Retirement Incentive Program Approved

Part of Larger Workforce Planning Process to Assure Students Receive High Quality Education at an Affordable Cost

The Board of Governors of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education has approved a voluntary retirement incentive program as part of a broader, ongoing workforce planning effort involving the 14 PASSHE universities and the Office of the Chancellor.

The retirement incentive will be available to full-time, permanent employees — both union and management — who are at least 60 years of age or have 35 years of service and are eligible to receive annuitant health care coverage. The program will not create an additional liability for the state-employee pension funds.

“We are facing very difficult financial challenges, just like every other higher education institution in America,” said PASSHE Board of Governors Chairman Kenneth Jarin. “Students will always be our top priority. We are committed to providing them with quality education that is affordable. We will take whatever difficult steps are necessary to accomplish that.”

Agreements to authorize the incentive are being finalized with five separate labor unions: the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME); State College and University Professional Association (SCUPA); Security, Police and Fire Professionals of America (SPFFA), Office of Professional Employees International Union Healthcare Pennsylvania (OPEIU); and the Pennsylvania Social Services Union (PSSU). PASSHE employees who are not represented by a collective bargaining agreement also will be able to participate in the voluntary program.

“The conversations we had with our unions were frank and very productive,” said PASSHE Chancellor John C. Cavanaugh. “Both sides learned a lot. These five unions understand the financial situation the State System faces. We all agreed to keep the main focus of providing a great education to students as our top priority.”

Eligible PASSHE employees will have a two-month period — from March 29 through May 28, 2010 — to decide whether to accept the retirement incentive.

Informational meetings will be held on all of the campuses to explain the program and to answer any questions employees might have.

Penguins Auction Boosts Scholarship Fund

Bidding is open now for the second Pittsburgh Penguins Online Auction supporting student scholarships at Cal U.

Hockey fans who visit the Penguins website can find a link to the auction, where they can place a bid on autographed Penguins collectibles or a special “hard-hat tour” of the Consol Energy Center, which is now under construction.

Bidding closes at 5 p.m. April 2. The winner of the tour will be able to visit the new home of the Penguins, including the concourse, ice surface, locker rooms and more — before the building is open to the public.

The tour package also includes B-level tickets to the final regular season home game vs. the New York Islanders April 8 at Mellon Arena.

Also on the auction block are home jerseys signed by Sidney Crosby and Evgeni Malkin, a goaltender’s stick autographed by Marc-Andre Fleury, and a framed photo of the Game 7 on-ice celebration with facsimile signatures of all the 2009 Stanley Cup Championship players.

Auction proceeds benefit scholarships for Cal U students. Cal U’s first online auction of Penguins memorabilia raised more than $5,000 for the scholarship fund.

For online auction details, visit www.pittsburghpenguins.com.

Employees Urged to Join Capital Campaign

Ten volunteers representing current and retired faculty and staff are spearheading the faculty/staff component of The Campaign to Build Character and Careers, the University’s capital funds campaign.

Now under way, the fundraising drive has set a goal of $35 million to support scholarships for students and enhancements to a variety of academic programs.

Faculty, retired faculty and staff have been sent a personalized letter and an information packet explaining the details of the campaign and outlining its goals.

“Our students need scholarships,” said Tim Susick, associate vice president of Student Development and Services, who serves on the volunteer committee.

“Far too often I see students who simply can’t take full advantage of the opportunities Cal offers, both in and out of the classroom, because of their desperate need for money.” I’m eager to support any opportunity to provide them with additional educational opportunities.”

In the past six years, nearly half of Cal U’s faculty and staff have contributed to the campaign, which began in 2004 and was announced to the public at the 2009 President’s Gala in June.

The current effort aims to increase the number of employees who become donors at any level.

“We need everybody to contribute,” said Bruce Barnhart, associate provost and a committee member. “I know from years of contact with alumni and other donors that the example of faculty and staff investing in our students encourages them to contribute, too.”

