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CONTINUUM



RUNNIN' WITH THE PAC

How the Utes have fared in their first five years of Pac-12 play.





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Utah teacher Kyle Bracken

FACING THE TEACHER SHORTAGE

[In about 1977], my sister who had a master's degree and many years more experience as a teacher in Utah was making barely any more than I was as a new teacher in Miami-Dade, AND she did not have the health benefits we enjoyed. I knew I would never return, especially since I was a single parent. And as an incentive for Florida teachers, if we receive the superior rating and [help students] achieve a high SAT or ACT score, we are eligible for a bonus of up to \$10,000. This is something Utah might consider.

Tanya Cummins BA'76 Chuluota, Fla.

I received an absolutely first-class teacher education at the University of Utah and taught for 32 years, two in Utah. I am currently a millionaire who has traveled the world in retirement, thanks to good pay, benefits, and investments that became possible for one reason alone: I taught the other 30 years in California.

Doug Pursley BA'74 Monrovia, Calif.

As a graduate of Utah public schools and the U, I was the grateful recipient of a valuable public education and have high regard for those teachers/educators who were passionately dedicated to giving me their best! In Utah back in the early '80s, I didn't realize how low the pay was for teachers (and nurses) until moving to Oregon in 1984. . . . So that they remain dedicated, passionate, and in their jobs long term, the PUBLIC and your LEGISLATURE need to care for these valuable assets in the community. What great teachers provide is VALUE beyond measure to every one of us. It's valid the support the U is outlining in this article, but let us not be led astray: being fairly compensated is NOT beyond what a dedicated, educated, and experienced teacher should ask for!

Susan (Hayes) Gervasi BS'79 Clackamas, Ore.

FAREWELL TO OSH

Alas I lament. . . Freezing cold summer classrooms or the very smelly, nasty bathrooms. . . the days so long and office space so wrong. . . I shall miss you, Orson Spencer Hall, despite your odd half-bathroom stalls.

Jason Knight MPA'15 West Jordan, Utah

I want one of the bricks! OSH was the birthplace of my intellectual life. I still hear the voices of Don Garrett, Fred Hagen, Peter Appleby, Bill Whisner, Mendel Cohen, John Francis, etc., etc. first heard in the classrooms, hallways, and offices of the OSH. It was the perfect temple, both sacred and democratic.

Rex Pond BS'84 MS'93 Salt Lake City

LIKE FATHER, LIKE DAUGHTER

Well done, Bev! The campaign trail is difficult and demanding, but you have persevered and won! Thanks, Melinda, for sharing Bev's story. It is women like you that continue to pave the way for women.

Katie Cassatt Clackamas, Ore.



Being fairly compensated is NOT beyond what a dedicated, educated, and experienced teacher should ask for!"

Susan (Hayes) Gervasi BS'79

CONTINUUM

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CAMPUS BIDS FAREWELL TO MILTON BENNION HALL



Since 1960, students studying to become educators at the University of Utah have been taking classes in Milton Bennion Hall, and many others have walked its halls as well. This winter, alumni, students, and faculty celebrated the legacy of Milton Bennion and bid a fond farewell to the building that helped shape the futures of thousands of general and special education teachers, counselors, administrators, and educational leaders. The building came down to make space for expansion of the David Eccles School of Business.

“What I experienced during my time in Milton Bennion Hall was a life changer; it enabled me to learn more, to appreciate who I am, what skills I have, what new skills I need to learn, and how I can contribute to education,” says Cecelia H. Foxley PhD’68, former Utah commissioner of higher education, who received her doctorate in educational psychology from the U. “It enabled me to have a whole new future.”

Milton Bennion, who served as dean of the School of Education for 28 years (1913-1941), was well known for his Socratic teaching style and his keen interest in personal and social ethics and character education. Bennion also served as vice president of the university from 1940-1941.

“A big part of Bennion’s legacy, which still continues today, was his focus on character education and the role of education, not only in academics, but also in preparing individuals to be good citizens,” says Michael Hardman BS’71 MEd’73 PhD’75, chief global officer for the U and former dean of the college. “In my early years of being a professor, I read a lot about Milton Bennion, and it shaped a lot of my thinking.”

In 2013, the College of Education found a new home in the Beverly Taylor Sorenson Arts and Education Complex, but Milton Bennion Hall continued to be used for other classes, clinics, and office space for faculty.

“The building has been home for remarkable students, incredible research innovations, and distinguished faculty for over half a century,” says María E. Fránquiz, dean of the college.

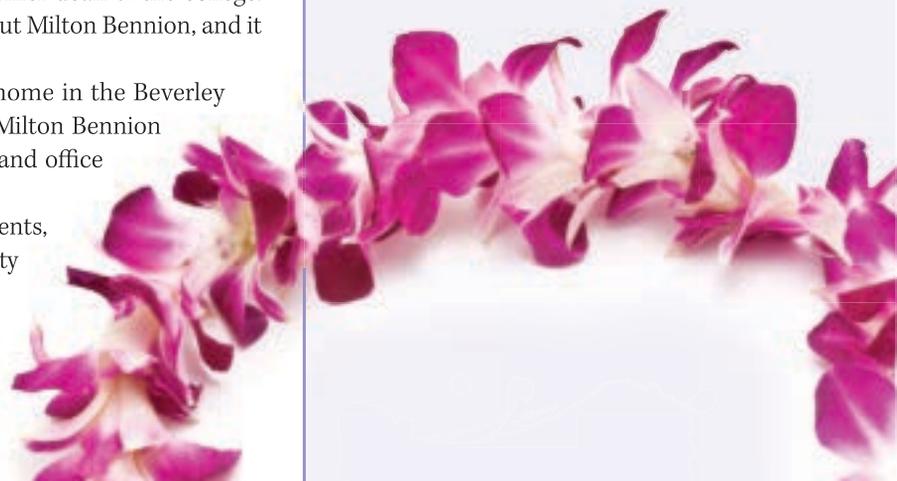
U AIMS TO BUILD TOP PACIFIC ISLANDER PROGRAM

The U is embarking on an initiative to become the nation’s leader in Pacific Islander studies. As part of the initiative, the university is hiring two new full-time faculty in Pacific Islander studies and recently created a new scholarship aimed at recruiting and retaining talented students of Pacific Island heritage.

Utah has one of the oldest and largest Pacific Islander communities in the country (with members from throughout Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia, from Hawaii to New Zealand). In fact, Utah has the largest population in the continental U.S. per capita, and U.S. Census figures show the numbers increased by more than 60 percent between 2000 and 2010. Pacific Islanders have lived continuously in Utah since 1870.

“Because of Utah’s long history with Pacific Islanders and the strong network of professionals, community groups, and associations within the Pacific Islander community, the U is well positioned to strengthen these partnerships and build the top program in the continental United States,” says Adrian Vilami Bell, assistant professor in the Department of Anthropology and co-director of the Pacific Islander Studies Initiative at the U.

The initiative will take a three-pronged approach: Collaborating with and serving the state’s Pacific Islander community, increasing the diversity of the university’s faculty by hiring scholars whose expertise lies in studying the area, and providing scholarships and mentorship opportunities to students of Pacific Island backgrounds.



CONRAD ANKER TO SPEAK AT 2017 COMMENCEMENT



Photo by Jimmy Chin

World-renowned mountain climber, filmmaker, author, philanthropist, and U alum Conrad Anker will deliver the 2017 commencement address on Thursday, May 4, at 6:30 p.m. in the Jon M. Huntsman Center. The event is free and open to the public.

Anker BA'88 was featured in the 2015 Sundance film *Meru*, which chronicles his attempt to lead the first team to summit the notoriously difficult Shark's Fin on Mount Meru in northern India. Anker was a founding member of The North Face Climbing Team and began his relationship with the outdoor company as a retail employee while he was a student at the U. He graduated with a degree in recreation and leisure.

"I want all of the graduates, regardless of how they choose to define success, to find greatness within themselves," Anker says. "That's why I'm thankful for the opportunity to come back to the University of Utah to deliver this message to the class of 2017."

Anker began climbing at a young age and jokes that he chose to attend the U because the brochure showed mountains in the background. He worked for the school's campus recreation program and enjoyed the U's close proximity to the outdoors while taking classes. He says he found his business courses to be especially useful, and even started a company while in school, KÜHL, that he eventually sold for \$10,000—which he used to go climbing.

"I want graduates to live in the moment," Anker says. "Utahns are known for their kindness and generosity. The goodness that comes from being part of the U community is something that will always be with you and that you can share around the world."



STUDENT CROWNED MS. WHEELCHAIR AMERICA 2017

Eliza McIntosh, a junior studying political science, wears the title of Ms. Wheelchair America 2017. She won with the platform: "Where there is a wheel, there is a way—identify your passion, invite people to join you, and ignite your community behind you."

Over the next year, McIntosh will travel the country as a spokeswoman for the disability community, visit with advocacy groups, make public appearances, and participate in parades. McIntosh uses a wheelchair for mobility because she has spinal dysgenesis and is paralyzed from the waist down. An intern at the Disability Law Center in Salt Lake City, she enjoys politics, wheelchair basketball, and chess. "Being disabled is normally seen as a very negative thing. It sounds kind of funny, but I was basically born a celebrity," she says. "Every time I come into a room, people notice. I can go for years without seeing somebody, and they'll still remember me. That's impact. That's power. And so, I feel like you should use what you have available to your advantage."

At the weeklong Ms. Wheelchair America competition last August, McIntosh competed against 25 other contestants from different states. Although the contestants are showcased in pageant format, physical beauty is not a consideration. McIntosh says of her new role, "I am excited and honored to be Ms. Wheelchair America 2017! I hope to use this opportunity to exhibit just how much you can do because of a wheelchair, not despite it."



PAKISTANI YOUTH LEADERS HERE ON EXCHANGE

The University of Utah's International Student and Scholar Services recently hosted 94 emerging youth leaders from Pakistan as part of that country's Global Undergraduate Exchange Program. Through the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and administered by IREX, an international nonprofit organization based in Washington, D.C., the program brings undergraduate students from underserved populations in Pakistan to study in the U.S. to increase their academic knowledge, enhance their leadership capacity, and build new life skills.

Having spent the past semester at 42 different colleges and universities around the country, the students concluded their experience together at a re-entry workshop at the U, learning how to integrate their individual and shared experiences in the U.S. into a blueprint for becoming leaders in their communities. "The workshop was a great success," says Chalimar Swain, director of International Student and Scholar Services. "Particularly in this time of divisive national politics, it was a healing, uplifting experience to see these future leaders engaging in lively discussions about diversity, inclusion, ethics, and leadership."

FORBES RECOGNIZES U ENGINEERING PROFESSOR



Luther McDonald, a 28-year-old civil and environmental engineering assistant professor, as well as a faculty member in the U's nuclear

engineering program, was just named one of *Forbes*' "30 Under 30" in science. He joins academics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Harvard, and NASA's Langley Research Center, among others, in being named one of this year's outstanding young scientists and scientific entrepreneurs in fields from mathematics to neuroscience and genetics. McDonald was the only researcher from Utah named.

"It's an honor," he says about the announcement. "It's also motivation to keep doing more—to get more research funding and get more students to the University of Utah and grow the research program."

