the next year before applying to University of Utah’s MS Health Promotion and Wellness Coaching program.

Oak Schuetz (2014)
Oak has been accepted into dental hygiene school in Yakima and is planning to move there after this summer.

2015 Graduates

Erika Bro (2015)
In 2017, Erika was awarded the Endeavour Postgraduate Scholarship (master's) through the Australian Government Department of Education and Training. This is a competitive, merit-based scholarship that provides international students the opportunity to undertake study by coursework and research in Australia. In 2018, Erika graduated with her master’s degree by coursework in international public health from the University of Sydney after completing a nine-week placement as a principal investigator with the National Institute (INS) of Health in Timor-Leste. During her placement, she conducted a post-training evaluation in Covalima Municipality of health worker competence, confidence, and performance following the competency-based clean and safe delivery and family planning trainings administered by the INS (in partnership with JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc. on a USAID-funded grant).
Erika was granted a Fulbright Scholarship to conduct an ethnographic qualitative study of maternal mental health in Salvador, Bahia (Brazil) among pregnant adolescents in the wake of the Zika outbreak. She will conduct her research through the Institute of Collective Health at the Universidade Federal da Bahia (UFBA), located in Salvador, Bahia, under the supervision of Dr. Darci Neves dos Santos of UFBA, who conducts epidemiological studies in human development and mental health of children and adolescents, and colleagues who work with women studies addressing young people and pregnancy.

Isabell Sakamoto (2015)
Over the past year, Isabell transitioned roles again at Seattle Children's Hospital and is now the Kohl's Helmet Safety Program Coordinator. She is still a Better Babysitters instructor and continues community health and injury prevention volunteer work with Seattle Children’s. Isabell is currently wrapping up graduate school and is slated to graduate with a Master of Science in health communications in August 2018!

Carolyn Wortham (2015)
Carolyn is pursuing a Doctorate in Nursing Practice at Seattle University, specializing in reproductive and women’s health.

2016 Graduates

Sarah Brauneis (2016)
Sarah made a transition in jobs from Seattle Cancer Care Alliance, Transplant and General Oncology Intake Department, to the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle, WA. She works with the Health and Behavioral Innovations in Technology (HABIT) Lab as a project coordinator. As a research coordinator she serves as a project liaison and coordinates research and administrative activities for six grant-funded studies. These studies focus on using Acceptance Commitment Therapy-based programs and technologically-diverse interventions to achieve healthy behavior change related to smoking cessation, healthy eating, and weight loss. Sarah was selected as a recipient of the Washington State Public Health Association Scholarship and attended the annual WSPHA conference in Wenatchee, WA, last October.

Emma-Lee Hefton (2016)
Emma graduated with a Master of Public Health degree in June 2018. The program specializes in community health and social justice. For her capstone project, she developed, implemented, and evaluated a mental health-related training for volunteers of a family homeless shelter. Additionally, she recently completed a 4-month full-time internship at the Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery where she supported tribal partners in their substance abuse prevention and mental health promotion efforts. She is currently searching for a job in substance abuse prevention, mental health promotion, or other health education or case management jobs.

Dillon van Rensburg (2016)
Dillon was selected as a presenter for the Washington State Public Health Association Annual Conference (WSPHA) in October 2017. He and Mimi Boumatar (alumna) presented their electronic cigarette research to attendees ranging from county departments to Washington State Department of Health. During this presentation, Dillon highlighted the state of electronic cigarettes in our public health system. He hopes that more professionals will investigate these electronic nicotine device systems and their long-term effects on our population.

In March of 2018, Dillon accepted a position at Sea Mar Mount Vernon. He works as an integration specialist in care management and coaches 24 low-income patients who carry the burden of chronic diseases. He establishes long and short-term health goals, acts as a navigator in
the healthcare system, and encourages lifestyle choices through motivational interviewing. Dillon wishes to inspire individuals of Skagit County and convey that, no matter your circumstance, you are worthy of improving your health and wellbeing.