Goals for The Campaign to Build Character and Careers include raising $15 million for student scholarships, addressing what President Angelo Armenti, Jr. repeatedly has called “Cal U’s greatest need.” About 93 percent of all current students receive some form of financial aid, and the average student graduates with more than $22,000 in debt.

The campaign also seeks to raise $4 million to advance the Business and Economics program and distinguish it as a separate School within the University. $2.5 million to elevate — Continued on page 2
Panel Discusses Obama’s First Year

Four political experts offered insight into the first 14 months of the Barack Obama presidency at a panel presentation organized by the American Democracy Project at Cal U.

Moderated by award-winning political analyst Jon Delano, of KDKA-TV, the panel consisted of Dr. William C. Binning, professor emeritus at Youngstown State University; Louis Jacobson, a writer for the Palitzer Prize-winning Politifact.com website and PoliticsPA; Dr. Costas Panagopoulos, director of the Center for Electoral Politics at Fordham University in New York; and Daniel Shea, director of the Center for Political Participation at Allegheny College.

Assessing Obama’s busy first year in the Oval Office, Binning said the federal stimulus money saved local and state government from disaster.

“He deserves a lot of credit,” he said. “He has done a good job and will get a lot of credit — unless we have a ‘double dip’ recession, which could happen,” he said. “The success or failure of the national economy is most significant in evaluating the president and how he will be viewed historically.”

Binning noted that Obama made a whopping 502 promises during his presidential campaign. At this point, about 100 have been fulfilled, another 100 are “stalled or broken” and the rest are “in the works.”

“It’s a half-empty, half-full conundrum,” Jacobson explained. “One could argue that he’s done one-fifth of what he said he wants to do, or you could argue that he’s made progress on four-fifth of his plans.”

A college professor, Panagopoulos gave Obama a first-year grade of B-minus.

“He has done a lot of good things but has failed to deliver on his key campaign promise, which was to change politics in Washington,” Panagopoulos said.

“I’m not saying this is even possible or desirable, but he said he would do it,” he said.

Shea, who gave Obama a grade of B, discussed the polarization of Congress, especially in regard to health care reform.

“He has confronted Congress and tried to reach across the aisle to get things done,” said Shea. “But that’s not happened for him, and it has stymied his efforts.”

Panagopoulos noted that the president has lost 20 points in popularity in the past year, but his 53 percent approval rating is not bad from a historical perspective.

“He looks better to the public than the two political parties do, which is remarkable because of the negative press from health care (reform),” Jacobson said.

“Few presidents have begun with such high expectations, so there was really nowhere for him to go but down.”

Delano inquired about race and the 2010 local elections, setting off another round of discussion.

“When campaigning, Obama did not like being asked about race, and he downplayed it,” he said. “As the country’s first African-American president, race is an issue. People have used it against him, and it shows.”

Shea labeled the 2010 mid-cycle election “a local election with a national twist,” and noted that youthful voters, who turned out in large numbers in 2008, will have less of a presence at the polls.

“Young voters have disappeared, and this is critical for Democrats,” he said.

“Opting out should not be an option, and it is not a solution,” he added, speaking to the students in the audience. “It’s important to remain interested, informed and involved. … You just have to understand that you may not always get what you want.”

Co-sponsors of this event were the Office of the President, the Office of Academic Affairs/Provost, the Office of University Relations, the Department of History and Political Science, the Student Government Association, Cal Campaign consultants, College Democrats, College Republicans, and Leadership Club.

Buchanan Headlines Government Career Fair

Alumna and former U.S. Attorney Mary Beth Buchanan ’84 will be the keynote speaker at tomorrow’s Cal U Careers in Government Fair.

More than 30 state and federal governmental agencies will be on campus looking to fill openings for jobs and internships. The event will be held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Performance Center. All current students and alumni may attend.

A candidate for the 4th U.S. Congressional District, Buchanan will speak at 11 a.m. She was the first woman and one of the youngest appointees to U.S. Attorney in Pennsylvania’s history. Prosecutions increased by nearly 300 percent during her tenure.

