Also in this issue:
New Engineering and Computer Science building  •  Business growth  •  Fighting childhood obesity
Dear Friends of WSU Vancouver,

As interim chancellor and vice chancellor of finance and operations, citizen and mother of five—three of whom are currently attending college—one of my chief concerns is maintaining access to higher education. According to a report released by the U.S. Census Bureau in February, 30 percent of Americans 25 or older have earned at least a bachelor’s degree. The same does not hold true for Clark County. While 2011 estimates for individual states and counties have not yet been released, Clark County trailed the nation in 2010 with just 24.6 percent.

That’s the precise problem WSU Vancouver has been tackling for 23 years. We are here to provide access to high-quality education in Southwest Washington and increase the percentage of citizens who hold degrees. The university’s full-time equivalent enrollment has increased 82 percent from fall 2005 to fall 2011. Nearly 3,200 students are currently taking classes. We have every intention of continuing to expand both our enrollment and our offerings over time.

Having a higher rate of degree holders in our community provides a benefit to us all including increased tax revenues, reduced incarceration, reduced cost of social service programs and higher employment rates. An educated workforce also encourages the growth of family-wage employers in the community. Those businesses are looking to locate where they can more easily recruit.

Today there are more than 9,500 WSU Vancouver alumni, 75 percent of whom remain in our community to live, work and raise their families. These alumni are direct contributors to the economic fiber of Southwest Washington. At commencement this spring we will gain approximately 900 alumni. Still, we need more.

You can help raise the percentage of degree holders in our community. By contributing to a scholarship, offering a job or an internship to a student, or even speaking to a class or a student club, you can help our students earn their degrees. It’s in all of our best interest.

The community helped found us. We continue to rely on your support to help us achieve our mission. Our work is not yet done.

Lynn Valenter  
Interim Chancellor
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How to grow a better business

Business students are helping local businesses thrive

What can a group of college students tell a small business about doing business? As it turns out, a lot!

The Business Growth Mentor & Analysis program in the College of Business at Washington State University Vancouver helps businesses manage growth. Since spring 2011 the program has been providing high-level consulting services—pro bono—to help businesses and non-profit organizations in Southwest Washington grow and create jobs in our community.

While MAP is beneficial to businesses, it also offers business students the opportunity to put classroom knowledge into practice, gain consulting skills and develop project management skills.

WSU Vancouver students work in teams under faculty direction and with the support of seasoned business professionals. The end product is a business assessment, recommendations for achieving business growth and success, and help with implementation.

“Our focus with MAP is to create a partnership with the business community that builds economic development in the region while offering our students hands-on experiences to practice what they learn in the classroom. Our clients appreciate the fresh perspective students bring, and students are excited about the opportunities MAP provides,” said Jane Cote, director of the College of Business.

How it works

Clients are matched with mentors who clarify the project’s scope and objective, and facilitate interactions between the client and the student team. Students conduct the business analysis throughout a 16-week semester with guidance from their mentor, instructor and advisor. Advisors manage the timeline and ensure a high-quality project report. Students make a final presentation to the client.

“Giving students an opportunity to present the final report to the company is the best training a student can have. It provides real-life experience,” said Debbie Dover, a MAP client and executive director of Second Step Housing.

Finally, the mentor works with the client to review and implement the student team’s recommendations for several months after the final presentation.

Who it helps

To date, MAP has consulted with more than 50 businesses. The program works
with about 10 businesses and non-profit organizations in the fall semester and 25 in the spring. Most have been in existence for at least three years and are facing their next level of business growth. From wine and design to industrial and consumer-goods manufacturing, these businesses are looking to take the next step.

Second Step Housing was a MAP client in fall 2011. The non-profit organization has been working to help eliminate homelessness in Southwest Washington for more than 15 years. Dover had been working on organizational efficiencies for some time and saw working with MAP as a perfect partnership.

“MAP gave me an opportunity to have an outside perspective of our agency,” said Dover. “As the students conducted employee interviews, I believe they were able to get more information than I could have as ‘the boss.’”

The students confirmed what Dover was thinking; she needed to take a close look at Second Step Housing’s processes and procedures in order to manage her two bottom lines. Dover considers the agency’s financial health as the first bottom line and its clients as the second bottom line.

Dover wasted no time in getting started.

“We removed everything from the pantry so to speak,” she said.

Dover and her Second Step Housing staff are in the process of looking at job descriptions and comparing those with actual duties performed. They plan to reassess each position to play to employee’s strengths.

Second Step Housing is just one example of the kind of work MAP does and the sort of benefits a business can expect from taking part in the program. Each participating business commits to working with the MAP team for 10 hours over a 16-week semester beginning in August or January.

“I have often said that if these business owners and managers had the money they would hire consultants to help, or if they had the time they would dig into the problem themselves; having neither, the student groups are a very logical and helpful alternative,” said Ron Bertolucci, member of the MAP Advisory Board and vice president and charitable banking specialist for First Independent—soon to become Sterling Bank.

If you would like to get involved with MAP in any capacity, please call 360-546-9750.
The changing demands of our nation’s complex health care environment require the highest level of scientific knowledge and practice expertise to ensure quality patient outcomes. As health care changes, so must the nursing profession. Today’s nurses are called upon to serve in a variety of primary care and specialty roles, as well as leadership positions. In addition to working in clinical practice and in public health, nursing faculty is needed in colleges and universities to educate future nurses to serve in this dynamic environment.

The doctor of nursing practice is a terminal degree that focuses on the clinical and leadership aspects of nursing rather than academic research. Starting in fall 2012, the Washington State University College of Nursing will offer the DNP with specialization as a family nurse practitioner, psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner, or as an advanced population health advanced practice nurse. Students will be able to enter this program after completing a baccalaureate or master’s degree in nursing.

