

# RESOLUTE

THE PACIFIC LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE | MAY 2018



*First  
In The  
Family*

First  
In The Family





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## OPENING NOTE

## FIRST-GENERATION PRIDE



I don't know where 9-year-old me got the Pacific Lutheran University shirt pictured in this grainy photograph of my visit to a petting zoo in Calgary, Alberta.

That little boy from Whitefish, Montana, would not step foot on the private college campus for the better part of a decade after the photo was taken — and private school in general seemed unlikely.

Still, as far as my parents were concerned, college was never an "if;" it was a "where?"

My mom always wanted to pursue a degree. A teenage pregnancy and four children delayed her plans.

Although our parents never went to college before us, they worked hard to ensure we did not go without. That included my dad's late nights in the garage, rebuilding the engine in my '62 Chevrolet Impala. I needed to sell the car to pay for tuition, and the long hours running his tire shop did not stop him from coming home and getting more grease on his hands.

So, my three siblings and I were first in our family to graduate college. Of the four, I am the only lucky one who calls PLU his alma mater.



I am lucky because PLU has a tradition of welcoming, supporting and celebrating first-generation college students. Their narratives weren't always at the forefront, but in

my time serving as chair of the Board of Regents, it is clear that PLU is committed to speaking the language and building a community around students treading new ground.

The university boasts a campus concentrated with staff and faculty who share stories similar to mine — offering representation for first-in-the-family Lutes who are products of

their past, an aggregate of the advantages and the adversity that accompany their experiences.

This edition of *Resolute* celebrates the value of first-generation alumni, students, faculty and staff — those who come from families with parents who did not graduate from four-year, degree-granting institutions in the U.S.

The stories not only highlight the challenges, but also the successes of this ever-growing contingent of Lutes. They also capture the shared experiences, as well as the not-so-shared experiences, that make up this diverse population. Perhaps I am the only one who learned to rebuild a car engine to cover tuition. Perhaps not.

As a student at PLU, I never heard the terms "first-generation student" or "first in the family," and I never realized I was different beyond my lower-income status. What I did know — like others who share my experience — was that I had been given an opportunity and it was up to me to capitalize on it.

I do not believe I am a self-made man. I believe I am a product of my environment, and my parents and the people around me contributed to my story. My environment was driven by hard-working parents who wanted us to have what they did not.

And we did.

Around the time I was graduating from PLU, my mom got to experience the first-gen feeling, too. She earned her bachelor's degree in social work from the University of Montana.

I may have had a bit of a chip on my shoulder as a young college student who faced challenges different than some of my peers at PLU, but the pride I have in myself, my siblings, my mother — and all who share in the first-gen experience — is something I would not trade for anything.

That pride shines through this magazine. And, as a passionate advocate for future first-in-the-family students, I am excited for the stories that have yet to be shared.

Ed Grogan  
Chair of the Board of Regents

# INSIDE

## FEATURE STORIES



There's a special kinship between people who are first in the family to graduate from college: grit, resilience, pride in where you come from, even more pride in where you're going. Read about what it means to be first. **SEE PAGE 6**



Jud Keim '86, alumnus and assistant football coach, continues "living the dream" at PLU. **SEE PAGE 32**

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Ann Auman, dean of natural sciences, is pictured in Namibia last year with her children. Learn more about the first-generation experience of Auman and her colleagues. **SEE PAGE 16**

PHOTO COURTESY OF AUMAN



## WHAT IT MEANS TO BE FIRST

**PLU ADMINISTRATORS — ALL THE WAY TO THE TOP — EMBRACE AND CELEBRATE THE FIRST-GENERATION STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

There's something about Laree Winer's chair.

I knew writing a story about first-in-the-family college graduates meant talking about my parents. I didn't think it meant crying about my mom with a colleague I'm just getting to know.

There's a chance Winer '15, associate director for student engagement and the Center for Vocation at Pacific Lutheran University, expected it.

"This work is emotional to me," she said, fighting through tears, amid my poor attempt to do the same.

There's a special kinship between people who are first in the family to graduate from college: grit, resilience, pride in where you come from, even more pride in where you're going.

But Winer's chair — the "vocational chair," as people fondly call it — mustered something in me that I wasn't expecting.

Winer witnesses many similar reactions in the chair, as she guides other first-generation Lutes through the unfamiliar territory of pinpointing their passions. For those students, "finding a calling" isn't typically at the top of their list of college goals.

"Nobody has ever asked these questions. Nobody has given them this option," Winer said. "This is a means to an end, instead of a lifelong journey." »



Pictured from left to right: Kari Plog, senior editor for content development; Allan Belton, acting president; Laree Winer, associate director for student engagement and the Center for Vocation; Eva Frey, dean of students.



**There's a special kinship between people who are first in the family to graduate from college: grit, resilience, pride in where you come from, even more pride in where you're going.**



## "MY MOM WAS INCREDIBLY INTELLIGENT," WINER SAID. "HAD SHE HAD A DEGREE, SHE COULD HAVE DONE SO MUCH MORE AND THAT MADE AN IMPRESSION ON ME."



(1)



(2)

**LAREE WINER '15, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND THE CENTER FOR VOCATION**

(1) Winer goofing around as a child.

(2) Winer and her mother on Winer's graduation day from Franklin Pierce High School.

(3) Winer and her father at PLU Commencement 2015, the year Winer earned her bachelor's degree. She walked across the stage on her 50th birthday.

(4) A portrait of Winer upon graduating from PLU in 2015.

That is until Winer intervenes. She doesn't minimize their priorities: getting a great job, earning a good salary, making their family proud. Still, she helps the students discover the complete picture of success.

"We'll talk about hard things. Fear. Doubt," Winer said. "A lot of my support is helping them be courageous."

And Winer knows firsthand what it takes to find courage.

She's a first-generation graduate who navigated a long, winding path to a religion bachelor's degree from PLU. It took two attempts to earn an associate degree from Pierce College, with a wedding and a baby in between. After five years working in the medical field and welcoming her second child, she thought she would go back to school for nursing.

"I had an epiphany," she said. "I can do this, but I don't know that I should do this."

So, she didn't. After eight years as a stay-at-home mom, Winer went back to work in K-12 education. She worked a laundry list of jobs at Cascade Christian Schools in Puyallup, from administrative assistant positions to fundraising work.

After outgrowing those jobs, Winer said, she worked as a professional organizer, pondering her next move.

Though she didn't know what came next, she knew college was at the top of her list.

"I wanted to finish my degree so much," she said. "It frustrated me to be in jobs that were just jobs. I didn't know if the work was meaningful."

Then, sitting at Marzano Italian Restaurant with her husband in 2005, Winer spotted banners across the way that spoke to her: "What will you do with your one wild and precious life? What's your vocation?"

PLU's mission found Winer in the right place at the right time. She snagged an informational interview with human resources, thanks to a client's connection to the Office of Advancement.

"I just started applying for anything I could to get my foot in the door here at PLU," she said.

An administrative job with the Division of Social Sciences in 2006 led to valuable mentorship by faculty members, who quickly realized Winer was overqualified for the work she was doing. She eventually landed in Student Life, where she remains today, and started pursuing her degree in 2009.



(3)



(4)

Winer took a class every term while working full time for the university, finishing with a 3.98 grade-point average upon graduating in 2015. The only B on her transcript was in philosophy.

"I always did really well in school. A learner was a big part of my identity," she said. "I loved to read, I loved to write, I loved to learn."

The intelligence runs in the family, she noted.

"My mom was incredibly intelligent," Winer said, adding that the family spent so much time at the old Parkland library on Garfield Street that the staff offered her mom a job. She worked in the local library system until she died in 2001. "Had she had a degree, she could have done so much more and that made an impression on me."

Winer's dad, who proudly watched his daughter cross the commencement stage on her 50th birthday, is pragmatic and sharp. "My dad has a tremendous work ethic," she said. "He's really smart. He reads voraciously."

Tears welled as I talked to Winer about her parents — because they remind me of mine.

My mom dropped out of high school not once, but twice. I was in eighth grade before I found out. That's when my mom was studying for the test to earn a GED certificate, right before she took an entry-level job at a title company. After years of working her way through the ranks, she became a licensed limited practice officer and subsequently one of the top escrow closers in her company. Now, she's a manager who has transformed the performance of the branch she leads.

And she's one of the smartest people I know.

"I am not ashamed of it at all," my mom recently told me. "I feel like my story could inspire someone."

Just like Winer's dad, mine has an unwavering work ethic. I don't have the space to list all the jobs my dad has worked. He excelled equally in all of them. But my dad's biggest impact on me has been his relentless consumption of newspapers and his staunch life lessons.

He has an associate degree, and started studying business finance at the University of Alaska Juneau before a great job opportunity in retail management and building a family took him down a different path.

"He just couldn't pass it up," my mom said. I've been reminded a lot that the job completely covered medical expenses when my two younger sisters and I were born within five years of each other.

My dad was my voice of reason during college: "whatever you study, make sure it pays the bills."

Winer can relate.

"Well, what are you going to do with that?" she recalled her dad asking, in reaction to the religion courses she was taking. "There's this practicality to it," she said.

Winer knows that's a struggle for many first-generation college students, making it that much sweeter when the breakthroughs happen.

Still, the practical side of being first in the family adds value to the overall college experience that other students may not reap. »



"They come with a realistic knowledge of the outside world," Winer said. "They come fully aware of the challenges, fully aware of the obstacles. And yet they still, despite full knowledge of those things, have incredible hope. They have a grit and resiliency and work ethic."

And they approach their education with eyes wide open.

"First-gen students have an eagerness, they have an appreciation, they have an openness to not just the content, but the mentoring that is readily available here," Winer said. "There's such a hunger for mentoring."

## 'PART OF THE FABRIC'

Eva Frey '95 was always the smart girl.

"The most salient identity up to that point in my life was that of a student," she said of her teenage self. "So what else was I going to do but go to college?"

Despite coming from parents who couldn't afford to pursue higher education, Frey says it was never a question for her and her sister. "The active conversation in our family was 'you girls will have more than what your father and I had.'"

That included swimming and piano lessons, trips to museums, and anything they needed to thrive at school.

"I was first in the family, but I was also free and reduced lunch — government cheese and peanut butter and the whole nine yards," said Frey, now the dean of students at PLU. "But my parents never made us feel like we didn't have enough to do whatever we wanted to do."

When she came to the university, she didn't know who around her shared a similar background.

"When I was here as a college student, you did not tell people you were first in the family," she said. "I knew for sure people could tell I was first in the family because I didn't have a bathrobe. All the other kids on the wing had a bathrobe."

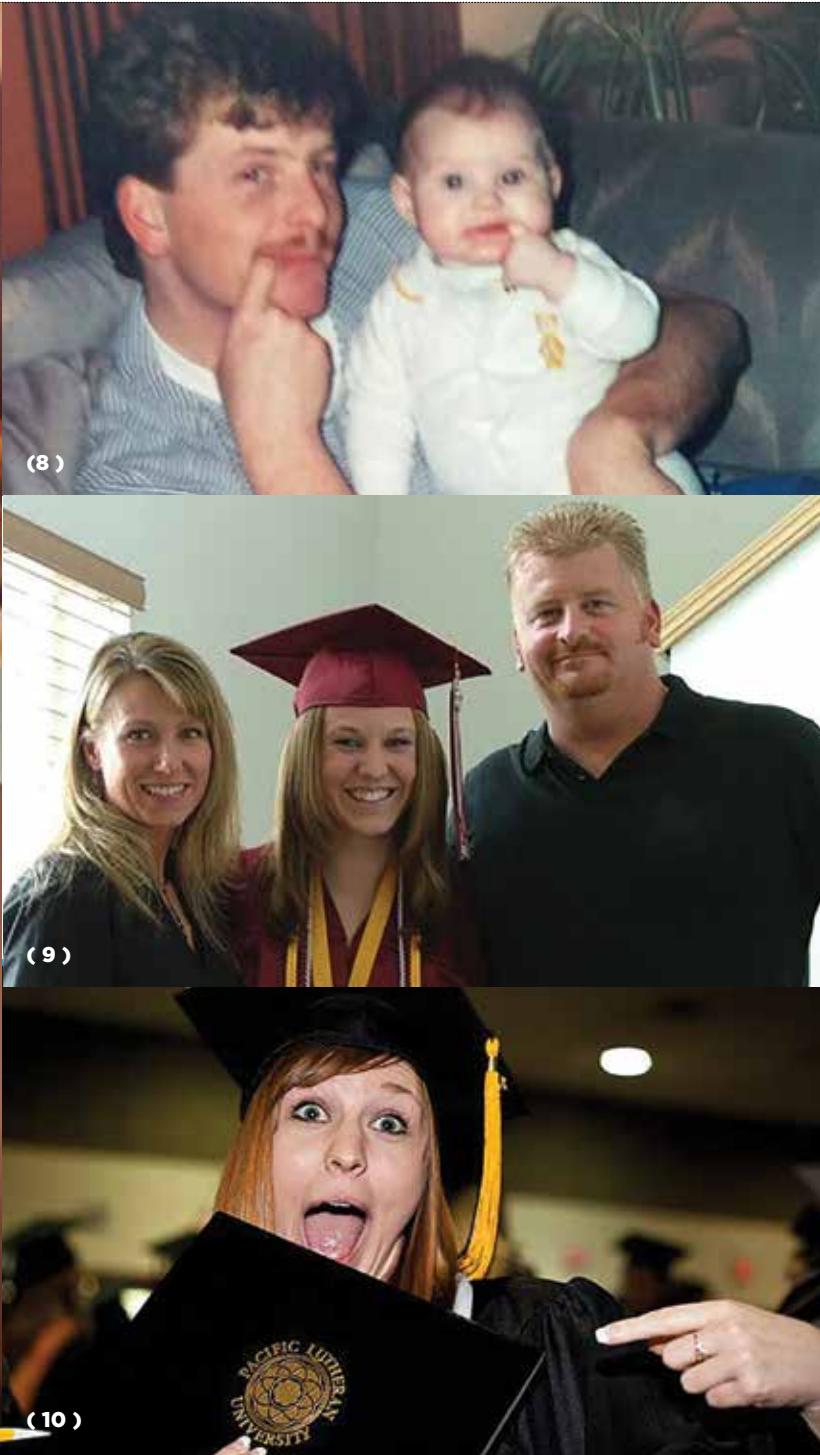
It was an item, among many, that didn't jump out as a necessity to a family who lacked the cultural capital to anticipate how to prepare for college.

It wasn't until Frey told me about her experience with a residence-hall fire alarm sans bathrobe that I realized I didn't have a bathrobe during my time living at PLU, either.

It wasn't for a lack of preparation, though. Despite living nearby, my mom compiled a massive list of must-haves before I hauled my things to Harstad Hall in fall 2007.

I didn't have a bathrobe, but I definitely had a shower caddy.





#### EVA FREY '95, DEAN OF STUDENTS

(5) Frey (right) with her sister.

(6) Frey on the morning of PLU Commencement 1995.

(7) Frey with her father the day of her PLU graduation.

#### KARI PLOG '11, SENIOR EDITOR FOR CONTENT DEVELOPMENT

(8) Plog with her father.

(9) Plog with her parents the day of her graduation from Bethel High School in 2007.

(10) Plog immediately following PLU Commencement 2011.

As for Frey, her dad bought an elaborate “shower caboodle” that stood tall and doubled as a seat with storage. “My dad had a very literal interpretation of what was needed to come to college,” she said, adding that her parents were “all in.”