“We are thrilled to have such a distinguished speaker and our own graduate deliver the keynote address at this fair,” said Rhonda Gifford, Cal U’s executive director of Career Services. “Ms. Buchanan’s lifelong experience as a public servant absolutely enhances our event, and she will offer invaluable insight.”

According to GovCentral, more than 8 million Americans are currently employed by local and state governmental organizations, and another 1.4 million jobs are expected to be created by 2014.

After the fair, a workshop on how to apply for state and federal jobs will take place in rooms 206-207 of the Natali Student Center.

Students and alumni can pre-register and see a list of agencies at http://www.calu.edu/current-students/careers/events/careers-in-government-fair/ info.htm. By pre-registering, alumni and students are eligible to win a $50 gift card for Walmart.

Walk-ins also are welcome.

For more information, visit Career Services in Room 230 of Ebely Hall or call 724-938-4413.

Employees Urged to Support Campaign

---Continued from page 1

the current honors program to a full-fledged Honors College; $2 million to support an endowed lecture series that will bring world-class speakers to campus; $2 million to support the Character Education Institute and its programming; $1 million to help pay travel and living expenses for students who accept experiential learning opportunities through the Internship Center; $2.5 million for other academic and program support; and $6 million for the Convocation Center, where a variety of naming opportunities will be available.

“Joining the campaign is easy,” said elementary/early childhood professor Diane Nettles. “Even a small contribution will make a difference, and the payroll deduction plan makes it simple to give.”

Brenda DePaoli, executive staff assistant in Student Development and Services, added: “It’s amazing to see what staff and faculty have given to students over the years. These small and large gifts from so many people really add up to a huge benefit for students.”

Questions can be directed to the committee members or to the Office of University Development. For more information, call University Development at 724-938-4690 or visit www.calu.edu and click on “Giving.”
Webinars Introduce Students to Pre-College Honors Portal

Three online seminars will inform high school honor students and their families about a new Cal U initiative, the Pre-College Honors Portal (PCHP).

The 100 percent online program gives high school juniors and seniors the chance to earn college credits before they graduate from high school. Eligible students must have an SAT score of 1100 in critical reading and math, plus a grade-point average of A- or above.

Webinars are scheduled for March 31, April 27 and May 15 so honor students and their families can learn more about the program. Invitations have been sent to high-achieving students in Pennsylvania and surrounding states.

California University faculty will teach the PCHP courses, which were selected with input from students in the Cal U Honors Program. Initial program offerings are Introduction to Music, taught by Dr. Yugo Ikach, and Introduction to Forensics, taught by Dr. Raymond Hsieh.

Co-hosts for the online courses will consist of high school juniors and seniors. Summer classes begin June 7.

“When students complete a PCHP course, they receive credits with an honors designation on a Cal U transcript,” explained PCHP director Barbara Crofchek.

“Because the University is accredited by the Middle States Association Commission on Higher Education, those credits are generally accepted by all colleges and universities.”

Courses scheduled for fall and spring will focus on world religions, social psychology, oceanography and anthropology.

PCHP tuition is based on the per-credit fee established by the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education. Families may be able to utilize a 529 Tuition Savings Plan to pay for the courses. Information about the new program has been shared with superintendents across the state, and with area guidance counselors and gifted program coordinators. PCHP materials also have been sent to teachers who participated in the Cal U in the High School Program, which ends at the close of the spring semester.

For details about the Pre-College Honors Portal or the “virtual open house” webinars, visit www.calu.edu/online-honors; call 724-938-4807 (local) or 1-866-941-7439 (toll-free); or e-mail precollegeonlinhonors@calu.edu.

Students Have Chance to Thank Community During ‘Big Event’

For the fourth consecutive year, students will show their appreciation to the California community by participating in The Big Event.