McDonald received his bachelor's in chemistry at the University of West Florida and a doctorate in radiochemistry at Washington State University. "My favorite class in high school was chemistry, and for my first chemistry course in college I had one of the most phenomenal professors," he says. "I thought, 'If this is what chemistry is like, I want to do it.' And I was hooked since then."

NOW AIRING THE HINCKLEY REPORT

From GOP infighting to the WikiLeaks email hacks and the rise of a surprisingly strong third-party presidential candidate in Utah, there has been no shortage of recent political surprises—providing perfect timing for the fall launch of *The Hinckley Report*. KUED—the public television station affiliated with the U—began airing the weekly half-hour public affairs series in partnership with the Hinckley Institute of Politics this past September. *The Hinckley Report* is modeled after *Washington Week* on PBS, which features a roundtable of journalists discussing the issues of the week. Its goal: elevate the dialogue surrounding pressing political issues and how they relate to Utah. The show airs on Fridays at 7:30 p.m. on KUED Channel 7.



Photo courtesy KUED

ANOTHER STUDENT SUCCESS STORY



Meet Uriel, a pre-med junior majoring in International Studies with a global health emphasis. As a first-generation college student, a University Ambassador working with underrepresented communities, and a recipient of the Larry H. and Gail Miller Enrichment Scholarship, Uriel knows that lending a hand to Latino high school students can help lead to more student success stories – just like his. Support more student success at giving.utah.edu

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Lunch with a View

The wait appears to be worth it. Whether it's spicy miso ramen, caramel pork banh mi, tofu tacos, or chicken masala—food trucks on campus are in high demand. On any given day around lunchtime, Marriott Library Plaza hosts several large food trucks with freshly made dishes at a student-friendly price, ranging from \$4 to \$9 per plate. While campus boasts an array of excellent food establishments, many students prefer to soak up some vitamin D and the great view while waiting for some good grub.



Photo by Randy Collier

WHAT TWEETS CAN TELL US ABOUT OUR HEALTH

“Coffee” was the most tweeted food in the continental U.S. from mid-2014 to mid-2015, followed by “beer” then “pizza.” Besides hinting at which foods are popular, tweets may reveal something about our health. Communities that expressed positive sentiments about healthy foods were more likely to be healthier overall.

Scientists at the University of Utah surveyed nearly 80 million Twitter messages—a random sample of 1 percent of publicly available, geotagged tweets—over the course of one year. They then sorted through the 4 million tweets about food for ones that fell on opposite ends of the health spectrum: tweets mentioning fast food restaurants, or lean meats, fruits, veggies, or nuts.

The real insights came after cross-referencing the two types of food tweets with information about the neighborhoods they came from, including census data and health surveys. They found, for instance, that tweets from poor neighborhoods, and regions with large households, were less likely to mention healthy foods. People

in areas dense with fast food restaurants also tweeted more often about fast food.

Twitter has previously been used to track health by gauging the prevalence of smoking and finding the source of its spread. Here, the comparisons could provide clues as to how our neighborhoods—the environments that we live, work, and play in—impact our health and well-being.

“Our data could be telling us that certain neighborhoods have fewer resources to support healthy diets,” says Quynh Nguyen, an assistant professor at the U’s College of Health and lead author of the study, published in *JMIR Public Health and Surveillance*. She explains that perhaps neighborhoods laden with fast food restaurants could benefit from having more supermarkets or farm stands that sell fresh produce.

Nguyen and co-authors are working on future versions of the analytical programs to improve results and deepen the findings. “This is a promising new, cost-effective method for studying the social and environmental influences on health,” says senior author Ming Wen, professor of sociology at the U.

HEART MED OFFERS HOPE AS ANTIVIRAL

Today, there is only one class of antiviral medicines against herpesviruses—a family of viruses that cause mononucleosis, shingles, and meningitis, among other illnesses. And if viruses become resistant to these frontline treatments, a growing problem particularly in clinical settings, there are no alternative drugs to serve as backup.

Scientists at the U’s School of Medicine found that a medicine routinely used to treat heart failure, spironolactone, has an unexpected ability to block infection by Epstein-Barr virus (EBV), a herpesvirus that causes mono and is associated with several human cancers.

Spironolactone’s target is distinct from that of existing drugs, revealing that it could be developed into a new class of anti-herpesvirus drug, providing another treatment option and helping overcome the problem of drug-resistant infections.

“It’s remarkable that a drug we have used safely in the clinic for over 50 years is also an effective EBV inhibitor,” says senior author Sankar Swaminathan, chief of infectious disease at U of U Health and professor of internal medicine. “It goes to show how basic research can reveal things we would never have found otherwise.” Conducted in collaboration with research assistant professor of internal medicine Dinesh Virma and lab specialist Jacob Thompson BS’11, the study is published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.



Sankar Swaminathan and Dinesh Virma

A SAFER WAY TO INTUBATE

Breathing tubes are commonly used during surgery and other instances when someone isn't able to breathe on their own. Each year, some 400,000 intubations require three or more attempts to get into the windpipe, and complication rates rise with each attempt.

So when U faculty member and anesthesiologist Sean Runnels had an idea for an upgrade to reduce injuries, deaths, and associated costs, he reached out to the U's Lassonde Entrepreneur Institute to find talented graduate students to help realize his vision. Together with MBA student Mackenzie Hales, bioengineering doctoral student Samer Merchant, and Benjamin Fogg, a medical and bioengineering student at the U, they created the award-winning Through the Cords, LLC.

Fogg explains how their products make it easier to intubate safely. "One main feature is our device's ability to gauge depth," he says. "If you insert the tube too deep, you risk puncturing a lung or only ventilating one lung. If it's too shallow, the patient doesn't get the oxygen they need."

The unique designs include a steerable, flexible device that, when inserted, is easily monitored using a medical camera. Feedback has been positive from paramedics, anesthesiologists, and others, most of whom were surprised something like this didn't already exist. To bring it to market, Runnels and the students have entered entrepreneur competitions and grant programs, winning more than \$150,000 so far toward further development of their devices and FDA approval.

Photo courtesy Lassonde Entrepreneur Institute



L to R: Benjamin Fogg, Samer Merchant, Mackenzie Hales, and Sean Runnels

STOPPING A COMPLETE WASTE OF ENERGY

According to the National Resources Defense Council, Americans waste up to \$19 billion annually in electricity costs due to "vampire appliances," always-on digital devices in the home that suck power even when they are turned off.

But U electrical and computer engineering professor Massood Tabib-Azar and a team of engineers have come up with a way to produce microscopic electronic switches for appliances and devices that can grow and dissolve wires inside the circuitry that instantly connect and disconnect electrical flow.

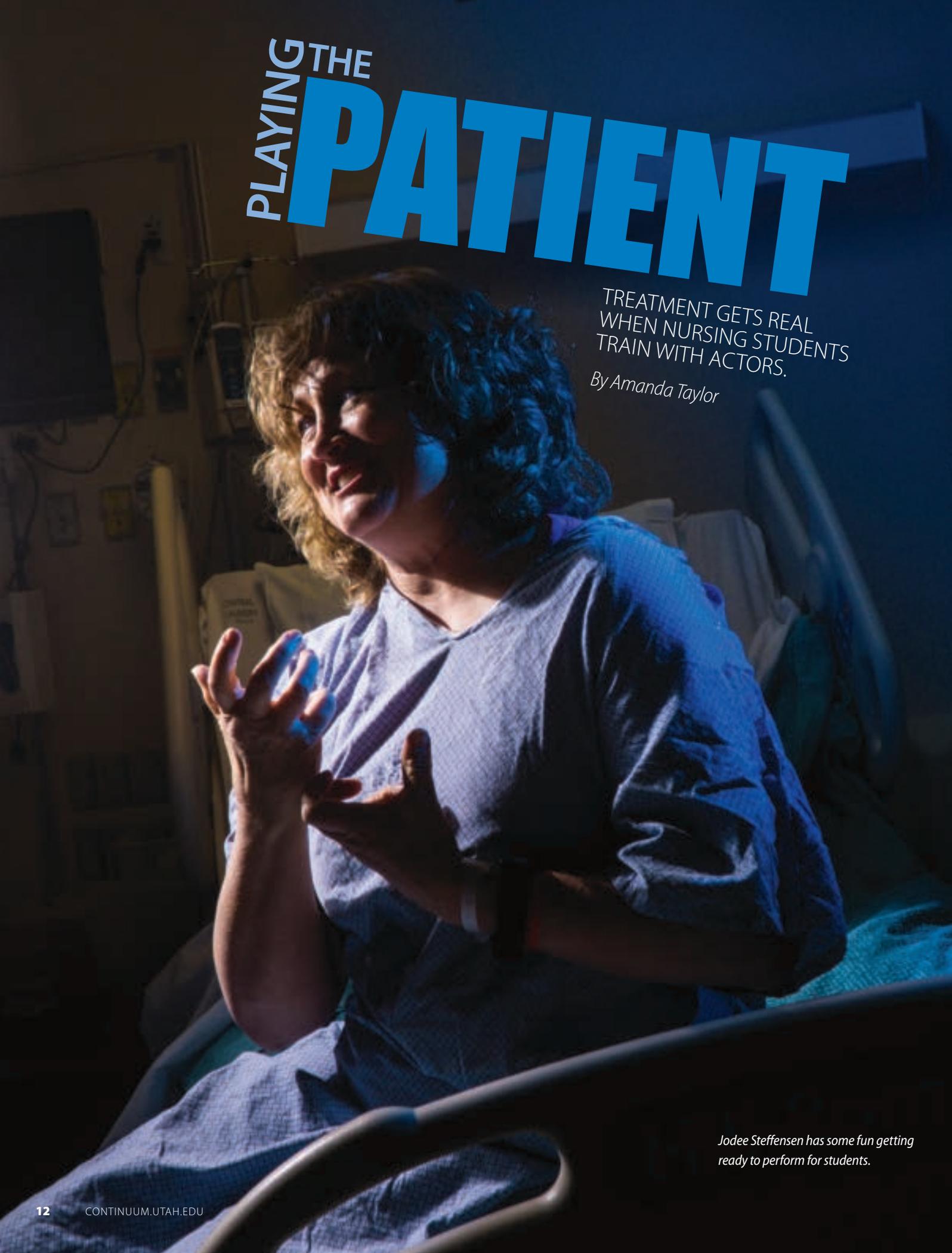
With this technology, consumer products such as smartphones and computer laptops could run at least twice as long on a single battery



charge, and newer all-digital appliances such as televisions and video game consoles could be much more power efficient.

"Whenever they are off, they are not completely off, and whenever they are on, they may not be completely on," says Tabib-Azar, who also is a professor with the Utah Science Technology and Research (USTAR) initiative. "That uses battery life. It heats up the device, and it's not doing anything for you. It's completely wasted power."

The research, published in a paper in *Solid State Electronics*, was co-authored by Intel engineer Pradeep Pai PhD'15, Omnivision Technologies engineer Yuying Zhang PhD'15, and IM Flash engineer Nurunnahar Islam Mou MS'16.



PLAYING THE PATIENT

TREATMENT GETS REAL
WHEN NURSING STUDENTS
TRAIN WITH ACTORS.

By Amanda Taylor

*Jodee Steffensen has some fun getting
ready to perform for students.*

The University of Utah's nursing college has a basement full of robots.

The Simulation Learning Center's hospital set contains expensive, lifelike dummies that help nursing students learn how to treat patients.