Frey says these experiences inform how she approaches student development in her role at PLU, especially when dealing with first-generation students. The representation she and other administrators across campus offer helps create a sense of belonging that wasn’t as accessible in the past.

“Representation is important because education is about growing your knowledge base and your experience base,” Frey said. “And that doesn’t just happen by what you learn in the classroom, it happens by who you sit next to.”

And, Frey added, sometimes the person you sit next to may represent perspectives that are invisible.

It’s why Elizabeth Barton, psychologist and associate director for training and outreach in PLU’s Counseling Center, stresses that representation alone isn’t enough. “We have to articulate that experience,” Barton said. “Just being is not the same as advocating and sharing that story. There’s such power in finding like-minded people.”

When I was at PLU as a student, I didn’t talk about my experience as a first-generation student, mainly because I was unaware that it was remarkable. Still, I always felt like I was on an island. At the time, I failed to articulate why I struggled to relate to my peers.

Now, I understand what made me different, and I envy the first-in-the-family students who can see themselves modeled — and celebrated — in the administration.

“Not only are there a lot of us, we don’t try to hide our identity,” Frey said. “We invite and we normalize that first-in-the-family exists. We don’t shame it.”

Frey says PLU is leaving behind the so-called deficit model of approaching first-in-the-family support, which can push those student narratives to the shadows.

“By bringing it out in the open we are pushing ourselves, as an institution, to increase the capacity to understand the opportunities and strengths of those who are first in the family and help them be even more successful,” she said. “It’s part of the fabric of this place.”

Frey admits her title sometimes makes it harder for first-generation students to see their experiences in her. But often it shows them what’s possible.

“Being Dr. Frey, being the dean of students, stands about 50 feet in front of me. And there are students who can never get over that,” Frey said. “Then there are students who get over it, and find me a role model of what can be achieved. And then there are students who actually engage with me in conversation about how do you do this.” »



Frey admits there are times when she hides her title — in part to avoid “flaunting it,” but also to settle into the space between the academic world and the world that came before it.

“I work in education, so I live in a cerebral world,” she said. “My entire family lives in a military world.”

She recalls a recent conversation with her sister — who holds a graduate degree from Georgetown University: “Why do you always have to use the biggest words possible?” Frey recalled her asking. “Normal people don’t sound like you, Eva.”

Barton says code-switching — or constantly shifting between cultural identities — is common for first-generation college students. It can involve balancing the desire for new opportunities with the nagging pressure not to get “too big for your britches,” she said.

“It’s feeling like they don’t belong in either world,” Barton said.

However, Barton added, students caught in the middle of the two worlds also benefit from the push and pull. “They get to decide what to accept and reject,” she said, embracing identity development more intentionally.

When I code-switch, I find myself yearning to transfer the most valuable parts of my college experience to my family. Specifically, the PLU brand of vocation.

My parents have always worked good jobs. More recently, those good jobs have come with even better salaries.

For many first-generation students, money is a motivator because it’s what they’ve come to understand as the marker of success. After all, how can you feel successful if you can’t pay your bills?

What PLU taught me — and continues to teach other first-generation students — is the value of fulfillment.

**FOR MANY FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS, MONEY IS A MOTIVATOR BECAUSE IT’S WHAT THEY’VE COME TO UNDERSTAND AS THE MARKER OF SUCCESS. AFTER ALL, HOW CAN YOU FEEL SUCCESSFUL IF YOU CAN’T PAY YOUR BILLS? WHAT PLU TAUGHT ME — AND CONTINUES TO TEACH OTHER FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS — IS THE VALUE OF FULFILLMENT.**



(11)



(12)

#### **ALLAN BELTON, ACTING PRESIDENT**

(11) Belton as a child, the youngest of eight.

(12) Belton’s fifth-grade class picture, taken in Zillah, Washington, where he grew up (pictured front and center in the yellow striped shirt).

(13) Belton with the first puppy he ever called his own.



**CHECK OUT THE VIDEO**  
[plu.edu/first-in-the-family](http://plu.edu/first-in-the-family)

"It's about wholeness and completeness, freedom and liberation," Winer said.

That liberation is something I've always wanted for my parents, who are smart and work harder than anyone else I know. Reflecting on the liberation I've slowly seen my mom achieve, culminating in a recent late-night phone call, is what brought tears to my eyes in Winer's chair.

Following an after-hours work gathering she organized for her staff, my mom called to share a feeling of fulfillment I've rarely seen in her when discussing her work.

"I'm just so happy with what I do," she told me. "And I'm so good at it."

Little did I realize at the time, that moment stayed with me. It bubbled to the surface as I sat across from Winer in the chair.

"Your mom is such a perfect example of the freedom," Winer said. "The reason why you get so emotional about it is because you're hearing her freedom. You're seeing her emerge and be whole, and be awesome in ways that you haven't seen before. And that's powerful."

## **'LOUD AND PROUD'**

Acting President Allan Belton says he was the "quirky brainiac" growing up — the youngest of eight with parents who were products of the Great Depression.

But unlike his colleague Frey, Belton never talked about college at home.



"It was a big deal to be the first," he said. "Nobody had that personal experience, so we didn't talk about it."

That changed when a new counselor arrived at Zillah High School, which only had about 150 kids at the time. Belton still remembers her name: Karin Thompson.

"She saw something in me that I didn't see in my future," he recalled.

The counselor convinced Belton's friends to drive him to and from the SAT, to guarantee he took the test. After that she asked him, along with a couple of his peers, to complete a form and an essay.

"I didn't know what it was for," Belton said.

When Thompson handed him the envelope that notified him of his full-ride scholarship to any state school in Washington, she asked him what it meant to him.

Even then, he wasn't sure: "I think it means I'm going to college," he recalled saying. "It was quite a shock. I had never visited a university."

Soon, that changed. After a tour around the state, he chose Washington State University. He still remembers standing outside his residence hall with a single box and a fast-food burger, alone and bewildered.

"I didn't know how to check into my room," he said. It wasn't until well into his first year that he learned about the concept of dropping classes. "I had to go through those processes on my own."

Belton knows other first-generation college students — at PLU and beyond — have similar stories. He also knows, and appreciates, the valuable lessons learned from them.

"A lot of first-gens are just self sufficient in many ways when it matters," Belton said. "You have to have some level of independence. Teaching yourself how to do things despite nobody showing you how."

Belton gained a lot of independence even before coming to college: he worked countless jobs in orchards, raised pigs, stocked shelves at a local grocery store, babysat neighbors. He even did his parents' taxes from the time he was 13, since neither of them graduated high school.

"I made more (money) out of my first year of college than my parents ever did combined," Belton said. "That's just eye opening. You can't teach the ability to find a way to get things done."

Much like myself and others, Belton didn't broadcast his first-in-the-family status. He counts himself lucky for stumbling into a support network that helped him thrive. His roommate's brother already had two years under his belt at WSU, for example.

He has learned how vital it is for him to talk about his past, especially in his role leading the university. It's why he wears his "proud to be first in the family" button, and why he shares his story with the PLU community at every opportunity. »



Belton sitting on Santa's lap as a child.

**"IT'S TOUGH AS A FIRST-GEN, BUT THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU CAN DO IS BE LOUD AND PROUD ABOUT IT. NO ONE IS GOING TO KNOW YOU'RE FIRST-GEN UNLESS YOU SAY IT. AND IT'S NOTHING TO BE EMBARRASSED ABOUT. IT'S SOMETHING TO BE PROUD OF."**

"I don't know if we do enough, and I don't know if you can ever do enough," Belton stressed. "One of the biggest challenges any university has in serving first-in-the-family students, and the biggest challenge any first-in-the-family student has, is finding each other."

First-generation students don't often "raise their hands" to be identified, Belton added. "They will pretend they fit," he said. "They don't want to stand out."

The culture at PLU is working to foster a sense of pride among those who come first. "The only reason I would say we're doing better is because we're talking about it," Belton said. "It's tough as a first-gen, but the most important thing you can do is be loud and proud about it. No one is going to know you're first-gen unless you say it. And it's nothing to be embarrassed about. It's something to be proud of."

And there's a lot to be proud of: self-reliance, understanding the value of a dollar, owning your success, and changing the story for those who come after you.

Belton, who was dubbed "Harvard" by his family after heading to college, became a role model for younger members of his very large family.

"Everybody just started going to college," he said. Nearly all of Belton's nieces and nephews earned degrees, he added. "That's probably my favorite part of the story of being first-gen. I won't be last-gen."

More importantly, PLU students can look to Belton — and Frey, and Winer, and roughly 60 faculty and staff members across campus — and see the possibilities for themselves.

"I went from shaving pigs' ears with Nair to being a college president," Belton said. "So yeah, anyone can do it."

As I pored over palpable stories of my peers' experiences as first-generation students, I found a common thread that tied all of our stories together: limitless optimism.

"Many first-gen students come in with a different sense of what's possible," said Barton, the university psychologist.

"I think first-gens have a different orientation toward the opportunity (to attend college)," Winer said. "We recognize the privilege in a different way."

"It's amazing what you can have when you make that your expectation," Frey said.

"Sometimes it's just finding a way when there's no path," Belton said. "That's not really adversity, that's just part of the DNA of being first of anything."

I am so proud to be first, for all that's mentioned above and more. And while I'm grateful for the cultural capital I've gained from my college experience — to inevitably pass on later — I sincerely hope I find a way to transfer what I gained from a lack thereof. □

# FIRST IN THE FAMILY COMMUNITY

The First in the Family community at Pacific Lutheran University is one of many ways the university is fostering a sense of belonging for Lutes who identify as first-generation college students. The two wings — located in Stuen Hall as part of PLU's collection of themed Residential Learning Communities — offer support to self-identified "first in the family" students, or those whose parents didn't graduate from four-year, degree-granting institutions in the U.S.

The community allows students to develop their own definition of what it means to be first, while also benefiting from the shared experiences of their peers. It also allows them to explore the ways in which their first-generation status intersects with other salient identities, and how those shape their college experiences.

In addition to the residential community, first-generation Lutes are invited to attend first-in-the-family-focused events across campus. Among them is the first-in-the-family dinner, most recently held in November. It brought together faculty, staff, and residential and commuter students, to give first-generation Lutes another opportunity to share challenges and triumphs.

## Other past examples of programming focused around first-in-the-family students include:

- #PLUFIF Series: dinners with faculty, film screenings, an annual first-in-the-family retreat, and more
- Panels geared toward sharing the first-generation college experience with PLU peers
- Overnight hosts for first-generation prospective students
- Visits to local high schools by first-generation Lutes, to share stories about the college experience
- Field trips to campus resources such as the library

## STRENGTHS OF FIRST-GENS



"It's a different kind of pressure. Because you, in a way, are being the pioneer to the next generation. The road in front of you isn't paved at all, you're the one who has to pave it. Once you get across it and you're able to look back, there is a stronger sense of satisfaction that comes with it compared to knowing that other people have helped you along the way. You have a little bit more freedom to shape yourself and also know what you are capable of."

-Cristina Flores '19

"It's understanding that I have the support, but it's my responsibility to use the resources at school to be able to get where I need to go. Taking ownership." -Sharlene Rojas Apodaca '21

**MORE ONLINE:** Nicole Gonzales, resident director of Stuen and Ordal halls, offers advice for current and future first-in-the-family students. [plu.edu/tif-advice](http://plu.edu/tif-advice)



**THE BUTTON THAT AUMAN AND ROUGHLY 60 FACULTY AND STAFF MEMBERS ACROSS CAMPUS WEAR CARRIES A SIMPLE BUT PROFOUND DECLARATION: "PROUD TO BE FIRST IN THE FAMILY."**



FIRST-IN-THE-FAMILY  
COLLEGE GRADUATES TURNED

# FACULTY MEMBERS

PROUDLY WEAR THEIR  
EXPERIENCE FOR STUDENTS TO SEE



Pictured from left to right: Mary Ellard-Ivey, professor of biology; Kate Luther, chair of sociology; Ann Auman, dean of natural sciences; and Amy Siegesmund, associate professor of biology.

Ann Auman didn't always publicize that she was first in the family to attend college. In fact, before Pacific Lutheran University started prioritizing the first-generation student experience, it rarely crossed her mind.

Now, the dean of natural sciences wears it on a button — during new-student orientation, move-in day, even at events where prospective students might surface.

"For a long time, I didn't really think about being first-generation," said Auman, who also serves as professor of biology. "It's not like I put that label on myself. In more recent years, as PLU has put more of an emphasis on trying to support first-generation students, I obviously recognize that I am one."

The button that Auman and roughly 60 faculty and staff members across campus wear carries a simple but profound declaration: "Proud to be first in the family." It serves as a conversation starter, signaling to current first-generation students that these members of the community can offer guidance from the perspective of someone who has walked in their shoes.

And in Auman's division alone, there are a lot of those shoes. Several biology faculty members — many of them women, a group traditionally underrepresented in the field — claim a first-generation background.

## PROUD TO BE FIRST

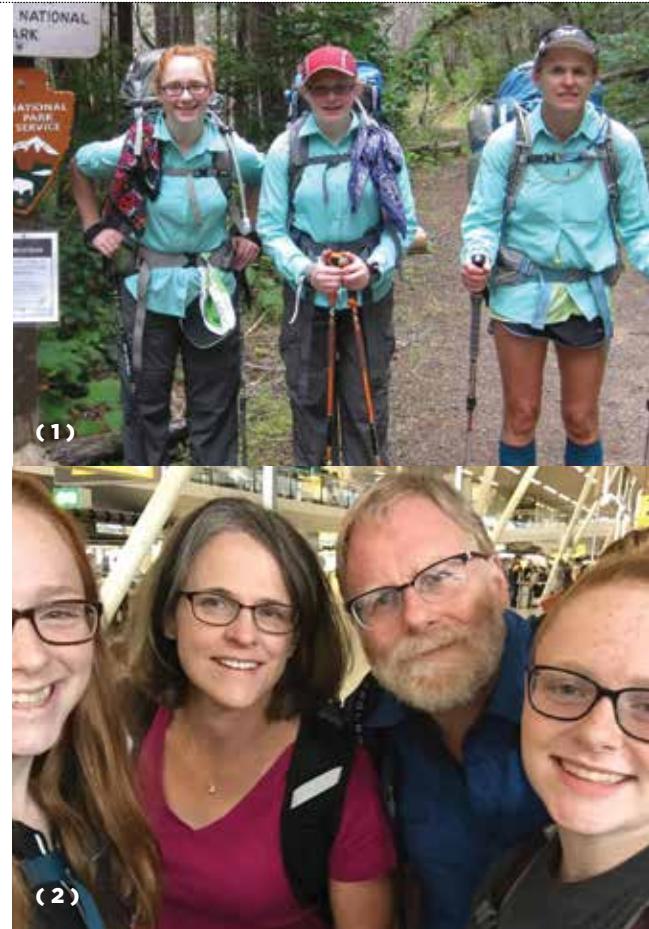
For Mary Ellard-Ivey, professor of biology, the courage to pursue her college dreams started with a teacher's simple checklist.

"I had a high school biology teacher who I remember very fondly as really encouraging me to go to college," said Ellard-Ivey, who grew up in working class Dublin, Ireland, as the youngest of nine children. "He said I didn't need anything except a bicycle and a pen and paper. And I already had a bicycle."

