

WEBBER

VIEW

MAGAZINE

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Unstoppable

Always In Our Hearts

Honoring the Legacy of
University Namesake Camilla
Grace Webber McConnell

Forever Friends

Class of '66 Alumnae
Reunite Online

Careers of a Lifetime

Beloved Kathy Wilson,
Nancy Nichols Retire

Exclusive Photos

From Commencement 2020

Greetings

*from the beautiful campus of
Webber International University!*



I came to Webber last May as the new Director of Annual Fund and Alumni Affairs. It has been wonderful, but let's face it ... 2020 was a very strange year.

My favorite part of my new job is the prospect of meeting so many new people, hearing the stories of our alumni, and sharing those stories with others in the community to help grow the financial support for this incredible university. Thanks to the pandemic, it has been a bit difficult to really get out and meet many folks or hold the events that would normally bring people to campus. However, I have been able to connect with some of our students and alumni over the phone, through email, and I even got to meet a few in person! (This usually happened on Zoom, but in 2020 that counts!) What all of this has taught me is that our alums and our students are incredibly resilient, and so is the university that unites them.

Over the summer, I got to (virtually) meet some of the amazing ladies from the Class of 1966. They are simply incredible. I got a phone call about an article that was featured in the 2020 alumni magazine. From there, the search was on. They now keep in regular contact, meet virtually every month and talk about when they can all hopefully meet up in person here at Webber. Read their story on page 12. They will absolutely brighten your day.

This past year was extremely challenging in a lot of ways, but what I have witnessed here at Webber goes far beyond the challenges of the past year. I have seen our students, faculty, staff, and alumni find ways not only to meet the current challenges they face but also to move forward at an even higher level. Read some of the stories inside about our faculty and students. Not only have they overcome the challenges of the past year, but many have had personal obstacles to conquer and they have thrived. This past year has also put a spotlight on first responders, and we have many of these real heroes in our Webber family. We were honored to feature a few of them on page 44.

If you want to connect or reconnect with Webber, please reach out to me. I would love to hear your stories. I am always looking for alumni who may be willing to serve as a sounding board for ideas, and I'm interested in new ways to connect and engage our alumni. I'd love to hear from you!

Sincerely,

Jeanne Laurie

Director of Annual Fund & Alumni Affairs
lawriejm@webber.edu

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WEBBER VIEW

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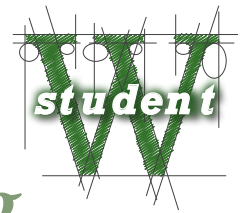


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Recognizing Outstanding Achievement

2020 Dean 's Lis t

STUDENTS WHO EARN a grade-point average of 3.5 or higher for 12 or more hours are honored and placed on the Dean's List. Webber International University is proud to announce the following honorees:

SPRING 2020

Akimoto, Mei
Alexander, Matthew W
Baranecky, Walter E
Bartek, Natalie E
Batie, TraeVonTae
Bonanken, Ivan
Bondarenko, Ivan
Borders, Caden T
Bowen, Emily M
Bradley, Blake E
Breuklander, Mekenzie
Canner, Cheyanne M
Castro, Colin R
Celaya, Mateo Nicolas
Celia, Alycia M
Chuenta, Rawinnipa
Clark, Kendal L
DeLong, Stephen
Dixon, Darius D
Domingo, Malia B
Embry, Laura
English, Ty M
Feder, Chaz M
Ford, Dayne O
Ford, Trevor J
Fosdick, Jenna L
Frank, Connor J
Friend, Kelsea
Glickman, Adam H
Hebding, Sabrina L
Hill, Katy-Rose F
Houston, Marques

Hoyt, Krista N
Ishizuka, Maria
King, Matthew
Koenig, Svenja Maren
Kori, Kumi
Larsen, Nicholas L
Lobo Doberstein de Magalhaes, Lucas
Lonadier, Hunter M
Markowitz, Kevin S
Matautia, Kalameli F
Matayoshi, Emi
Matsunaga, Yasuka
McHardy, Luke A
Montero, Jorge
Morales, Hunter L
Murrell, Jordon M
Negrin Ruiz, David
Neidenmark, Emelie J
Niehoff, Isabelle K
Okazaki, Austin T
Paige, Isaiah
Pantoja-Santos, Nayrelis M
Peacock, James T
Pham, Thuan T
Rautiainen, Salla
Riggleman, Daisy R
Rivera, Paola B
Robertson, Kyle C
Rochat, Lily-Rose
Roden, Tyler J
Rodriguez Zapico, Lucia

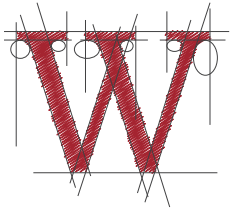
Sanchez, Kiersten N
Schneider, Marc
Schneidmiller, Zachary J
Schutzler, Anna N
Sebbouh, Elies Jilali
Simpson, Summer L
Snell, Jordan A
Susatchek, Paul George
Terry, Jessica L
Thompson, Abigail E
Tomie, Rie
Uriach, Alberto
Valdez, Brianda J
Vargas, Valerie M
Varkentina, Svetlana
Vigotty, Hannah T
Walsh, Kaley E
Warner, Megan A
Weller, Montrese M
Westley, Brandi M
Whalen, Sean P
Wiseman, Matthew H
Wittish, Austen P
Zhang, Shuyi

FALL 2020

Acevedo, Luis
Bartek, Natalie E
Berry, Jacob A
Bond, Kevin J
Bondarenko, Ivan
Borders, Leah V
Bowen, Emily M
Brewer, Cole L
Brown, Lauren M
Butler, Serteria A
Campopiano, Faith L
Canner, Cheyanne M
Celaya, Mateo Nicolas

Celia, Alycia M
Clark, Kendal L
Collins, Lucky D
Crow, Paysee
Cruz, Andy
Curry, Frederick L
Darress, Abbey R
Embry, Laura
English, Ty M
Figueroa, Yanileb
Ford, Dayne O
Gamaonov, Daniel A
Gibson, Jake G
Gomes, Matheus B
Grammar, Austin S
Harris, Sierra E
Hawlitzky, Julian
Heggen, Savannah R
Hernandez, Nicole
Hilker, Kristin Leighann
Houston, Marques
Ishizuka, Maria
James, Prince L
Johnson, Christian J
Jordan, Brianna M
Kalman, Ian A
Keown, Delaney L
Kori, Kumi
Kragh, Jamey E
Lonadier, Hunter M
Longhorn, Eric J
Lozano Rodriguez, Lorena
Maggard, Mary-Margaret
Matautia, Kalameli F
Matsunaga, Yasuka
Mejia, Diego S
Morales, Eduardo G

Moran, Martin H
Negrin Ruiz, David
Neidenmark, Emelie J
Niehoff, Isabelle K
Odom, DaCarrah A
Okazaki, Austin T
Ortiz, Juliana M
Pagan, Mackenzie B
Pages, Diego A
Peacock, James T
Pelak, Montana-Rae
Rautiainen, Salla
Rey, Reynold E
Riggleman, Daisy R
Rivera, Leishla
Rivera, Paola B
Robinson, Trevor J
Rodriguez Zapico, Lucia
Rodriguez-Forero, Samuel
Roy, Emma S
Sanda, Eusebio A
Schultz, Lillian T
Shaw, Trevor A
Simpson, Summer L
Sneed, Sydney O
Stull, Kristina R
Susatchek, Paul George
Terrell, Jaronda N
Terry, Jessica L
Todd, Richard G
Walsh, Kaley E
Whalen, Sean P
Wolstenholme, Allen E
Zanin, Kelsie R



Always **IN OUR**

University Mourns Passing of Namesake Camilla Grace Webber McConnell

by PAUL CATALA

In December, Webber International University family and faculty said goodbye to the school's namesake, Camilla Grace Webber McConnell. She was the granddaughter of university founder Roger Babson—a noted economist, presidential candidate and entrepreneur.

The alumna, former chairwoman of the board and trustee emeritus at Webber International University died December 23, 2020, in Waynesville, North Carolina, at the age of 93.

Camilla's name is on buildings throughout campus, testaments to her influence on the school. There is a Camilla Residence Hall, a Grace Residence Hall, and a McConnell Classroom Building. Major donors to the university are honored with membership in the Camilla Society.

After Camilla graduated from then-Webber College in 1949, she began working there. She served as Secretary, Registrar and Chairwoman of the Board of directors. Although she retired from the university in the 1970s and from its board in 2010, she kept in touch through campus events, activities, and some at the university, including President and CEO H. Keith Wade.

Wade, who has been at Webber for 18 years — 13 as president — says it was an honor to have known Camilla and calls her a “delightful lady” with a unique eye for seeing life.



“We talked a lot over the years. When I came to work here, she was on the Board of Trustees. She was actually an active board member before moving to the mountains of North Carolina decades earlier to start a Christmas tree farm,” says Wade, who holds a bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree in management. “The school was named after her, so of course she had to come here. She was the great

repository of Webber stories.”

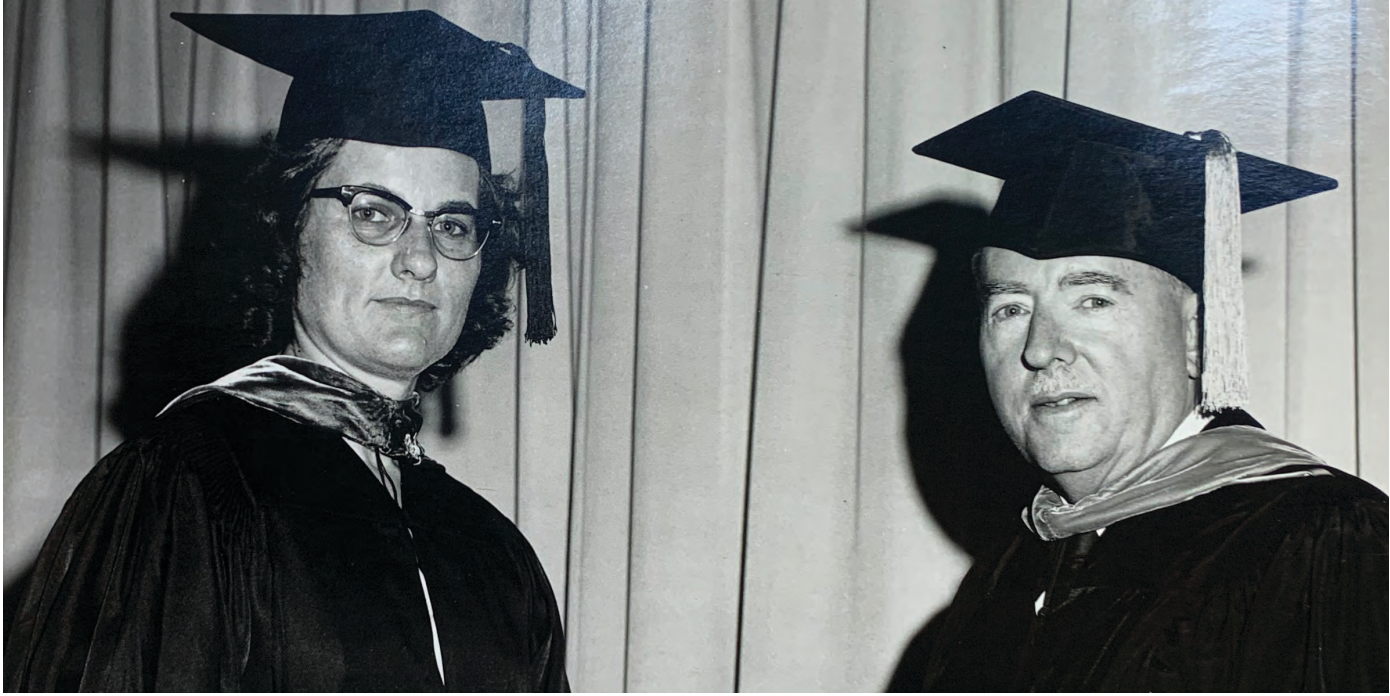
Wade also describes Webber McConnell as a “fire brew” who grew up being told her mission was to provide career education for businesswomen. He said she grew up in the area, was destined to work at Webber and had an entrepreneurial passion instilled into her by living with her grandfather, who also founded Babson College in Wellesley, Massachusetts.