The project, organized by the Student Government Association (SGA), will take place on April 25. Teams and individuals can register from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. today in the Natali Student Center or at 11 a.m. on April 25 in the Performance Center. Teams registered by today will have a chance to win a $100 Visa gift card.

Those who cannot register at these times should e-mail SGA President Jackie Davis at davisj91@calu.edu or Bonnie Keener at keenerb@calu.edu

The Big Event began at Texas A&M University in 1982, when student leaders saw a need to give back to the community. It has become the largest one-day, student-run service project in the nation, with students at more than 100 universities completing service projects such as yard work, window washing and painting for community members. Cal U began participating in 2007.

T-shirts will be provided for each team member during check-in at 11 a.m. on April 25 in the Performance Center. Departure for job sites begins at noon.

This is our way of saying one big thank-you to the community for their support and even putting up with us this year,” Davis said. “Last year we had more than 400 students volunteer, and we are hoping for even more this year. We want residents to contact us so we can help them and show our appreciation.

California Borough residents who wish to request service work should phone the Cal U Student Government Office at 724-938-4318 or send an e-mail to keenerb@calu.edu or DAVIS.

“Student Government and all the committees have been very active and focused, with community service leading the way as the underlying theme with all activities,” said Dr. Nancy Pinardi, associate vice president for Student Development and Services.

“The Big Event further emphasizes their devotion to giving back. Our Student Government members lead the way, grabbing shovels, brooms, paintbrushes and more, encouraging all student groups to say ‘thank you’ to the California community by joining them as they complete service projects.”

Campus Briefs

Walkers Needed for Relay for Life

Students, faculty and staff are encouraged to participate in the 2010 Relay For Life of California University, to be held 3 p.m. April 10 to 9 a.m. April 11 at Rotary Park. Proceeds benefit the American Cancer Society.

A national event, Relay For Life is an overnight walk-a-thon. Teams camp out overnight and walk around the track relay-style. Each team must have one person on the track at all times, symbolizing the fact that cancer never sleeps. In an inspirational ceremony, cancer survivors join the walk for the final lap.

Participants can register as a team or make individual or group donations. For details, visit www.relayforlife.org/pacala. Anyone interested in joining the third annual Relay For Life of Cal U should e-mail Heather Brooks at bro3766@calu.edu or call the final team captain meeting at 5 p.m. Wednesday in Hamer Hall, Room 142.

Last year Cal U students raised $27,000, and the university’s mission of eliminating cancer as a major health problem.

Blues Performer Visits Campus

Composer and musician Gaye Adegbalola will be on the Cal U campus today and tomorrow. Tonight she will perform with pianist Roddy Barnes at 8 p.m. in Steele Hall Mainstage Theatre. Tomorrow she will lead a workshop on the history of women in the blues at 11 a.m. in Vulcan Theatre, inside the Natali Student Center.

Adegbalola, who has composed many blues hits, received the Blues Music Award (formerly known as the W. C. Handy Award) for Best Song of the Year. Before making music her full-time career, Adegbalola taught science in public schools in Fredericksburg, Va. for 18 years.

The performance and workshop celebrate Women’s History Month. They are open to the public, and admission is free. For details, contact Kim Lucchini, an intern in the Women’s Studies program, at 724-938-5245 or lucchini@calu.edu.

Penguins’ Bourque Discusses Leadership

Pittsburgh Penguins radio analyst and former standout player Phil Bourque will speak tomorrow before signing autographs for Cal U students and hockey fans. The event is scheduled for 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. in the Morgan Hall Auditorium.

In a 30-minute talk, Bourque will discuss his leadership experiences, challenges and successes. He played eight of his 12 National Hockey League seasons with the Penguins and was a key member of Pittsburgh’s back-to-back Stanley Cup champion teams in 1991 and 1992. He has been with the broadcast team since 2003.

Bourque’s talk is open to the public; admission is free.
Williams ends Career

The successful 2009-2010 women’s basketball season completed a decade of dominance for the Vulcans and concluded the brilliant career of senior guard Brooque Williams.

