President Updates Students at Spring Convocation

It was a snowy day for a spring convocation, but more than 150 students made their way to the Performance Center Feb. 13 to hear interim University President Geraldine M. Jones share her “state of the University” message.

“Thanks to the weather, we’ve had our share of challenges,” she acknowledged. “Even though it has been quite a snowy and frigid start to our semester, I hope you are off to a good start.”

As she did at the Faculty-Staff Convocation held earlier in the semester, President Jones underlined her three primary objectives: to focus on the core mission of educating students, to stabilize enrollment and to restore financial stability.

She updated students on enrollment, announcing that the student population has dipped by 5.2 percent this semester, compared to spring 2013. Several recruitment initiatives are under way, she explained, adding that “we must help you, our students, to stay enrolled and finish your degrees.”

The President announced better news on the budget front, reporting that the Natali Performance Center renovations, President Jones noted that the project is proceeding on time and without cost overruns. She alerted students to the continuing daily,” President Jones said. “We know that whatever we do affects you, our students, and we are determined to provide the quality education you deserve.”

The President shared details about program accreditations, explaining that employers and graduate schools know the value of these endorsements, and she described the new Center for Undergraduate Research, led by Dr. Greg Gould.

In a brief update on the Natali Student Center renovations, President Jones noted that the project is proceeding on time and without cost overruns. She alerted students to changes coming next fall, when dining services will move temporarily to a “refreshed” Gallagher Hall dining area. While kitchen facilities are being updated, the food court will move into the Performance Center.

“IT’s important and interesting to hear about these things, especially the great progress we are making with the budget,” said senior Brendan Demmy, financial secretary for the Student Government Association.

“Oftentimes we (students) are asked by family members or even prospective students about things such as how many students are here (at Cal U). To be able to know and answer those questions, rather than refer to a newspaper article, is a very good thing.”

After her formal presentation, — Continued on page 4

Women’s Conference Focused on Films

The film director and chief executive officer of the Women and Girls Foundation, which works to promote equality in the region, will participate in a question-and-answer session following the Cal U premiere of the film Madame Presidenta: Why Not U.S.? — Vamos Muévanse!, which means Let’s Go Girls.

The film, which will be shown from 9:30-11 a.m., is based on Arnet’s trip to Brazil to explore the election of that country’s first female president, in 2010.

Other conference highlights:
• 9 a.m. Continental breakfast.
• 11 a.m.-noon: Students with minors in women’s studies will join members of the women’s studies advisory board for lunch and a discussion.
• 12:15-1:45 p.m.: Screening of The Invisible War, an Academy Award-nominated film about sexual assault in the U.S. military.

• 2-3:15 p.m.: Presentation by Faith J. Dinckinson, founder and president of Women in Film and Media Pittsburgh.

• 3:30-5 p.m.: Screening of Miss Representation, which explores how the media portrays women and girls.

• 5 p.m.: Women’s History Month celebration dinner. Attendees include those affiliated with the Women’s Center, Women’s Studies, Cal U Women United, the Women’s Consortium and the President’s Commission for the Status of Women.

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Women’s Conference Focused on Films

The film director and chief executive officer of the Women and Girls Foundation, based in Pittsburgh, will speak Thursday at the 2014 Audrey-Beth Finch Women’s Studies Conference.

This year’s conference title is “Employing a Critical Lens: Engaging with Film to Explore Media, Politics and the Military” Events will take place in the north wing of the Cal U Convetion Center and are part of the University’s celebration of Women’s History Month.

All events (except for lunch and dinner) are free and open to the public. Cal U students, faculty and staff are encouraged to attend.

Student Performance Back for Women’s History Month/Page 2

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Take that, Old Man Winter!

Acacia fraternity members clear packed ice and snow from sidewalks along Wood Street in California Borough. When sunshine reappeared and temperatures warmed on Feb. 18, criminal justice major Jesse McQuillan (at right) used a bar to break through the frozen mess, while (above) computer systems information majors Joe Bradley (left) and Mike Russell combined efforts to clear a path for pedestrians. No matter the weather, service to the community is an important element of Greek life at Cal U.
Students Chat With Russian Counterparts

T he roomful of about 20 students and faculty at the National Research University, Higher School of Economics in Perm, Russia, eyed the group of Cal U students gathered in Duda Hall for a cyber-conversation spurred by the Winter Olympic Games.

"Why are you all wearing winter coats and hats in the classroom?" asked a Russian student in semi-amazement on a day when high temperatures in California, Pa., and Perm weren't all that different.