“She grew up in a world where work was expected, work was good and even if you were born as she was in privileged circumstances, you were still expected to work and contribute to somehow make the world better,” says Wade.

Camilla's sister, Judith Ross of Waynesville, North Carolina, remembers Camilla as cordial and giving and was happy that her name and legacy carry on at Webber.

Speaking from her home in Waynesville, Ross adds her sister was always enthusiastic about her involvement with the university bearing her name in title and on buildings across the campus. She says the last time she visited the campus was “many years ago” when she used to drive her sister down from her Fraser fir tree farm to visit the campus.

HEARTS



“I’m very proud of her; I’m her baby sister and I’ve always been proud of her. It’s nice to have her legacy remembered there,” says Ross, 86, “Her middle name was Grace, and that name was right for her. She was really devoted to everybody, was very giving and caring. She was many things to a lot of people.”

At the time of her death, Camilla was survived by two sisters, Ross and Marlene Mustard Graf of Fountain Hills, Arizona; half-sister, Suzanne Joy Webber of Newton, Massachusetts; nephews, Norman M. Ross, III (Mary), Michael Webber Ross, Sr., Roger Babson Ross (Karen) and Richard K. Osborne (Charleen); niece, Virginia Lee Ricker (Dwayne) Sampson; two great-nieces and three great-nephews; and one great-great niece. 🌍





THERE'S NO PLACE *Like Home*

Longtime Registrar Receives Honorary Doctorate, Bids School Farewell

by JULIE BUTTERFIELD

WHILE IT'S DIFFICULT to call any one geographical place home, Kathy Wilson has no trouble identifying the people and memories that made Webber International University feel like home for her.

“My father was in the service, so we traveled and moved about every three years,” Wilson says. “So I never really knew where to say where I was from.”

Once her high school graduation was in sight, she chose the state of Florida to go to college, citing the weather and ties to Stuart. After perusing Florida school catalogs with her mother, she chose Webber

because of its retail program, a field she grew fond of during high school jobs at a stationery store and record store.

As a student at Webber in the '70s, Wilson and her friends would road trip to Vero Beach together or they'd hang out at the downtown pizza parlor. She also liked to visit the local bar called The Keg, where her soon-to-be husband, Steve, worked as

a bartender.

There were only about 100 students at the time, one of which was Steve, who was attending on the GI Bill.

“We had an English class together and so, out of about 12 or 15 males at Webber, I met my husband,” Wilson says.

There's a wide range of sports for students at Webber these days, but when Wilson was a student, there wasn't nearly as much. However, she discovered intramural sports and also spent a lot of time as a synchronized swimmer.

After graduating in 1976, she started working at Rheinauer and then at Belk, where she was the assistant buyer for the women's department.

Wilson, though, found herself drawn back to Webber, with the goal to pursue employment. She contacted her favorite professor, who was also her mentor.

"She said, 'Come run the bookstore,'" Wilson says.

She was put in charge of purchasing at the bookstore in 1981, which launched her storied career at the school.

In 1991, she was approached to work in the office of the Registrar and Financial Aid. By 1993, she earned the title Registrar and Director of Financial Aid.

During Wilson's tenure, the nonprofit school has grown to currently 700 undergraduates enrolled from more than 48 different countries.

Watching the campus evolve since her days as a student, she's witnessed several changes.

The huge gymnasium and the improved grounds are standout items for her, along with the updates to the Student Union. It's come a long way from intramural sports, too, with its football team, track and field, lacrosse, and others.

Out of all of the people Wilson remembers from Webber, the person she remains closest to is Director of Financial Aid Lee Ann Averitt, whom she hired as a student.

Wilson helped to pave the path for Averitt to take over as Director of Financial Aid, a role Averitt has had for six years.

While Webber has changed over the years, no one knows it better than Wilson, Avirett says. Wilson has



helped to facilitate the "family-like" feel at the college.

"Anytime anything happens with anyone here, everyone pulls together to help each other," Avirett says. "It's an environment not like many others."

During Wilson's time working at Webber, her two daughters have treated the campus like their own, attending events and once even performing in a campus fashion show where child models were needed. The two girls were well known, with students taking turns babysitting

them through the years.

The Kelly A. Wilson Memorial Scholarship is named after Wilson's younger daughter, Kelly, who passed away from Cystic Fibrosis in 2004. The scholarship is a \$1,000 award to a student who has overcome exceptional challenges.

The ties to Webber grow deeper still as Wilson's oldest daughter, Kara, like her mother, met her husband at Webber. While he was a student, Dan Maschmeyer was in Wilson's office to get some paperwork and Kara walked in, and "that was it," Wilson says.

Wilson retired in December 2020. To cap off her 27-year career at Webber, the school awarded her an honorary doctoral degree in Business Administration.

She says it's an honor not often handed out to employees of the university, which makes it even more meaningful. It's a sincere acknowledgment of the time and effort where she spent much of her life, she says.

"(The award) is a little emotional because it represents my life's work," Wilson says. "It's a great place." 🌿





Webber Bonds *Don't Break*

Nancy Nichols Cherishes Ties With Campus, Students During Retirement

by JULIE BUTTERFIELD

OUT OF ALL OF NANCY NICHOLS' accomplishments in her 30 years at Webber International University — and there are a lot — launching the school's football team stands out as one of her most memorable.

In the early 2000s, as the Athletic Director, she approached Rex Yentes, who was Webber's president at the time. She brought up the possibility of launching a football team, and he was all for it.

"We used to share memories of growing up in the Midwest," Nichols says. "One of the things we missed about the fall, besides the leaves changing color, was a good football game with a tailgate."

She hatched a plan before she brought it up with the school board. She wanted to be as thorough as possible, so she recruited senior marketing students to conduct surveys to provide data on subjects like costs.

The board gave the football program the green light, and it has

since proved a model for many area schools to progress with their own football programs.

It's what the students got out of it, though, that makes her happiest.

"Our students that were involved in that project were so thrilled that they got to do something legit," Nichols says.

Nichols retired in August from her role as the head coach of the Warrior men's and women's golf programs. The list of accomplishments from her 30-year tenure goes on and on. It includes 13 years as Athletic Director, 28 years as the Head Golf Coach, 20 years as Adjunct Professor, and 20 years as Director of Summer Camps. She also served as an Academic

Planner, Women's Basketball Coach, Assistant to the Academic Advisor, Women's Volleyball Coach, Dorm Director, and Director of Student Activities.

Her well-earned legacy wasn't always a sure thing on some days, though. She had her introspective moments when there'd be difficulty gaining traction with some of the students.

She admits that although some students might have perceived her style as stubborn and "rigid," she often transcended first impressions to develop enduring friendships.

Being present for the students requires knowing a bit about them, she knew. She didn't let a single interaction pass without learning more about the individual, which she considered an educational adventure. With Webber boasting student enrollment from 48 different countries, Nichols' path crossed



with students from all over the world.

“When the opportunity presented itself, I loved to ask questions and learn about people,” she says.

Ensuring students are guided throughout every step of the collegiate process, academically, athletically, and socially is what Webber is about, Nichols says.

Lacy Edwards, Director of Academic Planning, says it was Nichols who set her up with her work-study job in the financial aid office, which paved the way for her own career. It was through working together with Nichols that Edwards discovered the vast responsibilities that her mentor continually juggled.

However, even in retirement, Nichols is on hand to offer advice when Edwards needs it. The community connections Nichols established on campus are crucial to Edwards’ work.

“She’s always willing to help anyone at any time, and if she’s not able to help, she’ll get you to someone who can help,” Edwards says.

Stuart Winsby knows this, too. Nichols had once recruited Winsby to play golf at Webber as a student. Eventually, she groomed him to take over as Head Golf Coach.

Nichols’ strategy to develop successful people was to set high expectations, hold people



accountable, and not let them get by with the bare minimum, he says. As a coach, he finds himself employing many of her same tactics.

“Nancy is a great leader because she creates great leaders,” he says.

Though she’s retired, former students and current faculty at Webber know they can still rely on Nichols for counsel or even just a friendly chat.

In her free time, she plans to spend time with her two dogs and has recently invested in a saltwater fish tank. She has family in Toledo who she’ll get to visit more often. And she’ll surely keep in touch with former students.

She gets texts from them when they want to share good news or just to tell her that she’s on their minds for one reason or another. In fact, a large number of her Facebook friends are former Webber students.

“I think probably I helped them believe in themselves,” Nichols says. “I helped them expand their horizons. I’ve been very blessed. A lot of people use that word in a lot of different contexts, but I feel very blessed that the leadership at Webber identified that I had skills and abilities to do a variety of things, and they allowed me to do that at Webber.” 🌱

alumni

Forever FRIENDS

Class of '66 Alumnae Reconnect Online

by PAUL CATALA

THE WOMEN FIRST MET in the era of rotary phones with ringing bells and no answering machines and handwritten letters sent through the mail.

Now, 55 years later, 16 of 43 women members of Webber International University's Class of 1966 are using texts, emails, Skype and Zoom meetings to keep in touch through mini online reunions.

Since July, the alumnae have been meeting virtually via Zoom meetings to say hello, chat and catch up on recent life events and news.

It's the changes in technology that have allowed the participants to keep up. Besides the 16 regular online participants, more alumnae have since been found, bringing the contacted total to 31.

Karen "Ginger" Kuehl Lester of Deer Isle, Maine, who majored in retail management, was one of the women who got the online class reunions started. She says the reunions stemmed from an article in the university's 2020 *Webber View* alumni magazine. In that issue, there was an interview with Alice Bach, one of Lester's classmates and friends.

"I dove in and read it immediately. The last line mentioned that Alice would love to hear from other classmates," says Lester.

Now, from Babson Park to Missouri, Maine, and beyond, the Webber alumnae have been able to keep



Karen "Ginger"
Kuehl Lester of
Deer Island, Maine

social tabs on life's events. They have regular Zoom meetings planned on the second Sunday of every month.