**2017 Graduates**

**Dana Hasert (2017)**
Dana recently moved to Vermont and works for an organization called True North Wilderness Therapy. She works with teenagers and their assigned therapist to work towards their therapeutic goals. It’s like group therapy in the woods.

**Becca McNurney (2017)**
Becca lives in her hometown of Kingston, WA, and commutes by ferry to her full-time position at Seattle Cancer Care Alliance in South Lake Union. Her role as an administrative coordinator supports the Patient Education, Patient & Family Resource Center, Interpreter Services, and General Information departments. She serves in the resource center as a CHES and provides up-to-date, evidenced-based health education to patients and families about their recent diagnosis. Many of her projects this year have focused on streamlining and creating lean processes for each of her departments. She has thoroughly enjoyed working in the supportive care division in oncology and believes that it makes a huge difference in the quality of cancer patients’ experience and care. She is very excited about her current projects, including welcoming an intern from the WWU community health class of 2018 for the summer.
Senior Luncheon and Awards Ceremony-Bellingham Golf & Country Club

On May 19, 2018, we were honored to have Erika Nuerenberg (Assistant Director of Whatcom Health Department) join the senior cohort and our guests (Drs. Steve Bennett and Kelly Collins) to share her words of wisdom regarding career development. Erika congratulated students for choosing community health as their career path and advised them to be practical and passionate about public health and their personal lives. Everyone at the luncheon appreciated Erika’s practical and wise tips for life and career.

Laurel Puffert received the Outstanding Community Health Major Award and Jessica Dean received the Spirit of Health Education Award. Claire Talbert scored the highest on the CHES proxy examination and will receive reimbursement for the cost of the national examination. Alissa Parker and Kaylee Wells received Appreciation Awards for their contributions in making the community health suite a cozy and beautiful place for our students and faculty.
Community Health Program

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Community Health 2018 Award Winners

Left to right: Laurel Puffert, Jessica Dean, Claire Talbert, Alissa Parker, and Kaylee Wells
Recreation Program

Faculty Updates

News from Dr. Randy Burtz

Hello to our outstanding alumni!

I hope this newsletter finds you happy, healthy, and gainfully employed! At our core, we are the same program that has been guided over the years by amazing faculty like Ron Riggins, Charles Sylvester, Jim Moore, and Jill Heckathorn, among others. While our core remains the same, there have been many positive and welcome changes over this last year. As you may have heard by now, we are settled into our new Carver Academic Facility! We have a beautiful suite of offices (and windows that aren’t painted shut!) and a modern dedicated classroom. And while Carver 110 is no more, the fun memories of that room remain with us. For the first time in my 14 years here, we now have four tenured faculty in the program, which is a statement on the work of the faculty to achieve tenure and a demonstration of the support from the department and university. Importantly, it provides stability to the continuation of this program well into the future!

As it always has been, the most important piece of the program are the students…and you, the incredible alumni! We are always amazed and inspired when we hear about the work you do, and this year we thought we would highlight what some of our former students are doing.

Please take great care of each other, your communities, and the world around you as so many of you have been doing over the years. And as always, please stay in touch!

Randy Burtz

News from Melissa D’Eloia

Greetings! The 2017-18 academic year has been wonderful for many reasons, including reaching the professional milestone of earning tenure and promotion to associate professor. Some additional highlights of this year have been watching the therapeutic recreation (TR) students design and implement individualized TR programs for the Max Higbee participants, and of course, Camp TEAM. Between these two experiences, the students in the Recreation Program have engaged in over 1,500 service hours, reaching 58 community members with developmental disabilities. I am so very proud of our students and all they have accomplished this academic year. In addition to the Max Higbee TR student lab and Camp TEAM, I have been busy pursuing new and interesting lines of research and working on curricular changes to make sure the TR program’s learning outcomes are in line with COAPRT’s accreditation standards.