“We are searching for an individual who has both implemented and directed a DNP program in another university setting, understanding that our program may have somewhat different curricular offerings. Because the director will be working with the two campuses, we are also seeking an individual who has previous experience working with multiple campuses and a diverse faculty group,” said Guido.

Nurses who are interested in pursuing their DNP may call 360-546-9618 to learn more about the program and how to apply.
Every university has its hangouts—the student union, the library... At Washington State University Vancouver, the cafeteria acts as the town square. Here students, faculty and staff gather to take a break and break some bread. Café and Catering Manager, Bill Bontems, looks out for the wellbeing of the entire campus community by offering meals and snacks that are as nutritious as they are delicious.

“It’s critical in this country that we turn our eating habits in a much healthier direction,” said Bontems. “We added a stir-fried vegetable dish and a stir-fried chicken dish to the menu which has evolved into offering steamed vegetable and rice bowls.”

Bontems, who has more than 35 years of experience in the food industry, tries to round out healthy options by offering one healthy soup each day, egg-white omelets, gluten-free fruit bars and more. A healthy-option menu and a nutrition chart that lists calorie counts and fat grams for the cafeteria’s most popular items are posted on its wall and website.

Beyond breakfast and lunch service, Bontems occasionally offers healthy-cooking classes for WSU Vancouver faculty, staff and students as part of the campus’s wellbeing program. He teaches a small group how to make a healthy entrée with a vegetable and a starch—he may even throw in a dessert next time he teaches class.

WSU Vancouver’s Wellbeing committee selected “Spring into Nutrition” as its spring theme. It’s a good fit considering March is National Nutrition Month, an annual campaign sponsored by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics to promote nutrition awareness and education. Bontems is doing what he can to help the committee and the university.

“Even though we want students and faculty to eat healthier, chicken tenders, cheeseburgers and fries are still top sellers. We can see the tide turning a bit, which is encouraging,” said Bontems.

The public is welcome to dine at the WSU Vancouver cafeteria located in the Dengerink Administration building. A smaller café is open in the Firstenburg Student Commons. The cafeteria offers a daily entrée special, a daily sandwich special and two soups. Twice a month Bontems turns the cafeteria into a Culture Café featuring menus that celebrate cultures around the nation and the globe.

Learn more, including hours of operation, by visiting the cafeteria’s website at admin.vancouver.wsu.edu/finance-and-operations/dining-and-catering-services
how to **ENHANCE** children’s wellbeing

BY JACOB SCHMIDT

In today’s health-oriented and media-saturated society, most people have a strong reaction to the word “obesity.” Jane Lanigan, an assistant professor in Washington State University Vancouver’s human development department, has a reaction all her own. Not one fixated on societal norms of beauty, but centered on “ENHANCE-ing” healthy child-weight practices.

**FOCUSBING ON HEALTH**

Working in various collaborative partnerships at both the local and national level, Lanigan has dedicated her research to establishing healthy-weight practices and furthering awareness. Focused mainly on children under the age of 5, Lanigan wants to make certain that people concentrate on the health aspect of obesity.

“It is not an issue of aesthetics—it is an issue of health. Children who begin a pattern of unhealthy eating early in life tend to develop serious health issues such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease,” said Lanigan.

This attitude is evidenced in Lanigan’s recent involvement with ENcouraging Healthy Activity and Nutrition in Childcare Environments. Better known as ENHANCE, Lanigan headed up the three-year pilot project as lead researcher working in collaboration with Educational Service District 112, Childcare Resource and Referral, Educational Opportunities for Children and Families, Clark College and the Kaiser Permanente Community Health Fund.

With the help of these ENHANCE partnerships, Lanigan explored healthy-weight practices for children in early learning environments. Understanding the issue across a wide range of child care settings acted as a key focal point for ENHANCE. Eating habits form early in childhood, and ENHANCE has worked with families to ensure that habits around healthy eating and activity have the opportunity to take root.

By focusing her research primarily on the early childhood group, Lanigan has differentiated her research from other healthy-weight studies.

“Healthy-weight practices for older age groups had received quite a bit of attention in the scholarly literature, but we had yet to receive attention for early childhood,” said Lanigan. “I saw a huge gap in how we were approaching the issue.”

Lanigan’s research could not come at a more critical time. According to the National Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 17 percent of children and adolescents aged 2 to 19 years suffer from obesity. Further complicating the issue, childhood obesity rates have only recently leveled off after nearly tripling during the past three decades. These staggering statistics center on what, for many, remains a sensitive topic. Fortunately for those concerned with the sensitive nature of healthy-weight practices, Lanigan’s years of experience and thriving passion distinguish her as a seasoned researcher and attentive advocate.

**INSPIRATION**

With degrees in psychology, education and family studies, Lanigan’s passion has shifted across the educational spectrum throughout her 22 years in the field before settling on early childhood.

“Part of what moved me in that direction was my understanding that there are two critical contexts for children,” said Lanigan. “Working with families directly and working within the educational system.”

Lanigan has worked within both contexts and continues to do so today. When not immersed in her research at WSU Vancouver, Lanigan volunteers in the community through such programs as Share. Dedicated to serving the hungry and homeless in Southwest Washington, Share has provided Lanigan with the opportunity to continue to work with families on a more personal and direct level.

“It has been my primary volunteer involvement in the community—that and just being a parent myself,” said Lanigan with a laugh.

