Cal U Has a Mayoral Presence

Cal U is rapidly becoming Mayor U. As the new year began, two Cal U students held their first terms as mayors of nearby towns. Ryan Belski, 21, a junior sport management major, is the mayor of Rices Landing, a town with about 400 residents in Greene County. At 22, senior criminal justice major Courtney Gellar is the youngest person to take office as mayor in Deemston, a borough of about 800 in Washington County. They are not the first Cal U students to serve in local government. Former Cal U student Casey Durdines ’07 is beginning his second term as mayor of California Borough, and Robert Prah ’06, the University’s director of veterans affairs, served as mayor of Smithston from 2006 to 2009. “I wish Mayors Belski and Gellar the best in their first terms and would love the opportunity to meet with them and compare notes or provide advice, if needed,” said Durdines.

“I feel that I have an understanding of the people and especially Cal U students, taking an active role in their local government. This is truly a credit to the excellent education and mentoring provided by the faculty and staff at California University.”

Diehard fan

Belski said he decided to run for mayor at the urging of Brad Kline, his friend and incumbent mayor. Dr. Roy Yarbrough, chairman of the Department of Exercise Science and Sport Studies, also encouraged his political ambitions.

“He’s always been supportive of everything and always told me to go for whatever my dreams are,” Belski said. “I am a diehard Vulcans football fan and have loved going to Cal U,” added Belski, who takes EMT classes at night and hopes to build a career in resort management. “I really enjoy the atmosphere Dr. Armenti has created on campus.”

As he confronts challenges such as road maintenance, gas drilling and revitalizing old or dilapidated buildings, Belski believes in getting involved with his community. In addition to serving as mayor of Rices Landing, he is a volunteer firefighter, a first responder and a volunteer at Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church.

“Getting more people involved is the biggest challenge, and something we lack here,” he said. “The people show an interest, but there’s only a certain group of individuals who help.”

Belski believes his door-to-door campaigning last fall helped him get a feel for his community.

“Nothing can happen overnight, but I believe I have an idea of what the people want,” he said. “We need to attract people here. We have to see what is possible and make it happen.”

Yarbrough said Belski possesses the combination of personal and professional skills that can make a real difference.

“I believe Ryan’s scholastic achievement, commitment to excellence and proven work ethic have merited serious attention and admiration,” he said.

Cal U Marks Black History Month

Cal U’s Black Student Union and the Office of Multicultural Affairs will celebrate Black History Month in February with an array of campus activities and a trip to the National Afro-American Cultural Center and Museum in Wilberforce, Ohio.

The month’s keynote event will be a talk by author and poet Sapphire. Her best-selling memoir, an basis of the hit movie Precious, winner of a Golden Globe for best supporting actress, will speak at 6 p.m. Feb. 23 in the Performance Center, inside the Natali Student Center.

The kickoff event will be a church service at 6:30 p.m. Feb. 1 in rooms 206-207 of the Natali Student Center. The service will be led by the Rev. Monteale A. Crawford, pastor of Mr. Olive Baptist Church in Rankin, Pa.

Other on-campus events include a poetry slam featuring faculty and students and an open microphone at 8 p.m. Feb. 10 in the Gold Rush, and a step-dancing (“stepping”) performance featuring The Soul Steppers at 9 p.m. Feb. 22 in the Performance Center.

Campus events are free; the Cal U community and the public are welcome.

Three Women, Each Outstanding

A woman with a heart for educating others, one with a passion for organizing social awareness events, and a third who is pursuing a lifelong dream to be a teacher have each been recognized as an Outstanding Woman of the Year for Fall 2009.

The awards are given each semester by the President’s Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW), established in 1990 with the support of President Angelo Armenti, Jr.

“The commission focuses on women’s issues and concerns, advocates on their behalf and recommends to the President specific actions that should be taken to improve the status of women at California University,” said Dr. Lisa M. McBride, special assistant to the president for equality employment and education opportunity (EEOO), University ombudsperson and interim president of the PCSW in the Office of Social Equity.

The honorees are Melissa Nelson in the graduate category, Katie Mercadante in the undergraduate category and Julie Miller in the non-traditional undergraduate category.

— Nelson graduated in December with a master’s of education degree. She tutors students to help them prepare for the PRAXIS II elementary teaching certification, is active with Science Olympiad and developed the American Sign Language curriculum for the Pittsburgh Public Schools.

Nelson currently is working on the development of a charter school to aid English-as-a-Second Language students to improve their English and learn two major world languages.