The laughter that followed broke the ice, so to speak, between the two cultures.

The idea for the Feb 12 cultural exchange came from Dr. Sean Madden, a professor in the Department of History and Political Science, who visited the Russian school in spring 2013 as part of the Fulbright Specialist program.

"I've continued to be in touch with their faculty," Madden said, "and with the Olympics taking place in Russia, we thought this would be a great idea.

"I think there may have been some trepidation for all the students, but I think there is a real curiosity about other cultures. Within an hour they realized there are a lot of shared experiences."

Madden greeted the Russians in their language, as did a few Cal U students, prompting smiles and applause from that group. The conversation took place primarily in English.

The participating Cal U students were sport management, finance, economics and education majors, including many from Dr. Beverly Ross' Sociology of Sport class. Despite the difference in their indoor fashion choices, "it was cool to see how similar (the Russian students) were to us," said senior Daniel Puder.

Topics ranged from serious — such as gay-rights issues in Russia that received increased international media attention as the Winter Games approached — to light — such as whether Russian students prefer light — such as whether Russian students prefer American fashion choices, "it was cool to see how similar (the Russian students) were to us," said senior Daniel Puder.

Russian students asked their American counterparts about other cultures. Within an hour they realized there are a lot of shared experiences.”

"I had four students come up to me and ask, ‘Can we go there, to Russia?’ Their eyes have been opened to the possibility that you absolutely can.”

Cal U student Jackson Bakewell makes a point during last month’s cyber-conversation in Duda Hall with students and faculty at the National Research University, Higher School of Economics in Perm, Russia.

"I’d like to think what we’re seeing in our media is the truth," said a Cal U student, “but I know there are a lot of stereotypes.”

The Russians agreed. “We are so much more than what TV shows,” they said.

For Madden, the cyber-talk was a success that he hopes to repeat again. A particularly exciting moment happened after the video screen had darkened.

"I had four students come up to me and ask, ‘Can we go there, to Russia?’ Their eyes have been opened to the possibility that you absolutely can.”

Campus BRIEFS

Counselor Education Open House

The Counselor Education Department will host an open house from noon-1 and 6-7 p.m. Wednesday in Keystone Hall, Room 419.

Department members will be on hand to discuss Cal U’s master’s degree programs in clinical mental health counseling and school counseling, as well as the graduate certificate in sports counseling and the letter of completion in student affairs.

The department’s two master’s degree programs recently were re-accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP).

For more information or to register, e-mail Edwards_g@calu.edu.

Families Stop By for Open House

Cal U welcomes students and their families to an Academic Open House event from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday. Registration begins at 8 a.m.

The program is designed to introduce prospective students to Cal U and to give students who already have been accepted a chance to explore the campus. Those who attend will learn more about Cal U’s programs of study, housing, extracurricular activities and student life. They also can talk with Cal U students, meet faculty members and tour the campus.

The final Academic Open House program this spring will be held on Saturday, April 5.

For more information or to register online, visit www.calu.edu.

Prospective students also may contact the Welcome Center at 724-938-1626 or e-mail Carrie Pavits at pavits@calu.edu.

Grad School Open House Set for March 12

For college graduates, a master's degree can open the door to professional advancement or even a new career.

California University’s School of Graduate Studies and Research will hold an open house from 5-7 p.m. March 12 in the Kara Alumni House.

Cal U students can earn master’s degrees in more than 35 fields of study, including nursing, education, legal studies, athletic training and business administration. Traditional face-to-face and 100 percent online programs are available. Cal U’s School of Graduate Studies and Research also offers certification and licensure programs for professional educators and counselors, as well as certificate programs and letters of completion in a variety of fields.

The open house event is free, and online registration is preferred. For more information, e-mail popielcheck@calu.edu or call 724-938-4187.

For information about academic programs at Cal U, visit www.calu.edu.

Actors to Take ‘39 Steps’

T he Department of Theatre and Dance will open its 2014 spring season with “The 39 Steps,” a fast-paced whodunit for anyone who loves the magic of theater.

This classic British thriller was one of Alfred Hitchcock’s first major international hits, and it introduced a number of the stylistic and thematic elements that became hallmarks of his later work.

Audiences will be treated to an on-stage plane crash, missing fingers, old-fashioned romance — and nonstop laughs.

The performance contains subject matter may not be suitable for young children.