Her parents, on the other hand, were skeptical when she told them she wanted to be the first in her family to graduate from college. »



# PLU TRIES TO BRIDGE THE GAP FOR FIRST-IN-THE-FAMILY STUDENTS WITH PROGRAMS THAT INCLUDE A DEDICATED COMMUNITY IN STUEN HALL, A FIRST-IN-THE-FAMILY DINNER AND OTHER FORMS OF ASSISTANCE. REPRESENTATION FROM THE BEGINNING IS KEY, WHICH IS WHY AUMAN KEEPS HER BUTTON AT THE READY.



MARY ELLARD-IVEY, PROFESSOR OF BIOLOGY

- (1) Ellard-Ivey hiking with her children.
- (2) Ellard-Ivey traveling with her husband and children.
- (3) Ellard-Ivey, the youngest of nine, with some of her family members in Dublin, Ireland.

"I understand now that they were coming from a place of extreme concern," said Ellard-Ivey, who has taught at PLU since 1997. "It doesn't mean they didn't want what was best for me."

Still, she remembers her mother's reaction: "You have ideas above your station, young lady."

As Ellard-Ivey would discover, it's not easy being first.

Students whose parents or siblings have not attended college face significant hurdles when they choose higher education. Many not only lack cash, but they also may be deficient in the kind of social and cultural capital that their peers with college-educated parents gain as a birthright.

Everything from selecting a college to filling out applications, from choosing electives to choosing a meal plan can be a bigger challenge for first-generation students who have no one at home to offer advice based on personal experience.

And once they clear the big hurdles — gaining admission, securing scholarships and loans — first-in-the-family students may find themselves on campus struggling with the feeling that they don't really belong there.

Kate Luther '02, who chairs the PLU Department of Sociology, got both financial and emotional support for college from her family, as well as a financial aid package from PLU. She graduated with a degree in sociology and psychology, then went on to earn her master's and Ph.D. in sociology at University of California, Riverside.

"My parents always wanted me to go to college," said Luther, the oldest of three siblings and the first to attend college in her family. Her parents — a homemaker-turned-paraeducator and a carpenter who rose to become a construction supervisor — had saved a college fund she could draw on.

But she also worked a variety of summer jobs, including as a waitress at the local diner in her small hometown of Everson, outside Bellingham, Washington.



(4)

It was the proverbial one-stoplight town — actually, a flashing light — when Luther was growing up.

Luther realized once she got to college that “my friends’ families had different educational levels, and their families knew things that my family didn’t know.”

Now, she tells her first-generation PLU students that they are just as well loved by their parents as any other student.

“But we have to figure out how to do this on our own, in ways our peers do not,” Luther said.

PLU tries to bridge the knowledge gap with programs for students that include a First-in-the-Family community in Stuen Hall and other forms of assistance.

And in fall 2017, the university’s Center for Student Success, the Diversity Center and Residential Life launched a campaign to help faculty and staff show support for first-generation students.

That’s when Auman and others started proudly wearing their first-in-the-family buttons. Acting President Allan Belton wore his throughout beginning-of-the-year festivities — a gateway into sharing his own first-generation story. He centered his speech at University Conference — which kicks off the academic year — around his experience being first.

Representation from the beginning is key, which is why Auman keeps her button at the ready.

She has seen the struggles of students who may be juggling school, home life and even children of their own. And she’s glad that she can call on the campus Student Care Network to offer comprehensive support and necessary resources for navigating higher education.

Auman remembers what it was like in her student days, in an era before cellphones, when she had to time her calls home to her parents on Sunday nights »



(5)



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#### KATE LUTHER '02, CHAIR OF SOCIOLOGY

(4) Luther on a hay wagon with her siblings.

(5) Luther with her family on the day of her undergraduate graduation from PLU in 2002.

(6) Luther teaching at PLU during spring semester this year.



(7)



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#### ANN AUMAN, DEAN OF NATURAL SCIENCES

(7) Auman's family photo from about 1975.

(8) Auman in the lab during graduate school.

(9) Auman in her office at PLU.

after 9 p.m. That's when the long distance phone rates were cheaper.

Money was tight, especially after the closure of the department store where both her parents worked.

Auman survived her undergrad years on scholarship money and a system known as co-op education, which allows students for part of their college experience to alternate studying a semester and working a semester in a degree-related field. Her earnings from co-op work in a pharmaceutical company helped pay for college costs.

"I went to a really big school," said Auman, who attended Penn State University for her two undergraduate degrees and the University of Washington for her Ph.D. in microbiology. "I could have slipped through the cracks really easily and nobody would have noticed."

#### FIRST COMES WITH FORTITUDE

Growing up in rural Wisconsin, Amy Siegesmund didn't hear many of her peers making college plans.

As the oldest of three children, she doesn't remember her parents being against her going to college. But Siegesmund, now an associate professor of biology at PLU, doesn't remember them actively pushing the idea, either.

Her inspiration came from her circle of friends.

"It was the group I hung out with," she said. "We decided to do it together."

Like many first-generation students, she relied on a combination of student loans and work to finance her education at Alverno College, a small liberal arts college in Milwaukee where she earned a degree in biology. She received her Ph.D. in microbiology from Washington State University.



## Siegesmund said leaving her small Wisconsin town for the big city, living on campus and being exposed to the life-changing power of education was worth the struggle.

"I had all sorts of retail jobs," Siegesmund said of her college years. "I also had a job on campus. Part of my financial aid was a work-study job in the library. I loved that job. For the last couple years of school, I was working close to full time."

Siegesmund said leaving her small Wisconsin town for the big city, living on campus and being exposed to the life-changing power of education was worth the struggle.

"Discovering ideas about new ways of thinking and ways of exploring questions — it was transformative for me," she said.

Siegesmund says that when her PLU students spot her wearing her first-in-the-family button, it opens up all kinds of conversations.

Some who live on campus, but have family close by, feel the pull from home — parents who expect them home on weekends, when students are trying to make connections on campus.

"Their families don't always understand how much time it takes to be a student," Siegesmund said.

Ellard-Ivey said her first-generation students sometimes worry that their families don't understand what they're doing at college.

"That was my experience," said Ellard-Ivey, who attended University College Dublin for her bachelor's and master's degrees in botany and earned a Ph.D. in molecular biology at the University of British Columbia.

One experience she doesn't have in common with her American students is their financial struggles. Ellard-Ivey lived at home while she attended college in Dublin with a government grant that paid for her tuition and books. She worked one day a week at a hospital switchboard and commuted by bicycle.

"One of the things that blows me away about the United States is the lack of support for (higher) education," she said, noting that most European countries provide much more. That support, she said, ensures that college is "not a luxury for the privileged," but available to anyone with the "need, motivation and ability to go to college."

She talked about a recent interaction with a student, who was torn between attending an important guest lecture on campus and missing time at her job.

"I know it's difficult for them," she said of her first-generation students. "I'm in awe of some of the fortitude I see. They bring with them a type of motivation that I admire." □



(10)



(11)



AMY SIEGESMUND, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF BIOLOGY

(10) Portrait of Siegesmund as a child.

(11) Portrait of Siegesmund from her college graduation.

(12) Siegesmund in a lab at PLU this spring semester.



## Estudiantes de español como lengua heredada celebran nuevas experiencias juntos

### HERITAGE SPEAKERS EMBRACE FIRSTS TOGETHER

Emily Davidson '98 pursued the study of Spanish, in part, to prove herself to her grandmother.

"I wanted to prove to her that I was really Latina," she said, with a laugh.

Davidson, now an assistant professor of Hispanic studies at Pacific Lutheran University, says many of her college experiences — including traveling by herself to her mother's home country Panama after graduation — were motivated by a desire to show her family she was authentically one of them.

"For me, it was important in developing my identity to fully develop my language skills," she said.

That self exploration informs how Davidson educates her bilingual students, who take the "Spanish for Heritage Speakers" courses she launched at PLU. All of them grew up speaking Spanish at home.

"Each family has a different dynamic," Davidson said. "In some homes, they speak all in Spanish, but in most, you might speak



**DAVIDSON SAID STUDENTS' SHARED EXPERIENCES ARE KEY TO CREATING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY, A PRIMARY FACTOR THAT HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THE COHORTS' NEAR-PERFECT RETENTION RATE, DESPITE THE CHALLENGES FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS OF COLOR OFTEN FACE COMING INTO A PREDOMINANTLY WHITE INSTITUTION.**



Spanish to grandma, code-switch between English and Spanish with your parents, and speak Spanglish and English with your siblings."

During a recent discussion with the spring-semester class, Davidson jotted bullet points across a whiteboard about the assigned reading "I, Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guatemala." In the testimonial — written in many world languages, including Spanish, despite the English title used in class — the Nobel Peace Prize winner reflects on her experiences as an indigenous woman in Guatemala amid political terror and genocide.

Davidson challenged the students to analyze the activist's story as part of their study of narrative. Among the *contenido*, the content, the students discussed:

*Tradiciones indígenas*; indigenous traditions.

*Eventos — ella como testigo*; events as Menchú witnessed them.

*Descripciones de la violencia*; descriptions of the violence.

*Historias personales de la concientización*; personal stories of how she developed a critical consciousness (or in millennial speak, they joked, how Menchú "got woke").

And, fittingly, *género literario del testimonio*; literary genre of testimony, which privileges memories and personal experiences.

Sharing personal experiences, in many ways, lies at the heart of Davidson's heritage speakers course series. It's designed to pull from and empower the personal histories of the Latino students who take it — an academic approach rarely offered to them in U.S. classrooms, Davidson says.

"We get to channel our own experiences into what we write," Sharlene Rojas Apodaca '21 said of her class.

## **EMPOWERING BILINGUAL LEARNERS**

Rojas Apodaca is one of many first-year students, past and present, to join the cohort of heritage Spanish speakers. She's also one of many first-generation college students to enroll. »



The small, seminar-style courses are designed to hone participants' Spanish skills: academic writing, grammar, vocabulary and awareness of "linguistic registers," or the way that language shifts based on context or communication goals. They also introduce students to the broad histories and cultures of Hispanic countries around the world, as well as the U.S.

"Unfortunately, we live in a country that doesn't really value bilingualism," Davidson said. "They have distinct talents that we need to help support and develop."

Davidson designed the course series, now in its third year, as a hybrid between cultural studies and language learning. It offers bilingual students the rare opportunity to develop both languages simultaneously and in community.

It also aims to destigmatize the use of so-called "slang," or less formal ways of speaking.

"It's not seeing them as a population with special needs," Davidson stressed. "It's seeing them as a population with special skills."

Francisco Aragón '19 — a Mexican-American who took Davidson's heritage speakers class his first year at PLU — appreciated that intentional approach.

"She doesn't use Spanish to correct how you talk, but rather explains why you talk the way you do," Aragón said, noting that it was counter to his experience taking some Spanish classes in high school.

"The goal is to empower students by establishing a greater language repertoire," Davidson said.

The springtime discussion illustrated how students work to expand that repertoire. While discussing her view of Menchú's testimonial, one student switched to English to clarify the translation of "terminology" (*terminología*).

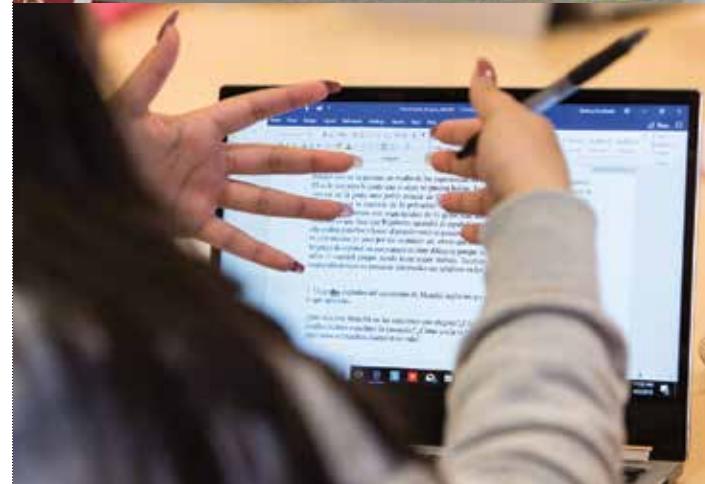
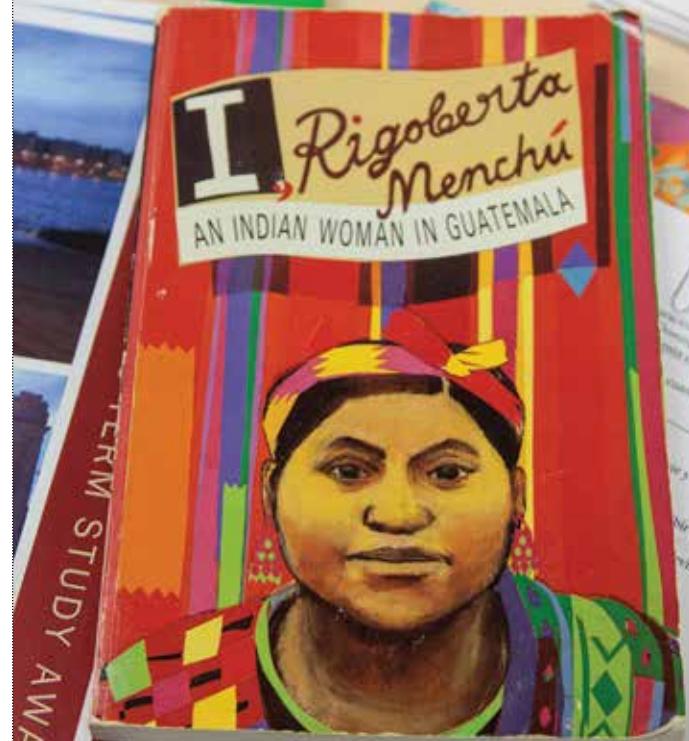
Beyond language, though, students embrace their culture and learn about others — addressing shared experiences, as well as those unique from their own.

"It's an invitation to critically examine what it means to be Latino in the United States," Davidson said.

Students in the cohorts claim a variety of backgrounds — with families from countries all over Central and South America, for example — and their majors are as diverse as they are: biology, education, philosophy, social work, kinesiology, and more.

But Davidson said their shared experiences are key to creating the sense of community, a primary factor that has contributed to the cohorts' near-perfect retention rate, despite the challenges first-generation students of color often face coming into a predominantly white institution.

"It's powerful when you can come together with a group of people



## **"WE'RE ALL HAVING THIS KIND OF UNIQUE, SHARED EXPERIENCE NOT ONLY BEING FIRST-GENERATION, BUT ALSO BEING LATINA WOMEN AND TRYING TO GET OUR EDUCATION."**

who share similar experiences with you," Davidson said. "It's sort of like a homeroom. It's a place of belonging. It's a place where you feel like 'everybody in here gets me.'"

Valeria Pinedo Chipana '20, an engineering student, registered for the class in 2016 hoping for that built-in community. During her high school years in predominantly white schools in University Place, she had to branch out to surrounding Tacoma, Parkland and Spanaway schools to meet other people of color.

After joining the heritage speakers cohort, Pinedo Chipana gained so much more, particularly a heightened ability to communicate with her relatives from Peru, where she was born.

"My parents know all the history," she said. "I was able to relate more to what they were talking about. When I learned about the history, I could finally understand what they were talking about."

Rojas Apodaca, a philosophy and Hispanic studies double major, says her learning also extends outside the classroom. "We always talk about it in other classes and at home," she said.

### **INTERSECTING IDENTITIES**

Rojas Apodaca, who was raised by a single mother and moved to the U.S. from Mexico when she was 8 years old, says her identity as a first-generation student is just as salient as her other intersecting identities.