But despite the advanced technology of the mannequins, the college knows there's nothing better than the real thing. "We hire actors not just to be a human body to give verbal responses but to actually play a part," says Madeline Lassche BSN'99, the college's executive director of simulation.

Lassche explains that in the past five years, feedback from the College of Nursing's clinical partners started to reflect a lack of interpersonal skills from recent nursing grads. So, the sim center changed its tactics. "Mannequins are great," says Lassche. "But they don't help students practice communication skills, bedside manner, or how to deal with mental health issues and HIPAA standards."

Lassche also points out that although the mannequins can "talk" through microphones and speakers, there are no nuances. Facial expressions and body language can only truly come through when a human performs them.

Two such performers are Steve Fukushima BS'75 and his wife, Susan, who both work part time as standardized patients—the technical term for actors assisting medical students. Steve was hired about five years ago, and he absolutely loves the work. He spent 27 years as a writer, producer, and director for KSL News in Utah, and enjoys being on the acting side of things now. "We do what can so that when the students get into the real world, their education is truly of benefit to them," Fukushima says earnestly.

Fukushima's approach is decidedly service-oriented, due in large part to the fact that he's seen firsthand how much the students learn. After a knee replacement surgery in 2016, Fukushima went to the Aspen Ridge rehab center and was treated by a nurse he had worked with in the simulation center. "She recognized me," Fukushima says, clearly pleased. "I saw how these nurses utilize their training, and it was pretty gratifying. I found out, as a recipient of that care, that it does work."

Among the pool of performers—which includes a range from children to retirees—are a few professional actors. After obtaining two theater degrees from the U and a varied acting career, Jodee Steffensen BFA'73 MFA'75 came full circle. "In retirement, I play around doing extra work and love my job at the U," she says. "The people at the sim center are the nicest and best employers I've had the privilege to work for."

With experience writing, acting, stage managing, and teaching, Steffensen is used to challenges. She says she loves the spontaneity of being a standardized patient. "We all try to make it as real as possible for the nurses, which means tweaking

the scenes on the spot," she explains. "No two sessions are the same. Once, I was in a scene where the students were supposed to practice communicating with a patient who couldn't speak English. By the end of that session, I was speaking Russian!"

One of the scenarios teaches student nurses how to navigate HIPAA and state laws in accordance with revealing medical conditions to the proper people. In the simulation, a 15-year-old girl comes in who has been in a car accident and is discovered to be pregnant—but the nursing staff is not required to tell her parents.

Steffensen has played the mother in this scenario before. "The point is for students to experience handling an extremely hostile situation," she says of the experience. "Most students find it unnerving. But one day there was a student nurse who was a master at de-escalation, and no matter what I tried, she seemed able to calm everyone down."

The exercises can highlight natural skills—or areas that clearly need improvement—in student nurses. The actors play out a full range of scenarios from treating a type-2 diabetic suffering from depression to non-English-speaking patients to skiing accidents that require training in using crutches.

Lassche says that mental health scenarios can be especially draining, but that the discussions that follow are invaluable. "We can actually teach: 'How are you going to isolate yourself and make sure you don't make an error?'" Lassche says. "It's really emotional for the students. They have no idea how hard it will be."

She recognizes that it can be intense for the actors, as well. "The most challenging role I've had was that of a military veteran with PTSD," says actor Rich Laniewski. "This role spanned several scenes involving changes in mood and mental attitude from one scene to the next. I always find myself emotionally drained afterwards."

Although the students know on a cerebral level that what they're doing isn't real, most take it to heart and feel the emotions of a live performance. Lassche says there are always exceptions, though. "You have the student who can never do it. Never in a million years can they walk in and pretend it's real. They just don't have it."

In those situations, it helps to have a standardized patient like Laniewski, who says he has to resist the urge to wisecrack. Laniewski recounts this exchange from a recent scenario, when a student seemed a little nervous:

Student: Are you sexually active?

Laniewski: Yes.

Student: How many partners?

Laniewski: One, just my wife.

Student: Do you wear seat belts or a helmet?

Laniewski says he couldn't stop himself from joking. "I looked at him quizzically, and said: 'During sex?' I have a suspicion that he'll never forget that for the rest of his career." 



A photograph of a man with glasses and a plaid shirt, likely Michael Gills, sitting at a desk in a dimly lit room. He is looking down, possibly at a computer screen. The background is dark with some circular patterns, possibly a window or a wall decoration. The overall mood is focused and quiet.

RISE AND WRITE

MICHAEL GILLS
TEACHES HIS
STUDENTS
THE TRUE GRIT
IT TAKES TO
PRODUCE A
NOVEL.

*Story by Elaine Jarvik
Photos by Austen Diamond*



Gills's early morning writing ritual begins with sage and a supplication.

WRITERS
OFTEN USE
THEIR WRITING
TO PLUMB THE
DEPTHS OF
THEIR OWN
PAIN.

His ritual: wake up, light a match to a stick of sage, talk to the universe.

"Please be with my wife on this day," Michael Gills says, his arms raised in something like supplication. It's 4:30 in the morning, and even the chickens in the darkened yard on University Street are asleep. "Please be with my daughter," he says. And then the final plea: "Open me up."

The craft of writing is mysterious. But it's also simple arithmetic, so Gills goes back in the house and sits down at his typewriter. By the time the sun comes up over the Wasatch two hours later, he has two new pages; by the end of the workweek he'll have 10. Do the math: if you keep that up for 15 weeks, you have 150 pages; keep that up for the next semester and you have the first draft of a novel.

This is the gospel of rise-and-write that Gills, associate professor in the University of Utah's honors program, preaches to his students

in Honors 3850: Novel Writing Workshop, which requires them to write a 300-page book by the end of the year. It's a *novel* novel requirement, because these students are undergraduates, not graduate students getting an MFA or doctorate in creative writing.

"As far as I know, there isn't another class like this on Earth," Gills says.

He takes on 10 undergrads a year, every two years. All of them must sign pledges that they, like their teacher, will commit to rising five days a week at 4:30 a.m. to write for two or three hours, from September to May. As Gills says in the class syllabus: "This class is not for the faint of heart."

Despite the promised rigor, 40 students auditioned for the 2016–17 school year. To winnow down the number, Gills interviews each prospective student. He asks them about their lives and what they like, and if they say they like writing he's more than a little suspicious, because writing is hard and

lonely. Plus, surprisingly, he's not looking for talent, because he believes talent is secondary. What he's looking for is grit.

"Give me someone who has struggled," he says. "Someone who has had to go out and seek their identity."



"Anybody here missing a parent?"

It's a Friday afternoon in the Honors Center, where Gills and his students are seated in a circle talking about the writer Flannery O'Connor, whose father died when she was 15. Gills raises his hand to answer his own question, then asks another: "Anybody here never *met* one of your parents?" He raises his hand again.

His point is this: writers often use their writing to plumb the depths of their own pain. His students, he notes later, may be young and often middle-class, but "they've still had wants, heartaches; they've told enormous lies.

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Mary Catherine Neville
Scholarship Recipient

*On approved credit. APR = Annual Percentage Rate. Variable Rates starting as low as 9.24% APR, based on eligibility. Maximum interest rate over the life of loan is 18% APR. 1% foreign transaction fees. Membership required—based on eligibility.

... My job is to tease that out, to get them to be real.”

Gills’s father, the one he never met, wasn’t so good on veracity or follow-through. Gills’s mother later married a truck driver, then divorced him, then married him three more times. Gills’s absent father and the complicated relationship with his sometimes abusive adoptive father are themes that run through his novels and short stories, as does the death of his brother in an automobile accident at age 19 on a country road, a shortcut Gills had shown him but wishes he hadn’t.

Sorrow and guilt—these are the staples of the kind of Southern writing Gills gravitates toward, books populated by flawed characters and rich details of working class lives.

Gills’s father hauled hogs; his mother once had a job stuffing lipsticks into plastic molds at the Maybelline factory. The family was evicted more than once, and lost everything when their rental burned down. Growing up, Gills says, he never knew anyone who owned a house. All of this happened in Arkansas, where Gills lived until he graduated from college.

“I don’t get up in the morning and say to myself, ‘I’m going to write me some redneck white trash fiction,’” he says. “It’s just what I know.”

He has a doctorate from the University of Utah (’97) and in 2012 was named “Distinguished Professor” at the U. But he still doesn’t feel at home in academia, he says. “In my mind, I’m still a

poor kid from Arkansas... It’s just a miracle I’m not pouring concrete.”

The path out began with a typo. This was at the University of Arkansas, where Gills was a first-generation college student and had signed up for creative writing, figuring that he had come from a long line of people who liked to sit around and tell stories or lies or both.

His teacher was an eccentric writer named Lewis Nordan, who early in the semester asked the students to write a poem. Gills had never written a poem before, but when he turned in “Night Dreams in Logic Class,” Nordan pulled him aside and said, “Michael Gills, you’re the one we’ve been waiting for.” Nordan was impressed with Gills’s poetic imagery, in particular what he deemed “the best phallic symbol ever,” namely the words “the eyes of hoses shone from buckled straw.”

Never mind that what Gills had meant to type was “the eyes of horses.” What Nordan did next was march him over to the University of Arkansas Press, where the poet Miller Williams was equally enchanted by the poem and the “eyes of hoses,” and pretty soon, even though he was just a sophomore, Gills was invited to attend the Graduate Writing Program, where as an undergraduate he won both the graduate poetry prize and the graduate fiction prize. Before that, Gills says, the only thing he had ever been praised for was running fast with a football. Even though he ended up with only a 2.3 GPA (“which means I wouldn’t even be able to attend my own honors classes” at the University of Utah), he was accepted into every graduate writing program he applied to.

At the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, where Gills got his MFA, he studied under Fred Chappell, the novelist and short

- 1 -

I'm knee deep in a blue run when Mama drowns in Arkansas.
Gull, heron, stork dive the bait-slick water. Bluefish leap
beyond the second breaker. For the quarter-mile school, I
fish one rod. Each hit is violent, tight line whistling
through the lips of waves. High tide rolls in, it's over-
cast. The wind is southwest. Even six ounces of pyramid
lead swerves hard north. A surfer girl runs past, neon board
looped to one ankle. She ducks under my line, hits the board
hard on her tanned belly, paddles for the good waves. I'm
very much alive.

— from *Go Love*





Next to Gills's desk is a photo of his mother with a young Bill Clinton, taken when she was an "Arkansas Traveler" during his 1992 campaign for president.

story writer who later became poet laureate of North Carolina. Today you won't get very far into a conversation about writing with Gills without hearing about the wisdom of Fred Chappell. It was Chappell, in fact, who taught Gills how to attack the blank page at 4:30 every morning.

"Michael is one of the best and most intense writers I know," says his mentor now, more than two decades later. Early on, Chappell says, he saw Gills's gifts: "his clarity, his forcefulness of expression, his desire for honesty. ... I still remember his short stories, even after all this time."

Gills was accepted into the U's creative writing doctoral program in 1993, arriving in Salt Lake in July and renting a house with a front porch that looked out toward the Oquirrh. He couldn't believe that he had landed in such a beautiful place, and before driving back east to pick up his wife, he penned a love letter to both the scenery and her, and placed it on the mantel. When he returned to Salt Lake three weeks later, excited for his

wife to read his romantic thoughts, he discovered that someone had broken into the house, drunk all his beer, opened the letter and scrawled "Ha ha ha" on the bottom.