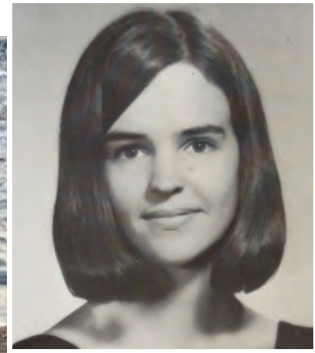
Jeanne Lawrie, director of Annual Fund and Alumni Affairs at Webber, put together a partial list of class members from 1966, of which Lester says she has been in touch with about 25 percent of them.

At times, the number of women in one of the Zoom meetings soared to nine.

Chatting and swapping stories in a recent Zoom reunion meeting were:



Jane Kent Winner



Ann McKeehan Windley

- Lester
- Janet Smith of Sugar Land, Texas
- Susan Shoaff-Ballanger of Kirksville, Missouri
- Melanie Meyer Henson of St. Petersburg
- Denise Haack Dettmann of Oldsmar

Lester says in early 2020, she had contacted Lawrie about finding classmates and learned that some lived between Daytona Beach and Tampa. That discovery led to 10 more women who live in Central Florida within 100 miles of each other! Through mostly online means, even more alumnae were found.

Lester says with the pandemic, online meetings have been perfect for the situation at hand.

About 12 of the participating women live within 100 miles from each other across Florida — even as close as 15 miles apart — and didn't



Gail Laraine Lueddeke Unice

know it.

Lester says the reunions make her days brighter.

“I loved calling people right out of the blue. Some responses were hilarious. Some were at times when they were struggling with ailing husbands and happy to be back in touch with old friends who are dealing with the same issues,” she says. “Of course, comparing

health issues can get pretty funny, too. Misery loves company you know. One told me, ‘I can't believe we are all personally in touch with each other. It takes my breath away!’ As I made my way down the lists, it was unbelievable to me what was happening.”

Of the former Webber graduate classmates, the women say there are seven or eight who haven't been located or contacted. They know of four who have passed away — Donna Dempsey,



Janet Smith of Sugar Land, Texas



Melanie Meyer Henson

Nance Koeck, Candy Campbell and Marilyn “Toni” Thomas.

Haack Dettmann says she and the Webber graduates try to keep their online reunions upbeat and fun. She says they try to steer clear of religion and politics, and it can sometimes act as a support group for personal and family crises.

“We talk about what’s going on in everybody’s life — good times, bad times and just laughing hilariously about some of the times we had,” says Haack Dettmann, who lives with her husband, Fred. “We’re getting old but, we’re not foolish!”

As far as personalities and what each participant brings to the reunions, Henson says everyone seems to be the same, maybe not outwardly, but inwardly. Lester says alumna Shoaff-Ballanger has the reputation of “cracking everyone

up” and was one everyone wanted to find.

“I consider that a high compliment,” Lester adds.



As for meeting virtually, Haack Dettmann says technology has helped, but it’s also not as intimate.

“Some things you lose the personal touch to. It’s still nice to get a greeting card or handwritten letter by somebody in the mail, but then again, they can write an email. It’s by and large you got so you have to go with it,” she says.

The alumnae plan to reunite in person as soon as the pandemic ends and it is safe to do so.

The virtual meetings have helped recover some humorous memories. Lester says classmate Alice Bach Collins, Lake Wales, had a dormitory room next to hers and was spraying her hair with hairspray when the can dropped, landed on its nozzle and hairspray went spinning and spraying all over the room.

“We had a wonderful spray of



CONTINUED ON PAGE 42

Grit. It's a Webber Thing



I love — genuinely love — talking to employers about Webber graduates. It takes them a while to get to it, they dance around phrases like “well prepared” and “dedicated,” but they eventually get to it: “grit.” Grit, that rare and hard to instill quality of determination, perseverance, powering through long after others have given up. It’s a Webber thing, and like most Webber things, it’s purposeful and we’re proud of it.

Of course, our graduates have grit. It’s not just hard-baked into our culture. It’s not just in our DNA. It’s our very birthright. Think for a moment about our birth and our early years. Roger Babson and Grace Knight Babson founded us as a college of business for women — and best as we can research it, we were the second such college in the nation — in 1927. 1927, that would be just seven years after women finally won the right to vote. And before they celebrated their first graduation, the stock market crashed and the nation plunged into the Great Depression.

The 2020 edition of WebberView listed some of the adversities Webber has lived through — from wars to plagues to economic catastrophes. But we were born survivors. Roger, you see, was a survivor of tuberculosis back in 1901 when modern medicine, well, wasn’t. Grace, a nurse, had a career of her own. “Powering through” was the only life they knew, the life they breathed into Webber as they personally nurtured her through her early years. And 94 years later, perseverance and determination — good old-fashioned grit — still courses through our veins.

Part of what really makes Webber an anomaly is that we’re comfortable in our own skin. We do good work, and we’re proud of it. Our goal isn’t to build lofty edifices. Our goal isn’t to amass a huge endowment. Our goal isn’t to admit everyone or to graduate everyone. Our goal isn’t to be the cheapest or easiest education money can buy. There are schools that have those goals, and that’s their right.

Our goal is to prepare our students sufficiently that they will earn their pay on their first day of work and be ready for their first few promotions while being good stewards of our resources. Coming to Webber means trusting us to help build your future, and that’s an enormous responsibility.

We don’t teach what’s popular; we teach what business needs. An awful lot of the material we teach is just, objectively, hard. Therefore, so are an awful lot of our classes. Showing up doesn’t get our students a trophy. It’s just what they’ve got to do before we can get to work.

We launch careers. We empower dreams. But we don’t do it through magic. Like everything, it takes a good plan and a lot of hard work. Grit. It’s a Webber thing. And we’re bragging, not apologizing!

We wish you good health, great prosperity, much happiness and we’ll leave the light on for you just in case you find yourself in the neighborhood.

Best Regards,

Keith

Dr. Keith Wade, President

Webber
alumni
**WHERE
Are They
NOW?**

HONORED IN HIS FIELD

Webber Alumnus Tommy Chasanoff Named NAIA's Sports Information Director of the Year

by PAUL CATALA

WEBBER ALUMNUS TOMMY CHASANOFF knows that hard work pays off. During his time at Webber, Chasanoff double-majored in sports management and marketing while competing in cross-country and track & field.

Going into his junior year, he qualified for the ParaPan American Games in Rio De Janeiro, which was the first of four major international competitions in which he would compete.

He went on to win a silver medal in the 100- and 200-meter races and a gold medal in the 400- and 800-meter races at the

2011 Parapan American Games in Guadalajara, Mexico.

What makes Chasanoff's athletic accomplishments even more significant is that he was born with cerebral palsy, affecting his mobility, control of extremities and motor coordination, making regular handwriting and even trying his shoes difficult.

At Webber, Chasanoff was a student assistant coach for the men's basketball team and was the editor for the school newspaper. Academically, he received the 2009 Webber President's Award and the 2009 Highest GPA Award.

Those accomplishments helped him secure a position with the sports information staff at the University of the Cumberlands, a private university in Kentucky, in 2016, where he was promoted to Assistant Athletic Director for Sports Information in June 2020.

Three months later, he received

“He is one of the hardest-working people I have been around in any field; he always wants it done the right way. A lot of times I have to tell him to slow down a bit, he just keeps going. He’s a superstar for his age in that profession.”

— Brad Cygan, Director of Athletics Communications at NAIA

a call from Brad Cygan, director of athletics communications at the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) who told Chasanoff he was the NAIA’s Sports Information Director of the Year for 2019-20.

The NAIA Sports Information Director of the Year is awarded based on accomplishments during the previous year in athletics communication, sports information, strategic communication and service to the NAIA.

Now in his sixth year at UC, Chasanoff has guided communications and media efforts for the UC Patriots’ athletics department, managing the communications of 28 varsity sports in written and digital mediums. Along the way, he has attracted local and national publicity to the university’s teams.

Speaking from his home in Williamsburg, Chasanoff, 33, said it wasn’t just the recognition by the NAIA that made the honor special — it was also being selected from among the peers in his vocation.

“Getting that call, it was exciting. Brad (Cygan) is someone who I worked with for numerous

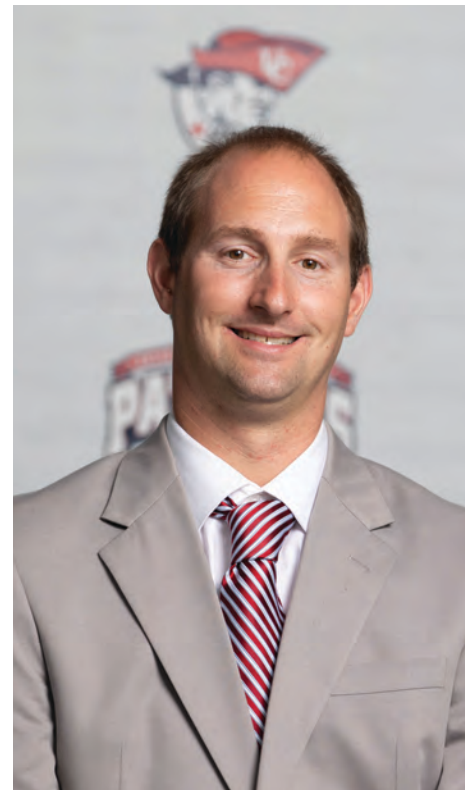
years and someone who won the award previously,” says Chasanoff, a New Jersey native who was raised in Bradenton. “So, to be recognized by my peers for the work we’ve done at Cumberland is such an honor, not just to me but to the whole staff.”

Chasanoff was scheduled to receive his trophy at the NAIA National Convention in April, but that was rescheduled to be held virtually in May. He says he’ll be receiving his award in the next few weeks and will make a video presentation thanking the NAIA for it.

“My work has helped give me an opportunity to stay in the NAIA while expanding on the sports that we cover and giving me new challenges that I hadn’t faced before, like covering sports like football,” he says.

Chasanoff’s drive and ambition on the field and behind his desk is admirable, says Cygan. He hired Chasanoff the first year he began work at the university and says Chasanoff has stepped up to the plate in helping to keep his department running amidst the current pandemic.

“We have had staff out with COVID, and he’s really helped fill



in where he’s needed,” says Cygan. “He is one of the hardest-working people I have been around in any field; he always wants it done the right way. A lot of times I have to tell him to slow down a bit, he just keeps going. He’s a superstar for his age in that profession.”

Besides his personal accolades and accomplishments, Chasanoff is quick to give high praise to his staff and those who encourage him at UC. He says having a supportive staff is motivating and encouraging.

“Working at Cumberland has been a tremendous opportunity for me, my staff,” he says. “We have a great administration here who supports what we’re doing. They encourage us to continue to develop and push the envelope and try to be creative; that’s one of the things that makes being at Cumberland so special.” 🌱



alumni

**WHERE
Are They
NOW?**

FAMILIAR FACE ON THE FIELD

Coach P Takes His Dedication to Webber to the Next Level as Interim Head Football Coach

by MATT COBBLE, photo by JOE LEDUC

ERIC POTOCHNEY has been involved with Webber football since the first season. When the “Shed Boys” first laced up their cleats in 2002, Potochney played linebacker. In the 19 years since, he’s served in a number of roles for the Warriors football team, first on and later off the field.

But now, as Webber prepares for its 20th season, Potochney is taking on a new role — that of Interim Head Football Coach.

