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Ed Diener, aka Dr. Happiness, shares wisdom on well-being.

No Flash in the Pan
How “flashing the U” became an iconic, unifying symbol.

Reflecting on War
Alum Kael Weston examines the human costs of conflict.

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Cover photo by Trina Knudsen
DOUG FABRIZIO AND RADIOWEST

Others may disagree, but I consider Mr. Fabrizio to be one of the best interviewers anywhere. (“Still Riding the Waves” Summer 2017). He is always superbly prepared—reads the books from cover to cover—and I’ve heard him complimented by his subjects more than once on his excellent preparation. As an interviewer, he is on par with the ever-excellent Terry Gross, and I like his style much better than Charlie Rose (whom my dad idolized)…. M. Guy Durrant
Manila, Utah

Doug’s show grabs my interest virtually every episode. Incredibly prepared and willing to ask difficult questions without being offensive. His interviews bring out the thoughts and questions that come up in my mind. I listen to his podcast every night as I go to sleep and finish on my way to work in the morning, re-listening to older shows when I run out of fresh.

Lee Taylor*

I love listening to RadioWest! The interviews are so interesting, and as Doug interviews, I’m captivated, and often, Doug asks the very questions that I myself am curious about. This program is my most favorite of all of the programs. And yes, I’m a podcast listener as well. Doug is a jewel here in SLC!

Cindi*

I would say that Doug Fabrizio’s low point in his broadcasting career was his September 5, 2006, interview of Dr. Steven Jones of BYU, which was supposed to go over the physical evidence Jones was uncovering that called into question the official story of the collapse of the three WTC buildings on 9/11 (Bldgs 1, 2 and 7). Instead the interview turned into a process of entrapment trying to implicate Jones in a “conspiracy theory” as to who did it. This lasted 20 minutes and was followed for the rest of the hour by an even more egregious interview featuring two professors…. Bradley R. Larsen MS’89
Bountiful, Utah

SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

We don't have to spin antiquity into political climate change (“The Cave that Holds a Million Bones” Summer 2017), because the climate changes almost every day and has been changing since the beginning of time. If we'd keep to the facts in academia and media, the world would be a better place.

Jim*

GENERATIONS OF GRADS

This is great! (“A Long Line of Alumni” Summer 2017). My son is starting at the U this fall, and when he graduates, he will also be a fifth-generation alum. Love it!

Sheila Geavas Tuttle B5’93
Centennial, Colo.

*Comments made in response to articles online at continuum.utah.edu.
Visit the site to read more.

Photo by Austen Diamond

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William Warren

Executive Editor
M. John Ashton BS’66 JD’69

Editor
J. Melody Murdock

Managing Editor
Marcia C. Dibble

Assistant Editor
Ann Floor BFA’55

Assistant Editor
Amanda Taylor

Advertising Manager
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Desert Blooms

With Utah being the second-driest state in the country, receiving an average of just 13 inches of precipitation per year, Red Butte Garden’s new Water Conservation Garden is a welcome and timely educational asset to the community. The three-acre garden, opened in late May, is defined by stone pathways that ascend 70 feet from base to top, with a total trail length of about a quarter mile. Along the way, visitors can study more than 530 species of plants that thrive without heavy watering, bringing an end to the myth that a water-wise garden can consist only of rocks and cacti.

Visit continuum.utah.edu to see more photos of the Water Conservation Garden.
CONTINUUM.UTAH.EDU

UPDATES

BIOCHEMISTRY SCHOLAR RECEIVES U’S HIGHEST HONOR

Wesley I. Sundquist, distinguished professor of biochemistry, has been honored with the 2017 Rosenblatt Prize for Excellence, the University of Utah’s most prestigious faculty award. The $40,000 gift is presented annually to a faculty member who displays excellence in teaching, research, and administrative efforts.

Sundquist has a doctorate in chemistry from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, was a postdoctoral fellow at the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology in Cambridge, England, and began his career at the U in 1992 as an assistant professor in the Department of Biochemistry. He became the Samuels Presidential Chaired Professor in 2015 and a distinguished professor in 2017.

Chair emeritus of the School of Medicine Executive Committee and former chair of the Benning Society, Sundquist has also served as co-chair for the Department of Biochemistry with Chris Hill since 2009. Under their leadership, the department has increased in size by 50 percent, and it consistently ranks in the top 20 biochemistry departments in total National Institutes of Health funding.