"That was my introduction to Utah literary criticism," Gills deadpans.

The collection of short stories he wrote for his dissertation, *Why I Lie*, won the Utah Arts Council \$5,000 publication prize. It was published by the University of Nevada Press in 2002, the same year it was judged the best literary debut by *The Southern Review*. Since then, Gills has seen the publication of *The Death of Bonnie and Clyde and Other Stories*; a collection of nonfiction essays called *White Indians*; the novel *Go Love*; and, last fall, a collection of short stories, *The House Across From the Deaf School*. *Emergency Instructions*, the sequel to *Go Love*, comes out this year.

For a while, in the midst of all this writing, he thought he had grown tired of Utah. So he got a teaching job at Arkansas Tech University, and bought a big house, two pastures, and a

barn in the Ozarks. But then he started feeling claustrophobic, hemmed in by the poverty and the landscape, the heat and the ticks. So he moved back to Utah, where he can write about Arkansas from a distance.

Besides, he says, "You never see where you're from better than when you're somewhere else."



What he learned from his mentor Fred Chappell: if the room you write in is a little chilly, the discomfort will keep you alert; if you get writer's block, look out the window and write what you see; the first sentence of your story should go off like a pistol shot heard during a preacher's too-long prayer; and you should always know what's happening in seven directions at any given instant in the piece you're writing: front, back, to each side, above, below, and within. Rich details, he says, are what keep a description or a scene from sounding hollow.

Here are a few of the directions early one morning as Gills types:



I DON'T GET UP IN THE MORNING AND SAY TO MYSELF, 'I'M GOING TO WRITE ME SOME REDNECK WHITE TRASH FICTION'. IT'S JUST WHAT I KNOW."



Although his course is rigorous, Gills and his students share many lighthearted moments along the way.

“

YOU NEVER SEE WHERE YOU'RE FROM BETTER THAN WHEN YOU'RE SOMEWHERE ELSE.”

To his right, a picture taken on a Ferris wheel the day he, his wife, and daughter were stuck for 40 minutes above the Utah State Fair. To his left: a window his wife taps on as she heads out to work; “I love you!” Gills calls out. In front of him, the sky starting to lighten. Behind him, a photo of his mother with a young Bill Clinton, taken when she was an “Arkansas Traveler” during his 1992 campaign for president. By then she had worked her way up to be Support Services Manager with the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration.

“My mother was an outgoing, fierce, beautiful woman,” says Gills, who has written about her—or someone sort of like her, living a very similar life—again and again in his books.

He writes his first drafts on an electric typewriter. This provides speed without the seduction of the Internet. Also, there’s not a “delete” key to tempt a man to strive for faultless prose.

“That’s where most people get stuck,” Gills says. “They get paralyzed by perfection.” He reminds his students that a rough draft can and should be rough—“Don’t sit down and try to write well,” he urges them—and that the important thing is to just keep going. But, of course, that’s just the first step.

Former student Paul Crenshaw, who now teaches at Elon University in North Carolina and has been anthologized three times in *Best American Essays*, was always impressed by Gills’s idea of letting a story “get tall”—the literal amassing of draft upon draft, piled up next to his desk. “Once a story got three or four feet tall,” Crenshaw says, quoting his mentor, “it might be getting close to a polished piece.”

“He pushed me to my breaking point and past it,” says Laurel Myler HBA’16, who was a student in the 2014–15 iteration of the Novel Writing Workshop. “He would always demand more of me.” But the hard work paid off:

the novel she wrote in the class, titled *City Ash and Desert Bones*, was published last fall by Raw Dog Screaming Press.

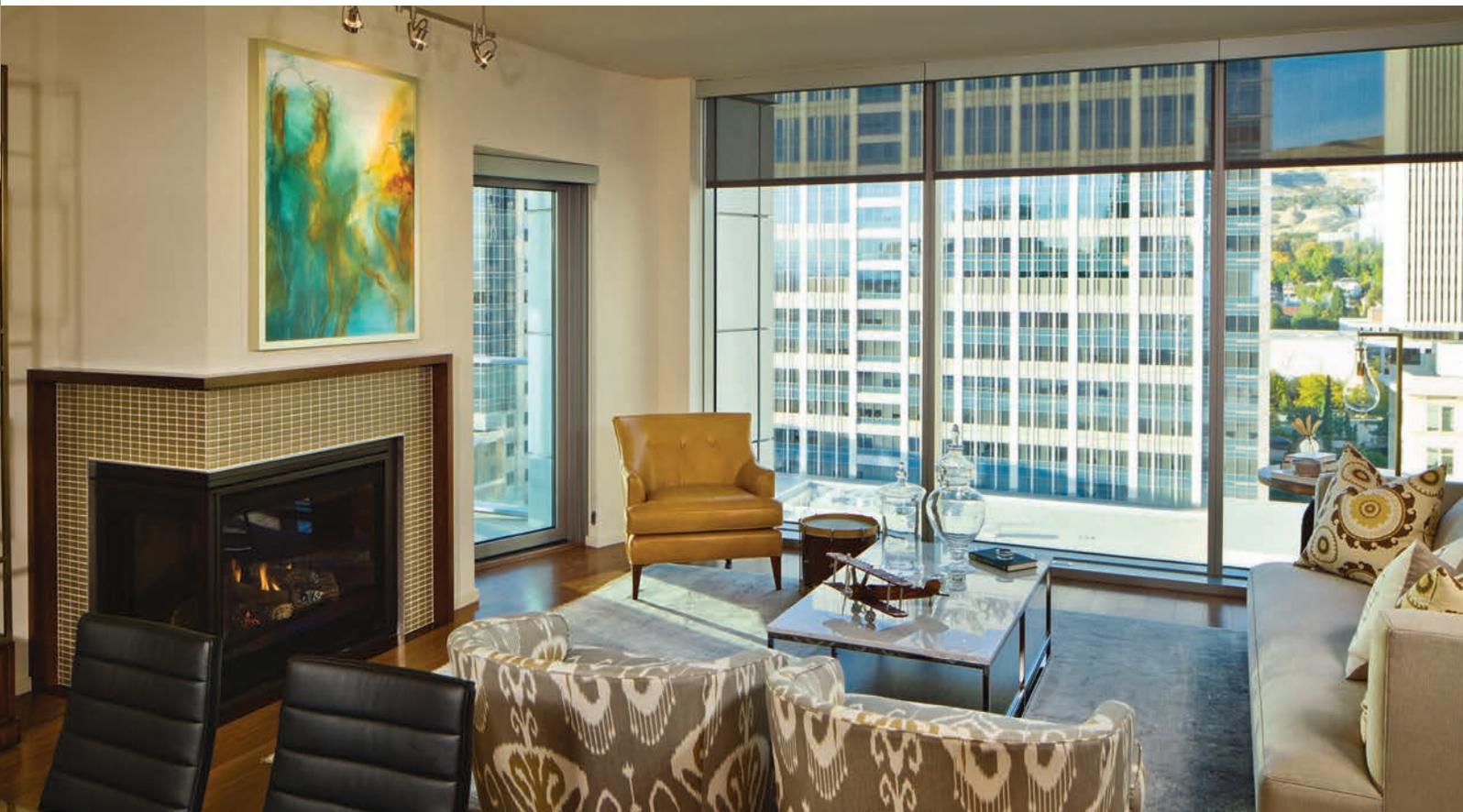
Writing is hard, and that’s one of the five reasons he’s a writer, Gills says. The other four: it’s powerful, it’s free, it’s a great equalizer, and he can be his own boss. And he says he feels like “the luckiest man alive” to get paid to work with young writers discovering their own voices.

So, as always, he’s at his desk before dawn.

“Keats would dress as if he were going to meet his beloved,” Gills says, noting that the English poet would even put on perfume as he sat down to write. Gills wears flannel and lights a stick of sage. But the impulse is the same: treat writing with the respect it deserves. And keep typing. **U**

—Elaine Jarvik is a Salt Lake City-based journalist and playwright and a frequent contributor to *Continuum*.

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THE U CREATES A NEW LOOK AND VISION FOR ITS HEALTH SYSTEM.

By Ann Floor

BRAN

In July 2015, David R. Perry was named chief marketing officer for University of Utah Health Sciences and was charged with creating a comprehensive strategy for further developing and growing the reputation of University of Utah Health Care and Health Sciences. The two separate names have caused some confusion over the years, so the new strategy involves consolidating them into one brand—University of Utah Health (U of U Health, for short). Today, more than a year and a half later, the campaign is going public.

Perry came to the U with more than 25 years of marketing experience at institutions ranging from Bentley University and Seattle Children’s Hospital to Microsoft to The Quaker Oats Company. But his interest in health care is rooted in personal experience. “In 2002, our youngest son was born with a cleft lip that required craniofacial surgery. Six months later, our oldest son was diagnosed with autism,” he says. “So health care became a major part of our lives and has been a primary focus ever since.”

Perry finds the U’s leadership in genetics and commitment to value-driven outcomes intriguing, but he is most enthusiastic about the U’s potential to become a national health care innovator and leader. What follows is some insight into Perry’s thinking and approach to the rebrand.

Why did the two areas—University of Utah Health Care and Health Sciences—decide to consolidate names and logos?

It is all about integration—integrating the clinical, research, and education domains of our institution to deliver greater value to patients and other key stakeholders. The change reflects the need to communicate the full spectrum of what we provide from wellness to cancer care. “Health” reflects the full breadth of our services. Simplifying our name from health sciences and health care to “health” is more patient-focused than “us-focused” and more accurately reflects our end goal in all that we do. The theme of our brand campaign is “One You,” which we hope resonates with the individuals we serve every day.

Is anything changing organizationally with these two entities, or is this just a consolidation of marketing efforts?

Our rebranding efforts are not the tail wagging the dog but rather the brand catching up to the incredible momentum and progress we’ve seen over the past five to 10 years. Breaking down silos, collaborating, and integrating our efforts has been a key area of focus. We’re training students to work in interdisciplinary teams to both care for patients and invent new medical devices. We’re co-locating researchers from multiple departments to focus on such diseases as diabetes and heart failure.

BRAND EVOLUTION



David Perry unveils the new U of U Health logo designed with a block U to tap into the overall university pride.

D NEW

We're working on steps to improve areas like billing processes that streamline the experience for patients. Frankly, as an academic medical center, we're already fairly far along in areas of collaboration compared to many of our peer institutions.

What drove the timing of the rebrand? Why now?

Much of the impetus behind a new brand relates to the growth of our institution, including the recruitment of new clinical and research leaders since the arrival of Dr. Vivian Lee, CEO of U of U Health. In my mind, it is the perfect opportunity to rebrand. Nationally, health care is undergoing tremendous changes, and we are taking a leadership role in that transformation. I don't think it's hyperbole to say that the country is really looking to Utah for solutions. So it's critical that our brand reflect our forward thinking and our focus on health.

What are the main goals of the rebrand?

We want to leverage the brand to accomplish three key goals: increase awareness, change perception, and drive consideration. Awareness involves letting people know—locally and nationally—all of the fantastic things we're doing to improve quality in our clinical practice, our groundbreaking research, and how we're recruiting the best and brightest. Changing perception includes informing audiences that we're not only a critical care facility for life-threatening situations but also a leader in primary care, wellness programs, and women's health. Finally, driving consideration involves moving audiences to take action—influencing potential patients to make an appointment or a community physician to refer a patient to our facilities or a new recruit to join our team.