A graduate of Tampa Bay Technical High School with numerous accolades even then, Potochney initially enrolled in the University of South Florida for his first year of college. But with Webber launching a football program, he found the school had an appeal that USF could not match. “What drew me to Webber

was that it was a smaller school close by with a football program,” Potochney remembers. “That was unusual at the time. Now, we’ve got Warner (University), Southeastern (University), Stetson (University), Ave Maria (University)...but at the time, there weren’t many smaller schools with football programs, at least not nearby.”

When Potochney graduated with his bachelor’s degree in 2005, he still had athletic eligibility, so he enrolled in the graduate program at Webber

to continue to play football. It worked out well for Potochney and Webber: In 2006, he had a record-setting 141 tackles in a season, averaging 14.1 tackles per game — both school records that still stand to this day.

Upon completing his athletic eligibility, Potochney was brought onto the coaching staff as a graduate assistant. And even when he started playing arena football, he would return to Webber in the off-season as a stipend coach. “I would play in the spring, and then come back and

coach in the fall.”

But eventually, Potochney was offered a full-time coaching position with the Warriors. Fondly nicknamed “Coach P,” he rose through the ranks of the coaching staff, becoming Defensive Coordinator in 2010. The Warriors defense thrived under Potochney’s tutelage, bringing home numerous conference accolades — most notably, winning the Sun Conference Championship in 2014. “That was a huge achievement for the school and the program,” he recalls. “It was the first year of the (Sun) Conference, and we won the championship. That’s a huge accomplishment.”

When Head Coach Kelly Scott, who had been on the Webber Football coaching staff since 2002, announced he was stepping down this past January, the door opened for Potochney to take his coaching career to the next level.

Looking back over his time at Webber, both as a student and as a faculty member, Coach P recognizes every step that brought him to where he is now.

“A lot of different aspects of my Webber journey helped prepare me for this next step. As a student, I took classes in management, marketing, and finance; I learned how to build presentations in PowerPoint and track statistics in Excel. I use it all on a daily basis for budgeting, managing expenses, and recruiting, trying to ‘sell’ our university and our program to prospective players. From a management perspective, I learned to delegate to employees, to oversee staff. I learned how to be a leader — for the team, the players, and the staff. A lot of practical skills transfer from a business major to managing a team.”

Of course, after nearly 20 years at Webber, he says he “definitely has a different perspective. A student is



looking at face value, looking almost one-sided from the perspective of academics, athletics, and being a student-athlete. Now, being a coach and faculty, I’m on the opposite side of the spectrum. But it helps me understand how to be successful at Webber because I’ve already been through all of that. A lot of the professors are even the same. It’s a great help with current students and recruits, and I can help them to be successful in the Webber environment.”

However, as well prepared as he thought he was to handle anything, 2020 had a few surprises up its sleeve.

“We were in the midst of recruiting the 2020 class when everything shut down (because of the pandemic). No one was on campus, everyone was working remotely.

Trying to get commitments from prospective players without visits was tricky. I was home with my 7-year-old son and 4-year-old daughter, and I had to make sure they were doing their schoolwork while trying to get everything situated for the football season.”

Despite the challenges, Coach P and the Warriors Football team had a successful season.

“We weren’t able to run football camp, which was an impact for us. But we ended up playing eight games in all. Of course, trying to adhere to all of the new protocols was difficult. At one point, we didn’t play a game for four weeks out of safety concerns,” he says. “We still had to be creative in how we were managing things, we couldn’t have a lot of contact. A lot of schools either delayed their fall seasons or canceled them altogether. But we figured it out and pushed through.”

But even in the midst of everything going on, when Potochney thinks of his time at Webber, there is always one thing that stands out. “The relationships are what stuck with me. The friends I made at Webber are the people I’m still in contact with today.”

Congratulations, Coach P! Best of luck to you and the Warriors Football team! 🍀

A lot of different aspects of my Webber journey helped prepare me for this next step. As a student, I took classes in management, marketing, and finance. ... A lot of practical skills transfer from a business major to managing a team.

— Coach Potochney

THEN *and* NOW

Entrance





**Computer
Lab**



Lounge

THEN *and* NOW

Bookstore



Signs of the Times



Grace Dorm



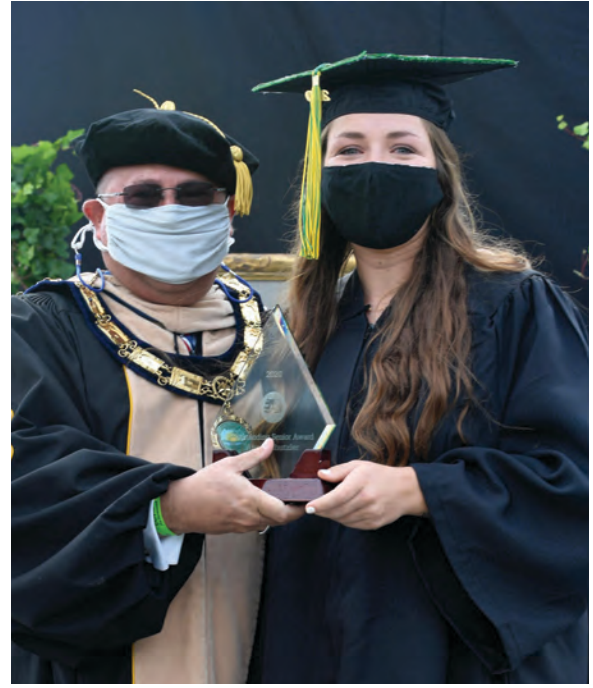
Commencement

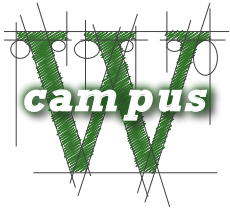
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12TH, 2020



Through the uncertain times of the pandemic and downpours that threatened to dampen our spirits, Webber prevailed. We kept our sights on the future and celebrated as the Class of 2020 set out to take hold of their dreams. We are Webber Warriors.







ON JANUARY 19, Webber held a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the new and improved Café at the Commons to officially open our new café featuring Starbucks Coffee. Webber President Dr. Keith Wade cut the ribbon to cap off the festivities. Guests included Jay Culver, VP of Student Life; Joe Cichetto, CFO of Webber International University; Bobbi Andrews, Director of Admissions; and other faculty, students and staff. The new café features great food offerings ranging from grab-and-go salads and snacks, flatbreads and custom orders from the grill. This Starbucks is not only the first on the Webber campus, but it is also the only Starbucks in Babson Park.



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WEBBER LAUNCHES COMPETITIVE ESPORTS TEAM

by GRACE BOGGESS HIRDES

AS COMPETITIVE ONLINE GAMING has exploded in popularity over the past couple of years, Esports expanded into intercollegiate athletics.

Webber International University recently joined more than 80 colleges and universities in the National Association of Collegiate Esports when it launched its inaugural team, led by Kyle Jensen as head coach.

Director of Athletics Darren Richie says, “We believe that launching this program continues to demonstrate Webber International University’s commitment to offering dynamic and innovative co-curricular programs for our students. With our new state-of-the-art facility, this will eventually serve as another vehicle to make us a national contender in intercollegiate competitions.”

The team started by offering practices and competitions in League of Legends, Call of Duty, and Rocket League. Esports

are different from physical sports in that they have two seasons. For example, Jensen says Rocket League has a spring and fall season. The team began practices in late January and is starting off strong.

“I have a great group of kids that are a joy to be around and are eager to learn and improve,” Jensen says. “They are also respectable and very coachable. Those qualities in a player make the time spent coaching them enjoyable, as well as beneficial.”

Matt Wiseman, one of the team members, says, “My favorite part about esports so far is having something to look forward to at the end of every day. Being a collegiate baseball player, too, I like to compete. So, being able to do something competitive day in and day out is a ton of fun for me.”

Looking to the future, Wiseman states, “What I look forward to the most is competing in Call of Duty again. I haven’t competed in any sort of tournament since freshman year of college, and I’ve been itching to get back to it.”

The university’s new state-of-the-art gaming arena opened in January, and it offers access to reliable high-speed internet and top-of-the-line hardware that really enhances the gaming experience for Esports team members.

Wiseman says he thinks the addition of Esports at Webber is a great example of how much the university is growing.

Jensen says that so far, it’s been a rewarding experience.

“It has been a pleasure seeing how fast we have grown in that short amount of time,” he says. “I see them avoiding common mistakes they had made prior. They are also recognizing and pushing advantages.”





SCHOOLED

in Success

Webber Played Key Role for Assistant Marketing Professor Tonya White

by HEATHER MACHOVINA

ASSISTANT MARKETING PROFESSOR Tonya White came to Webber University as an adult learner at the age of 34.

“I spent about 13 years in hospitality management, and I grew from reservationist to reservations manager to front office manager, managing five departments and about 100 people,” she says.

At the time, White hadn’t finished her degree. Right out of high school, she attended a small community college but ultimately learned she just wasn’t ready for school.

“I pretty much flunked out that first year,” recalls White, “so my parents asked me what I wanted to do and at that time. I wanted to go to school to get into hospitality.” She completed a certification program and began working at a hotel. “After six months of working there, I walked into the general manager’s office and announced I wanted to be the reservations manager as we no longer had one.” Tonya had no degree and only 6 months of experience but later learned that the general manager

saw a confidence in her that he believed in.

Thirteen years later, Tonya felt burnt out on hospitality. Working 70-hour weeks with a young son led her to seek other options. Ultimately, she returned to her hometown of Frostproof to go to college.

“Going back to school was always a dream of mine, I’ve always seen myself as a college graduate,” she says. “Funny story: When I did move back

here, I was going to go to Warner University because they had a psychology degree, and I came to Webber for a job.” When she applied for the job, the dean disclosed

that she would be eligible for reduced or free classes at the time

of employment, so everything fell into place then. “I’m going to Webber and I’m going to work at Webber.”

Employed as the Administrative Assistant to the Dean, Tonya immediately began classes to earn her associate’s degree and then her bachelor’s degree.

“Because I was an adult learner, I was more focused and I absolutely enjoyed school,” details White. She earned her associate’s degree within a year, and within the next year had her bachelor’s degree, graduating with a 3.8 grade-point average. When the Dean of Webber reviewed her resume, he noticed her extensive experience in management and HR and offered her the position of Assistant Director of Career Services. “I was used to interviewing, hiring and training, so it fit right into my skill levels,” says White.

She went on to earn her MBA at Webber with a 3.9 GPA just 18 months later. Shortly after, she was promoted to Director of Career Services.

“I started teaching as Director of Career Services, career development classes, and once again felt this kinship. This is what I was born to do,” says White. She went on to get her doctorate degree in only three years with a 4.0 GPA.

White says she is always forward-thinking and wanting to progress.

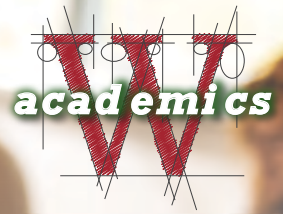
“I don’t like being stagnant, it’s just my personality, where do I go from here,” she says. During her search for more, she was offered the position of Associate Dean of Online Learning.

“Then my life started to change a little bit,” she says.