Sundquist is internationally recognized for his research discoveries in Human Immunodeficiency Virus replication and fundamental processes in cell biology. His work has dramatically enhanced the understanding of the architecture, assembly, and budding of HIV, and his research on viral structures is leading to new strategies for HIV therapeutics that have transformative potential for human health. He is the director of a $24 million award that involves 18 principal investigators from nine institutions across the country.

During his 25 years at the U, Sundquist and his colleagues have published more than 100 scientific journal articles, 16 of which appeared in the prestigious journals Cell, Nature, and Science. He is one of the most cited researchers in the field of HIV/AIDS. As a mentor, Sundquist has trained more than 40 graduate students and postdocs, many of whom currently hold positions in academic and private-sector institutions.

CLEAR BAG POLICY COMING IN 2018

A clear bag policy will be phased in at all athletics events at Rice-Eccles Stadium and the Huntsman Center this coming fall with the goal of speeding up security checkpoints and protecting fans. Enforcement of the clear bag policy will not go into effect until July 1, 2018, although fans are encouraged to begin complying with the new policy immediately.

The policy change comes on the heels of several recent security breaches involving venues for large events around the globe. “This proactive measure will enhance security inside and outside of the athletic venues and speed up the security screening process for all fans,” says U Police Chief Dale Brophy. “Security staff will be checking bags, which means shorter lines, fewer hassles, more time in the venue enjoying your favorite sport(s), and a greater sense of security.”

The policy allows for a variety of options for fans. Each guest may carry one clear bag no larger than 12 inches by 6 inches by 12 inches, or a one-gallon plastic freezer bag. Small clutches or purses for privacy are still allowed under the policy. Diaper bags may also be taken into venues with the accompanying child/infant. Seat cushions without pockets or compartments will continue to be allowed as well.

Clear bag policies are a growing trend among many colleges and national sports venues. The NFL made the switch in 2013. Institutions in the Southeastern Conference, along with the U’s fellow Pac-12 member Arizona State, have also been early adopters.

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UTES HAD RECORD YEAR FOR NFL AND NBA DRAFTS

The U’s eight 2017 NFL Draft picks led the Pac-12 and tied for fourth in the country, while in the NBA Draft, Utah became the only school from the Pac-12 to have at least one player selected in the draft the past three seasons.

In the NFL Draft, offensive tackle Garett Bolles became the eighth first-round draft pick in Utah history when he was selected by the Denver Broncos as the No. 20 overall pick. Utah safety Marcus Williams was selected by the New Orleans Saints as the 10th pick of the second round. Running back Joe Williams BS’16, offensive guard Isaac Asiata BS’16, cornerback Brian Allen BS’16, center J.J. Dielman BS’16, offensive tackle Sam Tevi BS’16 and outside linebacker Pita Taumoepenu went in rounds 4-7. The 2017 Ute draft class broke the former school mark of six picks in 2010.

In the NBA Draft, men’s basketball forward Kyle Kuzma became the 44th player in school history to be taken after he was selected as the 27th overall pick in the first round by the Brooklyn Nets and then traded to the Los Angeles Lakers. Kuzma is the 12th Utah player to be selected in the first round of the NBA Draft, and his selection marks the seventh time in school history since 1958 that Utah has had a player selected in three consecutive seasons.

ATHLETICS ADDS WOMEN’S BEACH VOLLEYBALL AND MEN’S LACROSSE

On the heels of adding women’s beach volleyball in spring 2017 as a new intercollegiate sport, the U Athletics Department announced this summer that it will also be sponsoring men’s lacrosse as an NCAA sport starting in 2018-19. Utah is the ninth Pac-12 member institution to sponsor beach volleyball. Men’s lacrosse is the U’s first completely new NCAA sport since women’s soccer was added back in 1995. With the addition of both of these new sports, Utah will support 20 total NCAA sports—eight men’s and 12 women’s.

Utah’s beach volleyball operates as a combined program, drawing its members and coaches from the existing volleyball program, including coaches Beth Launiere, director of volleyball, and JJ Van Niel, head beach volleyball coach. The team completed its inaugural season in 2017, going 2-12 overall with the season highlight defeating Oregon at the Pac-12 Championship. At the finish of the Pac-12 season, freshman Dani Barton received Second Team All-Pac-12 accolades and was named to the Pac-12 All-Freshman team. The players practice in the new beach volleyball gym in the Einar Nielsen Fieldhouse on campus.