 Curtain time is 8 p.m. Thursday and Friday, with shows at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. Saturday. All performances are in the Gerald and Carolyn Blaney Theatre in Steele Hall.

The cast includes students Clayton Rush (Hannay), Sarah Schumaker (Annabella/Pamela/Margaret), Jordan Brooks (Clown 1), and Nicholas Franzczak (Clown 2).

The show’s director is Dr. Michele Pagen, a professor in the Department of Theatre and Dance. Student K-Cee Smith is the stage manager, with assistance from classmates Annabel Lorence and Nikki Davis.

Cost is $12 for adults, seniors and children. Students with valid CalCards pay 50 cents; they must leave a $5 deposit that will be returned if they attend the performance.

For ticket information, or to order tickets (with a credit card) by phone, call the Steele Hall Box Office at 724-938-3943.
Hjerpe Named Athletic Director

Cal U has named Dr. Karen Hjerpe as director of athletics.

Hjerpe, who has served as interim athletic director since December 2011, before being named athletic business manager. She was promoted to associate athletic director in 2003 while continuing to serve as Senior Woman Administrator and the Athletic Department’s compliance officer, with oversight in the areas of gender equity, scholarships, facilities, budgets and all aspects of athletic administration.

As a Cal U faculty member, Hjerpe was instrumental in developing courses on compliance and gender equity within the PSUAC, which is now a program in sport management. She has developed guiding principles on gender equity, served on thesis committees for graduate students and led numerous workshops for coaches.

“Dr. Hjerpe has done a great job as interim athletic director, and I am very pleased to officially remove the interim from her title,” said interim University President Geraldine M. Jones.

“She is very knowledgeable about our University, our student-athletes and our athletic programs. She also is an expert in intercollegiate athletics and possesses great business sense. Our student-athletes, our coaches and Cal U will be well served by having Dr. Hjerpe in this important position.”

A 1991 graduate of Gannon University, Hjerpe earned her undergraduate degree in accounting. She holds master’s degrees from Cal U both in business and in performance enhancement and injury prevention. In 2009 Hjerpe completed a terminal degree in instructional management and leadership at Robert Morris University.

The PSUAC Athletic Directors’ liaison for volleyball, Hjerpe is a former member of the NCAA Division II women’s volleyball committee. She served as a facilitator for the NCAA CHAMPS/Life Skills Leadership conferences for three years.

“I am humble by the confidence in my leadership that President Jones has shown, and I’m deeply appreciative of her support for Vulcan athletics,” Hjerpe said. “I am fortunate to work with a highly skilled coaching staff and a group of talented and committed student-athletes. We continue to shine on and off the field, boasting Academic All-Americans as well as athletic All-Americans.

“Our athletes and staff touch lives in the community through their work with the Make-A-Wish organization, Center in the Woods and local women’s shelter, and by reading to elementary school students, holding canned food drives and more.”

“Division II student-athletes are balancing academics and athletics,” Hjerpe added. “Within our department, we strive to develop all aspects of our student-athletes as they prepare for success in the classroom, on the playing field and in life. As we set goals for the future, I am excited to continue the long tradition of success and develop new initiatives that will enhance our overall program.”


TEAC Students to Compete at International Conference

More than 20 Cal U student members of the Technology Education Association of California (TEAC) will compete March 27-29, 2014, at the largest technology and engineering educators conference in the world, the 76th annual International Technology and Engineering Educators Association Conference, in Orlando, Fla.

TEAC is coming off a strong showing at November’s Technology and Engineering Educators Collegiate Association Eastern Regional Conference in Virginia Beach, Va.

Cal U returned home from that event with four awards, including first place in the Manufacturing contest, which TEAC has won in 13 of the past 16 years. Cal U also took second place in the Instructional Modules competition at the TEECA Eastern Regional Conference in Virginia Beach, Va.

Cal U students (from left) Zack Scocarba, Daniel Zwick and Brett Kymer prepare for competition at the TECA Eastern Regional Conference in Virginia Beach, Va.

Contracting Seminar Set

Friday is the deadline to register for the latest seminar sponsored by Cal U’s Government Agency Coordination Office, or GACO.

“Basics of Federal Government Contracting” will be held from 8:30 a.m.-noon March 11 at the DoubleTree by Hilton hotel in Washington, Pa.

The federal government is the world’s largest single purchaser of goods and services, awarding about $500 billion in contracts annually. Government agencies are ready to do business on a competitive basis with qualified companies that can supply needed products and services.