Davidson's cohort allows her to discuss the struggles she shares with her peers. Among them, balancing her responsibilities at home — helping with bills, working multiple jobs — with the high expectations she sets for herself academically.

"We're all having this kind of unique, shared experience not only being first-generation, but also being Latina women and trying to get our education," Rojas Apodaca said of her all-female class this semester. "And not having that define us, but having it be a part of us."

Despite the challenges, Rojas Apodaca stresses the strengths she's gained from her background. Her mother never made her or her siblings feel like they went without, and inspired them to speak success into existence. That upbringing taught Rojas Apodaca to take ownership of her future, and informs her continued path toward law school.

"She was always very motivating, and I think that transcended into my own motivation," Rojas Apodaca said. "She's a really good role model for me."

Cristina Flores '19, who is majoring in psychology with a minor in Hispanic studies, says her first-generation identity in relation to others in the heritage speakers class is complicated.

She sometimes feels like she's "faking it," since her mom

attended some college in her home nation of Peru and her dad earned a graduate degree before becoming a systems engineer back home. Her aunts and uncles — among them dentists and neurosurgeons — also had a sense of belonging in academia and spoke the language of higher education.

Still, PLU defines first-in-the-family students as those who come from parents who didn't study at U.S. colleges, and Flores says she shares some of the traditional experiences of first-generation students. "They are kind of living through me, in a sense," Flores said of her parents.

She shares the strengths of fellow first-gens, too: resilience, grit, an ownership of her success.

"It's a different kind of pressure because you, in a way, are being the pioneer to the next generation. The road in front of you isn't paved at all, you're the one who has to pave it," Flores said. "Once you get across it and you're able to look back, there is a stronger sense of satisfaction that comes with it."

Aragón, a kinesiology and Hispanic studies double major, says he never really talked about his identity as first in the family with his heritage-speaker classmates. But, the shared experiences were still there.

"There's definitely a whole lot of framework I have to build up for myself as a first-gen student," he said. "Really becoming my own parental figure. I know I have to be on top of things."

And he and his peers who are blazing the trail bring a different perspective to the table, he stressed. "I think they bring, in a sense, hope," Aragón said. "Regardless of where we're coming from, despite all these odds, we're willing to be dedicated to our education."

Rojas Apodaca underscored that benefit. She said first-in-the-family students offer a dynamic perspective that helps professors improve how they teach, and PLU is better for it.

"We're very excited to learn, we're excited to get involved and we're excited to participate in class," she said. "My peers can learn from me."

Davidson says that same excitement and pride students show for their culture is one of the most rewarding parts of the courses she's created. And it begins with early recruiting, before students even step foot on campus their first semester.

"That's a labor of love," she said. "I'm a heritage speaker and I really believe in this powerful experience exploring who you are through your language in college. It changed my life and I want students to experience that. It's very personal." □

*First  
In The  
Family*

**RHYS JONES '16 SITS COMFORTABLY AT THE INTERSECTION OF MANY SALIENT IDENTITIES: VETERAN, NON-TRADITIONAL COLLEGE STUDENT, ACADEMIC, OPENLY TRANSGENDER. AND HE FEELS AT HOME WITH ALL OF THEM AT PLU.**

# Veteran. First-gen. Trans. Academic.

## Alumnus Rhys Jones '16 thrives at the intersection of many identities

After Rhys Jones '16 dropped out of high school in Santa Rosa, California, he joined the Army looking for a new start.

"Maybe this would be something to get me out of working on ranches," recalled Jones, who has worked in academic assistance at Pacific Lutheran University throughout this academic year.

It did, but it also helped the then-19-year-old look at the world differently, an experience that would carry over into his life more than a decade later.

After enlisting, Jones became a corrections officer in a military prison. "You realize nothing in the world is clear cut," he said of the job. "The personal narratives of people are so key."

He worked there for two years, but it left a lasting impact on him and even fed into his pursuit of history and religion majors when he got accepted to PLU at 29 years old, while stationed at Joint Base Lewis-McChord. He had done some schooling at Central Texas College, but at PLU Jones found his academic home.

Jones sits comfortably at the intersection of many salient identities: veteran, non-traditional college student, academic, openly transgender. And he feels at home with all of them at PLU.

Additionally, Jones was the first in his family to pursue higher education, something he has drawn from throughout his time at PLU.

"I got accepted fast as heck," he said. "I just remember being ecstatic about that."

Jones comes from a small family — "they're kind of quirky people," he said. His great-grandparents emigrated from Europe at the tail end of the Great Depression.

"I came here flying solo in a lot of ways," he said of PLU.

Still, Jones acknowledges that he wasn't totally alone. He counts on his chosen family of friends, or, as he puts it, "framily."

Nicole Juliano, assistant director of the Diversity Center who worked with Jones as a student, falls into Jones' framily. She says the alumnus-turned-employee uses his various intersecting identities to help others.

"(Jones holds) space for people who have multiple identities," she said. "Especially veterans."

Jones oversees student tutors and works out of an office in the Mortvedt Library. He is calm and collected, and really thrives at the university. He may have come in without the family forebears going to college, but he adapted to college life quickly and came into his own.

And representing that experience for students who relate to him is invaluable at an institution that welcomes an ever-growing population of first-generation, military-affiliated and other non-traditional college students.

Jones also helped those cohorts before joining the PLU staff. As a student, he was a community advocate in Kreidler Hall, which helped foster community for non-traditional students — such as commuters, veterans and older students — in the residence hall.

"I pretty much wound up working right with my peers," he said.

He knew how hard it could be to get back into the swing of things at college when you've been away from school working in another field.

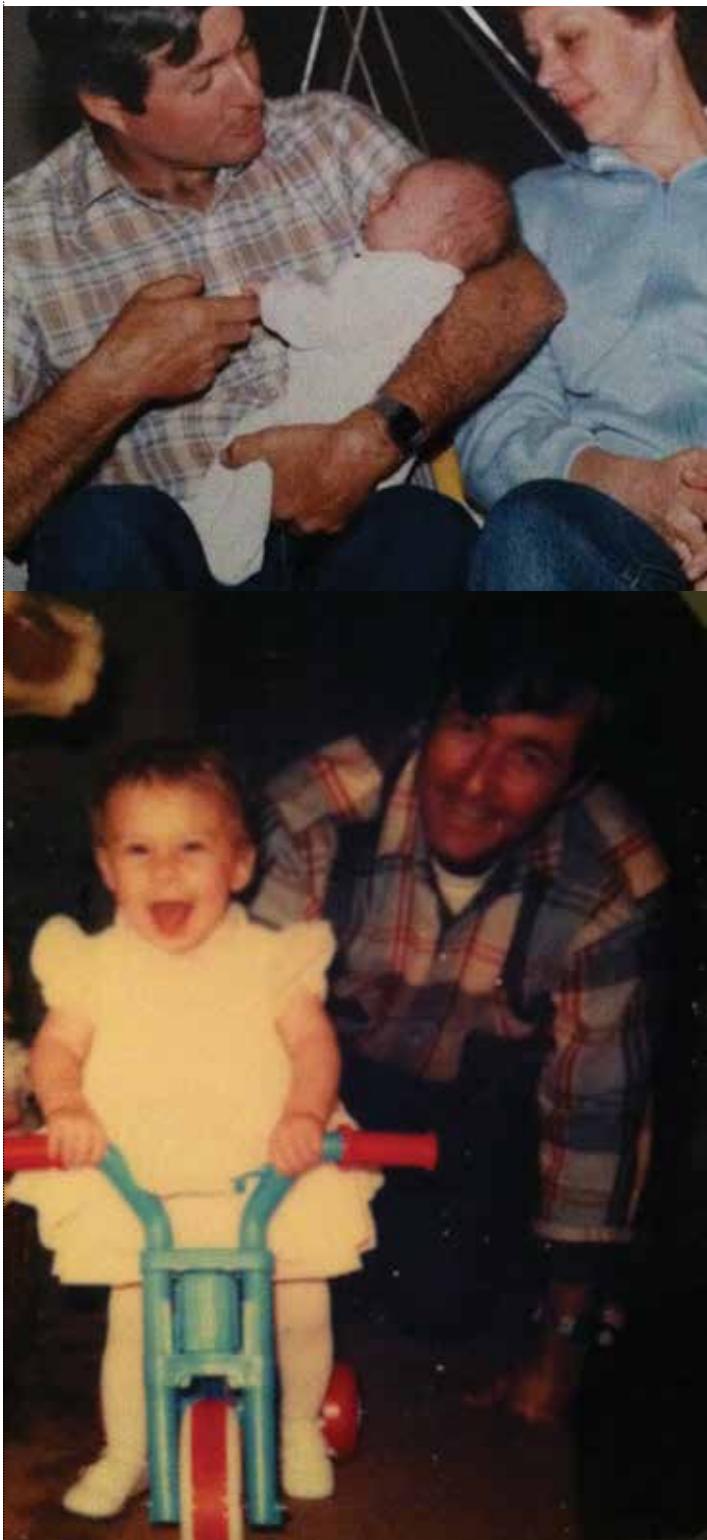
"If you've been out of college for a few years, jumping back into the grind isn't easy," Jones said.

To help his peers navigate the challenges of their unconventional college experience, Jones also draws from his military background — especially his short stint at the prison.

It spurred a deeper understanding of larger narratives of history, one half of his double major. Passion crosses his face when he talks about his studies. His face lights up and he leans forward in his chair to talk about what he's learned.

"The human story is a very complex thing," he said. "History doesn't start and then stop. It's more of an evolution." »

## **Coming out at PLU didn't intimidate Jones; he knew there was a culture of acceptance, and he already had a support system there.**



As for his study of religion, Jones saw it as a catalyst for the history he was studying and wanted to know more.

"Religion provides a huge worldview," he said. "When you understand the religion, history makes a whole lot more sense."

Jones' intersecting identities have evolved since graduation. He came out as trans in July 2017 and changed his name.

Jones gazes fondly at his gold PLU name tag while reflecting on his transition in 2017.

"I was really happy when I got my name badge. Just flashing my little name badge like 'This is my name badge!'" he said, laughing.

Coming out at PLU didn't intimidate Jones; he knew there was a culture of acceptance, and he already had a support system there.

"PLU is awesome in that way," he said. "Being (openly trans) is not a scary concept."

Jones' faith also is an important part of his identity. While at PLU, he was the vice president of the Congregation Council, a role that is a great source of pride for him. He was the vice president during the 2015-16 academic year.

In total, Jones was a PLU student for about two and a half years — slightly longer than his time working at the military prison, but equally as transformative. He stayed at PLU an extra semester to complete his double major. When he finally earned his degree, he chose not to walk at graduation.

Jones was adopted by his grandparents around age 7. He said "a lot of sadness" surrounded commencement, because his grandparents were not alive to see him graduate. After the death of his grandmother, he couldn't bear the idea of walking without her there to watch.

So he didn't.

"This was my way of paying homage to her by keeping to myself in a way," he said.

More graduations may lie ahead for Jones — he hopes to become a professor, focusing his Ph.D. on ancient Mediterranean history.

For now, Jones has found a home on PLU's campus, training student tutors and helping those like him. He feels he has a responsibility to prepare them for the workforce.

"Part of what I'm doing here is to train them to be responsible," he said.

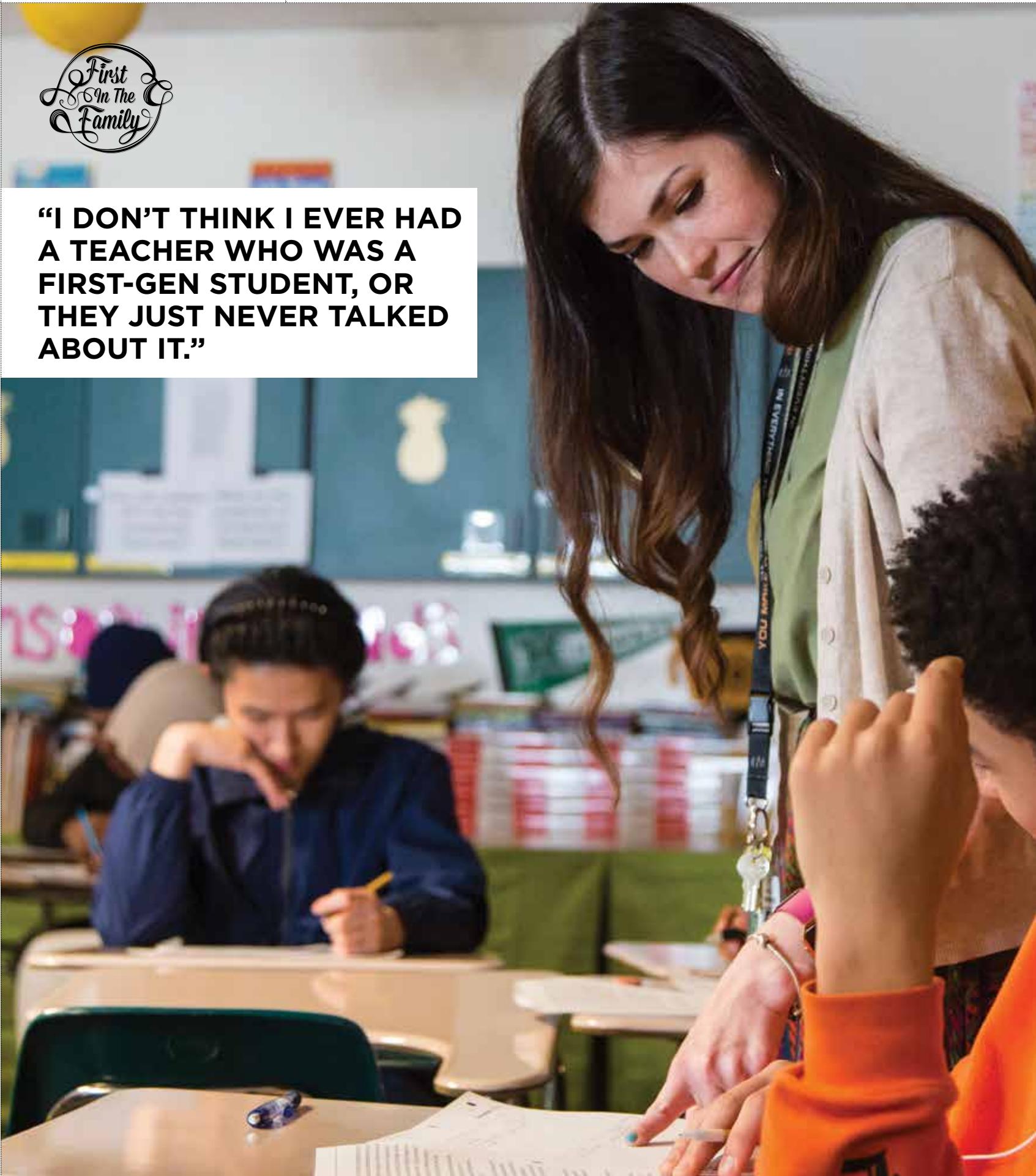
The homecoming is significant, and not just for Jones, Juliano says.