Lanigan has two children who, although fully grown now, she concedes may have partially pushed her in the direction of early childhood. For Lanigan, it’s a rewarding field of study—one the Vancouver community provides with a profusion of opportunities to pursue.

**WSU VANCOUVER**

Lanigan moved to Vancouver in 2002 after completing her Ph.D. in family studies at Texas Woman’s University in Denton, Texas. Shortly after, she began work as an adjunct with the human development department at WSU Vancouver. Although still finishing her dissertation, Lanigan’s passion for children’s health issues,
coupled with her high interest in research, pushed her to get heavily involved with the WSU research community.

“Even though I was paid to work as an adjunct, I still became involved in a lot of community research and evaluation projects because that’s where my passion lies,” said Lanigan. “I was very fortunate when I did get the assistant professor position, as I already had a very well-developed collaboration within the community that allowed me to move into this project quite early in my career.”

Although ENHANCE remains a golden achievement for Lanigan, she refers to ENHANCE as a “true collaboration” and frequently reflects on the partnerships that made it possible. A number of WSU Vancouver faculty, alumni and students were involved with ENHANCE including a human development alumna who went on to become the director of the ENHANCE project. Five undergraduate students from different disciplines also directly assisted Lanigan in her research by taking pieces of the project and conducting their own research.

Students seem to pay particular attention to Lanigan’s research when she presents it in such classes as Human Development 302, Child-Parent Relationships.

“Because we have so many non-traditional students at WSU Vancouver, many of my students are currently parenting themselves, so they are interested in my research from the perspective of a parent as well as interested in the topic of healthy-weight practices in general,” said Lanigan.

Further expounding on her research, Lanigan works as WSU Vancouver’s state specialist for the extension office. With seats on multiple committees, Lanigan’s primary responsibilities center on parenting, education and early childhood. Through the extension office, Lanigan co-directs professional development opportunities for educators, works with Just in Time Parenting and also works on the national leadership team for the eXtension Alliance for Better Child Care.

**GRANTS AND RECOGNITION**

Locally, Lanigan’s research was featured in the fall installment of WSU Vancouver’s 2011/12 Chancellor’s Seminar Series. Using her work from ENHANCE, Lanigan addressed common misconceptions concerning the connection between parenting and healthy-weight practices for children.

Furthering national recognition of her work, Lanigan’s ENHANCE research paper received the National Council for Family Relations award for best professional paper. In addition to this honor, Lanigan also works as investigator on a USDA AFRI SEEDs grant for early education. Working in conjunction with Tom Power from WSU Pullman and Sheryl Hughes from Baylor University in Texas, the five-year, multi-million dollar grant was based partly off Lanigan’s own work with ENHANCE.

While any number of researchers would clamor for involvement with grants such as these, the achievement Lanigan touted most eagerly was her participation with Michelle Obama’s Let’s Move. Designed to help solve the issues surrounding childhood obesity, the program took pieces of research from across the country to inform the initiative including research from Lanigan’s ENHANCE.

Extending beyond the national level, Lanigan’s research will soon appear at the United Nations International Congress on Diet and Activity Measurement. Lanigan will present the protocol for assessing healthy-weight knowledge in children aged 3 – 5.

**LOOKING TO THE FUTURE**

With so much already completed in the past 10 years at WSU Vancouver, it is no surprise that Lanigan is looking to the future and her next decade at WSU Vancouver.

“Within 10 years I would like to develop some more structured, formal curriculum for helping adults understand the feeding environment with children and how to structure that involvement in a positive way,” said Lanigan. “I want to work to develop an accurate way of assessing young children’s healthy-eating knowledge and to be able to recognize misconceptions they hold.”

Lanigan’s dedication to her research remains her primary passion, and she encourages others to get involved in the research field by pursuing the issues that interest them.

“Where you begin may be very different and may take many changes,” said Lanigan. “You evolve as you go along, and that’s part of the excitement and reward of the field.”
“Life is not about what you accomplish, it’s about what you overcome,” said Swil Kanim, world-class virtuoso violinist and inspirational storyteller, during his keynote address at College Goal Sunday Washington hosted by Washington State University Vancouver in January.

Kanim began his life on the Lummi Indian Reservation near Bellingham, Wash. His childhood had a chaotic beginning that eventually led to being raised by foster parents.

Kanim was invited to College Goal Sunday Washington to make education beyond high school feel possible to the nearly 400 guests who attended the event to get help filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and learn more about how to pay for college.

Kanim credits his fourth grade teacher, his self-proclaimed “hero,” for nurturing his love for the violin. He heard the instrument played at school and wanted to learn to play too. His foster parents, whose biological daughter had strained their ears and their patience with her foray into playing the violin, told Kanim “no.”

Kanim’s hero helped him get access to a violin. He began practicing in secret—up to eight hours a day. He finally told his parents about the violin when he needed to leave the house during a dinner party to play first chair in a school concert.

The kids at school teased Kanim and told him Native Americans play wood flutes or drums, not violins. But he didn’t let that stop him. There were many more obstacles along the path to world-class virtuoso violinist, including a stint as a street musician at the Pike Place Market in Seattle. The point is—he made it.

Kanim encouraged his audience not to give up on their dreams, but figuring out how to pay for college can be daunting. Tuition, loans, grants, waivers, scholarships and FAFSA can sound foreign to those who are new to the process. Imagine how much more complicated it gets if English is not your first language.

WSU Vancouver set out to simplify the whole matter when it hosted College Goal Sunday Washington. This program helps students and families complete the FAFSA, the form required to apply for federal financial assistance for higher education. The FAFSA is considered the gateway to accessing financial aid resources, such as federal and state grants, school loans and scholarships.