Most recently, I have been working with one of our recent therapeutic recreation graduates on a program evaluation project with the recreational therapy staff at Seattle Children’s Hospital. Through our work, we have helped the recreation therapists to align their TR practices with the World Health Organization’s International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health. We have presented the outcomes of the project at the Washington State
It has been another busy year here in the Recreation Program, especially on the research front. Last year’s microadventure grant that Hannah Narramore (class of 2017) earned has been expanded upon as this year Melissa D’Eloia (Recreation faculty) and students KP Hartman, Jillian Hardy, Iva Reckling, Lisa Osadchuk, and Lili Lyne have joined the research team. KP and Jillian led the team to earn a $30,000 grant from WWU’s Sustainable Action Fund for their project *Microadventures: Right to Risk*. This grant supports their research about barriers that people with disabilities and people with marginalized gender identities face in the adventure travel and outdoor recreation fields. Currently, students are conducting focus groups to dig deep into these issues. This information will be used to custom design two microadventures, create a documentary, present at conferences, and publish papers to help change the landscape of the adventure travel and outdoor recreation industries to be more inclusive and socially just. We want to give a special thank you to Johnathan Riopelle, SAF Grant Coordinator, and the entire Office of Sustainability for their support and guidance.

My own research on microadventures and questing has taken me all around the world. Last October I presented *Microadventures: Questing for Spirituality Close to Home* at the Sacred Journeys: Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage 4th Global Conference in Beijing, China. It was wonderful to reconnect with researchers from all over the world and learn how different cultures conduct and make meaning through pilgrimage. Then, over winter break I traveled to Vietnam to research for an upcoming book about the daughters of Vietnam veterans who journey to Vietnam in their fathers’ honor. There I bicycled 1000km along the old Ho Chi Minh Trail and visited Củ Chi Tunnels and War Remnants Museum. It was a powerful journey that I am still processing and, and I look forward to working on over the summer. Finally, in January I traveled to Segovia, Spain, to present *Redefining Adventure Travel: Promoting Microadventure as a Beneficial, Sustainable, and Accessible Travel Alternative* at the 6th Annual International Adventure Conference.

It has been a wonderful and productive year. I am grateful for the supportive faculty and staff and the bright minds of my students, and I am happy to report that I earned tenure and promotion. It is good to finally take a deep breath and know that Western is home.

Jasmine
News from Lindsay Poynter

It is hard to believe this has been my eighth year teaching within the Recreation Major. I covered for Keith’s outdoor classes again this year and have loved the opportunity to continue to read and teach about the outdoors. There are some incredible studies coming out regarding the positive health impacts of spending time in nature, and I’ve been able to integrate these ideas into my counseling practice through collaboration with a local Parkscriptions program through Recreation Northwest. Check out their work at: https://www.recreationnorthwest.org/active/parkscriptions/

Recreation students continue to inspire me with their passion to connect with each other, themselves, and the environment through Recreation. It has been a pleasure laughing and learning with students.

I’m now settling into a summer full of raspberry picking, bike riding, and hanging in the San Juans with my family.

All the best, Lindsay
Alumni Spotlight

2017 Phase IV

Isaac Day
Isaac is currently a guest services specialist working at Young Life's Malibu Club (high school-age summer camp) in Jervis Inlet B.C., Canada. He oversees sound and guest needs.

Ethan Rowe
Ethan serves as an outdoor environmental educator, circumnavigating the San Juan Islands by kayak with teens.

2014 Phase IV

Eric Bartlett
Two years after graduating, Eric relocated to San Diego, CA, and took a full time position as an IT manager for a mid-sized nonprofit serving disadvantaged youth in San Diego County. His long-term plan is to move to Australia on a work visa in the next four years.

Fie Broker-Bulling
Fie is currently working as a bike/kayak and office manager for Crystal Seas Kayaking, a tour company based out of Friday Harbor on San Juan Island. She was recently accepted to graduate school in Gotland, Sweden, where she will be studying Sustainable Destination Development.