"There's a lot of reasons why he is choosing to work at PLU right now," she said. "But I think that he is interested in committing to the overall success that afforded him to thrive at PLU." □





**"I DON'T THINK I EVER HAD A TEACHER WHO WAS A FIRST-GEN STUDENT, OR THEY JUST NEVER TALKED ABOUT IT."**



## THE PROLOGUE

Malia Oshiro '13 teaches from a hard-fought place of pride

At the start of each school year, Malia Oshiro '13 proudly introduces herself as a first-generation college graduate. It's the prologue to her career as an English teacher, a pivotal piece of her story that continues to inform her approach to education — for herself and her students.

But Oshiro didn't always wear her status as first in the family like a badge of honor. Early in her undergraduate years at Pacific Lutheran University, she kept quiet about it, paralyzed with anxious thoughts nagging in the back of her mind: I don't deserve to be here. That person is more qualified. Are they going to recognize that I'm here because of my achievements?

"It was almost a shame thing. I didn't want to talk about it," Oshiro said. "It's a thing that makes you different."

Now, sitting against a backdrop of classroom walls plastered with inspirational literary quotes, she understands how important it is for her to open up about that salient piece of her identity.

"I don't think I ever had a teacher who was a first-gen student," she said. "Or they just never talked about it."

So, she is talking about it.

"It's always the first thing I mention, that I was a first-gen college student and the first one in my family to get a master's degree," she said. "And I did it because I wanted to be the first."

Her decision to attend college was cultivated at home, by her parents who never earned degrees but constantly stressed the value of education.

Oshiro's father — born and raised in Oahu, Hawaii — served in the Army as part of the last wave of soldiers to be drafted. Coming from a large family with lots of siblings, college was a distant possibility for him. Still, Oshiro's "super creative" dad, as she lovingly describes him, attempted to pursue an associate degree in graphic design and visual arts. The birth of Oshiro's older sister ended that pursuit prematurely.

"He constantly used that as a teachable moment for my siblings and I," Oshiro said, underscoring the sacrifice he made. "That feeling you have when you're almost within reach, it's not something you want to have." »

**KEEP  
THE  
QUOTE**

*"NEVER doubt that  
a small group of  
thoughtful,  
COMMITTED  
citizens can  
change the world.  
Indeed, it's the only thing."*





Oshiro said her mother had limited family support and immediately entered the workforce after graduating from high school, before eventually staying home with her kids. Growing up, Oshiro and her siblings — thanks to their mom — did as much learning at home as they did at school.

"She made sure we would have extra practice with these little workbooks she would buy from Costco," Oshiro said. "I was surrounded by and immersed in education, school, books, reading. That gave me the love for the subject area I teach, and it was a natural thing for me to become a teacher."

The extra work was fun, too: "She made it fun," she said of her mom.

That foundation from her upbringing served as a catalyst for Oshiro's persistence in pursuing higher education, despite the challenges she knew lay ahead.

"They really emphasized the value of learning," Oshiro said of her parents. "Once you have an education, you can't give that up to someone. It's something you'll have for the rest of your life."

Oshiro describes dipping her toe into the college experience as an exercise of "trial by fire." Her parents already had tested the waters with her older brother, who went to the University of Washington Tacoma for business — a field Oshiro tried to embrace, but knew right away wasn't a good fit.

"It just didn't feel right," she said. "I wasn't engaged in the content at all."

Navigating the financial responsibility of college overwhelmed Oshiro, too. Although her mom — at one time a bookkeeper — helped shoulder some of the stress, Oshiro says the jargon and many moving parts prompted a lot of tears.

"I know I'm smart, why am I not understanding this?" she recalled thinking. "After graduation, I was late on three (student loan) payments because I didn't know where to send the payments to. Stuff was getting lost in the mail. It's almost like you're being set up or tricked just for not having known or being born into it."



**OSHIRO ADMITS IT WASN'T EASY TRANSITIONING FROM A PLACE OF FEAR AND SHAME TO ONE OF TRIUMPH AND PRIDE. SHE ROOTED HERSELF IN THE DIVERSITY CENTER, WHERE SHE FOUND MENTORS WHO HELPED HER REFRAME HER EXPERIENCE.**



Oshiro admits it wasn't easy transitioning from a place of fear and shame to one of triumph and pride. She rooted herself in the Diversity Center, where she found mentors who helped her reframe her experience.

"Not to minimize it," she stressed, "but realizing it doesn't have to be the only thing that defines you."

Oshiro said her academic spaces also offered valuable support; education professors were compassionate, understanding and relatable during some of her most difficult times, including the death of her grandmother that hit her hard. "I felt comfortable confiding in them," she said.

While there were plenty of challenges related to her college experience, Oshiro says it made the successes that much sweeter. A euphoric feeling engulfed Oshiro as she walked across the commencement stage five years ago — her late grandmother's voice echoing in the back of her head, praising her accomplishment. And it was only the beginning.

"I was so hungry for more education," she said. After a year of teaching, she enrolled in an online master's program through Walden University, eventually finishing with a 4.0 grade-point average despite teaching full time on the side.

"I don't know how I did it," she recalled. "I felt like a crazy person most of the time."

Oshiro says her first-in-the-family identity informs how she teaches, an approach that continues to evolve.

Monday through Friday, roughly 150 kids rotate through her classroom at Kentridge High School. She admits there are good days and bad days within the minutia.

On bad days, she reminds herself to acknowledge what she can't see — something she learned navigating her own educational journey.

"You see these kids sitting in desks every day, and there's not always a visible explanation for why they are the

way they are," she said. "No one wants to fail."

That understanding came in handy on one of the bad days, when a student swore at her in class. She wrote him up and kicked him out into the hallway.

"I was very dramatic about it, to make sure the other kids knew you don't speak to an adult that way and you don't disrespect yourself that way," she said. "And when I went out there, he was crying."

She realized the student's troubles transcended swear words lobbed at a teacher in a classroom. After talking further with the student, Oshiro ripped up the discipline referral. "That eased a lot of his anxiety," she said. "He had a lot of things going on that he didn't think his teachers could understand."

Oshiro could relate to her student in that moment, harkening back to her own brush with failure in college. She underperformed in a couple classes, as a result of her personal anxieties, and risked not graduating.

"I struggled hard with being disciplined and being interested in the work," she said of the courses, "I failed two exams and ended up having to schedule blocks of time in a study room in the library for hours at a time to force myself to do the work."

While that first experience with major failure was terrible, she acknowledges it helped make her a better teacher.

"I think it makes me a lot more empathetic," Oshiro said of facing adversity in college. "I can better understand people because I know myself better now."

So, each school year when she talks about the thing that makes her different, Oshiro beams with pride. She says first-generation college students deeply appreciate their educational experience — and it makes institutions better for having them.

"It's a value for education," she said. "You really cherish." □



## THE LEGACY OF BEING FIRST

JUD KEIM '86, FIRST-GENERATION ALUMNUS AND ASSISTANT FOOTBALL COACH, CONTINUES 'LIVING THE DREAM' AT PLU

Though he met the definition of a first-generation college student, that distinction was not at the top of mind for Jud Keim '86 when he made the decision to attend and play football at Pacific Lutheran University.

As a high schooler in Federal Way, Keim knew college would be his next step. His parents were both successful and supportive, and though neither attended a four-year university, they instilled in him the importance of postsecondary education, and the opportunities it affords.

That's what Keim embraced most about his first-in-the-family status: his parents wholeheartedly supported his pursuit of personal greatness, so his enjoyment of the PLU experience was never just about him.

"Really, it was to honor my mom and dad and make them proud of this degree that I earned from this prestigious, credentialed university," Keim said. "But all these people I met through college, that was as important to me in my college experience as earning a degree and learning how to be a critical thinker. My parents did everything to support that, and some of that, they had not experienced themselves."

His time at PLU profoundly influenced the trajectory of Keim's personal and professional life: this is where he met his wife, Sari Tollefson Keim '87, a Lute whose father was on the school's Board of Regents at the time. It's where he played college football for legendary coach Frosty Westering, and where he returned as an assistant coach in 2004 under Frosty's son, Scott. And it's where he remains today, as the program enters a new era under first-year coach Brant McAdams. »





**“REALLY, IT WAS TO HONOR MY MOM AND DAD AND MAKE THEM PROUD OF THIS DEGREE THAT I EARNED FROM THIS PRESTIGIOUS, CREDENTIALED UNIVERSITY.”**



Jud Keim '86 (left) and his daughter, Kalen Keim '19.



**"HE CAN SPEAK FIRSTHAND TO THE HISTORY AND THE TRADITION AND THE COMMUNITY," HEAD COACH BRANT MCADAMS SAID OF KEIM, "AND THE MISSION OF THE UNIVERSITY OVER TIME."**

Now, it is where his daughter, Kalen Keim '19, chose to go to school (she's a sprinter on the PLU track team), and where his son, Jace, will enroll (and, yes, play football) this fall.

There's just something about the place.

"We're living a dream right now," Keim said.

But daughter and son did not choose PLU to appease mom and dad. Kalen exercised due diligence, explored her options, toured other Northwest Conference schools. None of them felt like PLU. And that's a decision at which she arrived on her own, her father urging her only to "find the best fit for you for all the right reasons."

"I think she checked all the boxes there," Jud said.

It's the same, honest message he uses as recruiting coordinator for PLU football, in addition to his duties as defensive backs coach and special teams coordinator.

"My dad definitely brings his coaching philosophies home, and that's a good thing," Kalen said, "because they shaped me into who I am today."

Indeed, they are philosophies that transcend the pursuit of athletic accomplishment, rooted in the tradition of PLU's past and essential to its future growth. Keim knows how fortunate he was to have the opportunity to earn a degree from a university of PLU's caliber. But the wisdom he passes to football players here goes beyond that.

"What is your calling? What is your purpose? PLU has never been just about earning a degree. It's all those things that you discover when you're here, and that's the value and unique thing that has made it all it is," Keim said. "Buildings and bricks don't talk to you. It's the human resource that is the best element that PLU has to offer. It's the people here. It's the heart they have for others."

McAdams, on the job since late February, can already see the heart Keim has for PLU and its student athletes. While

the school conducted its search for a permanent hire, Keim served as interim coach, sustaining PLU's recruiting efforts and providing a degree of continuity during the transition.

"He picked up the torch and kept the best interests of the program in mind," said McAdams, hired from Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas, where he was defensive coordinator and linebackers coach. "I have a great deal of gratitude for the role that he embraced during this transition as the interim head football coach. He kind of took on a very large load in recruiting for three-plus months."

Keim's value as a recruiter, McAdams said, is "irreplaceable."

"He can speak firsthand to the history and the tradition and the community," McAdams said, "and the mission of the university over time."

That tradition, McAdams said, is part of what drew him to PLU. And Keim is eager to blend that legacy with the direction of new leadership.

"I think everything is in place to continue on with the unique experience of PLU football," Keim said. "We have yet to go through a season here, but the transition has been exciting. New staff, new leadership — you have to embrace the change, but I think I'm in a unique position because I can still draw from all the things that made us great."

From a first-generation student to a multi-generation PLU family, Keim has never forgotten where it all began.

"The values that I embrace and that have worked for me in my career, I learned here at PLU," Keim said. "The impact that I was able to make in several different coaching opportunities I've been involved with, that impact was because of my PLU experience." □



**FROM A FIRST-GENERATION STUDENT TO A MULTI-GENERATIONAL PLU FAMILY, KEIM HAS NEVER FORGOTTEN WHERE IT ALL BEGAN.**

# BIG NAMES ON CAMPUS

PLU NOT ONLY SENDS LUTES OUT TO CHANGE THE WORLD,  
BUT ALSO BRINGS WORLD-CHANGING LEADERS TO PLU.

**MORE ONLINE**  
[plu.edu/big-names](http://plu.edu/big-names)

## WANG SYMPOSIUM | MIGRATION



Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson, who has been at the forefront of national debates on immigration, opened the eighth biennial Wang Center Symposium on migration March 8.



Munib Younan, retired bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, spoke at the symposium about the church's vocation in a world on the move.



At the symposium, Greg Hermsmeyer '88, senior coordinator for international programs in the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons at the U.S. Department of State, explored the link between human trafficking and migration at the symposium.

### MAY

**COMING  
SOON**  
FOR A COMPLETE  
LISTING, VISIT:  
[plu.edu/coming-soon](http://plu.edu/coming-soon)

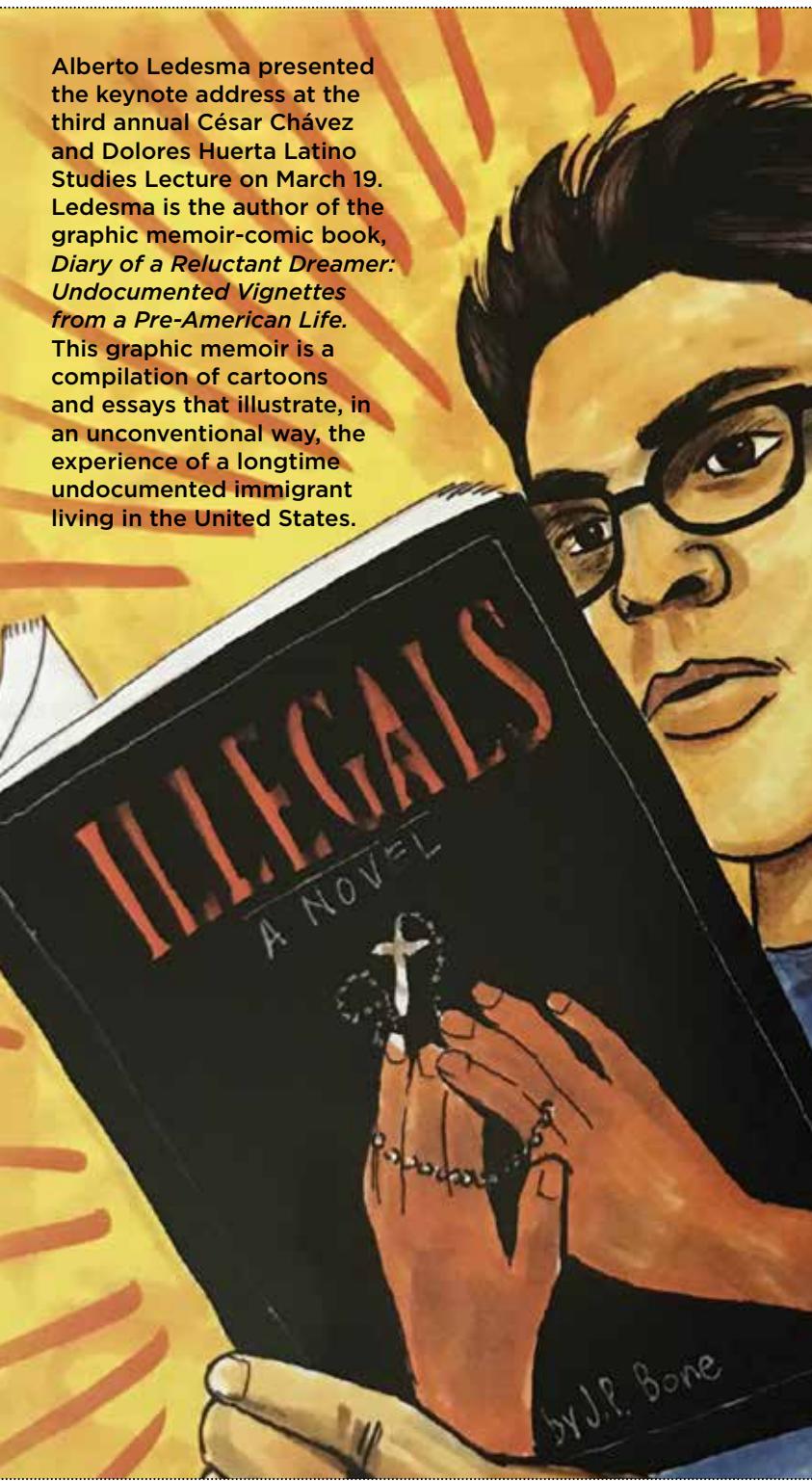
#### COMMENCEMENT 2018

**MAY 26**

Freeman Hrabowski III, UMBC president, will be the keynote speaker for the 2:30 p.m. ceremony at the Tacoma Dome. [plu.edu/commencement](http://plu.edu/commencement)



Alberto Ledesma presented the keynote address at the third annual César Chávez and Dolores Huerta Latino Studies Lecture on March 19. Ledesma is the author of the graphic memoir-comic book, *Diary of a Reluctant Dreamer: Undocumented Vignettes from a Pre-American Life*. This graphic memoir is a compilation of cartoons and essays that illustrate, in an unconventional way, the experience of a longtime undocumented immigrant living in the United States.