Men’s lacrosse will continue to compete as a club sport this year while it makes the transition into NCAA status. The program was endowed through a $15.6 million gift funded by an anonymous lead donor and other benefactors. No state or university funds will be used to support the program. Brian Holman, club lacrosse head coach, will lead the new team. A former eight-year assistant coach at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Holman helped lead UNC to the 2016 NCAA Championship before accepting the head club coaching position at Utah.

With 70 men’s lacrosse programs in NCAA Division I, Utah becomes the first Pac-12 school with an NCAA men’s lacrosse team and will join Denver and Air Force as the only Division I men’s lacrosse programs west of the Mississippi. U Athletics plans to pursue a conference affiliation for its newest sport. The team will play its games at Ute Soccer Field and will hold practices on the infield of the McCarthey Family Track & Field Complex. The lacrosse season, which typically consists of around 15 contests, begins in February and runs through May. Season tickets will go on sale in the spring of 2018.
U APPOINTS THREE NEW DEANS

Martell Teasley, new dean of the College of Social Work, comes to the U from the University of Texas at San Antonio, where he served as chair of the Department of Social Work in the College of Public Policy for the past five years. His experience also includes the development of a disaster management certificate program at Florida State University, employment as a drug and alcohol counselor, time as a licensed practical nurse, and a decade of service with the U.S. Army.

Teasley emphasizes the importance of classroom instruction and program fidelity, noting, “students should know that the administration, faculty, and staff will work hard to make sure that our students are among the best educated in the country.” During his tenure, Teasley says the College of Social Work will continue to advance its commitment to community outreach, advocacy, and helping local communities address social service needs. Teasley received his doctorate in social work from Howard University, and his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Fayetteville State University and Virginia Commonwealth University, respectively.

Elaine Clark, professor of educational psychology, is the new dean of the College of Education. “I am honored to have this unique opportunity to work with the outstanding faculty and staff in the college,” says Clark. “The College of Education is a significant contributor to ensuring that all children with varied backgrounds, needs, and abilities have access to a high-quality education, including one that provides effective academic, social, emotional, and mental health supports.”

A faculty member in the U’s Department of Educational Psychology since 1983, Clark served as the director of the school psychology program for 21 years and department chair for six. She has dedicated her career to the development of applied research and the preparation of school psychologists to provide effective services to individuals who have significant social, emotional, and learning challenges, in particular, those with an autism spectrum disorder. Clark received her bachelor’s, master’s, and doctorate in educational psychology from Michigan State University as well as a doctorate in neuropsychology from Brigham Young University.

John Scheib joins the U as dean of the College of Fine Arts from the University of Kentucky, where he was director of the School of Music for the past three years. He is recognized for his talent as a keen listener who works with his team, including community members, to build and enact vision and strategy to advance the arts.

His research in music education is rooted in his experience as a music teacher in the Wisconsin public schools for nine years. He focuses on, among other things, the beliefs and practices of music teachers and their students, and music education reform. “I am excited to be joining a college and university with such a strong commitment to the development of creative and innovative leaders and citizens,” says Scheib. “Our roles as artists, arts scholars, and arts educators are vital as we provide key opportunities for students to develop the wide range of intelligences and skills necessary for 21st-century success.” Scheib received his master’s and doctorate from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in music education.
NEW CENTER OPENS FOR MINDFULNESS AND INTEGRATIVE HEALTH

The University of Utah has launched a new center dedicated to providing a transformative influence on health care by unifying research on mindfulness and other integrative behavioral health interventions.

Eric Garland, associate dean for research at the College of Social Work, serves as director of the new Center on Mindfulness and Integrative Health Intervention Development (C-MIIND). The center, which assumes oversight of more than $17 million in federal research grants, is housed in the college.

“The center will advance a vision of a new model of health care, in which behavioral health experts work in tandem with medical providers to address the physical, psychological, and social needs of people suffering from an array of health conditions,” says Garland, whose research focuses on using mindfulness to help individuals who experience chronic pain.

The center will bring together researchers and clinicians from across main campus and U of U Health (including faculty in social work, psychiatry, primary care, anesthesiology, neuroscience, psychology, and health) who are pioneering integrative interventions aimed at improving physical and mental well-being. C-MIIND will strive to attract top faculty and provide research opportunities for undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral fellows interested in studying mindfulness and integrative behavioral health.