WSU Vancouver’s College Goal Sunday Washington is the largest in the state and the only event to offer the information in three languages—English, Russian and Spanish.

The annual event is free and open to all...
families no matter where the student intends to go to school. Whether students choose a four-year college, community college, vocational or technical school, College Goal Sunday Washington can help them get money.

Because household financial information is a key part of completing the form, students and parents are encouraged to attend this event together. Financial-aid experts, fluent in English, Russian or Spanish, were on hand in WSU Vancouver’s computer labs to provide as little or as much assistance as families needed to fill out the FAFSA.

WSU Vancouver takes College Goal Sunday Washington beyond filling out the FAFSA. The keynote, translated by interpreters, and three workshops presented in all three languages: “Getting to College & Succeeding,” “Financial Aid 101” and “Scholarships” rounded out the day.

One Latina mom who attended the event said College Goal Sunday Washington made her feel like part of the process thanks to Spanish-language speakers.

“My child knows what to do. It’s me that doesn’t. Today I feel like I’m helping her (big smile),” she said in a thank you note to the university.

College Goal Sunday Washington at WSU Vancouver is produced in cooperation with Clark College. Originally held the Sunday after the Super Bowl, the annual College Goal Sunday Washington series of events take place throughout January and February at multiple locations across the state. More information can be found at collegegoalsundaywa.org/event-locations.

Nationally, College Goal Sunday events are scheduled in 40 states, plus the District of Columbia. College Goal Sunday is managed by the YMCA of the USA.

“Education doesn’t change ‘you,’” said Kanim. “You can be who you are while you do what you do. You don’t have to give up who you are to be excellent at something.”
Tradition is an important aspect of any university. One tradition that stands firm at Washington State University Vancouver is the annual publication of the Salmon Creek Journal. What began as an English club project in 1997 has grown into the highly anticipated student-run publication featuring student, faculty, staff and alumni poetry, prose and visual arts.

Each December the journal receives about 150 submissions. After careful review, the journal’s staff selects about a third of them for publication in the spring.

The 2011–2012 staff of the Salmon Creek Journal started what they hope will be a new tradition. For the first time in 14 years of publishing, the Salmon Creek Journal is expanding beyond the printed pages that previously defined it by embracing technology. Technology allows them to include submissions in the performing arts for the first time.

Now dance, music and theater will be shared electronically on the Salmon Creek Journal’s website.

“This section will be a bit different in that submissions for the performing arts will be accepted year-round,” said Kimberly Lawrence, editor-in-chief of the Salmon Creek Journal.

Also for the first time, a digital edition of the journal will accompany the print edition. Offering the journal in two formats will allow for expanded readership and provide a digital archive for journals from 2012 forward.

The Salmon Creek Journal will celebrate traditions old and new at its launch party at 5 p.m. April 5 in the Firstenburg Student Commons on the WSU Vancouver campus. The event is free and open to the public. The party will unveil the 2012 print edition of the Salmon Creek Journal and will include a digital exhibit of performing arts, along with an exhibit of past editions of the Salmon Creek Journal.

Learn more about the Salmon Creek Journal by visiting wsuv.orgsync.com/org/salmoncreekjournal. You can get a copy of the journal by emailing scj@vancouver.wsu.edu.
Justin Draeger, National Association of Financial Aid Administrators president and CEO, does not pretend he’s unbiased. He believes higher education is a public good.

“People with some post-secondary education, not necessarily a bachelor’s degree even, earn higher wages and get raises faster. They have a reduced likelihood of being a drain on the system,” said Draeger.

Draeger came to Washington State University Vancouver in February to be the keynote speaker for the university’s 10th anniversary Public Affairs Lecture Series. He discussed the effects of recent cuts in financial support for higher education.

“In 1987 state money covered 84 percent of the cost of going to Washington State University. Students paid $1,732 per year for tuition. Under Gov. Chris Gregoire’s latest budget proposal, the state would pay only 35 percent, which means students would pay $10,874 in tuition, according to WSU President Elson S. Floyd in a Seattle Times op-ed published in January.

The state of Washington is not alone. University enrollment numbers have increased nationwide, but recent cuts have decreased the amount of financial awards available for students, requiring them to take more loans. Nationwide, the total amount of outstanding student loans exceeded the total amount of consumer credit-card debt last year, according to national news reports. The New York Federal Reserve is projecting total student loan debt to exceed $1 trillion this year.

As a first-generation university graduate from a long line of manufacturers in Toledo, Ohio, Draeger has experienced the inner workings of higher education funding on a personal as well as federal level.

“I believe in the American Dream. I believe we can start with very little and turn it into something ... but there are obstacles.” —Justin Draeger

“Cuts to higher education are opaque,” said Draeger. “There is not much public discourse or transparency. Students and parents don’t know all the reasons why, they only know they are paying more for tuition.”

Draeger asks himself if this is what we wanted. Was this, as a country, what we decided? Or is this where we ended up?

For students who seek to change the culture long-term, Draeger says talk to your legislator.

To learn more about the National Association of Financial Aid Administrators, visit nasfaa.org.
green ambitions
WSU Vancouver’s efforts to restore Mill Creek

By Laura Evancich

If you have hit the Cougar trails on campus, you’ve likely noticed the thousands of brightly colored flags that stand neatly in place marking the location of new trees and plant life along the banks of Mill Creek. And though there are more than 20 different flag colors—each signifying a particular species—they all serve one goal: help Mill Creek stay clean.

The Mill Creek restoration project aims to restore the area’s natural habitat through new tree and plant growth, bank stabilization to prevent erosion and the containment of invasive species. This large-scale effort is well underway thanks to many folks who don’t mind getting their hands dirty for a good cause.