In 2013, she decided to leave Webber in order to start personal businesses. Tonya still has these businesses today, an academic coaching/tutoring business and a personal development/mindset coaching business called Exclusively You Coaching. She also started a boutique, originally a physical ladies boutique called Exclusively You fashion boutique, but today it functions online only.

In 2017, someone from Webber visited Tonya’s boutique and told the dean she was still in town. Tonya went to college for marketing, and Webber University needed a Marketing Professor, so ultimately, she was offered that position at Webber. “I was missing the teaching aspect of it, so I made the decision to continue working on my businesses part-time and join Webber full time. Since 2017, Tonya has been the Assistant Marketing Professor. “I have been enjoying it because teaching is just my passion, it’s what I love to do.”





WEBBER LOGS RECORD ENROLLMENT IN FALL 2020

by HEATHER MACHOVINA

WEBBER INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY hit record enrollment numbers in the Fall 2020 semester with 398 new undergraduate students. This is up 100 students from the Fall 2019 numbers. Despite challenges posed by the pandemic, enrollment continues to trend upward at Webber. Spring 2021 enrollment was also up more than 60 percent compared with the Spring 2020 semester.

The campus took a strict approach to the coronavirus from the beginning and has been successful in keeping cases low. The president and academics team revised how classes were being conducted, including numerous new safety measures put in place.

Throughout the entire campus, “we have really tried to make sure that we’re following a student-centered approach,” says Bobbi Andrews, Director of Admissions. This is done to the biggest degree at Webber, from walking a student to where they need to go to the way that they’re greeted from the first time they get here.

“It’s a sum of interactions a student has on campus that really makes them decide whether they want to be here or not,” details Andrews.

Instead of just processing applications and transcripts, the

admissions staff members follow up on every inquiry and every applicant. Rather than having a simple conversation, they began devoting more time to making sure they’re discussing what the student wants to study, what kind of environment they’re looking for, and working to help them understand if Webber is a good fit for them. This student-centered approach continues into the financial aid department as well. Every student has an individualized financial aid appointment where they go through all of their specific details to help come up with a solid plan.

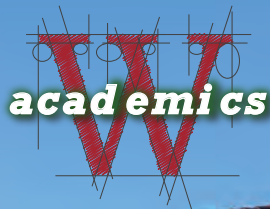
“We definitely recognize that the parents, guardians, and students have a stake in where they go to school,” says Andrews. Webber University staff members have office hours in the evenings and weekends, as well, making them available to students and their families when it’s most convenient for them.

The smaller things mean a lot to students, too. There have been some recent improvements on the Webber campus. Many dorms have been revamped, a learning center was built to house tutoring and related needs, and the cafe now serves Starbucks coffee. These types of things are really inviting when a student is on campus.

Webber has expanded its program offerings, now with multiple degrees in the health services arena. They have one of the only occupational therapy assisting bachelor’s degree programs in the country, health services administration, and a pre-nursing track available. The scholarship programs also have been through an overhaul recently to make sure students can easily apply for merit and academic scholarships.

This year, recruiting has been more difficult because of the pandemic. College fairs essentially went virtual. Webber has worked hard to account for that by focusing on increasing the start rate of their applicants.

“We are hoping to have another year that’s high,” says Andrews. “We’re striving for 430 students next year.” 🌱



by CATHERINE CERVONE

STUDENTS COMING to campus in fall 2020 were welcomed with a newly renovated space: the Learning Commons.

The Student Union, which was formerly home to some office space, pool tables, and televisions, was transformed into an immersive learning environment and study space. The reconfiguration moved student entertainment to the revamped cafeteria, kept the food options and the bookstore, and added a modern library, tutoring space, and computer lab.

The Learning Commons at Webber University was created in part by Merrie Beth Lake. She spent her early career in an elementary education career path, switching over to higher education when she received her master's degree in library and information sciences. She served as the dean of Keiser University in Lakeland until last year when she

tried to retire. She knew that wouldn't last long though, and she was tapped by a colleague at Webber University. They were looking to create the Learning Commons and thought she would be great for the endeavor.

Her background in library science made her perfect for the job. Lake is passionate about creating a good learning environment for the students. The Learning Commons serves a big role in that. A collaborative space, it's designed with several different zones that can serve many purposes. There's a quiet study area with individual desks, places for group collaboration, large glass boards with markers for brainstorming, and a computer lab.

The concept of a Learning Commons is relatively new to higher

education — about 10 to 15 years old, Lake said. The design embraces the more contemporary educational concepts of collaboration and critical thinking, which improve student learning and grades. Without collaboration in study, students won't learn as well.

"You can't do that in silence," she says, referencing older designs of libraries that only feature quiet areas.

Though this space is intended to aid the students in their study patterns, there's a focus behind it as well: retention. As the leader of the initiative, Lake is working with faculty and sending out marketing materials to the campus to reach the students most in need. She taps freshmen, students on academic probation, and those who are falling behind in attendance.

The Learning Commons is flexible and open. When students in need come here, Lake wants them to be welcomed by a kind, warm

environment. They can sit down with her to develop an action plan, which could include supervised tutoring, specific study plans, and help identifying their learning style.

No matter why they visit the Learning Commons that day though, Lake says the atmosphere is critical for student reception.

“We make sure we’re very welcoming,” she says. “It’s not about judgment.”

The space and programs have grown leaps and bounds since the center’s opening in the fall semester. Already they’ve seen expansion to the computer lab, added touchscreen computers for classroom technology enhancement, and now have the

ability to offer writing tutoring with the help of one of Webber’s English faculty. For an initiative that’s 6 months old, “We’re making significant strides already,” Lake says.

Now that it’s off to a healthy start, Lake has big dreams for the learning commons. While she’d love more space to keep up with a campus growing in population, she has other ideas, too. They plan to add a pergola and outdoor meeting space area for group work. Sometime next year, the library will merge with the Learning Commons, creating a one-stop shop for students.

Change can be hard to adjust to, especially for the older students. However, Lake says the reception

from students has been good and has just gotten better over time. She’s working directly with 44 freshmen in need this semester and meets with an average of 50 students a week. Familiar faces pop in now just to tell her they’re doing well or to do some individual study work in the space. She’s getting quicker returns on emails from professors, too.

“It’s about collaboration and communication,” she says. “We’re here for the students.”

Reception from visitors and alumni has been positive, as well. Lake says they remark, “‘Oh, this is so needed.’ It’s a quiet little revolution,” she says, “and we’ve only just begun.”



MERRIE BETH LAKE





FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: *Marketa Gregorova*

Assistant Professor's Passion for Teaching Knows No Limits

by CATHERINE CERVONE



MARKETA GREGOROVA, an assistant professor for mathematics and English at Webber, knew she'd one day be a teacher. If you'd asked her whether she thought she'd be teaching in the United States though, she would've said no.

Gregorova was born and raised in the Czech Republic. She loved the country, its beauty, and her family there. She studied to get her degree, majoring in English and math education. After graduating, she started her teaching practice and worked for a prestigious applied arts high school in Czech, and grammar and language schools, too.

along with helping her cousin around the house. It was a place that was easy to fall in love with. She especially enjoyed the theme parks and beaches, and the atmosphere of places like Key West and St. Pete.

The summer was enough to convince her; she needed to be here to stay. She went back to Czech for a year to finish out the remainder of her teaching contract. Packing only a suitcase or two, she moved to Florida. "Back when you are young, everything seems to be so simple," she says wistfully. She was 26.

After moving to Florida, she found Webber International University almost immediately. "That was a huge coincidence," she says with a grateful laugh. Since she was seeking a job, her boyfriend at the time took her teaching resume to work with him. A professor from Webber happened to be there and knew they were hiring for a position. It couldn't have turned out better. "That was really good luck," she says, noting that it was the right people and the right timing.

All her teaching credentials were able to be transferred to the United States and to Webber, and she was able to begin teaching. Thankful to be back in her field so quickly, she dove headfirst into helping her students, switching to higher education this time. She started in math, but was quickly given English

classes as well. Now, she floats back and forth, saying it's easy to fill in where she's needed.

In her spare time, she enjoys spending time with her two Davids: little David, her son, and big David, her husband. "They are the sunshine of my life," she says. She's already hard at work teaching little David about the world he will explore.

She enjoys experiencing the outdoors with her family and loves taking her son to Bok Tower Gardens and other nature areas. She also has a passion for interior design and enjoys photography. She travels back to Czech once a year to visit her parents, her sister and nieces.

She has no plans to stop teaching anytime soon. Her mother told her that as a child, she always had aspirations to become a teacher. Now, she's been teaching for 35 years. "I'm very glad I'm teaching," she said. "I will do this for the rest of my life." 🌍



"I'm very glad I'm teaching. I will do this for the rest of my life."

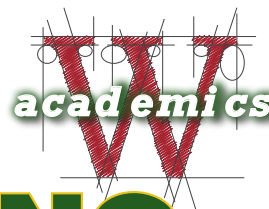
One day, she said she thought, "I should go to an English-speaking country." Seeking more experience with the English language so as to better teach it, and to get an immersive experience into the culture, she didn't think she'd be here to stay. What started out as a visit to her cousin in Orlando turned into finding the country she now calls home.

She was 25 the summer of her visit, and soaked up every second of the summer by sightseeing and traveling,

ADVICE

SUPPORT

GUIDANCE



PEER MENTORING PROGRAM

off to a Strong Start

by CATHERINE CERVONE

MERRIE BETH LAKE, director of the Learning Commons, was placed in charge of another initiative this spring semester. She teamed up with athletics, the dean and president, registrar, financial aid, and other members of faculty in a new summit to discuss students' struggles and what they could do to move the needle on retention at Webber International University. They came out with two suggested practices.

The first idea was to do an overhaul of the orientation process. The second was to create a peer mentoring program. The mentoring program has existed in the past at Webber, but it had faded out of existence a while ago. The team decided it was time to bring it back, and they wanted to bring it back with as much focus and dedication as they could. Doing so in the middle of a pandemic presented an extra challenge, too.

The pilot program rolled out at the beginning of the Spring 2021 semester, and with that came its own set of challenges. While it was modeled after other successful peer mentoring programs at comparable universities, it's sometimes hard to know where to start. Which do you recruit first, mentors or mentees? How do you tell a student they should seek a mentor?

"We're not going to tell students they have to have a mentor," Lake says. "They have to see the value in it."

The team also wanted to recruit high-quality mentors for the program. They incentivized by offering a scholarship and sent out an application to seek eight to 10 students who would each mentor two to three students. Interested mentors had to have a 3.0 GPA, 24 completed credit hours, and a letter of reference.

Lake says there's research that shows

the process is beneficial for both parties, the mentors and the mentees.

"(It) keeps you jazzed on why you're here," she explains. Mentoring can help the students keep the looming senioritis at bay.

By week three of the initiative in the spring, applications had been sent out. Mentors were selected, and it was time to find mentees. A committee of program advisors worked with professors to find good recruits. They also emailed every freshman on probation. Lake sits in a unique role as director of the Learning Commons, as she has the ability to recommend students for the mentoring program.

It's still early in the process, and the results of the program will be evaluated at the end of the semester by the committee. Lake says they've had strong mentor candidates though, like Abigail Thompson, a softball player at Webber. Thompson is mentoring a freshman and says she's so excited to work with someone who has such a great spirit and an eagerness to learn.