## JUNE

### SUMMER INSTITUTE IN PASTORAL THEOLOGY

JUNE 11-13

PLU hosts "Leading a Congregation in Anxious Times," a conference designed especially for pastors and congregational leaders who want to reflect on how to lead amid an unsettled nation and world. [plu.edu/pastoral-theology](http://plu.edu/pastoral-theology)



## MINAL HAJRATWALA

MARCH 6

Author Minal Hajratwala came to campus March 6 to present a lecture and reading from her award-winning epic *Leaving India: My Family's Journey from Five Villages to Five Continents*, which was called "incomparable" by Alice Walker and "searingly honest" by *The Washington Post*.



## RACHEL CARSON LECTURE

MARCH 6

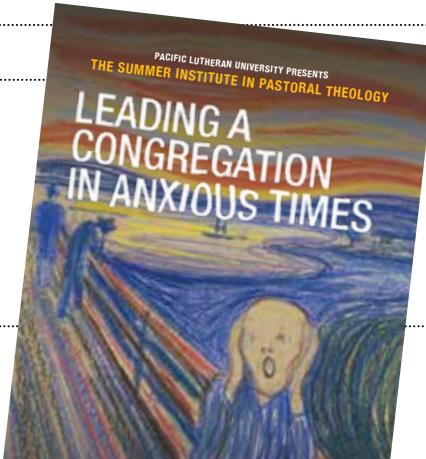
Pamela Ronald — a distinguished professor in the Department of Plant Pathology and the Genome Center at the University of California, Davis — presented the second annual Rachel Carson Lecture on March 6, expanding the case for genetically engineering food.



## VISITING WRITER SERIES

APRIL 5

Kaveh Akbar visited campus on April 5 for the Visiting Writer Series. His poems have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Poetry magazine*, *American Poetry Review*, *Ploughshares*, PBS NewsHour and elsewhere. □



# DISCOVERY PLU

**"WE REALIZED THAT THERE ARE LOTS OF SUBTLE THINGS THAT WOMEN END UP HAVING TO DEAL WITH THAT WE DON'T THINK OUR MALE COLLEAGUES DO."**



## JUNE

**COMING  
SOON**  
FOR A COMPLETE  
LISTING, VISIT:  
[plu.edu/coming-soon](http://plu.edu/coming-soon)

### BERRY FESTIVALS

**JUNE 13, JULY 11, AUG. 8**

Each of the annual events — in Red Square from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. — feature bushels of farm-fresh berries and entertainment. [plu.edu/berry-festivals](http://plu.edu/berry-festivals)



# PLU PROFESSOR RESEARCHES EXTRA DEMANDS PLACED ON WOMEN IN ACADEMIA

BY GENNY BOOTS '18

MICHELLE CEYNAR was the first in her family to attend college, and now she's a professor of psychology at Pacific Lutheran University.

And for her, the two identities — a first-generation graduate and a woman in academia — intersect, especially when it comes to hard work.

"I always have done what I've needed to do," Ceynar said. "I think that comes from growing up in a blue-collar kind of background."

The same approach applies for female faculty members: "We just kind of do what we feel like we need to do to get good teaching evaluations, and do what we think students are expecting and what is expected of us."

But Ceynar says a frustrating feeling results from this level of accommodation — especially after realizing some of her colleagues aren't approaching their work in quite the same way.

"You see that people have other ways of doing it and you

never thought to ask or you didn't realize that somebody else knew a different way," Ceynar said.

Her experience as a first-generation college student uncovered similar feelings of unfamiliarity.

Ceynar was always college bound; her mom made sure of it. It wasn't until graduate school that Ceynar sensed that other people knew things she didn't.

"I began to realize that a lot of these other grad students had a different sense of how to do this stuff than I did and I was still too afraid to ask at that point," she said. "I've also felt that as a faculty member, and I've got a lot of colleagues whose parents went to college and grew up around colleges and they know things that I don't know about sabbaticals, for example."

The sense of her personal unknowns has spurred curiosity in her professional life, extending to her most recent research. Ceynar

is keenly interested in the ways female professors are treated differently in academia. Ceynar's recent research focuses on how female professors face different expectations from students, compared to their male counterparts. Ceynar partnered with researchers from Eastern Washington University and Bridgewater State University in Massachusetts.

"We realized that there are lots of subtle things that women end up having to deal with that we don't think our male colleagues do," Ceynar said.

Those differences include students repeatedly asking for extensions on papers, students sharing deep personal stories, or comments from students about female professors' attire or age.

Ceynar and her research partners sent out a survey to professors around the country and measured the results

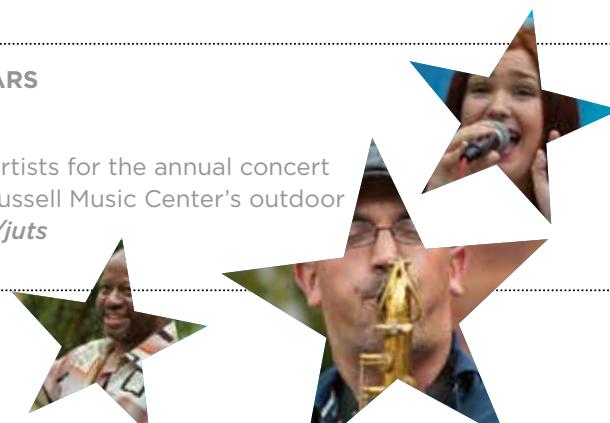
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## JULY

### JAZZ UNDER THE STARS

JULY 19-AUG. 9

PLU welcomes guest artists for the annual concert series at Mary Baker Russell Music Center's outdoor amphitheater. [plu.edu/juts](http://plu.edu/juts)



### SUMMER OPERA WORKSHOP

JULY 19-AUG. 9

The workshop allows participants to engage in movement, acting and vocal study with faculty members, and it includes a culminating performance. Registration open through May 30. [plu.edu/summer-opera-workshop](http://plu.edu/summer-opera-workshop)

## PUBLICATIONS



**Shannon Seidel**, assistant professor of biology, recently co-authored an essay in the March issue of *Life Sciences Education*, titled “Scientific Presenting: Using Evidence-Based Classroom Practices to Deliver Effective Conference Presentations.” Seidel’s co-authors include Lisa A. Corwin from the University of Colorado and Amy Prunuske from the Medical College of Wisconsin.

**Yajun An** and **Tom Edgar** – visiting assistant professor of mathematics and associate professor of mathematics, respectively – published a note titled “Proof without words: Rearranged alternating harmonic series” in the *College Mathematics Journal*. Edgar also published an article in the *Rocky Mountain Journal of Mathematics*, titled “The distribution of the number of parts of m-ary partitions modulo m,” as well as an article in the April issue of *Mathematics Magazine* – “Staircase Series.”

**Laurie Murphy**, associate professor of computer science, co-authored a paper for the Association of Computing Machinery’s *Transactions on Computer Science Education*, titled “How Student Centered is the Computer Science Classroom? A Survey of College Faculty.”



## AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

**Ksenija Simic-Muller** (associate professor of mathematics), **Shannon Seidel** (assistant professor of biology) and **Wendy Gardiner** (assistant professor of education) have been awarded a National Science Foundation grant to support their work strengthening connections between the Division of Natural Sciences and the School of Education. The work will help improve our science students’ exposure to careers in K-12 education, as well as help train education students in science.

**Lynn Hunnicutt**, professor of economics, is the new assistant director of The Council of Independent College’s Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE). In this role, Hunnicutt will have primary responsibility for administering NetVUE’s wide array of grant programs, working on a half-time basis from the PLU campus.



**Melannie Denise Cunningham** ‘12, director of multicultural outreach and engagement in Campus Ministry, was named the 2018 laureate by the Greater Tacoma Peace Prize committee “for her exemplary work promoting racial reconciliation.” The Greater Tacoma Peace Prize was founded by several Lutes in 2005, and the prize is believed to be the only local one of its kind in the country. Cunningham will travel to Oslo, Norway, to attend Nobel Peace Prize events later this year.

**Heidi Schutz**, assistant professor of biology, published a paper in the *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, titled “Locomotor activity, growth hormones, and systemic robusticity: An investigation of cranial vault thickness in mouse lines bred for high endurance running.”

**Rick Spillman**, professor emeritus of computer science and computer engineering, recently signed a three-book deal with Mountain Brook Ink, a Christian publishing house. His first book, *The Awakened*, is set to be released in January 2019. The second and third book in this trilogy will be released in June 2019 and January 2020. This is the culmination of a lifelong dream of Spillman’s to write and publish fiction, and one of the

main characters in his trilogy teaches computer science at a medium-sized (unnamed) university in Tacoma.

**Ksenija Simic-Muller**, associate professor of mathematics, and PLU education student Liza Griffith recently published an article in *Noticias de Todos’ Mathematics for All* newsletter, titled “World Cup, Fairness, and Teaching Mathematics.”

**Bret Underwood**, associate professor of physics, recently shared his story about becoming a theoretical physicist for a piece in the winter issue of the Society of Physics Students’ magazine, *The SPS Observer*, titled “Considering a Career in Physics Research?” Underwood’s portion of the article is titled “From the Theoretical Physicist.”



**Maria Chávez**, chair of politics and government and associate professor of political science, is finishing her book, titled *Latino Professional Success in America: Public Policies, People, and Perseverance*. The book, which will be available in 2019, documents the paths of Latinos who are the first people in their families to graduate from college. Chávez interviewed 31 Latino professionals, across the nation, from a variety of fields. She also included her own story. The book explores how first-generation Latinos became professionals, their experiences as professionals amid the country’s institutional racism, and the policies and programs this group believes would help increase their presence in the professional world. Learn more about Chávez, her research and her background as a first-generation college graduate.

[plu.edu/pave-the-way](http://plu.edu/pave-the-way)

MORE ONLINE: [plu.edu/accolades](http://plu.edu/accolades)



Poems by **Rick Barot**, associate professor of English and director of the Master of Fine Arts program, were published: "A Poem as Long as California" by Academy of American Poets (January) and "The Galleons" in *The New Yorker* (March).

**Maria Guarneri-White**, visiting assistant professor of psychology, published an article, titled "It's more than skin-deep: The relationship between social victimization and telomere length in adolescence." It examines the relationship between peer victimization and telomere length, an indicator of biological aging that is associated with stressors.

In an article about the effective mentoring of new teachers in Phi Delta Kappan, **Wendy Gardiner** — assistant professor of education — and co-author Nina Weisling observe that not all mentoring programs for new teachers are working well. They offer suggestions for supports, structures and resources that the most effective mentoring programs have in place.

**Sergia Hay**, assistant professor of philosophy, published "Foundations for Communities of Philosophical Conversation" in *The Public Philosophy Journal*. Co-authors include Andrea Christelle, James Lincoln and Eric Thomas Weber.

## MEDIA MENTIONS

**Colleen Hacker**, PLU professor of kinesiology and USA Hockey mental skills coach, contributed to the U.S. Women's Hockey win over Canada for the Olympic gold medal in Pyeongchang, South Korea. Hacker was featured and mentioned in publications including self.com, positivecoach.org, and ESPN.

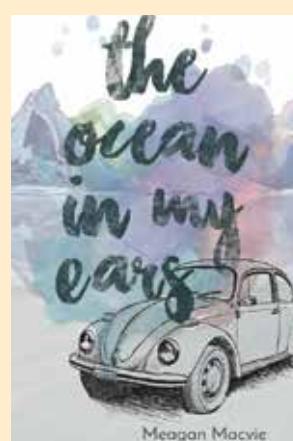
**Ami Shah and Michael Artine** — assistant professor of global studies and visiting assistant professor of politics and government, respectively — weighed in with NPR's Malaka Gharib on how global development aid groups and media shape perceptions of low-income countries.

## PRESENTATIONS

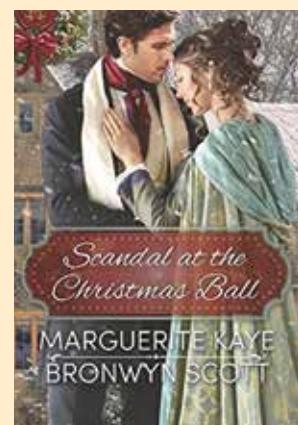
The Center for Gender Equity hosted its annual Celebration of Inspirational Women, featuring a keynote presentation by **Jessica Spring**, co-author of *Dead Feminists: Historical Heroines in Living Color*. Honorees included: **Jennifer Smith**, dean of inclusive excellence; **Tess Matsukawa** and **Nicole Gonzales**, resident directors; **Nicole Jordan '15** and **Marleisha Cox '17**, and nearly 50 additional inspirational women and gender non-conforming people. □



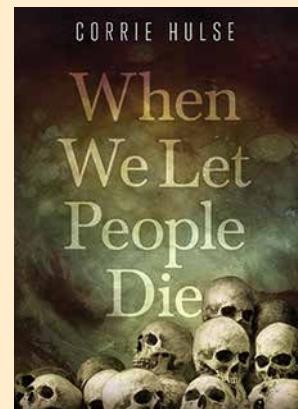
**Nancy (Wendland) Fehrer '86** and Boston Marathon race director, Dave McGillivray, co-authored the children's book *Dream Big: A True Story of Courage and Determination*. It's a touching story of rejection, determination, a beloved grandpa, a Boston Marathon attempt, a Boston Marathon failure and the good advice that finally got Dave to the finish line.



**Meagan Macvie '14** recently released her Alaskan coming-of-age novel, *Ocean in my Ears*. Macvie's debut novel raises questions of love, purpose and the power to choose your own future, even when your future's the thing that scares you the most.