History of Mill Creek
WSU Vancouver sits on 351 acres, many of which were once farmed. For generations, the riparian zone—the ecological buffer along Mill Creek—was clear-cut by past landowners for more lucrative use. While hay fields and dairy pastures may have once turned a profit, generations of clear-cutting put Mill Creek and its native residents—fish, birds, plants and other wildlife—in jeopardy.

Green thumbs
But with new growth comes hope for the future. In collaboration with partners including Clark Public Utilities’ StreamTeam and the Department of Natural Resources, WSU Vancouver’s facilities operations department is managing the ongoing project with optimism.

“We are reestablishing Mill Creek’s buffer by reintroducing native trees and shrubs,” said John Benson, grounds and nursery specialist at WSU Vancouver. “By thoughtfully selecting species, we are working toward a healthier watershed. We’re installing building blocks for an enhanced ecological process to renew.”

Group effort
Through a series of community events held on the WSU Vancouver campus, hundreds of volunteers have pitched in to plant native trees including Oregon ash, salmonberry, grand fir and western red cedar along the banks of Mill Creek. Many of the trees are propagated from local landowners and others are donated. To date, more than 14,000 trees have been planted—2,700 of them by community and alumni volunteers. In all, more than 350 volunteers have donated upward of 1,600 hours to the effort.

Thoughtful planting
Plenty of planning goes into where

Next to each tree stands a color-coded flag. There are more than 20 different colored flags in all, each corresponding to a native species. Every tree is identified and inventoried.

Trees are planted in a linear fashion in relation to the creek, in harmony with their neighbors, and spaced for easy maintenance by the grounds crew.
and how these trees are planted. Trees are broken down into ‘communities’ and selected by zones, based around noxious weed control and where they can be expected to thrive. Many trees are planted close together to create a canopy to combat weeds, as some invasive species can’t populate in the shade.

Invasive species such as Himalayan blackberries and reed canary grass can populate quickly and contribute greatly to erosion.

“The more trees we’re allowed to plant in the buffer zone, the more we’re bulking up the fish populations and the ecology of the creek,” said Benson.

Trees and plantlife along waterways help fish tremendously, providing shade for fish to maintain optimal temperatures; leaf and wood litter for use as in-stream habitats; and seeds which attract beneficial insects that fish can eat.

“Tree roots help stabilize creek sides, minimizing erosion,” explained Benson. “Erosion kills juvenile fish, which results in fewer adult fish. Fewer adult fish mean fewer juvenile fish, and so on.”

New trees along the bank will protect against droughts and flooding in many ways: roots absorb water from the soil, allowing more rainwater to be stored in the ground in the event of flood. Leaves collect raindrops on their way down, making for a gentler impact on the ground and less erosion. Tree roots also help keep soil in place, preventing it from eroding away and becoming damaged. The restoration team will reinforce banks by widening them and adding adjacent channels and felled trees that will act as buffers when waters run high.

**Salmon Safe (and happy)**

Restoring the habitat along Mill Creek not only offers fish and other native creatures a sanctuary, it’s also in line with the expectations of WSU Vancouver’s recent Salmon-Safe designation—an honor earned in 2010 based on green-gounds practices and the conditions of ponds and streams on campus. A Salmon-Safe certification comes with annual evaluations where certain conditions must be met; one of them being the restoration of Mill Creek as it runs through campus.

**Preserving the future**

Opportunities like the Mill Creek restoration project make for a healthier watershed, but are vital to preserving all wildlife habitats.

“It is important to restore areas that are degraded due to human fancies,” Benson urges. “We are only as strong as our weakest link. No matter how strong the other rungs are; it doesn’t mean much when the chain is broken and the repair shop doesn’t exist. When we lose a species or a part of the food chain due to neglect, we are to blame and our future generations will pay the price. It is important to do what we can toward the cleanup of our watershed as it affects us too, not just the critters that dwell there.”

**Ready to join the cause?**

Volunteer at an upcoming Cougar Pride Day or check vancouver.wsu.edu for future planting opportunities.

To view a photo gallery of the Mill Creek restoration project, visit [http://flic.kr/s/aHsjyyRfnp](http://flic.kr/s/aHsjyyRfnp)

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**facts**

Of the **14,000 trees** planted to date, **9,157** are in dense, forested areas and **1,883** can be found in open spaces.

Of those planted, **75–80 percent** are expected to survive to adulthood. Those that don’t will aid in what Benson refers to as wood recruitment, creating a healthy habitat for the forest floor.

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John Benson walks along the Butterfly Meadow on the WSU Vancouver campus.
Did you know that WSU Vancouver’s 351-acre campus has more than six miles of walking, hiking, biking, jogging and interpretive trails? It’s true. So lace up your shoes and get out there!

Alumni and community volunteers planting trees at last fall’s Cougs in the Community event on campus.
Need a buddy? Join one of the student- or staff-led walking/running groups.
During fall semester the Associated Students of Washington State University Vancouver provided a unique experience for students through advocacy, leadership and activities. ASWSUV will follow up last semester's successes with another auspicious semester of student involvement, personal growth and professional augmentation.

In the fall, ASWSUV launched a new diversity event coordinator position on the Student Activities Board. The position was established to increase diversity awareness and provide a more welcoming atmosphere on campus.

This spring, ASWSUV will focus on providing family-friendly activities and opportunities for students. One such opportunity is reduced-price tickets to the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry to see Gunther Von Hagen’s “Body Worlds and the Brain” exhibit.