Thompson describes how tricky it is for freshmen to navigate the stresses of college, such as schoolwork, extracurricular activities, maintaining a social life, and being away from home for the first time.



"I remember having to call my parents almost every day in order to help me with situations I had never experienced," Thompson says. Thankful that her mentee is courageous enough to speak out and ask for help on a new campus, Thompson hopes to serve as the guide she wished she had had a few years ago.

Whether it's going on a quick outing for coffee, organizing school files, or editing an essay, the partnership of a mentor and mentee is valuable and will only grow over time. Lake adds that the mentoring program is low maintenance and low cost with a huge potential return. The mentoring program's goal is to continue to change students' lives for the better and make the transition to college that much easier in the future. 🌱



HONORS PROGRAM *Thrives* DESPITE PANDEMIC

by TERESA SCHIFFER



WEBBER INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY is proud to boast a thriving academic program in which students are encouraged to reach their maximum potential. Nowhere is this more evident than within our honors program. Dozens of highly motivated, self-disciplined students take part in the program every year. Lacy Lambeth is the current director of the honors program, in addition to her responsibilities as the MBA Coordinator and Director of Academic Planning. She has been with Webber International University since 2012 and accepted the directorship of the honors program in August 2020.

“The purpose of the honors program is basically to engage our highly motivated and intellectually gifted students in experiences that develop their excellence in leadership, scholarship, and service,” Lambeth says. “We focus heavily on community service and leadership opportunities.”

Students who wish to be considered for the honors program must be enrolled in at least one honors class each semester. Honors students are also required to participate in Phi Beta Lambda (PBL), which is similar to the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) clubs found in many American high schools. PBL members attend a variety of competitions throughout the school year to showcase their prowess in areas such as public speaking, business acumen, and computer technology.

Typically, in order to qualify for status as an honors program student, administrating faculty, including Lambeth, will look for a minimum high school GPA of 3.5. SAT and ACT test scores are also normally considered. This year, with the COVID-19 pandemic affecting nearly every segment of society including the academic world, many students didn’t actually have the opportunity to take these standardized tests.

This year, because SAT and ACT scores could not be considered, invitations to join Webber’s honors program were sent to the high school seniors who had the highest GPAs, and those students were given the opportunity to apply for the program. Upon acceptance in the acclaimed honors program, freshman students were expected to maintain a GPA of at least 3.4 throughout their first year at Webber International University.

Despite the disruptions throughout 2020, honors students were still counted on to participate in some form of community service for at least 20 hours each semester. Many chose to utilize Webber’s community service class to fulfill their requirement. Others donated their time to a variety of personal causes, including special holiday events hosted by Webber and PBL, such as a Christmas tree lighting ceremony for the local

community. There are many opportunities for honors students to take part in community service projects both on and off campus.

Honors students benefit greatly from having access to an enhanced curriculum, personal and career growth opportunities, mentorships, seminars, internships, field trips, scholarships, and so much more. The University regularly acknowledges the outstanding efforts of these elite scholars through various recognition programs and events, including the official kudos they receive at graduation time.

You may be surprised to learn that of this year’s 18 honors students, 16 of them are student athletes. This just goes to show that these exceptional students are very well-rounded individuals who put forth their best efforts in all of their endeavors. It is exciting to think about the impact these young people will make on the world after graduation! 🌍





From Competition to Career Preparedness, **PHI BETA LAMBDA'S GOT IT COVERED**

by TERESA SCHIFFER

PHI BETA LAMBDA (PBL) is one of Webber International University's most elite student organizations. This club is the college equivalent of FBLA, the Future Business Leaders of America clubs found in most of the United States' high schools. Members of PBL are very active in the community, completing various service projects and fundraisers, and they compete in a number of competitions at the district, state, and national levels.

Joanne Muniz describes it, "As FBLA helps prepare you to get into college, PBL helps to prepare you to assimilate into your career and your profession."

Muniz started with Webber International University in 2018 as an assistant professor of accounting and co-advisor of Phi Beta Lambda with Dr. Jeannette Eberle, who is retiring this year after 20 years with the university. Together, they advise this year's exceptionally large group of 30 PBL members, spanning all class levels from freshman to graduate.

Webber's branch of PBL is particularly service-oriented and normally participates in a number of community outreach events throughout the year. Muniz and Eberle like to incorporate activities that will give the international students a taste of American culture, as well. Of course, with COVID-19, this year was a little different.

Muniz says, "We do try to do events for the community, and this year we've turned them more in-house. We've done

some student events for Webber, such as a Halloween barbecue for the campus and trick-or-treating around campus. Because we are an international school, we like to do events that are different for our international students, something that they're really not accustomed to."

A point of pride for Muniz is that PBL has recently established a "Career Closet" to help provide students, especially the international students, with suitable clothing to wear to competitions, interviews, and similar occasions. Many times, international students are limited in how much attire they can bring to campus with them. They tend to focus on the clothes that they will need to attend classes as opposed to professional business attire. The Career Closet helps to ensure that they make the right impression at more events by supplying them with the appropriate clothing.

The highly driven students of PBL also participate in competitions regularly. There are contests in speechmaking, digital media, social media, networking, accounting, and more. Muniz is

consistently impressed by the students she advises in this capacity, saying, "One of the things that is very interesting with PBL is that a lot of these students in this organization are taking tests or doing events that are outside their normal comfort zone. This helps them to grow as professionals."

District-level competitions are held at the end of January and early February. The top three winners of certain categories then go on to the state event. Normally, the state competition takes place in Orlando. The top performers from this event then go on to the national competition. The current, but tentative, plan is for the national event to be held in Anaheim, California. Last year's national championship was to have been held in Salt Lake City, Utah, but was canceled because of the pandemic, much to everyone's disappointment.

These competitions allow the students to hone their professional skills in areas such as public speaking, interviewing, and networking. The contacts that students make while participating in these events can become invaluable resources in their professional futures as business associates and even friends.

Roughly 25 of Webber's PBL members will be competing in the state competition this year. In an average year, about 200 students participate in this event from 14 Florida colleges. This year could be a little different, as not all of the schools may wish to take part in a virtual conference. 🌐

TRAINED *and* READY

Webber Criminal Justice Management Program Uses Hands-On Approach to Prepare Students

by J.P. SMITH

“Make a commitment to serve the needs of the ‘least of these’ and give voice to the voiceless.”
— Artika Tyner

Quickly approaching its centennial anniversary, Webber International University is known for its integrity and results-oriented programs. Dr. Peter Barone, associate professor and Chair of the Criminal Justice Management Program (CJMP), has put together a hands-on educational program and a seasoned team of educators, each having a minimum of 25 years of experience in the criminal justice system.

Lon Lovett, the assistant professor to Barone, explains, “I have the opportunity to prepare students for what they will be confronting in a law enforcement career. I can instill in them the same sense of justice and get them ready for the competitive nature of police service.”

The extensive program Barone has organized and designed covers more than just academics. The goal is to provide students with a living practical knowledge of the criminal justice system. Lovett says part of their technique is creating crime scene vignettes and artificial crimes for the students to apply their knowledge and training to observe and detect in solving the crime.

Lovett also builds pseudo-dioramas

and life-size scenes for students to approach realistically, apply training, and aim to solve the crime. A fictional murder is created with a fake skeleton buried in the woods. Students must then apply their working understanding in proper search techniques, processing the crime scene, and gathering evidence to solve the crime.

“We deliberately get our hands dirty, feel the stress, and the emotional ups and down of the job,” Lovett says. “This type of training is what students will fall back on in times of high stress.”

Certain careers in the criminal justice system require a high-school diploma and a degree in criminal justice, and occasionally field training or a master’s degree. Barone’s program equips the criminal justice student in these fields of specialization:

- **Probation or Parole Officer:**

These are critical roles in helping offenders rehabilitate responsibly back into society as a functioning citizen and are required to meet focused goals. Probation officers oversee those individuals who are serving probation only. A parole

officer works with individuals who have served time in prison, keeping them accountable for meeting their obligations. These careers require a vast grasp in understanding the criminal justice system, as well as monitoring, understanding, and reporting on various aspects of their clients.

- **Corrections Administrator:**

The main duty in this role is supervision of detained individuals in the criminal justice system. Some additional duties will also include managing a program or building, clerical work, filing reports, overseeing inmates or operations of a facility.

- **Court Administrator:**

This role directly deals with the courthouse and its operations, overseeing the administrative runnings of the courthouse and possibly working on different levels within the state and federal government. Often this career requires a master’s degree and comprehensive knowledge and experience in the criminal justice system.



Lovett shares his 30 years of experience with students in a way that sets a standard.

“We do not just provide the framework of the criminal justice system, but also spend a substantial amount of time devoted to individual integrity, truthfulness, and honor. We impart the knowledge that bias, prejudice, malaise, or unreasonableness is unacceptable in the criminal justice system.”

Barone also founded a chapter in the

American Criminal Justice Association where students with WIU are trained for competitions in crime scenes, calls for service, and traffic stops in the ACJA Conference.

But the program doesn't stop there. Lovett has even more plans brewing.

“Future plans for scenario training include developing a focused crime lab and criminalistics,” he says. “Designing a moot court to train students in courtroom testimony and depositions.

Vehicles to conduct searches, processing opportunities, and traffic stops.”

Lovett says the program fosters an important mindset, as well.

In the criminal justice system, he says, “You are the good guy. You are the one that makes the difference. And every single one of us will do it all again tomorrow and stand in the gap once again.” 🌍

CONTINUED ON PAGE 44





FINANCE MAJOR

Wins Worldwide Business Simulation Competition

by TERESA SCHIFFER

TOM AARON is an associate professor and program director for Sport Business Management at Webber International University. Aaron has been with the school for nearly two decades, and in all that time, Webber had never been invited to compete in the prestigious Smartsims Business Simulations competitions. That changed this year, however, as Ukrainian Finance Major and rising star of the business world Ivan Bondarenko not only received a coveted invitation to participate in the world-class business games, but single-handedly swept the competition.

Mike's Bikes

Advanced is a strategic management simulation tool by Smartsims that Aaron uses in his graduate-level business courses, and the introductory version of the simulation in

his undergraduate classes. Students compete against each other in teams, while the Smartsims company keeps an eye on the scoreboards in classrooms around the globe.

"One gentleman, in particular, did a great job in the class," Aaron says, referring to Bondarenko, who graduated in December. "They (the Smartsims company) noticed that and invited him to the qualifications for the world championship. We do the simulation as a teaching tool in the Strategic Management classes, and he got picked up on the radar from the company, and they invited him to the qualifications. He had to go through a series of qualifications competing against other people, and they narrowed it down to the top 10 teams. Then the top 10 teams had to compete, and he won against them."

Typically, students who are invited to participate in the Smartsims world championship competition do so as part of a team. Product Development, Operations, Marketing, and Finance are the four components of a standard team, with one student responsible for each

aspect. "Ivan," Aaron comments, "being the overachiever that he is, did it all on his own. He was his own team, competing against teams that had multiple people."

Hundreds of students participated in the qualifications, hailing from universities all over the world. Smartsims, which is based in New Zealand and has offices throughout the world, handpicks the best performing teams from all of these different institutions and invites those individuals to participate in their global competition.