A focus of the center also will be to train post-graduates and health care providers in innovative therapies to be used in primary care clinics, hospitals, community mental health centers, and addiction treatment facilities.

BUSINESS SCHOOL GETS $20 MILLION GIFT FOR NEW ECONOMICS INSTITUTE

The University of Utah’s David Eccles School of Business is establishing the Marriner S. Eccles Institute for Economics and Quantitative Analysis with the support of a $10 million gift from the George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation and the Marriner S. Eccles Foundation. The Charles Koch Foundation matched the $10 million for a combined gift of $20 million.

“We are proud to partner with these foundations to create a world-class economics institute at the David Eccles School of Business,” says President David Pershing. “It will enhance and complement the university’s existing program in economics, expanding areas of faculty expertise and interdisciplinary opportunities and, most importantly, engaging our students in a balance of practical and theoretical learning opportunities.”

The mission of the institute is to push the frontiers of knowledge through academic research and provide U students access to high-quality education in areas such as game theory, econometrics, and quantitative analysis. Its generous funding will enable the university not only to recruit seven leading economists as academic faculty, but also to support innovative research and provide $1.6 million in student scholarships. Its focus will include the development of students’ quantitative skills, which are widely seen as critical for success in today’s data-driven job market. In doing so, it promises to open career opportunities for Utah students in an ever-expanding array of areas from banking and private equity to technology and academia.

“The impact of this gift cannot be overstated,” says Taylor Randall HBA’90, dean of the David Eccles School of Business. “This institute will take the school and the university to another level of distinction, bringing leading economists into the Eccles School’s ranks who will enhance student learning in areas including economic thought and quantitative analysis, unlocking opportunities for them in a wide range of careers.”
Meet Katharina Gerstenberger, chair of the Department of Languages and Literature, who developed a love for reading as a child growing up in Osnabrück, Germany, in the 1960s, when her favorite author was Astrid Lindgren, who wrote *Pippi Longstocking*. By her teenage years, she had dived into the more serious literature of German writers such as Günter Grass and Christa Wolf. In the late ’70s, she spent a year at an American high school, an experience that would shape the rest of her life. She became fluent in English and learned to appreciate the openness and diversity of American culture. After reading Margaret Mitchell’s *Gone with the Wind* in English, she knew she was proficient and felt she had “arrived.” Gerstenberger completed her undergraduate work in German literature and history in Berlin, returned to the U.S. in the ’80s for graduate school at Cornell University, and then taught at the University of Cincinnati for almost 20 years. In 2012, she joined the U in her role as department chair and as a professor of German. She is the author of *Writing the New Berlin*, a book on Berlin literature after the fall of the Wall in 1989, and is in the early stages of writing a book on issues of climate change in works of literature.

Here, a snapshot of some of her recommended reads.

**WHAT HAVE YOU READ LATELY?**
I recently finished Colson Whitehead’s *The Underground Railroad*. This deeply moving novel follows the story of two slaves from Georgia as they escape to the North using real trains and actual tunnels. To me, fiction is a very powerful way of conveying historical reality, and this book, which takes literally the metaphor of the Underground Railroad, is a great example of that.

**WHAT IS ONE BOOK YOU THINK EVERY STUDENT SHOULD READ?**
*The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka, his famous story about a young man who one morning wakes up and finds himself transformed into a giant insect, challenges one’s mind to enter into a very different and utterly strange world. Yet it also says something about life in Eastern Europe at the verge of World War I. And you are allowed to use the word “Kafkaesque” after you have read it. Truly important to me is that students read literary fiction at all, because it stimulates the imagination and invites us into rich alternate universes.

**WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE BOOK OF ALL TIME?**
German Nobel Prize-winner Thomas Mann’s *Buddenbrooks* tells the story of four generations of a German family from the early to the late 19th century. The characters are fascinating. Mann’s style is sophisticated yet also accessible and entertaining. It was the first big (500-page!) novel I ever read, and that sense of pride and enjoyment is still with me.