To compete successfully for these contracts, companies first must understand how the government conducts business. This free seminar will provide attendees with a basic understanding of federal government contracting. Topics to be addressed include federal registrations and certifications, identifying procurement codes, understanding contract types and procurement methods, post-award concerns and more.

The seminar is designed to benefit producers or purveyors of products purchased by the government — such as manufacturers, office supplies, valves, tools, medical supplies, construction materials and food — along with companies that supply professional services, including construction management, environmental services, information technology, social services, housekeeping, research and development, printing, and translation.

For more information, or to register for the seminar by Friday, contact Tracy Julian at 724-938-5881 or julian@calu.edu.
The Vulcan women’s tennis and softball teams have both attained preseason national rankings.

The tennis team, under the direction of 12th-year head coach Pablo Montana, was No. 14 in the initial Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA) rankings. Coach by 21st-year leader Rick Bertagnolli, the softball team was ranked 16 in the National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA) preseason poll.

Senior Lucie Sipkova, the 2012-2013 PSAC-West Athlete of the Year, headlines a strong cast of returning tennis players, including fellow ITA All-American Lucie Rey. Sipkova went 23-9 overall in singles competition last year and teamed with Rey, a junior, to compile a 20-6 overall record in doubles play.

Junior Ramona Czakon, another returning veteran, was 19-8 in singles and 28-8 in doubles play.

In 2013 Cal U tennis won its seventh consecutive PSAC and NCAA Division II Atlantic Region titles. The team advanced to the national quarterfinals for the sixth time in seven years.

Softball will field a team that includes 11 returning players, including senior Shelby Lia and sophomore Lindsey Recoff, both 2013 NFCA second-team All-Americans.

A second baseman, Lia hit 14 home runs last spring. Recoff, a first baseman, added 13 home runs and batted .401.

Sophomore Alex Sagl, the 2013 PSAC-West Pitcher of the Year, looks to build on her initial season, which ended with a 20.3 overall record and 1.35 ERA.

Cal U softball compiled a 38-6 overall record last spring, winning a fifth straight PSAC-West championship and making the program’s 22nd NCAA Division II tournament appearance in the past 24 years.

Weather permitting, the women’s and men’s tennis teams will open the spring 2014 home season by hosting divisional rival Edinboro at 2 p.m. March 25 at Roadman Park.

The softball team’s first action at Lilly Field will be a home doubleheader against first-year PSAC-West member Seton Hill at 2:30 p.m. March 21.

President Gives Update at Convocation

—Continued from page 1

President Jones fielded questions from students.

They’d had a chance to view the University’s new TV ads before the convocation began, and junior Sestro Provance, a communication studies major with a concentration in radio and television, asked about the advertising campaign.

It features actual Cal U students, faculty and staff, he learned, and is intended to attract new students by showcasing the wide variety of academic programs and engaging activities available at Cal U.

“The general premise of the ad I think is good,” said Provance, who was attending his first Student Convocation after going to last fall’s Campus Talk. “I thought this was interesting, especially hearing about the Natali renovation.”

In closing, President Jones assured the students that academics remain Cal U’s first priority, even as administrators continue to trim the University’s budget.

“It’s a difficult time and interesting campus. We will keep working hard in order to ensure that Cal U stays that way for many years to come.”

Teams Earn National Rankings

The Office of Sponsored Programs and Research reports that:

• Dr. Thomas Mueller, of the Department of Earth Sciences, has been awarded a grant of $23,673 from the U.S. Geological Survey through AmericaView. This award will support the development and operation of the Pennsylvania StateView Program for 2014.

• Dr. Vanessa MacKinnon, of the Department of Professional Golf Management, has been awarded a grant of $950 from the Pennsylvania Faculty Health and Welfare Fund. This will support “Golf for Fitness, Relaxation and Fun,” a healthy lifestyle program for girls.

• Donna George of the Department of Student Affairs, has been awarded a grant of $5,000 from the Washington County Drug and Alcohol Commission. This will support Cal U hosting a day-long conference providing education on the topic of problem gambling.

The Office of Sponsored Programs and Research serves faculty and staff by providing comprehensive resources related to external funding for sponsored projects. The OSPM provides support in developing proposals for funding from federal, state and local grants, contracts, foundations and related associations. For more information call 724-938-1662 or e-mail vsmgr@calu.edu.

Trustees Meet

The Cal U Council of Trustees will hold its first quarterly meeting of 2014 at 7 p.m. Wednesday in the Grand Hall of Old Main.

President Gives Update at Convocation

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

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