In an interview with Smartsims after his big win, Bondarenko says his personal motivation drives him to attain such outstanding results.

"There is one strategy that I follow during any activity in my life. That is to gather as much knowledge as possible from the opportunities I have been provided. My main strategy during the simulation was to acquire the necessary knowledge about conducting business operations. I believe this knowledge will help me a lot in real life, too."

Aaron has been impressed by the tennis-playing Bondarenko's incredible drive for success.

"He's just a very self-motivated, intuitive student. This win truly fits his character. He really loves to go deep into something to truly understand it and the inner workings of the systems. This competition really fit his degree and fit his personality. I think he's going to be very successful in this type of scenario as an executive."

Business simulations, like those offered by Smartsims, are invaluable teaching tools, as they make it possible to bring classroom theories to life without the real-world risks. Students are able to incorporate the concepts and principles that they have learned from their textbooks and lectures and start to understand how all of the disparate parts that comprise an actual business environment function together. "In the real world, no decisions are made in a vacuum," Aaron says. 🌍

SENIOR SPOTLIGHTS

by JULIE GMITTER



Brianda Valdez

Balance of Academics, Student Life, Athletics Gives This Student an Edge

As Webber International University alumni, you know better than anyone the immense talent and professionalism students at the university display, and Brianda Valdez is no exception. A senior majoring in Sports Performance Health & Fitness, Valdez also plays on the beach volleyball team. While she is a California native, she lives on campus and calls Florida home for the duration of her experience at Webber. She thoroughly enjoys her classes and professors at Webber University. Perhaps most of all, she appreciates the “small school vibe,” where everyone knows everyone else. With all the connections you can make and networks you can build at a smaller school like Webber, it is surprising how this is undervalued and overlooked at some larger universities. She says some people may not like this close network of students, but she does. For example, on a recent Sunday, Valdez and some of her peers/teammates hung out on the courts and played beach volleyball for a Sunday Funday type of day. With more students living on campus and the close-knit community of students, this type of involvement is not only possible, but it’s one of the many things that make Webber unique.

Despite her busy schedule, Valdez took a moment to talk about how she balances her life with her academics.

“With balancing sports and school, time management skills are super crucial, as well as week-by-week planning,” she explains.

“Planning too far in advance gets to be a problem. I like to plan about a week in advance. I have found that when you plan several weeks out, for example, things come up and it is best to plan each week. The flexibility it provides really helps when on any type of sports team. It’s awesome that my tutoring center supervisor is flexible with tutoring hours as well.”

That flexibility, Valdez explains, is really important.

“Understanding coaches and moderators who know we have a lot of work really helps. College students have to really take initiative on their own, but it’s also very helpful when coaches are understanding with their schedules.”

Merrie Beth Lake, Learning Commons director, supervises Valdez and others at the tutoring center at Webber University. Lake says Valdez especially excels in Anatomy. “She runs an anatomy study group on Sunday evenings, the only one running for that specific subject.” However, that’s not the only subject Valdez is an expert in, and not the only subject she tutors, either! She is also a Sports Performance and Fitness Management tutor. Lake has high praise for Valdez, going on to say that she is “very student-oriented, very helpful to peers and she does a great job balancing sports and academics and her job.”

Because tutors are work studies, they get compensated financially for their work.

Valdez does it all – work, school, and sports, and she handles each like a pro. Lake appreciates that great attitude Valdez has. “Anything I ask the tutors to do, she’s the first one to volunteer to take it on.”

It’s that pleasant and approachable demeanor that makes Valdez the ideal person to work with her peers.

As Valdez looks forward to her upcoming graduation from Webber this December, she will be missed by those she tutors at the university.

She’s not entirely sure where the future will take her career. She has, however, contemplated doing her internship at Webber with her coaches and potentially becoming a GA (graduate assistant), depending on how the internship goes. If she decides to pursue her master’s degree as a graduate assistant, she would get to attend Webber free of charge rather than taking a salary. She is a great example of talented Webber students giving back to their school and peers. 🌱

Lee Bendolph III

No Dream Too Big When You’re Motivated and Supported

Lee Bendolph III, a Webber senior majoring in Sports Business Management, has worked hard in life to get to attend Webber and excel in academics.

Bendolph, who lives in Port St. Lucie but is originally from West Palm Beach, chose Webber International University because it was close to home. He says he comes from a single-parent home and didn’t want his mom to struggle in any way while he was away, so he wanted to choose an institution close to home. That way, he could still be a phone call away in case he needed to be there for his mother.

That turned out in his favor in a major way.

“Webber International University was a blessing for me,” he says. “I had many great opportunities, I met a lot of good people, I also made a great impact on the Webber student population for my hard work and dedication. There are not many people that could’ve been in certain situations that I was in and continue to march out of them. I could never give up; it was my home away from home. I’m honored to call myself a Warrior.”

Bendolph will graduate in May. He plans to become an entrepreneur and has many ideas of how to make that come to fruition. He plans to run his own trucking company, become an athletic trainer, start and run a mentoring program, and be a football coach.

Lee had a few favorite teachers and coaches during his time as a Webber student. He specifically mentions Dr. Fening, Dr. Farchmin, and Dr. Aaron.

“Dr. Fening pushed me to be great and never settle for less, Dr. Farchmin because no matter what she never gave up on me, and Dr. Aaron because he was my first college professor and also my last. He instilled a lot of knowledge in me. It was an honor to have them as professors. There are many more professors I could name. Overall, I had great ones,” Lee recounts.

In the future, Lee aspires to go as far as he can in the business world, make his mother proud, and secure more than just a job or career. He plans to generate streams of income that will ensure wealth for his family for generations to come. He credits his mother with supporting him throughout his life and being his motivation for success. 🌱

Leandra Franklin Brings *Passion* To Warriors Basketball

by TERESA SCHIFFER



1 LEANDRA FRANKLIN is a redshirt senior at Webber International University this year who has high hopes for the future. The Jacksonville native graduated from St. Augustine High School in 2015 and entered junior college at Florida State College at Jacksonville. After one year, Franklin then transferred to Webber to major in Sport Business Management and graduated in December 2020. She is currently enrolled in Webber's MBA program.

Like a lot of other high school graduates, Franklin was interested in attending a smaller college. The small class sizes are appealing to many young scholars because they allow for a greater amount of attention and personal interaction from instructors. There are about 20 students in any given class, so there is a great opportunity for developing meaningful and lasting relationships with peers as well as faculty.

Another appealing aspect of Webber International University for Franklin, or "Lee," as she is known to her friends, is the college's outstanding athletics program. The Webber Warriors women's basketball team has been a welcoming environment for Franklin, who is passionate about the game. "I've been playing basketball for as long as I can remember," Franklin reminisces. "The earliest age I can remember playing is about 6 or 7."

In March, the Webber Warriors women's basketball team is playing in the NAIA (National Association

of Intercollegiate Athletics) National Championship Opening Round against Bryan College (Tennessee) at Southeastern University in Lakeland, Florida. As of this writing, the Warriors are currently 17-10 overall after advancing to The Sun Conference Tournament. This is the second time that Webber International University has gone to a national championship under the leadership of Head Coach Grady Morrell, and the fifth time in the school's history. Games are still limited in the number in the number of spectators due to social distancing guidelines.

Franklin loves playing with the Warriors and is a huge part of the team. The senior point guard leads the NAIA in total steals with 113, and is second in steals per game (4.1). She is also ranked fifth in total assists (125), and 27th in assists per game (4.6). Franklin relates her participation on the team, telling us, "I had a good experience playing for Webber. I've grown a lot playing for them, and grown a lot of relationships

with players, even with Coach Grady (Morrell) himself. I've learned a lot on and off the court, playing and without playing, just being around everybody."

As Franklin looks toward the future, she is enthusiastic about her plan to start an organization with a facility for children to play basketball and earn scholarships for college. While she works to achieve that philanthropic goal, she intends to do some coaching. Franklin embodies a spirited joy for the sport of basketball, and would relish the opportunity to share her zeal with anyone who would like to learn from her, from tiny tots all the way up to college athletes.

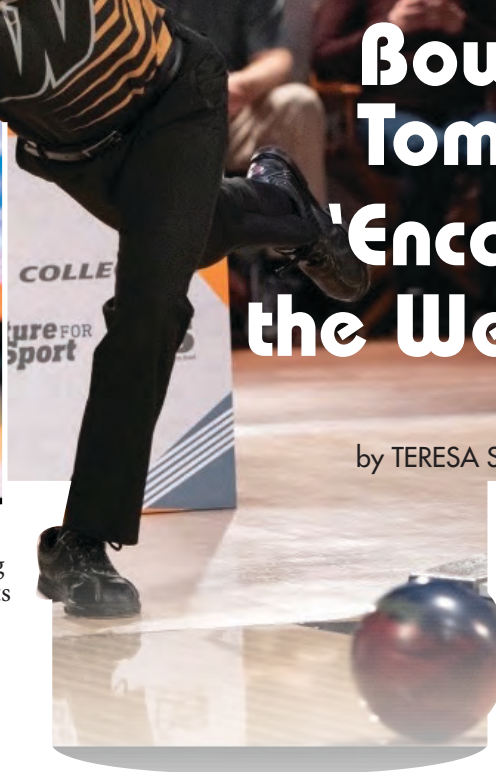
Franklin has been thoroughly enjoying her time at Webber.

"Webber has been a great experience for me. It's a close-knit college, so I got to know pretty much any and everybody and the relationships with the professors were top-notch because you get that personal relationship with them. Plus, you have the on-campus pool where you get to hang out with everybody. Everything within Webber was perfect for me and my situation."

Webber International University is proud to be a meaningful part of Leandra Franklin's life and education, and we look forward to cheering her on as she pursues her dreams. 🏀

Bowler Tom Hankey 'Encapsulates the Webber Way'

by TERESA SCHIFFER



Webber International University junior Tom Hankey Jr. has been bowling for pretty much all of his life. His parents own and operate Cove Bowling and Entertainment in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, where Hankey grew up, and he first picked up a bowling ball at the tender age of 2 years old. At age 10, Hankey began bowling competitively when his father, Tom Hankey Sr., a tournament bowler, started taking him along to the competitions. The father-son pair worked their way up to competing in regional and national events, and in 2016, Hankey won seven gold medals at the Tournament of the Americas international bowling tournament, plus Massachusetts Youth Male Bowler of the Year.

When he was 14, Hankey met Webber International University's Director of Bowling, Coach Del Warren, at a tournament in Fort Lauderdale in 2014. Hankey quickly developed an interest in the sun-drenched culture of Florida, which was so different from the chillier New England lifestyle that he was accustomed to. Coach Warren had no trouble persuading young Hankey to consider Babson Park's Webber International University for his college education.

During his freshman year at Webber International University, in 2018-2019, Warren coached Hankey into winning the 2019 Intercollegiate Singles Championships men's title in Dayton, Ohio. This was exciting for Hankey personally, as well as the university, as it was the first time in the school's history that a student won an Intercollegiate

Singles Championship.

Hankey is currently a Computer Information Systems major. He entered Webber International University as a Sport Business major, but after his first semester, he discovered that he really preferred the more technical aspects of business management.