**CAN YOU QUOTE A LINE FROM ANY BOOK YOU’VE READ?**
Like many Germans, I can quote lines from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s *Faust*, which is still the most famous book in the German language. One of my favorite lines is ”Wer immer strebend sich bemüht, den können wir erlösen,” which means something like ”Those who strive continually may be redeemed by the gods.” Perseverance is one of the characteristics I value most. This line cautions us that even after a life of perseverance, it is up to the gods whether we will be redeemed. I like the reminder that we ultimately do not have control over our fate.
THE MOST SEATS ON THE BENCH

The newly renovated Cleone Peterson Eccles Alumni House, located at the center of campus, features a gorgeous new ballroom with seating for 400 dinner guests, plus spacious conference and meeting rooms.

There are few, if any, meeting spaces on the East Bench that offer the flexibility and welcoming atmosphere you will find here, not to mention the convenience of adjacent parking.

We are now accepting reservations for events starting in spring 2018. To talk with us about your next conference, wedding, or other special event, call 801-581-6995 or email contact@alumni.utah.edu.

To learn more about the Cleone Peterson Eccles Alumni House, visit alumni.utah.edu/house.
CREATIVE DANCE SUPPORTS SOCIAL PLAY IN CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

In a recent study, University of Utah researchers found that creative dance helped increase play skills in children with autism spectrum disorder. “Play is central to the development of children’s language and cognitive skills,” says Catherine Nelson, associate professor of special education at the U. “However, children with autism often have difficulties with social play and play with objects such as toys.”

The study examined methods for increasing the quality of play of three preschool-aged children with autism who were in classes primarily composed of children without disabilities. Therefore, the interventions chosen for the study were ones that all children in the classrooms could enjoy without singling out the children with autism.

Typical preschool activities include large-group circle time and learning centers that contain a variety of toys and materials. In this study, favored play materials of the children with autism were added to the learning centers along with associated toy accessories that increase the potential for child-to-child interaction. Creative dance activities were then added to the circle time, and new and interactive ways to use the added play materials were practiced during the activities.

“For example, one of the children with autism liked pushing small match box cars back and forth on the floor,” says Susan Johnston, chair of special education at the U. “Creative dance activities included having the children ‘drive’ around the room with hula hoops representing car steering wheels. …Following the dance activity, the child and his peers went to the learning centers, and instead of simply pushing the cars back and forth, he played with the other children, using the pretend play skills he had just practiced.”

By the end of the study, all three children demonstrated gains in social play skills as well as complexity of play with objects. However, the gains were not maintained when the intervention ended, suggesting that movement-based interventions can improve play skills in children with autism, but such interventions must be ongoing if gains are to continue.

CERTAIN ‘MIRANDA’ REQUIREMENTS FOUND TO HANDCUFF THE COPS

On the eve of the 50th anniversary of the groundbreaking “Miranda ruling”—the U.S. Supreme Court decision that criminal suspects must be informed of their constitutional right to an attorney prior to police questioning—two U professors released study results suggesting that about 20 percent more violent crimes and 11.6 percent more property crimes would be solved each year without the Miranda requirements.

S.J. Quinney College of Law presidential professor Paul Cassell, along with researcher Richard Fowles, a professor in the U’s Department of Economics, found that Miranda requirements reduced police effectiveness by hindering law enforcement’s ability to solve certain cases. The two found that Miranda has “particularly harmful effects on police efforts to solve robbery, larceny, and vehicle theft crimes.”

But Cassell and Fowles note that the research suggests that the harmful effects do not stem from the well-known “you have the right to remain silent” Miranda warnings, but rather from Miranda’s lesser-known procedural requirements. For example, the Miranda procedures generally prevent police from questioning a suspect in custody unless he or she agrees to be questioned. Such expectations could be replaced by a requirement that police videotape questioning, a change Cassell and Fowles believe could result in a “win-win” solution that would not only allow police to obtain more voluntary confessions from suspects but also provide safeguards against false confessions or inappropriate police pressure.
A FIRST LOOK AT THE GIANT SHIPWORM

Mother Earth still has a surprise or two up her sleeve. Scientists at the U recently led an international team of researchers who were the first to investigate a never-before-studied species—a large, worm-like animal called *Kuphus polythalamia*, or the giant shipworm.

People have known about the existence of the creature for centuries. A native of the Philippines, the animal’s three- to five-foot long, tusk-like white shells were first documented in the 18th century. But researchers had never before been able to study the living animal, a black, mud-dwelling species that is really a marine bivalve mollusk, like clams and mussels. "Being present for the first encounter of an animal like this is the closest I will ever get to being a 19th-century naturalist," says the study’s senior author, Margo Haygood, a research professor in medicinal chemistry at the U’s College of Pharmacy.