What is the symbolism behind the new design of the logo?

The University of Utah is a fantastic institution, and we felt it was important that our new logo reflect that our health programs are an integral part of the U instead of a separate entity. So we adopted the "block U" logo to show that alignment and also to leverage the equity in the U's master brand. What I've noticed is that there is so much pride in the University of Utah, and I think this new logo with the block U will tap into that strong community feeling. I also think it will tap into the tremendous pride we

have in Utah as a state. The DNA helix featured inside the block U denotes our specific role in health and science and recognizes our role as a leader in genetics. Importantly, it also highlights our commitment to treat each patient, student, faculty, and staff member as a unique individual.

When and where will the public notice a change?

There was limited exposure to the new brand during the Sundance Film Festival in January, but the major public debut is in March via different forms of advertising and outreach. The initial stage of the launch will take about a year, but some elements will extend through another 12 months including updating of signage.

What interests you most about this project and your participation with it?

I've stated throughout the rollout of this project that the brand needs to catch up with this dynamic institution. University of Utah Health is one of the nation's leading academic medical centers. We are ranked #1 in quality among our peers and are emerging as a leading NIH-funded research institution. We now have

12 community clinics, nine urgent care centers, and 18 affiliate hospital partners throughout the Mountain West region. This growth and level of expertise and service to the community needs to be communicated and amplified. Finally, working with my talented team and the U of U Health leadership here has exceeded my expectations and been very rewarding!

How do you think the rebrand will be perceived from the consumer's perspective?

That is a great question. Based on our research with consumers and patients, we know that they view the university's health system as progressive and a step ahead when it comes to patient care and research. I believe the new brand will be consistent with their perception of us. Our new strategy is to inform and update the community about what makes U of U Health unique and where we are adding value, from breakthrough research to world-class education to improving the convenience of urgent care centers. Above all, we want to celebrate the unique community we serve and the people in it. 



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Intellectual Infusion

THE U INCREASES FACULTY DIVERSITY TO FOSTER CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION AMONG ALL.

By Annalisa Purser

W

hen sociology professor Theresa Martinez came to the University of Utah in 1990, it was a different place. Martinez, a Chicana from New Mexico, recalls Utah being very homogeneous, which probably doesn't come as a surprise. But in addition to the lack of diversity, she found that the environment in her department was, for the most part, not welcoming, nurturing, or supportive. While Martinez was appreciated and supported by faculty and administrators outside her department, she consistently struggled within it.

She worked alongside faculty who taught from the controversial 1994 book *The Bell Curve*, which argued, among other striking claims, that immigration to the United States should be reduced so as to increase the average IQ in the U.S. "It was hard—really hard," acknowledges Martinez, remembering her reality. "It's an emotional thing."

Nearly 30 years later, U administrators recognize that the university still has work to do in creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for all students, faculty, and staff, but it is working passionately to achieve that goal.

In fall 2016, the U celebrated its largest incoming cohort of faculty and postdoctoral fellows from underrepresented backgrounds. Nineteen new hires took

positions across main campus. This represented nearly half of all the new main-campus hires for the academic year.

"This is a historic achievement for the U," says Associate Vice President for Equity and Diversity Kathryn Bond Stockton. "It demonstrates that there is a tremendous commitment from the highest levels of the university to do everything we can to make sure that we're creating a diverse faculty for our students and for our intellectual life."

BETTER LEARNING OUTCOMES

Research continues to point to the benefits of diverse groups for decision-making, problem-solving, and creativity. In a 2014 *Scientific American* article, Professor Katherine W. Phillips from Columbia Business School wrote about finding how being around people who are different results in more creative, more diligent, and harder working individuals.

The piece, titled "How Diversity Makes us Smarter," references an experiment she conducted with colleagues from Stanford and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The researchers took a group of undergraduate business students and divided them into groups of three. Some groups were made up of all white members, and some had two white members and one person of color. The students were given



Theresa Martinez

Photo by Brian Nicholson

The U celebrated the hire of 19 new faculty members and postdocs from underrepresented backgrounds in fall 2016.



Diana Leong, Vincent Cheng, and Kya Mangrum (L to R) met regularly last fall with nine other professors as part of a mentoring workshop to help build camaraderie among new faculty.

information to help them solve a murder mystery. Each member received information that all their team members had, as well as a set of unique information. (The information was identical between the two study groups.) To solve the mystery, groups needed to share all the information they collectively possessed.

“The groups with racial diversity significantly outperformed the groups with no racial diversity,” Phillips reports in the article. “Being with similar others leads us to think we all hold the same information and share the same perspective. This perspective, which stopped the all-white groups from effectively processing the information, is what hinders creativity and innovation.”

A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Along with promoting better intellectual outcomes, university administrators want students to feel a sense of belonging. In fall 2016, the freshman class enrolled 29 percent domestic students of color. Across the entire undergraduate student body, nearly 25 percent are domestic (noninternational) students of color.

“If we are lucky enough to have a diversifying student body, we certainly want our faculty to reflect that diversity so our students feel a deep-seated sense of belonging to this intellectual community,” says Stockton. “We want students from every type of

background to see that careers are open to them in every possible field. We want them to know that they belong in these fields.”

The importance of focusing on improving faculty diversity and building the underrepresented community was reinforced at an open dialogue on racial climate held on campus in November 2015. Students, staff, faculty, and administration participated, including President David W. Pershing, Senior Vice President for Health Sciences Vivian S. Lee, and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Ruth Watkins. In a letter distributed to campus the week after the event, the three wrote: “We heard things that humbled and deeply moved us. We also heard that we must accelerate change at the U, in order to address injustices, create a stronger, better university, and foster a community that is truly welcoming to students, faculty, and staff from all backgrounds.”

Three weeks after the town hall meeting, the administration released 13 plan-of-action responses that promised meaningful change, many of which had already begun.

IMPROVED HIRING PRACTICES

Among the changes already under way was an open initiative to accelerate and support recruitment of faculty and postdoctoral fellows from diverse

backgrounds. Before a search even begins, committees meet with a consultant from the Office of Equal Opportunity who provides basic information about the importance of considering a diverse pool of candidates. To build such a pool, the Office for Equity and Diversity offers guidance on a number of topics, including how to write listings, where to advertise openings, and who candidates might wish to meet when they're on campus.

Additionally, search committees are encouraged to participate in an online Unconscious Bias training that was pioneered at U of U Health. The training increases awareness of the social stereotypes that individuals form about groups of people outside of their own perceived backgrounds (racial, economic, etc.). It also explains how these biases result in powerful unconscious conclusions about others that are often wrong. The training helps people identify their bias tendencies and uncovers ways that committees can reduce bias.

"When people are engaged in a process that they take seriously, and when they use the same rubric, questions, and evaluations for every candidate, it tends to even the playing field and yield better results," explains Amy Wildermuth, associate vice president for faculty. "Those who are committed to approaching the process in a more rigorous way avoid making assumptions and taking shortcuts and, as a result, end up with better outcomes."

A NEW MENTORING PROGRAM

The 13 U administration responses also included the development of a mentoring plan for all junior faculty. The Academic Senate Diversity Committee had investigated best practices for mentoring diverse faculty, and through their research, found that faculty mentoring programs in general could use strengthening and improvement.

The College of Humanities was selected to pilot the new mentoring program in fall 2016 because it welcomed 11 new tenure-track faculty members at that time, eight of whom are from underrepresented racial/ethnic backgrounds and nine of whom are women. The new program involves a semester-long mentoring workshop for new faculty in place of teaching a class. The workshop, led by English professor Vincent Cheng (who has been at the U for nearly 20 years), focuses on developing a cohort and

sense of camaraderie among new faculty and helping them establish a network of mentors.

"New faculty, especially those right out of graduate school or postdoctoral positions, experience a lot of pressure," says Cheng. "They may feel overworked, isolated, and intimidated by the publish-or-perish mindset of higher education. Having gone through the process myself as a faculty member of color, and at a time when there were even fewer of us, I feel a particular responsibility to help our new faculty feel welcomed, supported, and appreciated with a sense of belonging that would make them want to stay here."

TIPS TO REDUCE HIRING BIAS

Whether we like to admit it or not, we all have some form of unconscious bias, which means we let social stereotypes affect our understanding, actions, and decisions without realizing it. For every faculty hire at the U, the search committee is asked to apply certain steps to help reduce the level of unconscious bias. Below are three tips taken from the training:

- 1 Ensure diverse composition of your search committee.** This allows you to reach more potential networks to publicize job openings, increases the variety of insights, and signals to candidates that your organization is an inclusive community where they will be welcomed.
- 2 Commit to specified credentials ahead of time.** Create clear criteria for evaluating candidates before looking at their qualifications. It's often tempting to start perusing résumés before coming up with your hiring criteria, but that already allows bias to creep in.
- 3 Use structured interviews.** Ask the same or similar questions of every candidate. This helps the committee focus on skills and helps limit other distractions or biases, such as unintentionally asking men and women different types of questions.

Across the entire undergraduate student body, nearly 25 percent are domestic students of color.



Leading the charge behind the U's new School for Cultural and Social Transformation are (L to R) Ed Muñoz, Nicole Robinson, Kathryn Stockton, and Susie Porter.

During their weekly three-hour meetings, the group explored a full spectrum of issues, challenges, and adventures facing new faculty. They discussed the nature of the U's student body; learned about living in Salt Lake, including ethnic markets, restaurants, recreational possibilities, and other community resources; examined the challenges of teaching controversial topics, especially for young faculty of color and young women faculty; examined ways to secure research funding and fellowships; learned about the retention, promotion, and tenure process; shared best practices for publishing; and much more.

"As we develop and refine this approach, it's going to be among the best mentoring programs in the nation," says Stockton. "Compared to the old one-on-one model, this program gives new professors a strong experience together and builds for them a network of resources. This is a perfect example of how thinking about diversity makes life better for everyone."

MOVING FORWARD

In addition to the faculty hiring initiative, the U launched a new School for Cultural and Social Transformation in fall 2016. The new school is the

first in the Intermountain West to focus on the intersection of race, gender, and social justice issues. The school not only elevates the Gender Studies and Ethnic Studies programs to academic divisions, but it also allows the divisions to directly hire and grant tenure to faculty.

Things have come a long way since Martinez and Cheng joined the U. "Of course, I wish change was faster, but I can't deny there has been a lot of hard work in getting us here," says Martinez.

In spring 2016, four Chicana faculty members—all of whom joined the U in 2009 as part of an earlier effort to hire faculty from diverse backgrounds—received tenure at the same time. Martinez, who was reported to be the first Chicana in the state of Utah to receive tenure, was elated.

"When I received my tenure letter in 1996, I carried it around with me for a year because I couldn't believe it," she adds. "I still get choked up. These women are so deserving. I see them as a reminder that I'm glad I stayed and fought it out. I'm glad I could pave the way for them—just a little bit." **U**

—Annalisa Purser is a communications specialist for University Marketing & Communications.