2012 Phase IV

Renee Ward
Renee says that Tacoma is bustling with recreation alumni—specifically Metro Parks Tacoma! She has been living there and working for Metro Parks for 2.5 years and moving up. It's been awesome for Renee to have other past recreation students as mentors (Bob Houston), amazing new employees (Jewels Jugum and Courtney Morris, 2017), fantastic co-workers (Jefri Peters, 2000, and Doug Archuleta, 2016), and more! If you work for MPT and she missed you, look her up and go say hi!

Yana Wilson
In working to further her career in event planning, Yana has actually found herself back at WWU in the Foundation's Special Events Office. She has been there for just over a year and is loving it. She moved back to Bellingham with her partner, and they have been having a blast exploring the local area. In November 2017, they did some backpacking through Europe and are looking forward to future travels.

2010 Phase IV

Cory DeBardi
Cory volunteers as a youth football coach for Ballard Junior Football.
Alumni Spotlight continued...

2009 Phase IV

Maria Borisov

Maria lives on Whidbey Island with her husband and dog and works for the Adventure Travel Trade Association, working with travel-related businesses from around the globe who have a vested interest in the sustainable development of adventure tourism. They are both a membership organization that drives thought leadership, industry promotion, and networking for over 1,300 businesses from 100+ countries, as well as a service provider organizing educational & business building events/conferences (they are on their way to making all of their conferences carbon neutral!), producing regular industry research, providing education and training for both tourism boards and tour operators, and a variety of other solutions for the travel industry. It's a dream job for Maria working in a company that is rooted in values around protecting people and places in every corner of the planet (their strategic initiatives this year are around promoting women leadership and gender equality in the travel industry, eliminating single-use plastics from tour operations around the world, carbon neutrality, and youth leadership). Maria feels very fortunate to have studied sustainable tourism with Jill, as well as all of the other fantastic life-long lessons she learned from Keith and Randy, and is able to use these skills in her career.

Renee Reynolds

Renee works as the Donor Relations Director in the WWU Foundation. She helps support the Student Success Initiative by thanking donors, showing the impact of their gift, and helping foster a culture of philanthropy at Western. She is slowly checking off her travel bucket list. Highlights include: New York, Colorado National Monument, and backpacking Maui in 2016; Barcelona and backpacking around Iceland in 2017; and a road trip of National Parks in the Southwest coming up this summer. Renee is the happy aunt of four nieces and two nephews and the mother of two fur babies along with her partner Brady Foreman (a geology professor here at WWU). She had the pleasure of making cupcakes for fellow phaser Morgan Olson Fein at her beautiful wedding.

Sam Stripes

Sam works for the Forest Service in Alaska and says it's been an adventure getting there through all these years! He can't believe it's been eight years since his phase!

2008 Phase IV

Chas Eberle

Chas recently moved to Anchorage, AK, where he is in graduate school for Occupational Therapy. He just finished his first of three years and has greatly benefitted from the education he received in the Recreation Program related to the concepts of inclusion and self-efficacy.

2004 Phase IV

JP Mumley

JP has lived in Vancouver, WA, since graduating and for nearly that whole time he has been on staff with New Heights Church, where he leans heavily on what he learned in the WWU Recreation Program to better people’s lives through group experiences, helpful debriefing, clear communication/teaching, and general leadership skills. At home he is kept busy with four kids, two biological, two they have received through the foster system. They are very excited to be finalizing the adoption of one of those foster girls this summer.
Current Intern”ship”

Ben Morgan  
Phase II 2018 Recreation Major Interning with Argosy Cruises

While many took the 1962 Seattle World’s Fair to be the glimpse into the future, a little-known portion was built to preserve the past. Across Puget Sound from Seattle lies Blake Island State Park and Tillicum Excursion. Since 1962, Tillicum has offered guests a unique telling of Northwest culture through dances, food, and stories of the Coast Salish Tribes. The island is thought to be the birthplace of Chief Seattle.