“We are looking for outstanding women, and Melissa certainly stands out,” said Dr. Connie Armitage, who joined Jane Bonari in nominating Nelson for the award.

“She stands out in a crowd for her professionalism and work ethic. She’s involved in so many things. She’s a real go-getter.”

— Mercadante is pursuing bachelor of science degrees in earth science and secondary education with a minor in GIS/emergency management. She has organized campus events such as Walk a Mile in Her Shoes and Take Back the Night to raise awareness of women’s issues. As a community assistant, she hosted programming to discuss the issue of date rape and served as a resource for female residents. She also has been a leader in several sororities on campus.

“Katie is a high achiever in her male-dominated field of earth science and meteorology,” wrote nominator.

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Students network, clubs meet service goals and children benefit from a project organized by the Women's Center.

Tie & Talk project participants saw the first tangible results this month when nearly 30 “Blanket, Book and Bear Bundles” were delivered to the Washington Women’s Shelter for young children victimized by domestic violence. “We provided the fleece material and children’s books, and we asked participating groups to donate teddy bears,” said Kay Dorrance, a former graduate assistant at the Women’s Center who now is interim coordinator/advocate for the P.E.A.C.E. Project.

“Each group scheduled specific times to come in and make the blankets and tie it all together with ribbon.” Dorrance distributed information about the project at last fall’s gathering of clubs and organizations. Tie & Talk participants included the women’s swim team, Black Student Union, Best Buddies, Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA), the PRactitioners, Kappa Kappa Psi, Phi Sigma Pi and the Psychology Club.

“The idea behind Tie & Talk was really to give clubs and organizations something they need, which is involvement in service projects,” said Dorrance, who will earn a master’s degree in social work this May.

“At the same time, it was an ideal way to network, build some relationships and see what kind of events we have planned. We want to build that bridge with the Women’s Center and students on campus.” During her internship at the Domestic Violence Center of Fayette County, Dorrance saw firsthand how children are affected by family violence. She believes the bundles can offer some comfort. “It’s something soothing to give them to make things a little better,” she said. “Ofentimes children and women come into a situation literally just the clothes on their back. They do not have time to gather what few toys they might have.”

The Women’s Center has scheduled an array of activities for the spring semester, including a fundraiser from Tie & Talk. Collaborating with the women’s swim and basketball teams — and endorsed by First Lady Barbara Armenti — the Women’s Center is co-hosting a raffle to benefit the Village, a nonprofit facility near campus that offers child care for low-income single parents who are pursuing their education at Cal U.

The grand prize of the raffle is a free in-state tuition for a semester or the cash equivalent ($2,800). All proceeds benefit the Village daycare center, the Women’s Center and the two teams. Tickets may be purchased at the Women’s Center, Carter Hall G-45.

“The Tie & Talk event was successful,” said Nancy Skobel, director of the Women’s Center and the P.E.A.C.E. Project. “The raffle was a direct spin-off from that and helped more people become aware of the center and what we have to offer.”

Cal U Has a Mayoral Presence

— Continued from page 1

said. “Ryan comfortably interacts with people and can express himself in a very lucid manner. He is someone who welcomes challenges.”

“They are a good person to know if I get a speeding ticket in Rice’s Landing,” he said.

‘Definitely my year’

Geller said she has wanted to be Deemston’s mayor for five or six years. She got her name on the ballot last spring and ran uncontested after 24-year incumbent Kathy Harasty chose not to seek re-election.

A longtime volunteer at the Beth-Center Senior Center, Geller said she has wanted to be Deemston’s mayor for “Definitely my year,” she said, laughing.

Among her mentors at Cal U, Geller singled out Dr. John Cencich, former chairman of the Criminal Justice Department and interim dean of the School of Graduate Studies and Research.

“Dr. Cencich has been amazing in helping me with classes and really all areas of life,” said Geller. “All of the classes in criminal justice have been very interesting because all the professors have extensive experience in the field, which has made learning from them so valuable.”

Random drug testing of borough employees is among her duties, she said, and the borough council also wants her to start a town website. Last fall she took a web design and layout course from faculty member Stephen Whitehead.

“The criminal justice courses fill well into a lot of the things I have to do, and I will most definitely seek advice from Professor Whitehead for the website,” she said. “It’s a good thing I went to Cal U and took his class.”

Geller, who hopes to become a juvenile probation officer, said Deemston politics runs in the family. Her father is a council member, and her mother is the judge of local elections.

Geller plans on carving her own niche.

“Everyone’s been so supportive, and residents seem happy to have a young mayor who can stay for awhile and really help the community,” she said. “I love living in Deemston.”