ASWSUV is also focusing on leadership and personal growth through workshops that allow students to gain information and skills they can put to work both during their time at WSU Vancouver and after graduation.

The organization has partnered with the Office of Student Involvement to host a three-part leadership series called “Sex, Confidence, Drive.” More than 100 students participated in the first two parts, and the feedback was great. We hope to attract even more students for part three this semester.

One important area of focus for ASWSUV throughout this year is environmental sustainability. ASWSUV passed a bill through the student senate that funded the purchase and installation of several storm water filtration systems for the campus’s storm drains. This system will aid in fulfilling the requirements to be recognized as a Salmon-Safe Certified campus.

As vice president of ASWSUV, it has been my privilege to be a part of the organization, to witness the organization’s success and share it with WSU Vancouver students and family.

Narek Danielyan, 
Vice President, ASWSUV
The littlest Cougs on campus, those attending the Child Development Program Preschool and Kindergarten, are following in the footsteps of their big Coug brothers and sisters. This year the CDP initiated its first Hal and Joan Dengerink Early Learning Annual Read.

At the university, the Campus Reading Project (2006–2010) enhanced a sense of community between students, faculty and staff, and introduced first-year students to intellectual life at WSU Vancouver. The project involved reading a chosen book and participating in discussions and events throughout the year. The basic concept holds true for the CDP kids, only at a beginner’s reading level.

The CDP “Hal Read” initiative, established in honor of founding Chancellor H.A. (Hal) Dengerink and his wife Joan, is destined to be an annual project. It will provide a book to each child enrolled in the kindergarten and preschool programs. For this inaugural year the project focused only on the preschoolers, who each received “The Kissing Hand” by Audrey Penn.

A New York Times #1 Bestseller, “The Kissing Hand” is considered “required reading” for children entering preschool and kindergarten for the first time.

Originally published by the Child Welfare League of American, Audrey Penn’s story focuses on Chester Raccoon, who confronts a difficult situation and is provided gentle reassurance that sustains him for many new situations.

For parents and others who care for and about children, “The Kissing Hand” provides a wonderful way to communicate the message that “you are loved and remembered.”

If you would like to contribute to the 2012/2013 Hal and Joan Dengerink Early Learning Annual Read, call 360-546-9600.

Laura Evancich
Washington State University Vancouver opened its new Engineering and Computer Science building in January—home to the School of Engineering and Computer Science where mechanical engineering, computer science and electrical engineering programs are offered.

The $38.5 million, four-story, 60,000-square-foot building offers laboratories, classrooms and study spaces for WSU Vancouver students and faculty.

The new teaching and research facility will prepare students to meet the employment needs of high-demand, high-tech fields in Southwest Washington and beyond. The building offers power systems, radio-frequency, electronics and computer labs as well as Class-100 cleanrooms. Engineering and computer science students gain innovative research opportunities and the ability to work with the kind of equipment they’ll encounter when they enter the workforce.

The building’s design, in process for “gold” LEED certification, features durable composite and recycled materials and lots of natural light.

To view a photo gallery of the new building, visit http://flic.kr/s/aHsjwKEvDv
Hallway alcoves with benches are drenched in natural light, offering a quiet nook for studying.

A (VERY) CLEAN ROOM
New Class-100 cleanrooms are just that—labs free of outside contaminants. They house integrated circuit and nano device fabrication equipment which must be operated in a very clean and tightly controlled environment in order to achieve good fabrication results. The room shown above is bathed in low-frequency lighting so that sensitive micro devices can be fabricated without interference.

Classrooms feature perforated bamboo wall panels and top-notch audio-visual presentation equipment.

Computer labs feature the latest equipment for engineering and computer science students.

From the ground up
LMN Architects, Seattle
Hoffman Construction, Portland

LAURA EVANCICH
HONORING WOMEN WHO INSPIRE, MENTOR & EMPOWER

CELEBRATE INCREDIBLE WOMEN WITH INCREDIBLE WOMEN

An annual recognition of Women’s History Month

6 p.m. Thursday, March 29
Dengerink Administration building, room 110

KEYNOTE BY
Maya Muller
Principal, Muller Design Studio

“Hunting Rhinoceroses in the Digital Age”

Free. Reservations are recommended.
RSVP by March 21 at vancouver.wsu.edu/distinction.

SPONSORED BY

The Office of Student Involvement
Unitus COMMUNITY CREDIT UNION
The Campaign for Washington State University continues, as does Washington State University Vancouver’s effort to raise $20 million of the $1 billion goal. The campaign ends in 2015 in conjunction with WSU’s 125th anniversary. To honor donors who have generously donated $25,000 or more, WSU recognizes them with a Cougar Campaign Flag.

Columbia Credit Union
In celebration of the credit union’s 60th anniversary, Columbia Credit Union gave $60,000 to the School of Engineering and Computer Science. The gift supports a radio-frequency research laboratory, a computer science open computer lab and six faculty-research mini grants.

Tektronix
Tektronix, Inc., the world’s leading manufacturer of oscilloscopes, made a $342,000 gift of test and measurement equipment to WSU Vancouver in February. The equipment, including a real-time spectrum analyzer, digital phosphor and mixed signal oscilloscopes and Keithley’s semiconductor parameter analyzers will be used to outfit laboratories and classrooms in the Engineering and Computer Science building.

Kathy Sinclair
When she died last year, Kathy Sinclair left $1.3 million in her will to create the Glen D. and Katherine Sinclair Endowed Scholarship fund at WSU Vancouver. Her gift is the largest endowed scholarship at WSU Vancouver and the second-largest donation of any kind since the campus was established in 1989. Sinclair was the widow of former Camas, Wash. Police Chief Glen Sinclair. Kathy and her family couldn’t afford college when she graduated from Camas High School in 1938. She wanted to provide opportunities for community members who also can’t afford college through her will. The first awards will be made next fall.

