Stars Shine for Homecoming

A star-spangled week of festivities is planned as Cal U celebrates Homecoming 2014 with a talent showcase and a float-filled parade honoring the “Spirit of America.”

Weekend events begin at 7:30 p.m. Friday, when interim University President Geraldine M. Jones invites alumni, employees and friends of Cal U to attend “Our Showcase of Stars” in Steele Hall Mantingate Theatre.

Some of Cal U’s most talented alumni, students and faculty — including one very special performer — will appear on stage to benefit the Student Scholarship Fund for Academics, Arts and Athletics.

Ticket price is $5 for students with valid CalCards, $25 for others. All Cal U alumni are invited, and the public is welcome to attend. Tickets will be available at the door, or by calling the Steele Hall Box Office at 724-938-5943.

After Our Showcase of Stars, President Jones will visit the various fraternities, sororities and other organizations preparing floats for the Homecoming Parade, a traditional highlight of the weekend celebration.

Pre-parade activities begin at 9 a.m. Saturday on the main campus, where inflatables with a U.S.A. theme will add to the family-friendly fun. Photo novelty booths, mascot appearances, face painting, balloon art and a petting zoo also are planned.

The annual Homecoming Parade begins at noon. The lineup of bands, floats and marchers will step off from the Convocation Center courtyard and travel down Third Street. Marchers will turn right at Union Street and return to campus on Second Street.

A Vulcan Huddle tailgate party will begin at 1:30 p.m. at Roadman Park, and a Kid Zone near the alumni pavilion will keep the little ones busy starting at 2:30 p.m. At 3:30 p.m. the Cal U football team will host Slippery Rock University at Adamson Stadium. At halftime, winners of the parade float competition will be announced, and the Homecoming King and Queen will be crowned.

Hockey fans can watch Cal U’s men’s teams play on Homecoming Day at the Rostrover Ice Garden. At 4:15 p.m. Saturday, Cal U’s College Hockey East I team will host East Carolina at 4:15 p.m. The CHE II team entertains Community College of Allegheny County at 7:15 p.m.

Other events The announcement of the 2014 Homecoming Court will be made at noon Tuesday in the Gold Rush Dining Hall in Gallagher Hall.

On Wednesday, a Vulcan Fan rally is planned from 2-6 p.m. on Third Street, in front of the Natali Student Center. The event features bathtub races and inflatables. The community is welcome to attend.

For more information about Our Showcase of Stars, visit www.calu.edu. For a complete schedule of Homecoming events, visit www.calu.edu/2014/schedule.html.
Panel Discusses Ethics in Government

With every decision, action and even perception, politicians walk a fine line between failure and success. On Constitution Day, Sept. 17, Cal U held two back-to-back sessions exploring ethics in government.

An annual event mandated at all schools that receive federal funds, Constitution Day commemorates the signing of the U.S. Constitution. Alumnus Stephen V. Russell, an educator and historian of political, Hollywood and sports culture, joined Cal U faculty members Dr. Ambrus Price and Dr. Melanie Blumberg, both of the Department of History and Political Science, and Dr. Emily Sweetzer, of the Department of Modern Languages, Philosophy and Socio-Cultural Studies.

Dr. Gary DeLorenzo, of the Department of Math, Computer Science and Information Systems, served as moderator.

Russell has been a consultant to ESPN SportCentury, Turner Classic Movies, Peter Jones Productions for the A&E television network, and Hofstra University’s nationally known presidential conferences. He retired as Belle Vernon Area School District’s superintendent in 2012.

He began by citing a message President John F. Kennedy wrote to Congress on April 27, 1961: “No responsibility of government is more fundamental than the responsibility of maintaining the highest standards of ethical behavior by those who conduct the public business. The basis of effective government is public confidence, and that confidence is endangered when ethical standards falter or appear to falter.”

“Ever since Theodore Roosevelt ushered in the modern presidency in 1901, American presidents have led the way in emphasizing ethical government,” Russell said. “Successful presidents are candid in responding to the issues of both their victories and defeats.”

Russell believes that America began losing its trust in American leadership following Kennedy’s assassination. He cited the Vietnam War, the Watergate scandal, the malaise of the 1970s, the Iran-Contra crisis and the lost opportunity to reshape a new world order after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

“The lessons learned are that presidents who practice candor and have no hidden agenda, who are devoted to the American people, will be the most successful stewards of the American experience,” he said.

Sweetzer began the panel discussion by listing five overarching ethical principles — autonomy, benevolence, justice, fidelity and non-maleficence.

“Ethical decisions are an everyday occurrence,” she said. “The conflict between being fair or doing what’s best for what’s thrown at them is a moral dilemma our leaders constantly face. There is no right or wrong.”

Discussing the role of ethics prompted DeLorenzo to bring up the role of the media not only in politics, but also in current events.

“The media is important to keep people accountable, but they can also explode an issue by grinding and grinding it,” Russell said. “Price spoke to the students about the ‘crime of being a public official.’