Although he is not one of her constituents, Cencich is a fan.

“Courtney was a great student, and I always knew she would be successful,” he said. “She is bright and sees the big picture. On top of that, she has a wonderful sense of humor. Courtney makes us all proud at Cal U.”

Greeks Win President’s Award

Cal U’s Zeta Phi Beta sorority and Phi Gamma Delta (Fiji) fraternity have earned the President’s Award for the most outstanding fraternity and sorority on campus.

The award is the highest recognition a fraternity or sorority can receive. It is based on scholarship, community service, overall Greek activities and educational programming.

This is the 10th consecutive year that Zeta Phi Beta has won the President’s Award. The group has raised funds for the American Heart Association, the March of Dimes and Ronald McDonald House, and participated in events such as Light the Night walks and highway cleanups. Members volunteer at preschools and make Easter baskets for the elderly, and the sorority holds frequent workshops on topics such as healthy eating and stress management.

Founded in 1920, Zeta Phi Beta has chartered hundreds of chapters and initiated thousands of women around the world. It was the first Greek-letter organization to charter a chapter in Africa; to form adult and youth auxiliary groups; to centralize its operations in a national headquarters in Washington, D.C.; and to be constitutionally bound to a fraternity, Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.

Phi Gamma Delta received the President’s Award and the Scholarship Award for a second year. Members had an average GPA of 3.18, exceeding the overall campus fraternity average of 2.73.

The fraternity brothers participated in Relay For Life, Walk a Mile in Her Shoes, the Big Event, Take Back The Night, educational programming for alcohol awareness, sex education, and Stephens Covey’s “7 Habits” training. They also work extensively with Cal U’s P.E.A.C.E. Project.

Cal U’s fraternity was recognized by Phi Gamma Delta’s national newsletter, The Friday Letter — Good News Edition.

The Fraternity of Phi Gamma Delta, also known as Fiji or Phi Gam, has 107 chapters and seven colonies at colleges and universities in the United States and Canada. It is dedicated to developing men of character within the academic setting, with the aim that they will become fully contributing members of society. Its international headquarters is in Lexington, Ky.

“The University is very proud of the Zeta Phi Beta sisters and Phi Gamma Delta brothers,” said Dr. Lenora Angelone, vice president for student development and services.

“Their community service, stellar academic work and active presence on the campus symbolize the part of our University’s mission that involves building character.”

Only in their third year on campus, Phi Gamma Delta (Fiji) fraternity has won two consecutive President’s Awards.

Talkers Bundle Books and Bears

Kay Dorrance, P.E.A.C.E. Project intern coordinator/advocate, sits among teddy bears donated for the Tie & Talk Project. The bears will be given to the Washington Women’s Shelter.
Vulcan Athletes Make the Grade

For the seventh consecutive semester, participants in Cal U’s athletic programs have compiled a cumulative grade-point average of 3.0 or higher. In all, 201 student-athletes were named to the fall 2009 edition of the Vulcan Athletic Director’s Honor Roll. To be eligible for the academic honor, student-athletes must earn a GPA of 3.0 or higher during the semester. The women’s golf team achieved the highest cumulative team GPA at 3.58, with all eight players attaining honor roll status. The baseball team topped the men’s side with a 3.18 cumulative GPA and 21 players on the honor roll. Eighty-seven percent of the women’s cross country team, and 85 percent of the softball team made the honor roll. The women’s track and field team had the greatest number of athletes on the honor roll, with 39.

Vulcans Repeat Lambert Win

For the third consecutive year, Cal U’s football team has earned the NCAA Division II Lambert Meadowlands Cup, awarded by the Eastern College Athletic Conference. Cal U finished atop the final Lambert Meadowlands weekly poll for the second straight season, edging out University of New Haven, Farmingdale State, New York Institute of Technology and New Jersey City University. The territory includes New York, New Jersey, New England and against eligible Lambert Meadowlands teams. The territory must be located in the East or play at least half of its schedule against eligible Lambert Meadowlands teams. The territory includes New York, New Jersey, New England and Pennsylvania; teams in Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia qualify if at least half of their schedule features eligible teams. Established in 1956 as the Lambert Trophy, the annual award recognizes supremacy in Eastern college football at all NCAA levels.

Under the guidance of eighth-year head coach John Kirkland (68-28), the Vulcans compiled an 11-4 overall record in 2009. The team won its fifth consecutive Pac-Sun-West championship and advanced to the NCAA Division II national semifinals for the third straight season. Over the past three seasons Cal has compiled a 36-7 cumulative record, a perfect 20-0 divisional mark and won seven of 10 NCAA playoff games.