"I like to do a lot of work with data and spreadsheets, website design, and coding," Hankey says of his academic interests. His Advanced Spreadsheets class was the tipping point for Hankey deciding on his intended career path. "That's when I really knew I wanted to be a CIS major because that class has a lot to do with spreadsheets and data analysis, and ways to analyze certain forms of data and how to apply it in business."

Hankey would like to use his CIS degree to find a position that entails statistical analysis, or as a stat keeper for a professional sports organization, such as the MLB (Major League Baseball) or NBA (National Basketball Association).

Webber International University is providing Hankey with an excellent educational experience from which to launch his career. "Because Webber is such an athletic school," he explains, "I'm getting a lot of hands-on experience

with a lot of different athletes from all around the world. It's really helping me adapt to different ways, different perspectives of seeing different sports and different cultures, and that's really helping me grow as a person by helping me understand the world a little bit differently."

When he isn't throwing strikes on the bowling lanes, Hankey enjoys spending his free time studying and attending to his personal health for a bit of escapism from the pressures of college life. You will often find him doing yoga, cardio workouts, and taking long walks while immersed in some invigorating, upbeat music.

He says he is grateful for the opportunity to attend Webber International University and participate in its outstanding athletic program. Hankey sums up what he most appreciates about the school, saying, "A lot of development of where I am right now comes from my coach and the bowling club here at Webber because it teaches a lot of philosophies that not only apply to a team, they also apply to the real world and real life. Helping prepare us for the real world is probably the biggest thing."

Tom Hankey truly embraces the Webber Way. He is committed to constant learning, exhibits a team-first attitude, and strives for excellence in all he does. Coach Warren has nothing but praise for the student, telling us, "There's a reason why he's a captain so early in his college career. He encapsulates the Webber Way in everything he does." 🌟

Forever FRIENDS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

shellac everywhere we went for a while. It didn't stop until it ran out. I bet some of that furniture in that room is still stuck to the floor," she says and giggles.

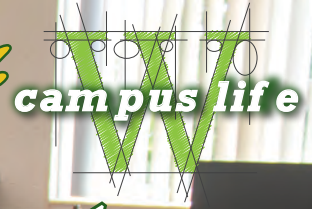
Shoaff-Ballanger tells her colleagues of being "locked in a station wagon" as her parents drove her to Webber from Dunedin for the first time.

"I had no interest in going to a women's college. But it ended up being the best thing to ever happen to me."

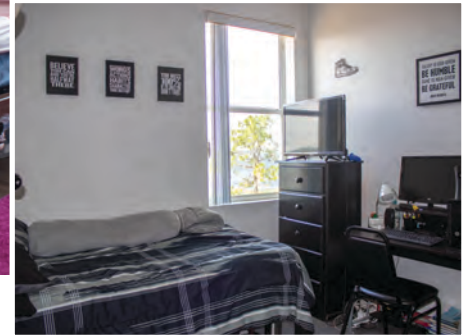


*Want to get in touch with former Webber classmates?
We can help!
Email Jeanne Lawrie, director of Annual Fund and
Alumni Affairs, at lawriejm@webber.edu
or call her at 863 638-1431.*

DORMS *Get* Fresh Looks, Updates



by GRACE BOGGESS HIRDES



AS WEBBER INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY ALUMNI, you probably remember the five residence halls that are centrally located on the beautiful shores of Crooked Lake. If you remember Grace Hall and its shared room accommodations for male students or Camilla Hall with its shared room accommodations for female students, you'll appreciate the updates that took place in 2020. Vice President of Student Life Jay Culver says, "We have taken out all the carpet in Grace and Camilla Hall (our oldest dorms) and added new laminate flooring. We have redone a quarter of the showers in Camilla, as well, and plan on finishing the rest this summer."

He also explained that Camilla received more unique updates because the water heater was updated.

"It's not something anyone will notice when walking in the rooms, but the students that live there sure will."

Even though these updates are amazing, Webber is not finished updating, and still has plans for the other dorms.

If you remember dorms "A," "B," and


Miranda Hall with their single private bedrooms, a semi-private bath, and a suite lounge, they also will be receiving some amazing updates.

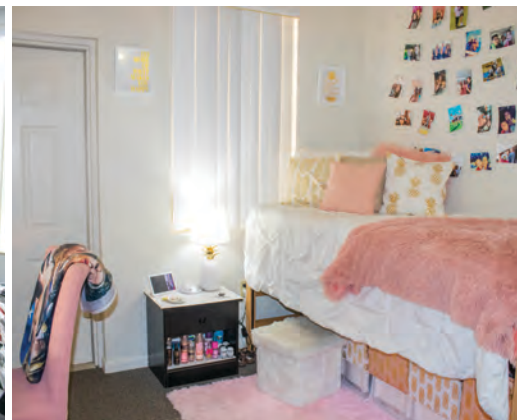
Thinking back to the time you stayed in the dorms, you'll also remember the laundry facilities, cable, ethernet, and a micro-fridge as well the furnishings such as the bed, dresser, desk, and closets for each resident. You'll also remember the twin-size beds as well as the leather

couches and chairs that were provided in the common living area. Culver says these also received some much-needed updates.

"We have removed the old and outdated teal vanities in Camilla with beautiful brand new ones. We also replaced all the mattresses in all the rooms and have begun to update the furniture."

Wireless access points also were added all across campus and in the dorms so students no longer need a router. Students can walk from their dorm to the classrooms without losing a wireless signal.

The current students who call their dorms home will hopefully enjoy these new renovations and the safe environment that is Webber International University as they grow and flourish personally, socially, and academically. 





CONTINUED FROM PAGE 37

Webber Is Proud of Our Heroes

by TERESA SCHIFFER

AS THE PANDEMIC CHANGED LIFE for so many people over the past year, first responders and healthcare workers enjoyed renewed appreciation for their dedication and selflessness. Webber International University is proud of its alumni who are part of this celebrated profession. Here are just a few:

Ryan O’Gara

Ryan O’Gara has been with the Highlands County Sheriff’s Department since 2015 after graduating from Webber International University in 2014 with a bachelor’s degree in Criminal Justice. He is part of the K-9 unit, and for the past two years he has been working with a now 5-year-old bloodhound named Benji. Benji is a single-purpose tracking dog trained to find missing people or suspects who flee on foot.

Growing up watching “Cops” on TV, O’Gara knew early on that if baseball didn’t work out for him, he wanted a career in law enforcement.

O’Gara recalls what motivated him to go into law enforcement, “The professors at Webber helped, like Peter Barone and Mark Schrader. I took some of their courses. And there were employees here at the Sheriff’s office. Hearing their stories, that inspired me to want to work for this agency.” During his time at Webber, O’Gara was able to intern at the Highlands County Sheriff’s Department, which proved to be an invaluable experience.



Playing baseball for Webber helped prepare O’Gara for a hectic schedule. He remembers what it was like being a college student at Webber.

“The early morning workouts, a full-time class schedule, and then also working on weekends. It really teaches time management.”

Stephen Taylor

Stephen Taylor has been in the National Guard for 19 years, and he graduated from Webber International University in 2008. He also went into active duty in 2008 after his second tour of duty overseas.

Taylor has been to Afghanistan, Iraq, and Qatar in the service of our country. Nowadays, he is stationed in Lake Wales with the Florida National Guard. He serves as a Readiness NCO, plus as a platoon sergeant for a distribution platoon. During his college days, Taylor was pleased that Webber International University was willing to accommodate his military duties to allow him to earn his degree.

Describing his experience, Taylor explains, “Originally, in 2004, I transferred to Webber after graduating from Polk State. Then the ’04 hurricanes hit, and while we were working for the state during a natural disaster, we were called up to go to Afghanistan. So I didn’t actually finish the fall term because I was gone. So when I got back, I re-enrolled at Webber. My senior year, my last year for my bachelor’s degree, I got called up to go to Iraq. The school actually worked very well with me, and allowed me to finish up my last month and a half of college and worked around my schedule because I was at training up in northern Florida, and I came down... so I could still graduate and mobilize to go to Iraq.”

Brian Morgan

Brian Morgan graduated from Webber International University in 2003 with a business degree. He continued with his education to earn a couple more degrees after he left, and then joined the Hillsborough County Sheriff’s Office in 2006. He is currently a sergeant and a member of the Peer Support Team and the Critical Incident Stress Management Team.

Morgan also has served Hillsborough County as a detective and a corporal, working in numerous departments, ranging from Narcotics to General Offense Crimes. For 10 years, Morgan put his communication skills to the test as a negotiator. He still acts as a national instructor for negotiations, traveling around the country teaching people how to be negotiators in accordance with FBI standards.

Teamwork is a vital life skill that Morgan honed on the baseball team during his time at Webber. Always willing to lend a helping hand, he enjoyed playing on a team where each player worked hard to do their personal best.

Morgan relates the lessons he learned at Webber to his current occupation.

“In law enforcement, the whole team aspect is super important. I think people outside the profession wouldn’t be able to see that, the team mentality.”

Transferring from a big college, as Morgan did, Webber International University provided a refreshing change.

“Webber allows you to kind of find yourself,” he recalls. “You can get lost really easy at a big school. A smaller school allows you to find yourself, find some true friends, and learn a whole lot more about yourself than just being one of a thousand people in a chemistry class.”

SAVE THE DATE

President's Golf Tournament

**Monday, October 25, 2021
11:30 a.m.**



*Location:
Southern Dunes
Golf & Country
Club, Haines City*

*Entries and
sponsorships available.
To learn more and
register, email
lawriejm@webber.edu*

ALUMNI WEEKEND

Fall 2021

Location: Webber campus

Event is contingent upon CDC guidelines and will include get-togethers and social activities.

Dates and details as they become available: www.Webber.edu/alumni



Camilla Society Luncheon

**Tentative date:
Saturday,
December 11
11:30 a.m.**

*Location: Yentes Center on
Webber campus*

*2020 & 2021 Camilla Society
donors will be recognized.*

*Dates and
details as they
become available:
[www.Webber.edu/
alumni](http://www.Webber.edu/alumni)*

*Camilla Society
donors are individuals
making gifts of \$1,000 or more
to the Webber Annual Fund.*



DINNER FOR FOOTBALL PROGRAM ALUMNI AND SUPPORTERS

Saturday, May 22 6-10 p.m.

*Location: Webber International
University inside the Yentes Center.*

Inside and outside seating will be available for \$50 a person. Dinner, drinks and desserts will be catered. The event will feature a raffle and silent auction.

*To reserve your tickets,
scan the QR code*



*For more information,
call Coach Potochney at 863-734-1548 or
email him at PotochneyES@webber.edu.*



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THANK YOU

WEBBER ANNUAL FUND

The same global appeal, intimate classes, and applied learning that brought you to Warrior ground continues today. Becoming an advocate for Webber International University enables us to carry on the highest standards of excellence in education while fostering competitive leadership through hands-on training and athletic programs. Your continued support enables current and future students to achieve success in the real world.

Please consider making a contribution to the Webber Annual Fund. The commitment of all of us who are closest to Webber and know it best will motivate and inspire other donors as they consider supporting the University.

GIVE ONLINE



Donations can be made online at webber.edu/giving or by scanning the QR code here.

GIVE BY MAIL

Webber International University
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For a list of Advocates, please turn to page 46