“We are in a social era now and losing our best and brightest because they are not for what’s thrown at them is a moral dilemma our leaders constantly face. There is no right or wrong.”

“In a social era now and losing our best and brightest because they are not sure of how to run a campaign,” he said. “It usually takes quite a while for them to realize that they’ve got disgruntled enough that they vote someone out of office.”

The campus chapter of the American Democracy Project, the Office of Academic Affairs, the College of Liberal Arts, and the Department of History and Political Science presented Cal U’s Constitution Day program.

Annual Health Fair Draws 1,300

Nearly 1,300 people visited the Convocation Center Sept. 17 for Cal U’s 27th annual Health Fair, “A Wealth of Health.”

Fifty vendors from the health care industry presented information, conducted screenings and offered giveaways at the event coordinated by the University’s Health and Wellness Education Center.

“Our event gives our students, faculty, staff and community a head start on a healthy academic year,” said Cal U nurse practitioner Fran Fayish, who thanked the faculty and staff for encouraging students to attend.

Joshua Richardson, a sophomore majoring in criminology, enjoyed receiving a mini-massage from Monongahela-based Chancey’s Natural.

“It helps my lower back pain considerably. If there’s a free massage on campus, I’m taking advantage every time,” he said. “I also went to the health fair last year, and it’s something I wouldn’t miss.”

Sarah Forsyth of Chancey’s Natural administers a mini-massage to Cal U sophomore Joshua Richardson at the Cal U Health Fair.

Sarah Gregory, a freshman psychology major, also enjoyed the mini-massage. “I just came upstairs and there was the booth,” she said. “It did feel really good, and I also enjoyed the information that was available on nutrition.”

Ciara Crow attended her first health fair as a First-Year Seminar requirement when she was a freshman. Now a senior peer educator, she was swiping CalCards so that students could get OrgSync credit.

“The health fair is beneficial to so many and for so many different reasons,” she said. “There’s such a variety of vendors that anyone who visits will find something that interests them.”

After two years in the Convocation Center’s South Wing, this year’s health fair took place in the building’s lobby and second-floor concourse.

“I love holding the fair in the Convocation Center,” Fayish said. “Everyone enjoyed it being more spread out this time.”

Employers Lined Up for Career Fair

Hundreds of students and alumni, all seeking internships or full-time employment, are expected to attend Thursday’s Cal U Fall Career Fair in the Convocation Center.

Sponsored by the Career and Professional Development Center, the career fair will run from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. No advance registration is required, and admission is free to students and alumni. Students from schools other than Cal U pay a $10 walk-in fee (cash only).

Representatives from more than 50 companies and organizations will be on hand to recruit for internship, co-op, job shadowing and employment opportunities.

Information is available at the Career and Professional Development Center Web page, www.caluc.edu/current-students/career-services/index.htm.
Campus Feels Effect of Enrollment Dip

At the Fall 2014 Faculty-Staff Convocation, interim University President Geraldine M. Jones reported that a 3.2 percent drop in enrollment has put pressure on the University’s budget, and the effect will be felt across campus.

Speaking Sept. 16 in Steele Hall Mainstage Theatre, President Jones reported that Cal U’s headcount stands at nearly 8,000 students. Although the enrollment dip is less severe than last year’s decline, the decrease in tuition, fees and housing revenue has a “significant financial impact,” she said.

On Sept. 3, the University’s leadership team presented a balanced budget to the Council of Trustees for the second year in a row. But the $115 million spending plan includes sharp cuts in all areas, including personnel costs.

Calling it “the most difficult decision I have made,” President Jones told the convocation that 12 unionized staff members and four non-represented managers would be furloughed, and an additional 14 faculty and management positions vacated by retirements or attrition will remain unfilled.

Personnel costs are the largest segment of the University budget, representing about 75 percent of the total. Personnel costs for 2014-2015 have increased by about $4 million compared to last year, the President noted.

“Achieving that (balanced budget) required us to make some very painful decisions,” she said. “I can assure you that downsizing was considered only after every other alternative had been exhausted.”

“Over its long history, California University has witnessed many changes and weathered many storms,” she said. “It has sometimes been painful, but we have always faced our difficulties, found solutions and emerged stronger than before. We can — and we will — do so again.”

Students Updated on Governance, Planning

Nearly 300 students packed the Convocation Center’s south conference wing on Sept. 18 for their Fall 2014 Convocation.

In her “State of the University” address, interim University President Geraldine M. Jones explained the concept of shared governance, which gives all stakeholder groups on campus “a voice in the decision-making process.”

In recent months a Shared Governance Task Force, led by history professor Dr. Craig Smith, has been working to devise an alternative to the University Forum, which was dissolved last spring.

Minutes of the task force meetings are available online, along with the group’s final recommendation. Students are encouraged to read the recommendation and provide feedback before the completed report is submitted for the President’s approval.

“I encourage you to take part in the process,” President Jones said. “Your input is important, and your voice should be heard.”