Quarterback Josh Ports’ record-breaking season helped the Vulcans earn a third-consecutive Lambert Meadowlands Cup.

Black History Month Events

A schedule of events for Cal U’s 2010 Black History Month, sponsored by the Black Student Union and Office of Multicultural Affairs, follows.

• Feb. 1 — 6:30 p.m., church service led by Rev. Monte Lee Crawford, Natali Student Center, rooms 206-207. He is pastor of Mt. Olive Baptist Church in Rankin, Pa.
• Feb. 4 — 5:15 p.m., “Talk back” discussion forum, Carter Hall Multi-Purpose Room. Tamaniya Howe, Director of the Kingsley-Lincoln Freedom School, will discuss the history of Freedom Schools.
• Feb. 10 — 8 p.m., poetry night, Natali Student Center, Gold Rush.
• Feb. 11 — 9 p.m.-midnight, Valentine’s dance, Johnson Hall Community Room. Admission is free before 10 p.m., $2 after 10. Half the proceeds will be donated to the Kingsley-Lincoln Freedom School.
• Feb. 18 — 8 p.m., game night, Natali Student Center, Commuter Center. A bingo event and a spades card tournament ($15 per team) will be held for prizes, in addition to board games and videogaming stations. A portion of the card tournament entry fees will be donated to the Kingsley-Lincoln Freedom School.
• Feb. 20 — Trip to National Afro-American Cultural Center and Museum in Wilberforce, Ohio. Cost is $15 for students, $30 for others. Bus departs Natali Student Center at 6 a.m. To register, please contact Tonya Kirkland at 724-938-4307.
• Feb. 22 — 9 p.m., Soul Steppers step-dancing show, Performance Center. This event is co-sponsored by the Student Activities Board.
• Feb. 23 — 6 p.m., talk by Sapphire, author of Push, Performance Center. The hit movie Precious, winner of the Golden Globe for best supporting actress, is based on Sapphire’s best-selling memoir. The free event is open to the public.
• Feb. 24 — 9 p.m., Black history trivia contest, Natali Student Center, Commuter Center. This event is co-sponsored by the National Pan-Hellenic Council.

Women’s soccer coach Al Alvine

Following the best season in the program’s 20 years at the NCAA Division II level, Cal U women’s soccer coach Al Alvine was named the National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA)/adidas® NCAA Division II Atlantic Region Coach of the Year. Last fall, the third-year head coach guided the Vulcans to a school-best 19-6 overall record and the team’s first PSAC-West title. After advancing to the PSAC semifinals, the Vulcans competed in the NCAA Division II tournament and won three straight games to win the NCAA Atlantic Regional championship and advance to the national quarterfinals.

Before Alvine’s arrival, the program had achieved just five winning seasons — none since 2003. Two years ago the Vulcans won 12 games, after winning just four times in 2007. Alvine’s coaching record at Cal U is 35-26-5 (.568) in an overall eight-year cumulative collegiate career coaching record of 92-61-12 (.594). In addition to the NSCAA award, Alvine was selected the PSAC West Coach of the Year in November.

Outstanding Women Honored

— Continued from page 1

Karen Posa, director of University-wide mentoring. “Periodically throughout my career, I have had a few opportunities to meet an exceptional student who stands out among the rest. Katie Mercadante is one of those students.”

— Miller, who is pursuing a bachelor of science in education, came back to school to achieve her dream of becoming a teacher. She is active in her community with the Perryopolis Heritage Society, developing and running a one-room schoolhouse demonstration during the town’s Pioneer Days. She also works full-time at Linden Hall Corp., helping to prepare young women to be leaders of their generation. She is the proud mother of two daughters, both in college themselves.

Noted Bonari in her nomination letter, “Julie’s dedication to hard work and her desire to help people will enable her to become an outstanding teacher.”

The awards were presented at a luncheon in December. Guest speaker was Lynda Jones, president of the California Chapter of AAUW (American Association of University Women).

For more information about the President’s Commission on the Status of Women, contact McBride at 724-938-4014 or mcbride@calu.edu.
Call for Faculty Nominations to the California University Forum Academic Policy Committee

The California University Forum has announced a call for the nominations of faculty members for election to the Academic Policy Committee of the University Forum. The Forum Constitution calls for the election of six (6) regular (tenured or tenure-track) faculty members to the Academic Policy Committee, with each undergraduate college having two (2) representatives. The Executive Committee will supervise the election and certify the results. The terms of office are for three years. Self-nominations are permitted. The nominees will be contacted to confirm acceptance of their name to be placed on the electoral ballot.