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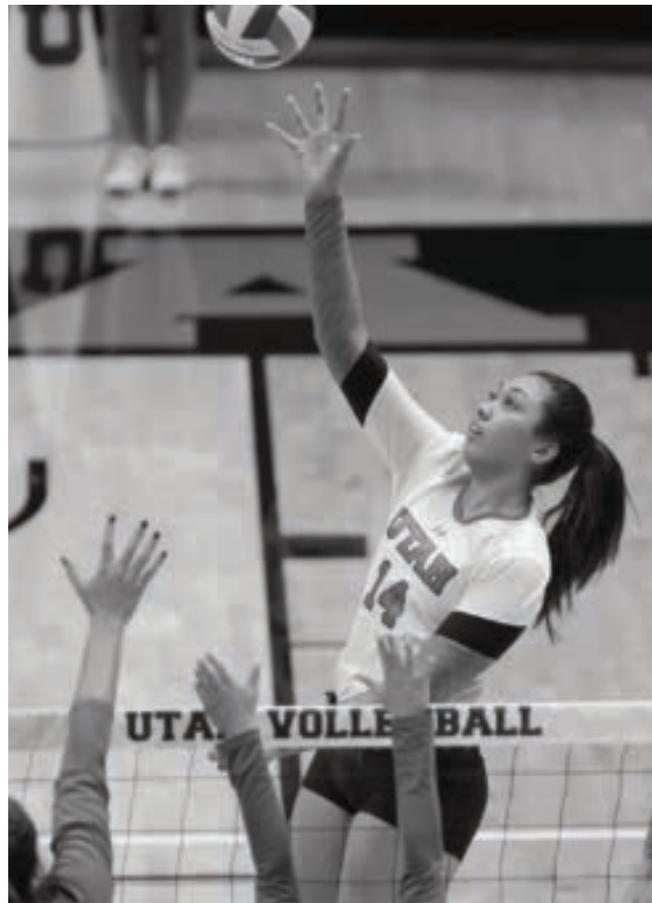


Story by James Seaman



Photos courtesy University of Utah Athletics

PAC

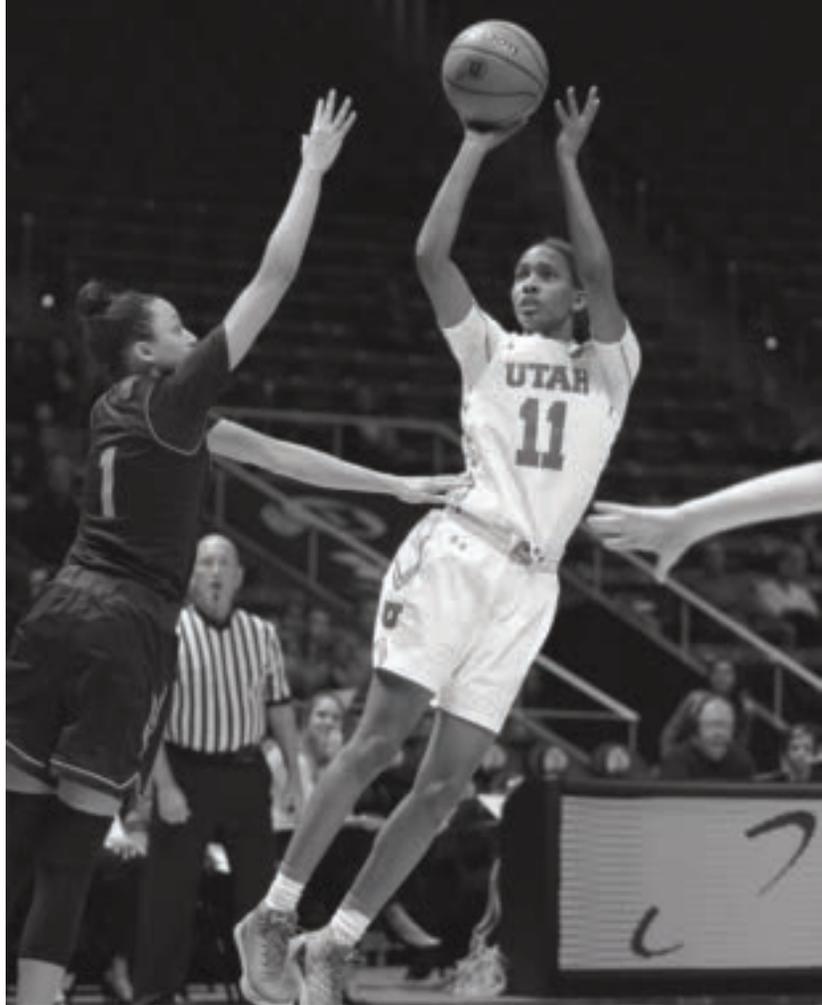


When University of Utah Athletics Director Chris Hill MEd'74 PhD'82 informed baseball coach Bill Kinneberg that the Utes were joining the Pac-12, a health emergency nearly ensued.

"I'll never forget Chris Hill walking into my office and asking if I was breathing okay," Kinneberg laughs. After catching his breath, the Ute skipper sized up the task of competing in a conference that owns 28 NCAA baseball championships. "Where the program was at that point, I knew it was going to be a big job," Kinneberg recalls.

Other coaches shared Kinneberg's initial wariness when they learned in June 2010 that Utah would officially join the Pac-12 on July 1 of the following year. "Coaches were excited, but we were also a little apprehensive, and rightfully so," volleyball coach Beth Launier remembers. The Pac-12 claims 14 national titles in women's volleyball, more than any other conference. "We knew we were going to have to grow into it," Launier says.

Launier has fostered that growth, leading her squad to three of the last four NCAA tournaments. And Kinneberg, who like Launier coached Utah



**UTAH
JUMPED
FROM
WINNING
27% OF
ITS PAC-12
GAMES THE
FIRST YEAR
TO 60%
IN 2016.**

in both the WAC and the MWC, has gone from hyperventilating to breathing rarified air. After finishing dead last in each of its first four Pac-12 campaigns, Utah baseball finally broke through last spring, becoming the first Utah men's team to win a Pac-12 title.

As Utah battles for Pac-12 supremacy in one sport after another, fans and alumni feel compelled to reminisce on a wild five-year ride and ponder an even more exciting future.

When the Pac-10 moved to expand under the leadership of Commissioner Larry Scott, Utah was prepared on all fronts. "There were three primary priorities that we looked at when we considered expansion," Scott says. "We looked at athletic and academic fit. We looked at geographic fit. And we looked at what would create value overall in light of a football championship game, markets, and media rights. We determined that Utah was a great fit along all three of these fronts."

For Utah, decades of preparation finally paid off. And yet the real work was just beginning. At the time Utah joined the Pac-12, the conference already owned more than 400 national championships. Outside of skiing and women's gymnastics, Utah had one (men's basketball in 1944). From the conference's 38 national titles in swimming and diving to UCLA's legendary run of 10 NCAA titles in 12 years in men's basketball to USC's six Heisman Trophies, the Pac-12 represents the pinnacle of collegiate athletics.

As one might expect, the Utes struggled early on. In the first year of Pac-12 competition, Utah won 27 percent of its conference games in football, basketball, baseball, softball, soccer, and volleyball, going a combined 36-96. In the most recently completed season (including fall 2016 for football, soccer, and volleyball), Utah finished 75-50-4 against Pac-12 foes, winning 60 percent of league contests. How does a program more than double its output in half a decade? The answer

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<i>Russia</i> Aug 28- Sep 8	<i>Scotland</i> July 3-14
<i>Paris</i> Fall 2017	<i>Greece</i> Oct 1-14
<i>London</i> Oct 5-14	



lies in attracting the right student-athletes to Utah, supporting them both athletically and academically, and obtaining the resources needed to do so.

Attracting the right student-athletes to Utah occupies a great deal of head football coach Kyle Whittingham's attention. "Recruiting, recruiting, and recruiting," Whittingham emphasizes when asked how he and his staff have built Utah into a perennial Pac-12 contender. The new conference affiliation has opened recruiting avenues previously closed off to Ute coaches, but it has also mandated that Utah attract better athletes to survive the Pac-12 gauntlet.

"Everything we do, we ask the question *How does this impact recruiting?*" Whittingham explains. "From the way we train, the facility, what we feed the players, to the gear they wear. If we do not recruit the right guys, we will not be successful." Elite high school athletes seek colleges where they can play with and against other elite athletes, and the Pac-12 provides that chance. Whittingham and his staff have made the most of greener recruiting pastures, winning 16 of 27 conference games the last three seasons

after claiming just nine league victories in their first three Pac-12 campaigns.

Increased revenue from conference affiliation and national television has afforded Utah more opportunities to hit the road and evaluate the nation's best high school talent. The Athletics Department's recruiting budget grew from roughly \$700,000 in the last year of MWC competition to more than \$1.1 million in fiscal 2015. Getting in front of more kids and touting Pac-12 affiliation has a significant impact. "Our conference has a strong brand, and kids from all over associate our conference with great teams and great programs," golf coach Garrett Clegg BA'04 says.

Of course, this means Ute coaches find themselves in heated recruiting battles against traditional Pac-12 powers that have beefy budgets and name brands. "I've recruited kids for 18 months, then had USC and UCLA come in and get a kid in an hour," women's tennis coach Mat Iandolo laments. The California schools pose an especially formidable challenge across all sports. Iandolo refers to them as the California Four, while soccer coach Rich Manning calls them the Four-Headed Monster. "In the circles we recruit, the

California schools still eat first in terms of the food chain," Iandolo says. "The blueprint is to do a better job of selecting your kids, and do a better job of coaching and training them."

Upon entering its new conference, Utah also needed to meet the Pac-12 standard for training and supporting its student-athletes. "We've built a framework, a support system where we're able to take care of all their needs physically and mentally in order to help them succeed," Manning says of the soccer program. Prior to Pac-12 entry, training and strength and conditioning for soccer would be aided by a graduate assistant or one of the football coaches giving part-time support. Now soccer has its own personnel for those critical roles. Recruiting, but also supporting those student-athletes who commit to Utah, helped Manning lead the Utes to arguably the best season in program history in 2016. Utah earned its most wins since entering Pac-12 play, beating both Texas Tech and 10th-ranked Florida State in the NCAA Tournament and finishing 16th in the National Soccer Coaches Association of America rankings.



Training and supporting student-athletes requires money. Utah's expenditures on coaches, support staff, and athletics student aid increased from just under \$20 million in the last year of MWC play to almost \$32 million in fiscal 2015, an increase of more than 60 percent. But lest the average Ute fan think Pac-12 membership has boiled the U's Athletics Department down to nothing but dollars and cents, consider the way this money supports the athletes we cheer on every season. Senior Associate Athletics Director Nona Richardson emphasizes Utah's ability to give its student-athletes the complete support they need to be successful on the field and in the classroom as they prepare for life beyond college.

"In the past, we may not have known about the issues students may have had prior to enrolling at the U," Richardson says. Not unlike the average student one can see walking to class or passing through the Union Building, athletes may deal with depression, anxiety, learning disabilities, and even eating disorders. "We're able to address, assess, and assist a number of these areas," Richardson says. Utah is now able to wrap its arms around the student-athletes



A FAIR FIGHT

The Utah women's gymnastics program needed the Pac-12, but not for the same reasons as the other sports. The Red Rocks were an elite national program long before the Pac-12 came calling, so much so that the squad was in need of better competition. Since most MWC schools don't have gymnastics, Utah found itself as a lone wolf of sorts, forced to wait until Regionals for a fair fight.