Education builds our community.
The opening of the Engineering and Computer Science building for spring classes inspired local businesses to support high-tech degrees to help fuel economic recovery in Southwest Washington.

Pictured at right: Columbia Credit Union board of directors and senior management.
Sleep Country Amphitheater
When Sleep Country Amphitheater began operating in 2003, the executive staff committed to building a charity fund that would benefit the community. From the beginning, they focused their efforts on education. At the launch of the Campaign for Washington State University in December 2010, the amphitheater presented a $25,000 check to endow a scholarship at WSU Vancouver to support students who reside in Clark County. The staff intends to add to their original gift over time. The amphitheater’s executive staff hopes their gift will fund a full-tuition scholarship that will allow more local residents an opportunity to pursue their education.

CAMEO
Cathy Anna Mayer Encouraging Others donated $26,000 to the WSU Vancouver program At Home At School last fall. Mayer died due to complications of breast cancer in 2004. After her death, her family and friends created CAMEO as a reflection of her love for her four young children, her family, her friends and the community she called home. Each year CAMEO selects one organization to be the beneficiary of its annual “Girls Night Out” charity event, and this year AHAS was selected.

AHAS provides equity and opportunity to all children who face systematic roadblocks to education. It offers community-based teacher education to prepare new and current teachers to work in an increasingly diverse society. It supports K – 12 and early college-years students who are homeless or otherwise underserved succeed in school. AHAS will use CAMEO’s gift to support educational programs for underserved children.

Schwab
The Anna and Dwight Schwab Charitable Trust made a $40,000 gift this year to support nursing scholarships. This generous contribution will support students who aspire to become nursing faculty. Anna and Dwight lived in Portland, Ore. where Dwight was a business attorney. Anna was a health nutritionist and volunteered with local charities. The board members of their trust voted to support nursing scholarships at WSU Vancouver to address a critical and emergent need—a national shortage of nurses. While the demand for highly educated nurses increases each year, so too must the number of nursing faculty to train the next generation of nurses. The Schwab scholarships have a tremendous impact on the quality of health care in our community.
Clearly not one to languish in any one profession too long, Meister began working in the coffee business in Ethiopia seven years ago. What does coffee have to do with fashion? Coffee and raw leather are among Ethiopia's largest export products. Much of Ethiopia's raw leather has traditionally been exported to Italy and is used in high-end, Italian finished-leather goods such as footwear and apparel.

While Meister was in Addis Ababa six years ago on coffee business, he met some people who were working on a project to bolster the finished-leather goods sector in the Horn of Africa, and they asked if he would consider becoming involved.

The finished-leather goods project was started by a number of non-government organizations, countries and entrepreneurs with a goal of reducing poverty through productive means. This is how—and why—Meister founded Konjo Ababa, an ethically produced designer-accessories label.

"By creating finished-leather goods and selling them both wholesale and retail, more money is left in country. Instead of an extraction economy—exporting raw leather—we are developing an export economy," said Meister. "This reduces poverty by providing more jobs from the tanneries to the workshops. It also teaches valuable and marketable skills such as leather working, sewing, quality control, shipping/receiving, delivery, marketing and many others. Each Konjo Ababa order provides jobs to hundreds of people."

Ethiopia is a lesser-developed country. The average annual income is about $400 USD. A large portion of the population lives in abject poverty and lacks access to basic resources including food, clean water, medicine and education. Konjo Ababa is out to change all that. Meister says walking into the workshop and seeing smiles on the faces of the people who work is what keeps him coming back to Ethiopia.

Thomas Meister, Bachelor of Arts in anthropology, magna cum laude, '06, started in the fashion industry as a young man. He began modeling at 16. At 20 he became a fashion photographer. Later, he became a stockbroker, which required him to wear chic men’s fashions. You could say Meister has seen fashion from all angles.
faces of his workers is one of the best feelings he gets.

“These people are working in a safe environment, paid a livable wage, able to feed, shelter, clothe and educate their children. That’s the most fun I have,” said Meister.

Meister credits his wife and his WSU education for his success.

“My wife, Fleurdeliza, has empowered me beyond belief. None of this would be possible without her,” said Meister.

In fact, Meister named his company after his wife. Konjo Ababa means “beautiful flower” in Amharic, and a fleur is the French word for flowers.

“My WSU Vancouver education helped immensely as well. My anthropology degree taught me much about cultures, religions, linguistics and more. I use my education every day in business and every millisecond in life. WSU taught me to think differently and has changed my life,” he said.

Konjo Ababa is a Washington-based company with offices in Vancouver. A majority of the company’s sales and design are done in California, so Meister has offices there too. Konjo Ababa has boutiques in Southern California. It’s one of the biggest fashion centers in the U.S. and boasts a well-educated, affluent demographic. Konjo Ababa is a big hit among Hollywood’s royalty. The company’s products make regular appearances at glamorous Tinseltown events. The company also sells wholesale at trade shows in some of the world’s other important fashion centers including Las Vegas, New York and Paris.

The international aspect of Konjo Ababa takes its toll on Meister in some ways. He’s racked up some frequent flyer miles to be sure. The hotel he frequents in Ethiopia is very nice, but something is usually not working while he is there. On his last trip the elevators were out of order for two days, the Internet down for two days, and the shower didn’t work for a day.

“The Internet being down is the biggest concern as communication is halted both in country and to the west. If all I cared about was profit, I would immediately move production to Asia, which is approximately an equal distance but much closer in many ways,” said Meister.