The University also is developing a strategic plan to guide its progress and measure its success, the President reported. Although there is an overall strategic plan for the State System of Higher Education, Cal U’s plan will reflect both that collaboration and this campus’s particular goals and objectives.

Again, students will have opportunities for input.

“Key elements of this plan will focus on the things that matter most — positioning California University as a vibrant and competitive institution, and providing you, our students, with an outstanding educational experience,” she said.

President Jones’ voice turned somber as she spoke about one of society’s most pressing issues: the use of alcohol and other drugs.

She reminded students that Cal U’s Alcohol and Other Drug program provides interactive educational programming and awareness initiatives.

Another resource for students is Option@CalU, whose volunteer peer educators can help their classmates make responsible choices or access campus resources.

“I ask each of you to keep your health, welfare and future in mind when you are faced with choices about alcohol and/or illegal drugs,” President Jones said. “This is a serious matter that requires your serious consideration.”

Dr. Larry Sebek, associate vice president for Student Affairs, stepped to the podium to report on the Natali Student Center renovations. The two-year project was initiated by students, who approved the upgrade and expansion through a 2011 referendum.

In addition to improving the building’s infrastructure, the project will expand the center by about 31,000 square feet. Shared conference rooms accessible to students, as well as an upgraded dining area, are among the project’s benefits.

The Career and Professional Development Center, the Women’s Center, and the Volunteer Programs and Service Learning office will be housed in the renovated center.

Completion is scheduled for 2015.

“It was interesting and informational to hear about what is going on,” said Isaiah Alfred-Williams, a sophomore who is studying graphics and multimedia. “I especially wanted to hear about Natali. I’m looking forward to using the finished product.”

Emeritus Professor Returns as Noss Speaker

Cal U’s Noss Lecture Series will host a presentation by professor emeritus Dr. Richard Cavasina, director of the patient advocacy program at the Pittsburgh-based Abdominal Transplant Institute.

The free talk will be presented during the common hour, at 11 a.m. Oct. 9 in Steele Hall Mainstage Theatre. The campus community is encouraged to attend.

Cavasina, a former member of the Psychology Department, will present “Dealing with Life and Career Goals Through Positive Mental Health.” He will discuss how life and career goals are affected by mental health, how to achieve positive mental health, and his own experiences as a liver transplant patient.

During his 28-year career at Cal U, Cavasina served in many roles, including director of the school psychology clinic. He retired from in June 2012 and was named an emeritus professor in March 2013.

Shortly after he retired, Dr. Cavasina received a liver transplant at Allegheny General Hospital. Since his recovery, he has drawn on his experience in the field of mental health as director of the patient advocacy program at the Pittsburgh-based Abdominal Transplant Institute, which helps to support transplant patients and their families through surgery and recovery.

Chair for the Cavasina Endowment for Transplant and Research, Cavasina currently is conducting research regarding psychological issues involved with transplantation.

He says his own surgery has “given me a second life,” and he is pleased to share both his insights into obtaining positive mental health and his firsthand experience as a successful transplant patient.
Tennis Duo Heads to Nationals

Tennis players Kiefer Shaw, a sophomore, and Jesse Burrell, a senior, will compete at the International Tennis Federation (ITF) National Championships Thursday through Sunday in Sumter, S.C. The Cal U women’s duo qualified for the event after winning flights at the ITA Atlantic Regional Championships last month in Erie, Pa. Shaw and Burrell won four consecutive matches at the regional competition, including a 4-6, 6-1, 12-10 victory over teammates Ramona Czakon and Lucie Rey in the championship finals.

Last spring’s Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference West Freshman of the Year, Shaw earned the singles title and advanced to the championship finals. The Vulcans, who are coached by 13th-year head coach Pablo Montana, won both the singles and doubles regional titles for the ninth consecutive season.

“Any time our players can win an ITA event, it’s a good statement for our team,” Montana said. “You have a lot of teams from the conference that we’ll see later in the year, so it helps our team tremendously to know we have … players who won the Regionals. “Our players have experience competing at the national level, and they are working hard to hopefully bring back home a national championship.”

Cal U will conclude the fall portion of its 2014-2015 season by hosting Goldey-Beacom (Wilmington, Del.) at 4 p.m. Oct. 17.

Hockey Night

Oct. 7 at Ice Garden

Players strap on their skates for a Cal U Hockey Night Tuesday at the Rostraver Ice Garden. Cal U’s CHE II men’s team will host Washington & Jefferson at 4:15 p.m.

A public skating session from 6:45-7:45 p.m. features appearances by Pittsburgh Penguins players and the Iceburgh mascot.

The University’s CHE I men’s team plays Pitt-Johnstown at 8-15 p.m. Former WTAE meteorologist Joe DeNardo will be on hand as Cal U recognizes that channel’s Project Bundle-Up efforts.

Hockey Night admission is free for Cal U students with a valid CalCard; non-students pay $5. For more information, e-mail Jamison Roth at rothj@calu.edu.