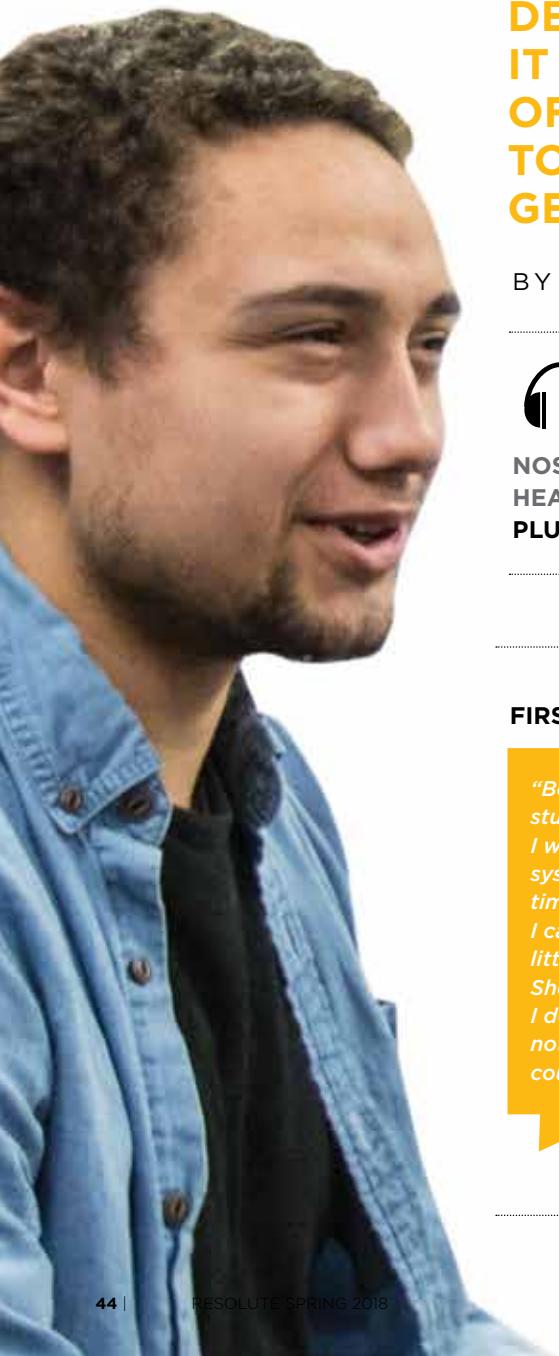
Bronwyn Scott's (pen name for Nikki Poppen-Eagan '90) work "Dancing with the Duke's Heir," one part of *Scandal at the Christmas Ball*, has been named as a finalist in the Novella Category of the 2018 RITA awards. The RITA is the romance publishing industry's highest award of distinction.



**Corrie Hulse '04** recently released *When We Let People Die: The Failure of the Responsibility to Protect*, a collection of essays examining situations in which R2P, a report called "The Responsibility to Protect," was — or should have been — implemented, including in Darfur, Iraq, Libya and Syria. □

**READ MORE**  
[plu.edu/lute-library](http://plu.edu/lute-library)

# ALUMNI NEWS



## BRIAN LAUBACH '84 '95 AND ISAIAH HUEY '20 ATTENDED PACIFIC LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY THREE DECADES APART. ALL IT TOOK WAS AN HOUR OF CONVERSATION TO BRIDGE THE GENERATIONAL GAP.

BY JUSTIN BUCHANAN '12



BELOW IS A COLLECTION OF EXCERPTS FROM THEIR RECENT CONVERSATION, HEAVY ON NOSTALGIA AND LAUGHTER. TO HEAR FULL-LENGTH AUDIO, VISIT [PLU.EDU/BRIDGING-THE-GAP](http://PLU.EDU/BRIDGING-THE-GAP)

### FIRST-GEN VS. LEGACY LUTE

*"Being a first-generation student, I always knew that I wouldn't have a support system, family wise. And when times get hard, I'm like, 'Nope, I can't drop out' because my little cousin looks up to me. She's like a little sister, and if I don't do well I'll feel like I'm not being the best role model I could be for her." -Huey*

*"I only applied to PLU. I knew that's where I wanted to go. My parents are alumni. My dad majored in chemistry and I majored in chemistry. My mom majored in accounting and my sister graduated from PLU in accounting. So we're kind of crazy on the legacy side."*  
*-Laubach*

### BONDING WITH PROFESSORS

*"Professor Timothy O'Neal, he's the reason why I'm a Chinese studies major. When I came into PLU I intended to be a history and theatre double major, and then I took a class with professor O'Neal and he made me fall in love with China and East Asia." -Huey*

# THE PLU CONNECTION

# BRIDGING THE GENERATIONAL GAP



Through a series of online surveys and group interviews, PLU sought your opinions about the university's priorities and how connected you feel to your alma mater and current PLU students.

Your input already is informing our efforts, including this conversation between Laubach and Huey. We invited them to campus to share their experiences with each other, and we were pleased — and, in many ways, unsurprised — to discover how similar their individual stories are, despite the years that separate them.

We plan to continue our effort to better understand alumni experiences and how they compare to the experience of PLU students today.

We suspect this pair of Lutes illustrates one of many ways that members of our community relate to one another.

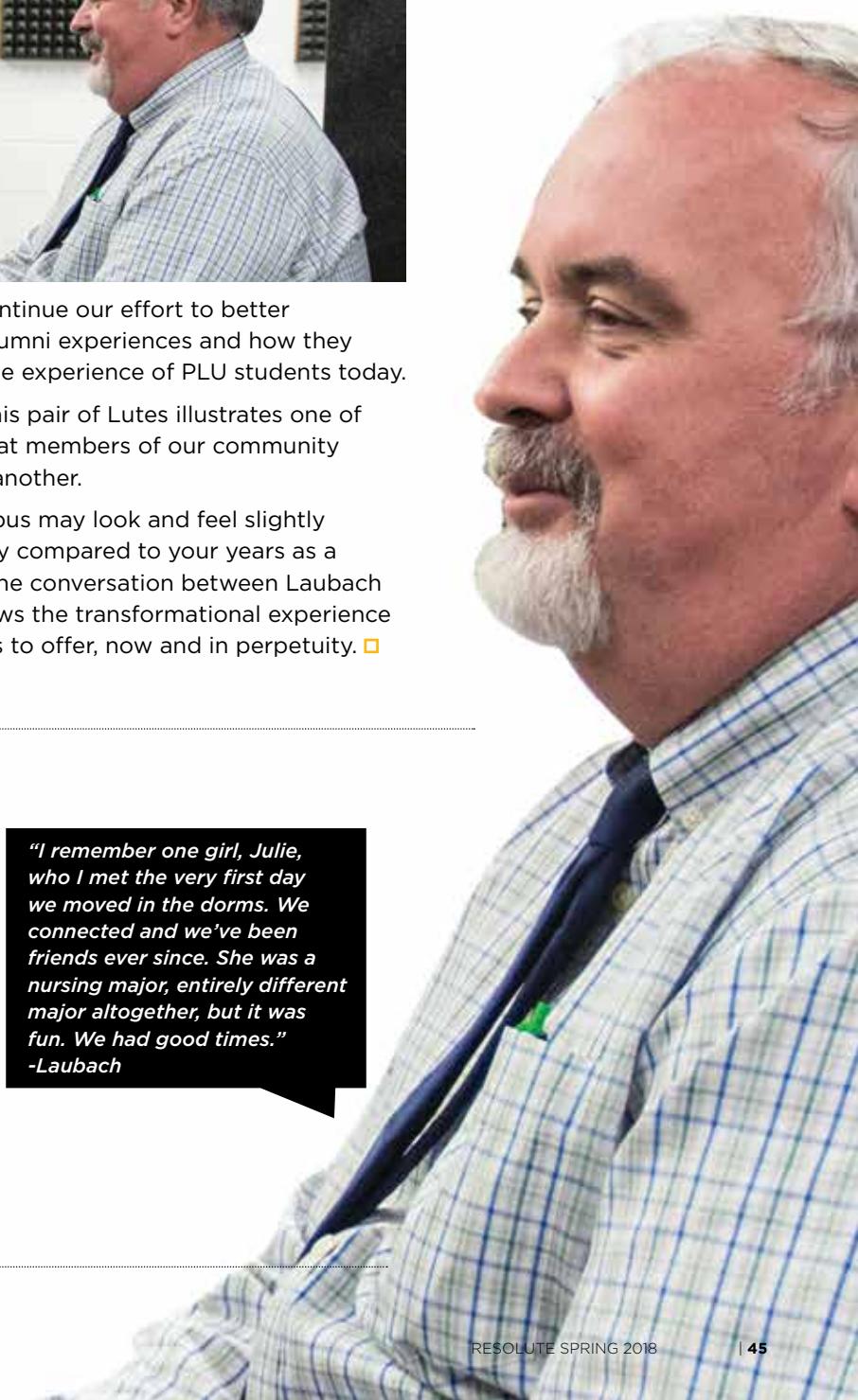
The PLU campus may look and feel slightly different today compared to your years as a student. But the conversation between Laubach and Huey shows the transformational experience PLU continues to offer, now and in perpetuity. □

## LASTING FRIENDSHIPS

*"In chemistry, I had Dr. Fred Tobias, he and I really bonded. He was my advisor and he kept me going in the chemistry major. He was very good about making sure that you follow through on your plans."*  
-Laubach

*"I made friends with the people in my wing my first year, love those guys. We still live on the same floor. We have a DnD (Dungeons and Dragons) group we've been playing since the beginning of the year, and so they have become like my support system." -Huey*

*"I remember one girl, Julie, who I met the very first day we moved in the dorms. We connected and we've been friends ever since. She was a nursing major, entirely different major altogether, but it was fun. We had good times."*  
-Laubach





BY RHIANNON BERG '18

**STUDENTS CONNECT WITH ALUMNI TO GET A GLIMPSE INSIDE**

# AMAZON

"There's something magical about stepping into a workplace and learning about it," said Grace Amsden '19, after exploring Amazon's Seattle headquarters in February. The communication major and 43 other Pacific Lutheran University students spent Presidents Day visiting the tech giant's campus, having lunch with PLU alumni who work for the world's largest online retailer.

"It's great for current students to see other Lutes in the industry," said Jimmy Nguyen '13, a non-technical sourcing recruiter at Amazon. He said he enjoyed talking with students and sharing how he joined his team.



Events like this offer current students the opportunity to network with alumni and learn more about potential paths after graduation.

"Having the opportunity to meet with alumni in a casual setting like this lunch is invaluable for building confidence in soon-to-be graduates," said Haley Miller '13, another alumna who works

with Amazon Web Services.

Recruiters from Amazon hosted an informational session and a panel with current employees, who gave students more insight into working at the Fortune 500 company — one that's seen explosive growth, including a recent acquisition of the supermarket chain Whole Foods and an impending headquarters expansion.

"As a business student, I was gratified to learn how the HR, finance, marketing and accounting functions could work together in harmony for tech employees," said Finn Kelln '18, who is set to graduate in December. "I am excited to enter the business world after

seeing an organization of this size. It is wonderful that PLU offers opportunities like this."

While they enjoyed exploring the company's campus, students said their favorite part of the trip was meeting with alumni and sharing stories about their PLU experiences.

"It's a great opportunity to create visibility for our students, and to connect with many of our former classmates," said Sascha Billinghamhurst '15, an Alexa communications recruiting coordinator at Amazon.

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**Interested in connecting with current students?**  
**Email [alumni@plu.edu](mailto:alumni@plu.edu).** □

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## WE MISS YOU! COME BACK FOR PLU'S HOMECOMING AND FAMILY WEEKEND.

When was the last time you stood in Red Square, hiked up Hinderlie hill, cheered “Attaway!” or listened to a lecture in Xavier? If you have to think about it, it’s been too long.

With many events going on, you can spend the whole weekend with us or just pop in for a drink. Don’t miss this chance to connect with new Lutes and their families and reunite with your friends.

## SAVE THE DATE: NOV. 2-4



### PLU ON TAP

Come wine and dine at the fourth annual PLU on Tap! Join your classmates and enjoy locally and alumni-produced wine and beer, and of course, great food. Cheers!

### CLASSES WITHOUT QUIZZES

Relive the student experience of attending class. Don’t worry, you won’t be graded.

### LUTE FAMILY BRUNCH

Brunch is great, but brunch with Lute families is truly special. Join us for this fun event that brings together students and their families. You’ll also hear updates from campus.



### UNIVERSITY CONGREGATION

Please join us at University Congregation for a worship service to celebrate Homecoming Weekend. All are welcome.

### GOLDEN CLUB BRUNCH CLASS OF 1968

It's your turn to be golden. Each graduate from the Class of 1968 and earlier is invited to this annual event.

### HOMECOMING FOOTBALL GAME

Head to Sparks Stadium in Puyallup to cheer on the Lutes as they take on George Fox. Don’t forget to wear your black and gold. Lute gear will be for sale at the stadium, too.

**VISIT [PLU.EDU/HOMECOMING](http://PLU.EDU/HOMECOMING) FOR A FULL SCHEDULE AND TO REGISTER**

# CLASSNOTES

SUBMIT YOURS HERE: [plu.edu/submit-class-note](http://plu.edu/submit-class-note)

**1950**



**Burton Foreman** retired from university teaching after a 30-year career teaching English language and literature, as well as music composition. Burton's career also featured time as an educational missionary, English teacher abroad and interpreter.

**1955**

**Paul Labes** died Sept. 12, 2017.

**Allen Moen** died Jan. 24.

**1959**

**Conrad Mandt** died July 29, 2017.

**Jack Holl** received the Founder's Award from the National Council on Public History in Indianapolis on April 22, 2017, in recognition of his lifetime contributions to the field of public history. Jack was the founding president of the Society for History in the Federal Government and the third president of the National Council on Public History.

**1960**

**Marta Berg** died March 9, 2017.

**1963**

**Bill Lessley** and his wife, Deanne, spent three months exploring Europe in the spring of 2017. They enjoyed hiking in the Dolomites Alps of Northern Italy.

**1964**



**John Oliver Ruud** died Feb. 5.

**1966**

**Ken Knutsen** died March 8.

**1970**

**Lee Wayne Davidson** died Nov. 29, 2017.

**1971**

**John Olson** and his wife now "snow-bird" in Sun City Oro Valley, Arizona.

**1973**

**Bob Vernon** retired from Providence Health and Services in Everett, Washington, where he worked as a health care business intelligence analyst. He also served 22 years, both active and reserve, in the U.S. Navy as a health care administration officer.

**1974**

**David Johnson** retired from his position with the Skagit Valley Tulip Festival, but plans to continue volunteering.

**1976**

**Dale Nordin** died Feb. 22.

**1978**

**Darcy Johnson**'s wealth management firm, Fulcrum Capital, was ranked No. 7 in

the nation on RIA Channel's list of Top 100 Emerging Wealth Managers for 2017.

**1979**



**Douglas Becker** was recently elected as a Fellow of the American College of Tax Counsel. Doug is a tax lawyer in Denver, Colorado, and an adjunct professor at the University of Denver Graduate Tax Program.

**1983**

**Mike Larson**, designated broker and owner of Allen Realtors, was re-elected to the board of directors of the Northwest Multiple Listing Service as representative of Pierce and Thurston counties.

**1985**

**Jeff Rounce** and his wife, Jill, recently sold their business, Business Examiner Media, to Premier Media Group.

**1988**

**James Johnson** was recently appointed CEO of Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra.

The Byram Township Board of Education recognized **Annie Ryan** as a district recipient of the Governor's Educator of the Year award.

**1989**

**Keith Achepohl**'s art exhibit "Vision of Nature/Vessel of Beauty" was displayed at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art in Eugene, Oregon, earlier this spring.

**1991**



**Michael Standish '91** and his wife, **Tracy '92**, retired from the U.S. Army on Jan. 31 after 28 years of service. Michael last served as the chief of CBRNE (chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosives) defense operations for the United States Army Central Command. He intends to hike the Pacific Crest Trail this summer.

**1993**

**Mohamed Dobashi** was named as the new CEO of the Washington Farm Labor Association (WAFLA) this spring.

**1994**

**Tim Hein** recently was appointed to the position of vice president, sales for Paradigm Spine, LLC, which provides motion preservation solutions for the treatment of lumbar spinal stenosis.