He admits he frets about not being able to be in two places at once. He hopes things are going smoothly in Africa when he’s in the U.S. and conversely hopes things are going smoothly in the U.S. when he’s in Africa, despite the fact that he has wonderful employees on both sides of the globe.

Economic uncertainty has been another source of stress recently.

“The economy has been rough for many. Access to capital has dried up considerably and that has hindered growth. But as the saying goes, problems are opportunities wearing work boots. The slowdown has given me an opportunity to revise the business model, rewrite the business plan and streamline operations. I have been able to concentrate on quality control and product development/design. Finally the global recession has given me an opportunity to narrow my focus on targeting the proper demographic for marketing and sales,” said Meister.

Worry and the economy aside, let’s face it, the fashion industry is fun!

“Fashion is a blast! I work in Hollywood, where the majority of my product is sold. I travel to France and Italy every year for trade shows and product development/design ideas. As a photographer, albeit with aging eyes, I still do some of the photography for Konjo’s look books, marketing materials and other collateral. It’s rough working with models all day, but someone has to do it,” said Meister.

To learn more about Konjo Ababa or to purchase products, visit konjoaba.com. Stores wishing to purchase wholesale or retail may call Thomas Meister directly at 360-600-9162.
Shirley Skidmore, communications ‘84 and English ‘02, considers learning one of the greatest joys in life.

Why WSU Vancouver?
I majored in communications and English at WSU Pullman, but left with my English degree unfinished. Even after completing a master’s degree, that unfinished bachelor’s degree nagged at me. In the 1990s I was living in Portland and working in Vancouver, which provided me with the perfect opportunity to finish my English degree at WSU Vancouver.

What have you been doing since graduation?
Finishing my English degree helped motivate me to take the next step in my career and move into education advocacy work. I served two stints leading the communications team for former State Superintendent Terry Bergeson, and I oversaw all communications for the Chalkboard Project, a prominent Oregon K – 12 advocacy group. For the past three years I’ve been the director of marketing and communications at Marylhurst University, a liberal arts university south of Portland. I feel very lucky to have had these great opportunities to apply my skills to promote issues I care so deeply about.

Is there a specific thing you learned at WSU that you have been able to apply in the real-world working environment?
My experience at WSU Vancouver made me an even better writer. There is nothing like a great English class—or five!—to re-emphasize the importance of writing well and to help you perfect your craft. I’ve done a lot of persuasive writing in my career, and I’ve become adept at making a strong case based not only on facts and reasoning but on how all information is carefully presented. All of my liberal arts courses helped me excel in this area.

Outside of the Pacific Northwest, where have you run into a fellow Coug?
My most recent “Cougar spotting” came while I was on vacation in Chicago. My husband, an Oregon State grad, is more observant about seeing people in Cougar gear than I am; he always nudges me and says, “There goes one of you.”

How do you show your Cougar Pride?
I try to be restrained at the office since I do work for another university. But for more than 20 years my Oregon license plate has been COUGAL, and I’m on my third red car with gray interior. For years, I used to host Cougar kickoff parties prior to football season complete with Cougar trivia quizzes, and I’m an active donor and participant on university advisory boards. Let’s just say that anyone who knows me at all is very aware I graduated from WSU!
### March

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 – 16</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>MBA Stakeholder Series</td>
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<td>Bruce Silverman from Whole Foods presents “Declaration of Interdependence” 7 – 8 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>A-Z of Financial Aid Workshop 5:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Job internship Strategies Workshop 4 – 5 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>2012 Professional Writers Series</td>
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<td>Randy Gragg, “Making Your Pitch” 7 – 9 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Women of Distinction: Women in Technology 6 p.m.</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>WSU Vancouver scholarship application deadline</td>
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### April

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Interviewing Skills Workshop 4 – 5 p.m.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Salmon Creek Journal Launch Party 5 p.m.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Preview Day 1 p.m.</td>
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<td>A-Z of Financial Aid Workshop 2:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 and 13</td>
<td>Cougars in the Community Clark County Food Bank 8:45 a.m. – 12 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Job internship Strategies Workshop 4 – 5 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A-Z of Financial Aid Workshop 5:30 p.m.</td>
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The complete 2012 football schedule for WSU follows:

- Sept. 1 – at BYU
- Sept. 8 – Eastern Washington
- Sept. 15 – at UNLV
- Sept. 22 – Colorado
  (Homecoming)
- Sept. 29 – Oregon
  (at Seattle)
- Oct. 6 – at Oregon State
- Oct. 13 – California
- Oct. 20 – Bye
- Oct. 27 – at Stanford
- Nov. 3 – at Utah
- Nov. 10 – UCLA
  (Dad’s Weekend)
- Nov. 17 – at Arizona State
- Nov. 23 – Washington

Season tickets are on sale at wsucougars.com or by calling 1-800-GO-COUGS. Single-game tickets for road contests and the Seattle game will go on sale Apr. 2, while single-game tickets for Martin Stadium contests will be available beginning Aug. 4.

For more information about upcoming events, visit events.vancouver.wsu.edu or like us on Facebook: wsuvancouver
In Memoriam

H.A. (Hal) Dengerink
Chancellor Emeritus

Minnie Marshall
Human Development
alumna ’08

Vickie Rickard
Human Development
alumna ’06

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vancouver.wsu.edu  |  NWCrimson&Gray  |  29
“I had a long list of colleges to choose from, but WSU Vancouver had everything I wanted—a beautiful campus, lots of ways to get involved and amazing professors.”

Kyra Smith, marketing major