I have been a part of this tradition since 2014. While I was home from Western for the summer, I worked full time on the island. In October, I was told of big changes ahead and asked what my plans for the upcoming summer would be. I told them I needed an internship for school, and the general manager asked how Tillicum could be that internship.

Since Easter, I have been working full time at Tillicum training the new staff and teaching the new director how to keep Tillicum functioning. I have recently been trusted to run Tillicum without the general manager or director. The hours can be long and the days stressful, but when I do get a day off, I crave going back.

What I love most about Tillicum is that no two days are the same. Over the years, I have come to learn how to do nearly every task on the island. The only consistent position I have had has been “do what needs to be done,” wherever that may be. I may be the lead for the day, but you will find me bartending, answering questions from guests, and helping the dishwasher clean the 1000 plates they can have in a day. At the end of the day, I may have to be the deckhand back to Seattle! Tillicum has become a second home, and the crew a second family. It’s what pushed me to pursue recreation and tourism. I am so proud of what we do and the Argosy staff that makes it possible, that I spend every day trying to convey that to our guests. After all, Tillicum means friendly.

Ben (right) with Pete Osborne, his internship supervisor and the Director of Island Operations at Argosy Cruises.

I hope to be at Tillicum long after my internship. I am trying to restart talks of developing hiking tours on the island as well as get my boaters license, and hopefully, my captain’s license as well.
Trent Tresch (2013)

After graduating from the Recreation Program in 2013, a chapter closed but an adventurous life was just beginning. Like many recent graduates, I really didn’t know where I wanted to go out of university. Was it time for grad school, recreation, or joining the work force? Recreating seemed like the option my heart was leaning toward, so for the next three years I spent my time traveling, diving, climbing, and flying, traveling to Europe, Australia, Asia and South America. Discovering that I could work seasonally in many adventure/travel trades, I found a lifestyle that was fulfilling, rewarding, and recreational.

I discovered that I was drawn most towards exploration—mountains, underseas, you name it. But a budding passion for the stars became apparent. I began reaching out to those working in fields I found interesting. Emails led to meetings, meetings led to projects, projects led to more meetings and projects. I currently work with four main organizations.

Pacific Spaceflight is a think tank focused on next-generation space exploration technologies. We build space suits, run analogue missions, fly missions to high altitudes, and are now getting into commercial spaceflight trainings. I have been fortunate to work on commercial space contracts and research interesting subjects, like our Mars climbing simulation that you can read about in Climbing Magazine.

This type of work has led to my involvement in spaceflight training, standardization, and research programs such as Project PoSSUM (Polar Sub Orbital Science in the Upper Mesosphere), a training and research program with Embry Riddle Aeronautical University, and ASTM F47 commercial spaceflight standardization. To learn more about this project, you can read my article that I put together for the PNW Explorers Club.

I am also involved with ASET Dive into Space, which focuses on teaching high school students hands-on leadership and STEM/STEAM using robotics and underwater astronautics and celebratory leadership. Students train like astronauts, then put those skills to the test in the underwater Zero G habitat. I have worked on the development of the underwater missions, underwater operations, and habitat and mission construction and implementation.

I just accepted a position for Lindblad Expeditions/National Geographic as an Expedition Development Coordinator. I will be responsible for expedition permitting and reports on all National Geographic-named vessels as well as work on expedition development projects around the world.

Lastly, I started my own company called Earth and Space Exploration, LLC, whose mission is to enable exploration across all frontiers. Right now we are researching and publishing books and manuals on exploration training/skills to enable those interested in learning about spacesuit operation, submarine operation, and high altitude skydiving apparatus operation, etc. Through enablement, technology, and research we want to see humanity discover what’s in the depths of the oceans to the far reaches of space.
Keiko Itagaki (2015)

I graduated from the Recreation Program with a focus in ecotourism. My passion for ecotourism extended to my home country of Japan. Fortunately, after graduation a job opened at Expedia Japan, and I now maximize revenue of our hotel partners. Expedia is a great fit because the culture of the company is very close to that of Bellingham, so I have met people who have the same values.