The animal’s preferred habitat was unclear until scientists came upon a video showing the creatures seemingly planted, like carrots, in the mud of a shallow lagoon laden with rotting wood, with just the tops of the shells protruding. Now, researchers are learning about the unique and bizarre way the giant shipworms acquire energy with the help of bacteria that live in their gills. Normal shipworms burrow deep into the wood of trees that have washed into the ocean, munching on and then digesting the wood with typical internal digestive organs. The giant shipworm gets energy from its beneficial bacteria in a way much more similar to how green plants use the sun’s energy to convert carbon dioxide during photosynthesis. Haygood is investigating whether medicines might be developed from the shipworm bacteria.

UTAH IS NO SMALL POTATOES IN ETHNOARCHAEOLOGY

A new archaeological finding in the southern Utah town of Escalante may rewrite the story of tuber domestication.

Researchers from the U’s Natural History Museum of Utah and Red Butte Garden have discovered potato starch residues in the crevices of a 10,900-year-old stone tool within Escalante’s borders—the earliest evidence of wild potato use in North America. This is the first archaeological study to identify a spud-bearing species native to the southwestern United States, *Solanum jamesii*, as an important part of ancient human diets.

The researchers pieced together evidence from stone tools, ethnographic literature, and modern gardeners to show that Utahns have used the species intermittently for more than 10,000 years. The Escalante area was even previously known as “Potato Valley” to early settlers.

Native American tribes including Apache, Hopi, Kawaik, Navajo, Southern Paiute, and Zuni consumed *S. jamesii*, and some still tend their potato populations in cultivated gardens. The long history could mean that the species was transported, cultivated, or even domesticated. If true, *S. jamesii* would be the first example of a plant domesticated in the western U.S.
what do we want
IN A U PRESIDENT?

As the University of Utah begins its search for a new president, we wanted to know what attributes people in the U community think would be most important to consider. So we reached out to a few students, faculty, administrators, and alumni to find out. Here’s what they had to say.

“I hope that the board of trustees will find someone with a clear vision for the university, a strong sense of integrity, and a commitment to transparency within the position. Our university needs a leader who will not only be the public face of the U for years to come, but who also has the interpersonal skills necessary to ensure that the U will remain a hub for world-class education, research, and health care for years to come.”

Steven Havlik, biology major
President, The MUSS Board

“The president should above all be student-oriented and have a vision of the university that is progressive, inclusive, and high achieving. The U is a top-tier research institution, and I love the opportunities it provides for entrepreneurship and cultivation of the intellect. I think a good president has ways of implementing these opportunities on an administrative level and finding ways to get students involved. Additionally, after speaking with a lot of students about the current political climate of the country, it’s become apparent that many don’t feel as comfortable or safe on campus as they deserve to be. I believe it is important for the president to find a way to make students feel welcomed and involved.”

Saeed Shihab, biomedical engineering major
Vice President, ASUU Student Relations

“As a U student, especially a student reporter, I like to know what is going on with the higher-ups of my school. I want to know what decisions are being made, and how they will shape my college years. It is important to me to know that my voice is being heard, and that my experience is being considered as a factor in universitywide decisions. For my university, I want a president who is dedicated to transparency, and who is willing to show how and why they are making the university better for every individual involved.”

Megan Hulse, English and communication major
Editor in Chief, The Daily Utah Chronicle

“The University of Utah needs a president who has integrity, good judgment, courage, diplomatic and communication skills, a deep understanding about academics, scholastic accomplishments in their own field, and stamina to deal with the demands of the position. We also need a president who knows how a great university operates, and who can lead the U to look and act even more like the world-class university that it can become.”

Richard B. Brown PhD’85*
Dean, U College of Engineering

“In addition to continuing the great work around equity and diversity initiated by our current administration, our next president should continue to guide the university toward becoming an inclusive environment for all students, faculty, and staff to excel to exceptional levels.”