"We were this little lone school, Utah, kind of the odd one out," says Megan Marsden BS'84, who was co-head coach with her husband, Greg ex'78, when Utah joined the Pac-12; she now shares the duties with Tom Farden. Pac-12 membership meant finally having a home where the Utes could find a worthy adversary during the regular season.

"It's made them feel more powerful at the national level because they're part of a dynamic family," Marsden says of her team's inclusion in the Pac-12. "It's given them a chance to be part of a larger family of gymnastics schools." Marsden, a two-time Pac-12 Coach of the Year, has led her squad to two Pac-12 championships. The Red Rocks have won 10 NCAA championships over the years, all of which have included Marsden as either a competitor or a coach. Greg Marsden was the head coach from 1976-2009 and co-head coach until 2015, when he retired.



ATHLETICS' RECRUITING BUDGET GREW FROM ROUGHLY **\$700,000** IN 2010 TO MORE THAN **\$1.1 MILLION** LAST YEAR.

who represent the university on the field of play. The results have resonated, from the softball diamond where Hannah Flippen won Pac-12 Player of the Year in 2016 to the basketball court where Delon Wright BS'15 and Jakob Poeltl ex'16 became first-round NBA draft picks in 2015 and 2016.

In recruiting, facilities, and student-athlete support, Utah is now on par with the rest of the Pac-12. And still, life in the Conference of Champions provides no rest for the weary. While Utah athletics has improved across the board, the ultimate prize—a conference championship—has eluded all but the gymnastics and baseball teams.

"The next step is really, really hard," Hill says. "The upper part of the league changes a lot because it's so competitive." The Utes made the leap into the Pac-12; now they seek to take those final steps, ascending to the top of the conference even as 11 other teams fight them for

every inch. In football, the task has practically assumed a Sisyphean nature. In each of the last three years, Utah has entered the final month of play either tied or alone in first place in the Pac-12 South, only to wake in late November and find the boulder has rolled back down the hill.

Unlike in a Greek tragedy, however, the Utes can impact their fate. The same formula used to propel Utah's teams from the Pac-12 cellar to its middle and upper rungs can carry them over the top. "Keeping good coaches, that helps us recruit," Hill says. "Then we continue to provide the facilities and the support for student-athletes that are so important."

The results don't come overnight. It took Hill's administration nearly a quarter century to hoist Utah into an elite conference. And the lifting was done by every athlete and every coach who, game by game and match by match,

slowly increased Utah's profile. Now those coaches and athletes doggedly build Utah's Pac-12 legacy. "You plan and you dream, and then you just make it happen every day," Hill says. "Bring your lunch pail in and make it happen."

"It takes time" women's basketball coach Lynne Roberts says. "I tell our players, you can't work your way to the penthouse in just one year. We've got to grind and take the stairs and work our way up." For the Utes and their fans, the journey itself is worth the climb. **U**

—James Seaman BA'01 BS'01 MA'07 is a freelance writer based in Salt Lake City.



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FOODIE GONE WILD

Utah native turns love for Norwegian food into award-winning blog.

By J. Melody Murdock



Photo by Espen Berg

On September 23, 2016, Nevada Berg BS'06 left the serenity of her farmhouse in a remote mountain region of Norway to board a plane to New York City. She would spend the next two days baking bread, butchering pigs, testing recipes, and mingling with other lifestyle bloggers from around the world. After all, Berg was selected from more than 50,000 nominations to be one of 78 finalists in 13 categories for the 2016 *Saveur* blog awards, one of the most prestigious recognitions in the world of food blogging.

"I was so happy to have just been selected as a finalist," recalls Berg, whose blog was less than a year old at the time. She says she went into the awards ceremony hoping, but not expecting, to win her category—Editors' Choice Award for Best New Voice. The judges obviously liked what they saw, and Berg was indeed dubbed the category winner. "I was elated, just happy to be in the moment," she says.

When it came time to announce the biggest award of the evening—Blog of the Year—Berg was excited to find out which of the other bloggers she had met would be taking home the coveted title. "I'm pretty

sure there was a look of utmost shock on my face when they announced my blog, *North Wild Kitchen*, as the blog of the year," she says, still with a tone of surprise. Berg adds that the thought never even crossed her mind. "I was most certainly the underdog going against some big-name blogs. It was thrilling and humbling at the same time."

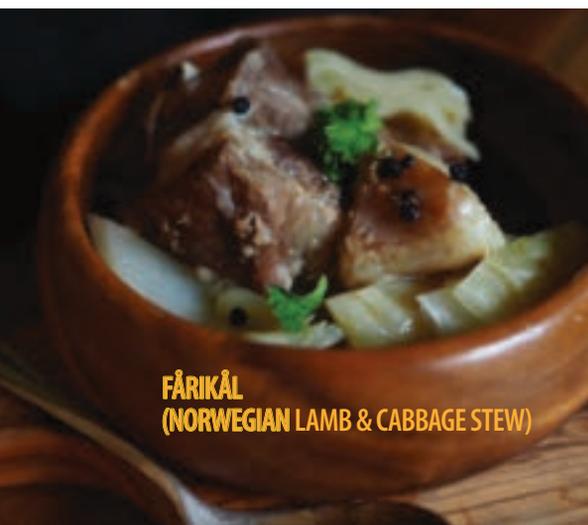
Saveur, a magazine for food and travel enthusiasts, describes Berg's photos, stories, and diligence in re-creating Norwegian family recipes as "nothing short of transporting." In fact, Berg is so passionate about Norwegian cuisine, culture, and



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**BLØTKAKE MED TYTTEBÆR
(LAYER CAKE WITH LINGONBERRIES)**



**FÅRIKÅL
(NORWEGIAN LAMB & CABBAGE STEW)**

traditions—and happens to be a light-eyed blonde—one might assume that she’s from Norway. And while she lovingly calls her adopted home “my Norway,” she was born and raised in Utah.

In fact, that’s where her culinary journey began—watching her own mother comb through cookbooks while she “cooked effortlessly” in their kitchen. Even before Berg became interested in cooking, she developed a love for recipe books—a habit that followed her to the University of Utah. “When I wanted to relax my mind, I would go to the Marriott Library, grab a few cookbooks, and just flip through the pages and examine the photographs,” says Berg, a self-trained photographer who takes all of her own blog photos.

It’s no surprise that one of Berg’s college jobs included working at a restaurant in Salt Lake City called The Paris, which she credits for widening her tastes and experience with food. But it wasn’t until she moved abroad that she “began to start cooking for others and experimenting.” As an international studies major at the U, Berg had the opportunity to move to England to study at Plymouth University as part of a one-year study abroad exchange program.

And, as college fairy tales often go... she met a cute guy during orientation week. His name was Espen, and he was from Norway. “It was a wonderful whirlwind of a romance,” she affectionately recalls. The couple married a year later. After finishing their degrees, the two of them spent the next decade living and working around the world from England to Mozambique to Italy. Following the birth of their son in 2012, the couple decided it was time to settle. “After moving around so much, we were looking for a home and a community to get rooted into,” says Berg, whose case of wanderlust was finally fading. “Thinking about all of our options, we decided on Norway.”

In what some might call a bold move, she and Espen bought a mountain farm whose origin dates back to 1651—without ever seeing it. And they have no regrets. Reflecting on her upbringing in Utah, Berg says she “only ever really felt at

“It’s important to me that I understand the seasons and approach my cooking in a way that reflects what and when the land produces.”

home in the mountains.” She describes her first impressions of her new hilltop home in her blog: “My love affair with this place started the moment we arrived. Beauty graces its raw exterior. The splendor of the landscape is overshadowing, its imperfections adding to its charm. And who would have guessed that deep in the northern wild lies one of nature’s culinary banquets.”

Berg discovered an abundance of wild produce and wild meats in the valley. “I love that we can live by the seasons,” she says. They forage in the spring, garden in the summer, hunt and fish, and cure and preserve for the winter. “It’s important to me that I understand the seasons and approach my cooking in a way that reflects what and when the land produces.”

Berg sees food as a common thread in every culture. Her travels have taught her to appreciate different cooking methods and the importance of understanding where our food comes from, as well as the history and stories behind recipes. This is what excites her most about *North Wild Kitchen*. “It’s more than a blog; it’s a cultural journey. It’s my journey through Norway, with a focus on the food, the people, the traditions, and the landscapes.” Berg’s next step on this journey is a cookbook, slated to come out in fall 2018.

And while she is certainly receiving prestigious accolades from the foodie community, she has her own measure for success. She says, “Success is when readers tell me they were moved after reading a story and inspired to get in the kitchen, use local ingredients, and reconnect with their heritage.” **U**

GODFATHER OF THE MUSS

By Ann Floor

**NOTHING GREAT WAS EVER
ACHIEVED WITHOUT ENTHUSIASM.**

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

John Fackler keeps this quote in his office. He says it symbolizes his lifelong passion for athletics—from the time he was a child in awe of college football to today, as he steps down after 15 years leading the U’s wildly successful student cheering section, The MUSS.

When Fackler BS’89 BS’94 MprA’95 was around age 7, his family moved from La Vale, Maryland, to Salt Lake City, where he joined the other kids playing sports in his new neighborhood. “Broke a few windows but never any bones,” he says. Around that time, his dad took him to a game at the U’s then Ute Stadium. “I fell in love with college football that day,” he says with conviction. “From the game to the band to the green grass. I’ve always joked that I asked my dad if we could live at the stadium.” What Fackler couldn’t have known then was that he would grow up to essentially call that stadium home—and that he would become known as Godfather of The MUSS.

In 2000, after working several years as a CPA, Fackler learned that he had attention deficit disorder and was counseled to consider another line of work. His good friend Bill Coen BS’83, on staff at the U’s Alumni Association, called to tell him about an opening for director of business relations. Fackler had served on the Young Alumni Board and thought it would be a “cool” place to work, so he called executive director John Ashton. “Hiring John Fackler was an easy choice,” says Ashton BS’66 JD’69. “He had a unique blend of accounting, finance, athletics, and alumni experience.”

Two years later, Fackler took over as adviser to the Student Alumni Board and was charged with getting more students to attend games. He was confident that he could prove the naysayers wrong—those who said Utah students wouldn’t go to football games—but there were, admittedly, occasional obstacles. “One day, a bit discouraged, I ran into Bruce ‘Woody’ Woodbury [BS’72], the sports information director for the U,” says Fackler. “He said, ‘A lot of people have tried to get students to football games, but you’re the guy who can do it.’ I always remembered that encouragement during tough times.”

Fackler partnered with Kim Sorrentino, assistant marketing director at the Athletics Department, and together they started the Utah Football Fan Club, which one year later, in 2003, was renamed The MUSS (from a phrase in the U fight song, and also known as an acronym for Mighty Utah Student Section). “We knew it would be difficult, but we were optimistic. We went to various campus organizations—Greek row, residence halls—wherever and whatever it took,” says Fackler. They assembled a board of



Deputy Athletic Director Kyle Brennan congratulates John Fackler during the Utah-Oregon game at Rice-Eccles Stadium in November. Fackler was honored for his 15-year leadership of The MUSS.

nine students and made a goal to attract 300 students to every home game. Eight hundred signed up. And the rest is, well, history. Today, you can find The MUSS, capped at 6,000 strong, sitting on the southeast side of Rice-Eccles Stadium cheering their hearts out. They’re also a regular fixture at other athletics events including men’s basketball and women’s gymnastics.