I feel that ecotourism is where the travel industry is moving towards, and I believe big travel companies like Expedia will not be able to ignore this movement. My goals at Expedia Japan are to help increase sustainable options and to align with the UNWTO’s (United Nations World Tourism Organization) new sustainability goals. This is a lofty goal.

I recently returned to Bellingham for my vacation and saw my professors and friends from the Recreation Program. It reminds me how much I love learning ecotourism and my passion for it. I am re-energized to figure out a way to incorporate online travel and ecotourism and to continue to build my career in that field!

Keiko at her December 2015 graduation
Mackenzie Price (2016)

There are moments in life when everything starts falling into place. Finding the Recreation Program at Western was one of those moments for me. Choosing to pursue ecotourism and travel as a specialty turned out to be so much more than my college major; it turned into the road map for my life. Since graduating, I have found that my education provided me with the skills necessary to pursue the world’s wild places as a profession. It not only prepared me for the business side of things, but got my foot out the proverbial door in teaching others about the value of having outdoor experiences.

My post-graduation life has been anything but predictable. First, I became a snowboard “bum” for three months while I worked nights at a restaurant, racking up nearly 70 days on Mt. Baker. I then traveled to Costa Rica and Panama, first with my family and then with my best friend, a fellow Rec major. We spent our time backpacking, meeting locals, jumping from mega Tarzan swings, swimming in a crystal blue Caribbean ocean, and drinking piña coladas in the Starfish Islands. I spent summer 2017 in Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming working at Signal Mountain Lodge, one of the most sustainable hotels in the National Park Service, and there I found a plethora of likeminded people who shared my love of the wild, sustainability, and fun. In October, I embarked on a solo road trip of the entire west coast, beginning in WY and passing through MT, ID, WA, OR, CA, AZ, and UT, visiting eight National Parks along the way and covering over 7,000 miles in 36 days.

By mid-January, I found myself craving something new and different, so I decided to quit my job in WY and see what other options would present themselves. By February of 2018, I would have a new job—this time as a deckhand and stewardess aboard a 96-foot yacht that would carry me up the Inside Passage to Alaska. As I write this, the ocean is out my window. I’ve been fortunate enough to have acquired the best boat family in the world, and together, we are exploring and helping others experience the wild of Alaska. Each day the view changes, and my time is spent looking for whales, pulling crab pots, eating shrimp, exploring far-off light houses, kayaking with bears nearby, and so much more.

The value of experiences in nature isn’t emphasized enough today. Neither is the fact that slowing down and smelling the roses is actually good for you. Perhaps life doesn’t have to be 9 to 5 and your office doesn’t have to be a cubicle. There are many ways to live life, and they don’t have to be traditional. I think back on all the readings, essays, group projects, and most of all, the people that taught me all of these things, not just my professors in the Recreation Program, but my peers; you all helped shape me into who I am today, and I couldn’t be more proud and happy because of it. So, as a WWU Recreation alumni, all I can say is that if you feel the pull of adventure, declare yourself part of the “Phase” and jump on in. The world is calling.

Getting to see hard-to-reach places of Southeast Alaska, such as the Sawyer Glacier, is one of the many perks of the job!
Sarah Stochel (2017)

Since January, I have been working as a recreation specialist for Cascades Job Corps College & Career Academy in Sedro-Woolley, WA. Job Corps is a national organization that provides students ages 16-22 with the skills they need to become employable. Many of the people who attend Job Corps come from low socioeconomic backgrounds or have a history of drug use/abuse. The Job Corps experience includes free education, housing, and recreation, naturally pointing people in a healthy direction. Students live in dorms and take public transportation to Skagit Valley College where they can either specialize in healthcare or IT.