Six faculty members will be elected to the Academic Policy Committee by confidential ballot, following the nominations. All regular (i.e. tenured and tenure-track) faculty may vote. The voting will take place electronically on February 17th and 18th. Further information will be provided via e-mail to faculty members who are eligible to vote.

The Academic Policy Committee meets periodically to tackle certain issues and make recommendations to the full Forum. For further information and details of the Academic Policy Committee visit the Forum website at www.calu.edu/forum.

Nominations forms will be sent to the campus mailbox of all regular tenure and tenure-track faculty members. The nomination form is also available in Public Folders/Campus-Wide Resources/University Forum of the university’s Microsoft Outlook Software.

All nominations must be submitted to Mrs. Dana Turcic, Forum Recording Secretary, Campus Box 99, by Friday, February 5, 2010.

For more information contact her at 724-938-1633 or via email at caluforum@calu.edu or turcic@calu.edu. You may also write her at University Forum Office, 250 University Avenue, California, PA 15419.

Sociology Intern’s Work Promotes Human Rights

When Stephanie Swetz first considered completing an internship, she immediately ruled out participating in the Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars. “I didn’t want to go through the Washington Center,” she said. “It seemed too strict.”

After some persuasion from Internship Center director Karen Printm, however, Swetz decided to give the Washington Center a chance. That is how Swetz, a senior sociology major, became an intern at the Protection Project in Washington, D.C.

The Protection Project is a research institute based at the Foreign Policy Institute at the John Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies. Its mission is to promote human rights and address the issue of human trafficking.

Swetz’s duties included researching training manuals and common practices used in the field, and participating in a civic engagement project. The Save Darfur Coalition is an organization that Swetz has been involved with and passionate about for two years, so she chose to join a protest in support of Darfur.

“It was a very emotional experience for me,” she said.

Swetz completed her internship successfully and won praise from her supervisors. “Stephanie has always been a conscientious student and worked hard to meet challenges,” said Dr. Elizabeth Jones, director of the sociology program and Swetz’s internship adviser. “Our students can compete successfully with the best students in the United States,” she added. “Stephanie’s success also demonstrates that we truly are a national university.”

Despite her original hesitation about a Washington Center internship, Swetz encourages other students to take part in the same experience. “This was an opportunity of a lifetime,” she said. “It is something I will never forget.”

THE CALIFORNIA UNIVERSITY FORUM

December 1, 2009 / 4:00 p.m., LRC Auditorium

APPROVED MINUTES

The California University Forum met in regular session Tuesday, December 1, 2009, in the LRC Auditorium. Presiding Officer Hoover called the meeting order at 4:05 p.m.

The following senators were in attendance:
Ms. Ashley Baird
Mr. Rick Bartagnoli
Ms. Jessica Bettlyon
Dr. Bill Biddington
Dr. Jane Bonari
Ms. Angela Burrows
Mrs. Roberta Busha
Dr. Leonard Cotelli
Ms. Jackie Davis
Ms. Jenna Duinmine
Ms. Sharon Elktetani
Ms. Fran Fayish
Dr. Joyce Hanley

Dr. Thomas Mueller
Ms. Rebecca Nichols
Dr. Susan Ryan
Mr. Paul Stibe
Mrs. Jennifer Sigado
Dr. Michael Slaven
Mr. Bryan Tolle
Dr. Tom Wickham
Dr. Brian Wood

The following were also in attendance:
Mr. Douglas Hoover, Presiding Officer
Mr. Loring Prest, Parliamentarian
Mrs. Dana Turcic, Recording Secretary

Ms. Fran Fayish

THE CALIFORNIA UNIVERSITY FORUM

January 26, 2010, 4:00 p.m./LRC Auditorium

TENTATIVE AGENDA

I. CALL TO ORDER
II. ROLL CALL
III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA
IV. MINUTES OF DECEMBER 1, 2009
(Approved by e-mail ballot – refer to Forum website or Public Folders in Outlook)
V. MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
(Informational Only – Minutes of January 19, 2010)
VI. PRESIDING OFFICER’S REPORT
A. Miscellaneous Information
B. Notice of Executive Committee Meeting: February 2, 2010 – University Community Welcome
VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS
VIII. INTERPELLATION
IX. NEW BUSINESS
X. ANNOUNCEMENTS
Next FORUM Meeting February 16, 2010
XI. ADJOURNMENT

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