Fackler, who has been named national outstanding student adviser twice in his career, admits he’s had an incredible run leading The MUSS. He now passes the MUSS advisory baton to his longtime assistant, Brynn Whitchurch BA’05. “And she’ll do a great job,” he says. “Kevin Stoker [BA’06 MBA’09] also has played a significant role. It wouldn’t have happened without either of them.”

“Coming to work at the Alumni Association is one of the best decisions I’ve made,” says Fackler. And although he’s handing over the MUSS reins, he is not retiring. “I still have a full plate of alumni duties, and will still be involved with The MUSS. I’ll probably also still be busy writing recommendation letters—I write more of those than anyone else on campus!” **U**



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1960s



Julie Smart BA'68 MA'70 has received the Distinguished Career in Rehabilitation Education Award from the National

Council on Rehabilitation Education, a professional organization of educators dedicated to quality services for persons with disabilities. In 2001, she was awarded the council's Outstanding Researcher/Educator Award. Now retired, Smart was a faculty member for 24 years at Utah State University's graduate program in rehabilitation counseling, and served as program director for 10 years. Smart has translated into Spanish two testing instruments used in rehabilitation and disability practice and has published widely in the rehabilitation/disability literature. In addition to holding a bachelor's degree in history and a master's degree in educational psychology from the U, Smart received a doctorate in rehabilitation counseling from the University of Northern Colorado.

1970s



Mary Hyacinth-Houser MS'76 was inducted into Voorhees College's 2016 Homecoming Hall of Fame. Hyacinth-Houser graduated

from Voorhees in 1971 with a bachelor's degree in history. She received a master's degree in human resource management from the U and furthered her studies at Long Island University in guidance counseling. After spending her professional career with the New York State Department of Labor and the New York City Board of Education, she retired after 36 years in supervision and counseling. Hyacinth-Houser, an ordained minister, also founded and remains active with a Helping Hand Ministry to assist the needy, currently in Georgia and South Carolina. "A desire to help and empower others has always been my life's focus," she notes.

FOUNDERS DAY CELEBRATED WITH ALUMNI AWARDS

On March 3, the University of Utah celebrated its 167th year since its founding in 1850 with a gala bestowing its Founders Day awards (among its highest honors, alongside honorary doctoral degrees), to four outstanding graduates and one honorary alumnus. The awardees were recognized for their exceptional professional achievements and/or public service, as well as for their support to the university.

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI



Pamela Cipriano PhD'92 is president of the American Nurses Association, which represents the interests of the nation's 3.1 million registered nurses. She is a research associate professor at the University of Virginia School of Nursing, where she has served in faculty and leadership positions since 2000. She previously led the University of Virginia Health Systems employees as chief clinical officer and chief nursing officer. She was named one of the top 100 Most Influential People in Healthcare in 2015.



David Jorgensen BS'61 had a successful career as a Silicon Valley high-tech entrepreneur before devoting himself full time to philanthropy. Former CEO of Dataquest, a high-tech market research company, he also cofounded the copier/printer supply company Katun, which he sold in 2002. Since then, he has served as president of the David and Annette Jorgensen Foundation, whose work has included supporting more than 40 U engineering students with scholarships for up to five years each at nearly full tuition.



Miriah Meyer PhD'08 is a USTAR (Utah Science Technology and Research) assistant professor in the School of Computing at the U and a faculty member in its Scientific Computing and Imaging Institute. Previously, Meyer was a postdoctoral research fellow at Harvard University and a visiting scientist at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard. She has been named a TED Fellow, as well as included on a *Fast Company* list of the 100 most creative people in business.



Alan L. Sullivan JD'74, a prominent Utah attorney of 30-plus years, has been sought out for high profile litigation including an intellectual property case in which he obtained the largest jury verdict in the history of the state court system. A past chair of the Utah Supreme Court Advisory Committee on Civil Procedure, he led the "And Justice For All" campaign to establish ongoing private funding of pro bono legal services for Utah's most vulnerable citizens.



Visit continuum.utah.edu to watch video profiles on each of our honorees.

HONORARY ALUMNUS



Bruce Bastian (B.A. and M.A., Brigham Young University) co-founded WordPerfect, which revolutionized word processing and document-generating features that are still relied upon today. He used his success to found the B.W. Bastian Foundation, which focuses its gifts on LGBTQ equality and the arts in education. To the U alone he has given 55 Steinway pianos, a major contribution for renovations to Kingsbury Hall, annual support to the University's LGBT Resource Center and U Pride, and thousands of dollars to various other areas across campus.

FOUNDERS DAY SCHOLAR EMBRACES HER CULTURAL IDENTITY



For Sydney Chan, our 2017 Founders Day Scholar, cultural identity has made her who she is—a successful second-year nursing student, an active volunteer with several groups supporting the underrepresented, and an outstanding service leader with the U's Bennion Center.

Sydney's parents are African American and Chinese, so she was raised in both cultures and traditions. "My beliefs have saved me many times, and the tradi-

tions sustained by my family have had an enormous impact on me," she says. "I am very proud of my heritage and hope to build confidence, courage, and character in those I help."

But Sydney's life wasn't always so bright. For many years, comments about her mixed heritage affected her confidence and made her question who she is. At one point, she felt painfully misjudged based on racist stereotypes. "I was hurt and frustrated that because of my skin color, people assumed I was scary, bad, a lowlife," she recalls. "But I quickly snapped out of it when I remembered all the beautiful teachings my cultural background has given me." Sydney uses these experiences as motivators to make a difference and help others who might have experienced similar hardships.

Sydney gained leadership experience working with girls from refugee, homeless, and domestic abuse shelters, and became involved with diversity committees and underrepresented student groups at the U. "Through my involvement on campus, I've been able to understand how my culture and beliefs have shaped me," she says. "As I further my nursing career, I'm determined to take my experiences and use them to advocate for my patients and their beliefs."

The Alumni Association awards its annual \$8,000 Founders Day Scholarship (its largest single award) to a student who has overcome difficult life circumstances or challenges and who has given service to the university and the community.



Martha Raddatz ex'75, chief global affairs correspondent for ABC News, was selected as one of two

moderators of the second 2016 U.S. Presidential Debate between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, in October, alongside Anderson Cooper of CNN. *The New York Times* said the two journalists "steered debate with sharp question." *The Columbia Journalism Review* noted, "Audiences for debates tower over those of all other political coverage... upping both the potential and risk of more assertive moderating. But Raddatz... proved that such hands-on direction can ultimately lead to a more revealing look at the candidates than the public would otherwise get." Raddatz has written for *The New Republic* and is a frequent guest on PBS's *Washington Week*. At the U, she studied speech and hearing science.

1990s



Genevieve Atwood MPA'91 PhD'06 received the 2016 Lehi Hintze Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Geology

of Utah from the Utah Geological Association and the Utah Geological Survey. Atwood, who is chief education officer of Earth Science Education and former adjunct associate professor of geography at the U, has spent her career on the interface of Earth science and public policy. As a representative in the Utah Legislature, she was instrumental in establishing Utah's mined land reclamation program, Seismic Safety Advisory Council, and dam safety program, and the state's acquisition of Antelope Island. She also served as State Geologist. Atwood received a master's degree from the U in public administration and a doctorate in geography.

2000s



Viet Le BS'01 MPS'04 was honored with one of *Utah Business* magazine's 2016 Healthcare

Heroes awards. Since 2012, Le has been employed as a cardiology research physician assistant, working with the director and co-director of cardiovascular research at Intermountain Medical Center Heart Institute and at the University of Utah Hospital. He devotes a portion of his time to seeing patients in clinic and the rest of his time to research projects. Le's research interests are wide and varied. He particularly enjoys the study of mobile health technologies and interventions. He is a member of the American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association, and was named Physician Assistant of the Year in 2014 by Intermountain Healthcare, Urban Central Region.



Vicki Fish MBA'08, vice president of dermatology at Myriad Genetic Laboratories, in Salt Lake

City, has received a Women Tech Award for leadership excellence. Fish is one of six women recognized in late 2016 by the Women Tech Council, Utah's most visible trade organization focused on the economic impact of women in driving high growth for Utah's technology sector. Fish has spent 18 years at Myriad focused on patient care in the field of personalized medicine and molecular diagnostics. She is responsible for launching a gene expression assay aiding in the diagnosis of melanoma, and founded Myriad's Women's Leadership Forum. In addition to her degree from the U, she has a master's degree in genetics from the University of North Texas.



NEW MARKETING DIRECTOR JOINS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

The Alumni Association welcomes a new director of marketing, Andy Cier, an award-winning marketing and communications executive with extensive strategic marketing experience in education, tourism, health care, and government. The University of Utah is lucky to have his expertise.

Cier attended K-12 in Salt Lake City (and went to the U for a brief time) before graduating from the University of Notre Dame in communications and film production. Since then, he has worked for companies such as Helix Education (previously Datamark) and Riester to ensure their clients' marketing strategies were the best they could be.

Personable and interested in telling relatable stories, his approach to marketing takes on a more human quality than a stiff, corporate one. He enjoys working with a team, encouraging them to align their personal goals with the success of the company, and considers himself a people person.

Cier also runs an independent consulting firm that offers marketing advice and coaching. He is an avid film lover and a member of the Utah Advisory Board for the Sundance Institute. Always involved in local events, he looks forward to applying his community spirit to the U.

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Hundreds of supporters gathered on the steps of Kingsbury Hall on January 16 after participating in a rally and march to commemorate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s legacy. MLK Week has become a platform to engage students, faculty, staff, and community members in critical conversations around contemporary civil rights issues and race in America. This year's celebration also included a musical performance by Taylor Mac, a keynote address from Ta-Nehisi Coates, a panel discussion on systemic racism, and a day of service at various locations throughout the Salt Lake Valley.

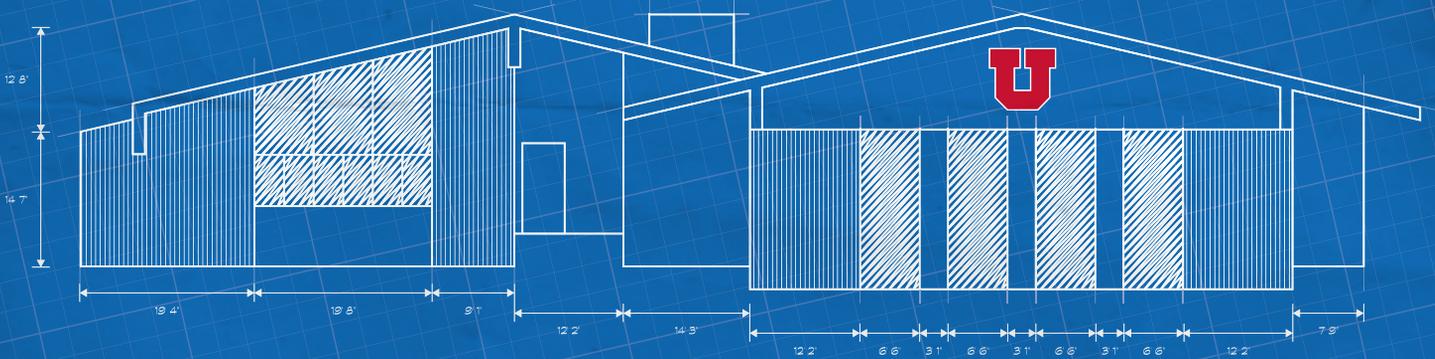


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