After starting just 16 of 30 games her freshman season, Williams helped Cal compile an 80-20 overall record and 33-7 PSAC-West mark over the past three seasons.

She finished her collegiate career earlier this month by helping the Vulcans make their ninth straight NCAA Division II Tournament appearance and 10th consecutive appearance in the PSAC championship game. Both are PSAC women’s basketball records.

One of her highlights during this past season for Williams was becoming the school’s career-leading scorer. The 5-foot-8-inch graduate of Perry High School in Pittsburgh surpassed Sarah McKinney and finished with 2,205 points, which is third-best in PSAC history.

“She’s a tremendous leader, a prolific scorer and could do some things with the basketball offensively that very few people throughout the country if any — could do — at our level,” said head coach Mark Swasey.

Her 424 career steals are both a PSAC and a school record, as are the 744 points and 303 field goals she scored in 2008-2009. Williams set school standards in career field goals and free throws with 892 and 413, respectively. She also produced 1,016 career rebounds and 373 career assists. Her career rebound total is second to only McKinney’s 1,204 in school history, while her field goal total is third among all PSAC players. Williams is one of just six women’s basketball players in conference history to score more than 2,000 points and to haul down more than 1,000 rebounds.

“What I found most impressive about Brooque was the consistency of her work ethic,” Swasey added. “She was not blessed with all of her skill early and worked to become the player she is. Brooque’s (an example) to any player out there that if you really work at the game, the possibilities for what you can do are immense. She’s all about hard work.”

Diamond Sparkles as Baseball Begins

Coming off 10 consecutive seasons with at least 25 wins, including a 32-15 overall record last season, Cal U’s consistent baseball team was ranked sixth in the preseason National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association Division II Atlantic Region poll.

The Vulcans were picked third in the preseason PSAC-West coaches poll.

Under the direction of 14th-year head coach Mike Conte, the Vulcans exceeded the preseason accolades. As of March 22, the Vulcans owned an 11-9 overall record and 6-2 divisional mark.

Conte is one of just three head coaches for the Cal U baseball program since 1960. The previous Vulcans skipper were emeritus faculty members Chuck Gismondi (1980-1996) and Mitch Bailey (1960-1979), who passed away last fall.

Cal U returns five position starters from last year, including preseason All-American outfielder Sam DiMatteo. A 2009 third-team All-America selection, DiMatteo set the school career record for stolen bases (80) in the team’s season-opening southern trip.

Seniors Ryan Lavrusky and Nick Schreiber, along with 2008 PSAC-West Rookie of the Year Randy Sturgill, anchor Cal’s pitching staff.

Conte’s career record at Cal U is 371-261-4, closing in on Gismondi’s school-record 393 career victories. Conte has guided the Vulcans to six division titles and nine PSAC Tournament appearances, with a conference crown in 2004.

Robotics Camp Set for Teens

High school students with an interest in technology can attend the first Cal U Robotics Camp, sponsored by the National Center for Robotics Engineering Technology Education (NCRETE) and Cal U’s Office of Lifelong Learning.

The summer session will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. June 21-25.

The team-oriented program is designed for students entering grades 9-12 who have completed a minimum of a pre-algebra class with a letter grade of C or higher.

The summer session will be held from 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. June 21-25.

The fee of $199 includes educational materials supplied by NCRETE. Payment (by check, cash, money order, MasterCard, Visa or Discover) must accompany the registration form.

Completed registration forms should be mailed to: California University Office of Lifelong Learning, 250 University Avenue, Box 12, California, PA 15419.

For students too young to attend the Cal U Robotics Camp, the University offers SEEK, the popular Summer Educational Enrichment for Kids program. Open to students in grades 1-8, SEEK’s two sessions will take place July 12-16 and Aug. 2-6 on the Cal U campus.

The California Journal is published weekly by California University of Pennsylvania, a member of The Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education.

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The Journal is printed on paper made from trees harvested under the principles of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (www.SFIprogram.org).