**1995**

**Gerda (Wagner) Hunter** received the Scandinavian Cultural Center Outstanding Service Award at the Nordic Jul Banquet on Dec. 16, 2017.

**1996**

**Lisa Skari** recently was appointed as the 11th president of Mount Hood Community College in Gresham, Oregon.

**1993**

**Kim Malek-Harnish**'s renowned ice cream company, Salt & Straw, was recently featured in *The Seattle Times* for its expansion from Portland to Seattle.

**Duke Paulson** was named executive director of Tacoma Rescue Mission in April.

**1997**

**Lisa Cole** recently was hired as an assistant coach for the Houston Dash, a professional women's soccer team.

**Sirine Fodstad** was promoted to chief human resources officer for the Norwegian Sovereign Wealth Fund.

**1998**



**Marty Mogk** recently celebrated his second year with the Kodiak Cakes, a pancake company in Park City, Utah. He works from home in Burlington, Iowa, and volunteers at The Capitol Theater and Restoration Station.

**Amy Stack** recently was featured in *Astoria Characters* for her baking prowess and work with Pink Canary Desserts in Long Island City, New York.

**2001**

**Brandy (Hedger) Halprin** became a licensed clinical social worker in October 2017. She works as an on-call medical social worker for the Shriners Hospital for Children - Portland and at Providence ElderPlace.

**Kelly (Kearsley) Johnson**'s *StartupBend*, a blog about startup companies in Bend, Oregon, was featured in *Bend Source*.

**2002**

**Tiffany (Stone) Cook** recently was promoted with Wells Fargo to the position of regional services consultant for Southeast Alaska. Tiffany works with 11 branches, overseeing compliance, mentoring and management, and also acts as a resource officer.

**2003**

**Eric Parks** recently played T. Stedman Harder in an on-stage production of "A Moon for the Misbegotten."

**2004**

**Tamara Lynn Schaps** now serves as the assistant dean of graduate strategic initiatives at the University of California, San Diego, where she works on cross-campus collaboration and new program development.



**Shella Biallas '04** married **Sigurd Grimsby '04** — an exchange student from 2001 to 2002 — on Nov. 2, 2017, in a small ceremony at the Orange County Courthouse in Santa Ana, California. The ceremony was witnessed by longtime friends and PLU classmates **Tamara Lynn Schaps '04** and **Andrew Sternard '03**.



**Frank Jackson** recently accepted a position with St. Luke's Rehabilitation Institute Psychiatry Practice in Spokane, Washington.

**2005**

**Anthony Webb** made his Opera Idaho debut in a production of Giacomo Puccini's "Madame Butterfly."

**2008**

**Zach Parsons** recently was named shareholder with DP&C, an accounting firm in Tacoma, Washington.

**2010**



**Matthew Kim '10** and **Jennifer (Emerson) Kim '13** married on Aug. 26, 2017, in Spokane, Washington. Lutes in the wedding party included **Stephanie Hatch '12**, **Lesley Gardner '13**, **Pat Carlisle '09**, **Scott Posey '10**, **Rayan Carter '12** and **Chase Mesford '12**.



**Karly Siroky** is founder and CEO of Karma Design, one of the first woman-owned and operated studios for brand strategy and visual design in the Pacific Northwest.

As Horton the elephant, **Steve Barnett**, starred in Tacoma Little Theater's production of "Seussical the Musical."

**Phillip Schmitt**, teacher at Gray Middle School in Tacoma Public Schools, was honored as a MESA Teacher of the Year.

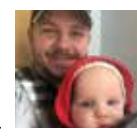
**Tyson Bendzak** inspired others with a "shot of encouragement," a trick basketball shot with a unicycle, basketball and bridge, dedicated to his dad and others struggling with cancer.

**Rocky Bilyeu** joined the The Doty Group — an accounting office in Tacoma, Washington — as a valuation analyst.

**2011**

**Anneliese Kellogg** recently finished her second year with the Empire State Youth Orchestra's CHIME — an El Sistema USA after-school program for economically disadvantaged students (first- through eighth-graders) in Schenectady, New York. This year, she was promoted to lead teaching artist and helped start a new CHIME program at Van Corlaer Elementary.

The U.S. Navy framed and displayed a comic by **Kevin Knodell** aboard the USS Michael Monsoor. The installment is part of *Naval History Magazine's* "Acts of Valor" series.



**Luke Terwilliger** recently celebrated one year at i21 Population Health in Nashville, Tennessee, managing software implementation projects.

# PICTURE PERFECT



Gary "Phil" Rempe '13 and Molly (Shade) Rempe '12 were married in Buena Vista, Colorado, on July 29, 2017. Many Lutes were in attendance. Pictured from left to right: Jeffrey Linxwiler '14, David Wirth '13, Megan Buchholz '11, Erica Boyle '13, James Tupper '11, Colin Zinnecker '11, Alex McDiarmid '12, Molly Rempe, Phil Rempe, Allison Danforth '11, Jackson Mowe '13, PJ Edds '13, Courtney Karwal '13 and Tessa Heck-George '13.



The Hatlen siblings — Mark, Beth, Joel and David, with spouses — gather for a photo during their Christmas celebration. The family submitted the image in honor of National Siblings Day. Use the hashtag #PLUSiblings to share your Lute family ties on social media! Pictured above, from left: **Mark Hatlen '82, Mary (Zitzewitz) Hatlen '84, Randy Hamlin '85, Beth (Hatlen) Hamlin '85, Meg (Fish) Hatlen '80, Joel Hatlen '81, Kari (Stenserson) Hatlen, and David Hatlen '91.**



A group of Lutes gathered for a pop-up brunch at Super Six in Seattle for an event through the Diversity Center Alumni Network. The event, organized by **Katie Garrow '11**, had seven class years represented.

MORE ONLINE AT PLU.EDU/CLASS-NOTES

that enable health care providers to perform population health analytics and enhanced care coordination. He's pictured here with his 8-month-old son, JT.

**2012**



**Preston Taylor '12** married Kailynn Taylor on July 22, 2017 in Santa Barbara, California. Lutes in the wedding party included **James Clegg '12, Klayton Fletcher '13 and Steven Swanke Hedback '12**.

**Phillip Dixon** received his Master of Fine Arts in Writing from Lindenwood University in December 2017.



**Mercedes (Begley) Leahy '12** married Ryan Leahy on Sept. 30, 2017, in Arlington, Washington. Lutes in attendance included **Anna (Stewart) Koone '12, Sonja Ruud '12, Meagan Wehe '12, Nick Oglesby '12, Hannah Walton '16, Harmony Young '12, Alex Domine '12 '17, Michael Clark '13, Kiersten Bowers '13, Paige Griffith '13 and Meg (Randich) Newton '12.**



**Ashley Marshall** graduated from the University of Colorado Boulder with her Ph.D. in chemistry in May 2017. She moved to Oxford to begin work as a post-doctoral researcher.

**2013**



**Alicia (Diesch) Lopez** graduated with her Master of Science in Counseling from Lubbock Christian University in Lubbock, Texas, in August 2017. She is now pursuing her doctorate in the Counselor Education Program at Texas Tech University.

In April, **Wendy Willis** led PoetryFest 2018, "Poetry of the Moment," at the Hoffman Center for the Arts in Manzanita, Oregon.

**2014**

As a representative for Stanford University, **Aaron Steelquist** attended Geological Society of America's 2017 annual meeting and presented his research poster, titled "Fluvial incision rates of the San Juan River using In-Situ Be, Mexican Hat Utah."

**Ben Sonnenberg** began his Ph.D. program at the University of Nevada, Reno in Professor Vladimir Pravosudov's lab, which focuses on focuses on behavioral ecology with special emphasis on animal cognition.

**2015**



**Shannon Reynolds** married Corbin Edwards in Issaquah, Washington, on Sept. 22, 2017.

**2016**



**Allison Groseclose** earned her master's degree in political theory from the London School of Economics.

As a representative of Portland State University, **Christina Gray** attended Geological Society of America's 2017 annual meeting and

presented her research poster, titled "Regional Modeling of Glaciers in the Olympic Mountains, Washington."

**Alice Henderson** started working with the Washington Conservation Corps in the Washington Department of Ecology's Coastal Monitoring and Analysis Program.

**Tom Kolibaba** is at Texas A&M University pursuing his Ph.D. in chemistry.

**Lee Shaffer** co-authored a paper published in the April issue of *Molecular Metabolism*, titled "Astrocyte IKK/NF-B signaling is required for diet-induced obesity and hypothalamic inflammation."

**2017**



**Cierra Nalani Richards** was named queen in the Queens for a Cure pageant, making her the face of Susan G. Komen cancer-research fundraising. Additionally, Cierra competed for the title of Miss Washington/Pacific Northwest through International Junior Miss in February.

**Victoria Benson** attended Geological Society of America's 2017 annual meeting and presented her research poster, titled "Identifying Influences on Glacial Meltwater Hydrochemistry Using Laboratory Simulations of Subglacial Chemical Erosion."

**Katie Caspary** is pursuing her Ph.D. in chemistry at Oregon State University.

**Bryan Gutierrez** is pursuing a Ph.D. in chemistry at Rutgers University.

**Ashlee McGovern** is pursuing a Ph.D. in chemistry at Penn State University.

**Miles Radford** is pursuing a Ph.D. in chemistry at Washington State University.

**Maddie Smith** currently serves with the Lutheran Volunteer Corps, Interfaith Power and Light, a nonprofit environmental advocacy group devoted to "a religious response to global warming" in Washington, D.C.

**Brandon Tabor** is pursuing a Doctor of Pharmacy at Washington State University's College of Pharmacy.

**Genevieve Brandt** is attending Georgia Tech's bioinformatics master's program.

**George Duma** was hired as an extraction technician at Cordant Health Solutions in Tacoma, Washington.

## FUTURE LUTES

**1999**

**Kari (McGrath) Matthews '99 '01** and her husband, John, welcomed Luke Jameson Matthews on Jan. 8. He joins sisters Grace and Gwen.

**2002**



**Peter Bonifaci '02 and Jessica Darling '03** welcomed their first child, Elena Rose Bonifaci, on Jan. 30.

**2003**



**Sean and Molly (Banks) Kennedy** welcomed their daughter, Elizabeth Anne Kennedy. She joined her brother, Gavin, six weeks early on Oct. 31, 2017.

**2004**



**Alison (Stark) '04 and James Leiman '05** welcomed Siena Claire Leiman on July 24, 2017. Siena joins her brother, Miles.

**2005**



**Laine Walters Young** and husband, Michael, welcomed their first child, Theodore James Walters Young, on Feb. 9.

**2006**



**Lindsay (Tozler) '06 and Seth Storby '07** welcomed Brayden David Storby on Dec. 21, 2017.

**2007**



**Nick Page** and wife, Christie, welcomed Adley Iris Page on Dec. 29, 2017.



**Sean McIlraith** and wife, Bekah, welcomed Sullivan Thomas McMilMac on Nov. 1, 2017.



**Krystal (Anderson) Serrano** and husband, Rodrigo, welcomed Luna Angeline Serrano on Jan. 8.

**2009**



**Alex Eli** and wife, Kat, welcomed twins, Addison Marie and Avery Lilly Eli, on Oct. 25, 2017.

**2010**



**Tyler and Carrie (Draeger) Gubsch** welcomed their first child, Henry George Gubsch, on Feb. 6.

**2017**



**Misty Lang** welcomed twins, Lana Louise Lang and Phoenix Ray Lang, on Nov. 12, 2017.



**Kailey (Beard) Huber** welcomed Hazel Suzanne Huber on Feb. 18.

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# THANK YOU LUTES

Because of your generosity, we had the most successful Bjug Day yet. Thank you for providing opportunities for PLU students and faculty members to turn ideas into action and make an immediate impact on our world.

**YOU AND 863 OTHER LUTES GAVE  
\$588,517 ON BJUG DAY 2017.**

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**SAVE THE DATE,  
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## DEMANDS ON WOMEN CONTINUED

against a scale that calculates emotional labor — the process of managing emotions to satisfy requirements of a job — in the workforce.

Ceynar noted that the study was informed by the researchers' personal experiences, too.

"So when we started sharing some of the ways we had been disrespected and feeling like it had been gendered in some way, we started adding those things into our survey," she said.

They found that students more often display friendship behaviors with their female professors. For example, a female professor having to assign a bad grade to a student who just told her about a death in the family may be challenging to negotiate for the faculty member.

"They kind of expect a little more sympathy because you're a woman and you're supposed to be nurturing and all of that," Ceynar said. "Students tend to be more angry at women when they don't bend the rules or give good grades."

This phenomenon also is called "academic momism."

"It's not that we don't like getting to know our students or have close relationships with them," Ceynar said,

"it's just this kind of assumption that we are going to be nicer, or softer, or grade less harshly."

The results came as a sort of relief for Ceynar, who has been teaching for more than 20 years, 17 of them at PLU.

"We are not just imagining things," she said. "This is an experience that women are having all over the place."

Ceynar and her colleagues also surveyed students about their behavior related to academic entitlement. Her research partner Amani El-Alayli asked students to review a syllabus and then asked if they would request an extension on assignments. The findings showed that students asked for extensions from female professors more often than their male counterparts.

This is just the latest research for Ceynar, who has been interested in the use of formal titles by female faculty members and gender for a long time. Ceynar's graduate school mentor — who was the only female professor in the psychology department at the University of Montana in the 1960s — made Ceynar promise to always use her title.

"At the time, the department chair would send out mail to the department, hard copy mail in the 60s, and it would say 'Dr. Walsh' and 'Dr. so-and-so' and then it would be 'Miss Hill,'" Ceynar said.

"And she made me promise that I would continue to use my title once I graduated because it was so important to her."

The next step in Ceynar's research will include partnering with female professors in the natural sciences to study how student expectations of professors vary by discipline and gender. This is a growing research field, with more studies on the extra burdens students place on faculty of color, as well.

One way Ceynar hopes to help change the way students treat their female professors is by sharing these findings with them. Traditional formalities are changing, and titles are not always made clear to students, and for students just out of high school their expectations of professors can be different.

"I don't think that students are trying to be disrespectful at all," Ceynar said. "I think a lot of it is just subtle and implicit. And so kind of bringing that out and letting people know, I think that makes a difference."

Pulling back the curtain on gender in the classroom is one solution. And for first-generation students, Ceynar has an added piece of advice.

"First-gen students just kind of plow through and make it what they can make it," she said. "So advice would be to not be afraid to ask people questions." □

## LEARN WITH FELLOW ALUMNI IN THE GALÁPAGOS IN MAY 2019

Pack your bags and don't forget your camera — join PLU alumni on a 13-day travel seminar through the Galápagos Islands led by Charles Bergman, professor emeritus. You'll experience the charm and incredible importance of these islands with other PLU graduates. The study-away opportunity was specially designed for Lutes — with passionate faculty leaders, authentic experiences, intimate attention to nature, animals and culture, as well as short readings chosen to deepen and enrich your experience.

Space is limited and deposits will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Registration opens June 1. Mark your calendars.

DETAILS AND PRICING AVAILABLE: [PLU.EDU/TRAVEL-SEMINAR](http://PLU.EDU/TRAVEL-SEMINAR)



**Faculty tour leader:** Professor Emeritus Charles Bergman, Department of English and Environmental Studies





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Sunshine peeks through the tree blossoms on the PLU campus. (Photo by John Froschauer/PLU).