My job as a recreation specialist is to figure out what kind of programs and trips the students want and then make them happen! We try to offer the students a wide variety of programming—everything from open mic nights to sports leagues, or even videogame tournaments. On weekends, we take students on trips to do things like paintball, swimming, berry picking, hiking, go-karting, etc. We also host monthly events such as students vs. staff games, outdoor cookouts, and glow-in-the-dark night games (to name a few). One of the biggest parts of my job is building professional relationships with the students and getting them to try new things. I do my best to engage with the students and listen to their needs so I can help them achieve their goals.

In mid-June, I was recognized with the “Above and Beyond” award for making exceptional positive changes for the Job Corps community, and shortly after, I was promoted from part time to full time. I am currently enjoying my full-time position and preparing to take the NCTRC (National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification) exam in September so I can become a certified recreation therapist.

I am certain the success in my career would not have been possible without the incredibly valuable academic experience offered by the WWU recreation professors. The “phase” set me up for success, and I feel very fortunate to have been a part of it!
In hindsight, Eric Christensen and Justin Wallace becoming co-owners of a recreation business was obvious, but it didn't seem that way in the beginning. Their life paths would spin around each other, only occasionally meeting back together. That is, until they finally met in the middle when they purchased the company they now own, Recreation Without Borders, LLC.

Both grew up in Tacoma, went to the same high school, had mutual friends, but wouldn't meet until Recreation 201 with Charlie Sylvester at WWU. Phase One of the recreation major stoked an enthusiasm for socially-engaging activities that push boundaries, allowing people to be vulnerable, which leads to trust, strong friendship, and healthier communities.

After graduation, passion for the potentials of adventure and challenge sent them in very different directions. Eric left with fellow phase graduates for an epic bike ride, and Justin left to work in outreach for Outward Bound in Chicago. Chicago proved to be too much city for Justin, and Eric chased love to Hawaii. Justin would find love while working as a snowboard instructor in Washington. Love would change their trajectories dramatically, yet they still spun around each other.

Both would get married and stand as groomsmen in each other's weddings. Both took work wherever possible as their love interests pursued their own careers. Eric formed a tree service company; Justin built ziplines in forest canopies. Eric took work at a senior center as Justin became an EMT, taking seniors to the hospital. Both would meet back in the Pacific Northwest and try to form a business together, but life would spin them away from each other again.

The loss of love brought Justin and Eric spinning back toward one another, as Eric began the divorce process. Mentally unhealthy, Justin showed up at Eric's doorstep, lifting him through this unexpected hardship. At the same time, Justin was struggling with a sense of purpose. He had moved throughout the country supporting his now-wife in becoming a physician, and now that she was done, he was left struggling to find a sense of purpose.

Eric's need for support offered a serendipitous opportunity to reignite the passion that had cooled in both over the years. A friend was selling her business that she had run for nine years called Recreation Without Borders, a company built to provide excursions and trips in response to the Great Recession of 2008. As recreation and senior centers lost funding, Recreation Without Borders would fill in the gaps to keep programs available for Skagit, Whatcom, and Snohomish county residents.

This was the type of business the two had begun developing over a decade before, and they now had the time and resources to stop spinning and fully commit themselves. They purchased the company earlier this year, beginning a new and challenging period of their lives. They still spin in circles at times as they navigate the challenges of business ownership, but they have finally recreated the passion that had been stoked back in Carver 110 nearly 15 years earlier.
Phase I and Phase III student-leaders organized and ran an overnight camp at Warm Beach Camp & Conference Center for people with disabilities from Whatcom and Skagit counties. As one of the students reflected, “Inclusive recreation...extends to creating a welcoming supportive atmosphere where all participants fell genuinely involved.”
Phase I students spent the afternoon at Bloedel Donovan Park learning how to adapt sports and athletic activities for people with disabilities. Thanks to Outdoors For All, the Bloedel Donovan gang ball group, the Bellingham Central Lions Club Al Boe Wheelchair Warehouse, Tom Feller, and Bellingham Parks & Recreation.