Nicole Rene Robinson*
Professor, U School of Music
Assistant Vice President, U Office for Equity and Diversity

*Appointed
“The next president of the university must care deeply about students, believing that students are not an interruption of our work, they ARE our work. Understanding and framing the campus culture for learning requires assembling an amazing team of leaders, nurturing them individually and collectively, celebrating successes, and adapting from failures, always with the best interests of the university at heart. The U thrives on collaboration and partnerships; its new president must serve as a model and cheerleader for these values. The groundwork for a fantastic future has been set, and we all look forward to the incredible years ahead!”

Barbara Snyder
Vice President, U Student Affairs

“A university president’s job is highly collaborative. Thus, a successful president is one who has not only impeccable integrity, a great vision for the future of the university, and professional credentials that win the respect of peers and constituents; a successful president will also be one who is highly effective at building relationships with students, faculty, staff, legislators, and donors, along with business, education, and government leaders across the state of Utah and beyond. Having an optimistic attitude and a great sense of humor helps!”

Harris Simmons BA’77*
Vice Chairman, Utah Board of Regents
Chairman, President, and CEO, Zions Bancorporation

“I feel like a laundry list may be the best way to look at the ideal candidate so it can be used as a checklist. Here is my take on that list: Has a good sense of humor, clear idea of right and wrong, common sense, integrity, perseverance, willingness to listen and debate an opinion that is different from or opposite of their own, strong sense of family; is a problem solver, team builder, good communicator; is enthusiastic, passionate, thick-skinned, patient, loyal, visionary, optimistic, socially and politically poised, approachable, confident, caring, and respectful. Not necessarily in that order.”

Joe Sargetakis BA’80
President, U Alumni Association Board
Co-owner, Frog Bench Farms

“A university president should be a beacon, inspiring both commitment and deep curiosity in scholars across all disciplines. He or she must be a humanist, one who reminds us that for all our specialties, we aspire in common to aid and improve humankind. Our president must remember and honor the first purpose of all higher learning: To provide a physically safe and intellectually unsafe, exciting, and stimulating environment where any mind may think critically and develop to its fullest. The president must be well-rounded, have an ability to live in this unique culture, cultivating community support as well as legislative appreciation for the university. Finally, the president should be forthright about how the institution must adapt, always bearing in mind that the future will be shaped only inasmuch as we succeed to mentor, mold, and then make way for the individual student.”

Anne Cullimore Decker BS’57 MFA’82
Actress; former U Professor of Theater

*Members of the U’s Presidential Search Committee (Simmons is co-chair).

We want to hear from you, too!
Share your thoughts online at continuum.utah.edu/presidentsearch
What Happy
Ed Diener has devoted his academic career to figuring out what makes people happy and how to measure it, and he says the secret lies in that last line: happiness is subjective.

Each of us defines and evaluates happiness in our own way, though the happiest people share common characteristics, says Diener, a University of Utah psychology professor. His popular term for it—and he invented it, by the way—is “subjective well-being.” Boil down all Diener's decades of research and you get a formula that looks like this: subjective well-being = positive affect – negative affect + life satisfaction + flourishing.

Which means you take your positive emotions, subtract the negative ones, evaluate your satisfaction with life and areas where you are flourishing, and it adds up to how happy you consider yourself to be.

Diener, who is often referred to as Dr. Happiness, is a pioneer in the field and a go-to expert on the subject. This spring, the United Arab Emirates, which is trying to encourage governments around the world to pay more attention to their citizens' well-being, gave Diener a key role on the World Happiness Council as head of a subcommittee on personal happiness.
The council’s six subcommittees will produce an annual report that highlights best practices by governments in promoting well-being and happiness and, through an annual summit each February, encourage world leaders to “look for a new way to bring happiness to their people.”

And that, well, makes Diener happy.

“When I started studying happiness scientifically 35 years ago, it was a nonexistent field, and everyone thought I was crazy,” Diener says. “Now it has taken off. It’s amazing how this field all of a sudden is having a big impact.”

To be honest, he says, it hasn’t been easy to get happiness taken seriously. Happiness, he says, “sounds flaky, kind of frivolous. But what we’re talking about is sustainable happiness—what you get from your family, work, meaning and purpose, having goals and values. We’re not just talking about having fun. Well-being is much, much more than having fun.”

Individual happiness, he says, is to some degree a result of your inborn temperament, where you live, your financial circumstances, etc. But some good news from Diener’s studies is that there are conscious decisions and choices you can make to increase and cultivate your level of happiness.

The happiest people actively work at and make decisions that impact their well-being. It is a process, he says. A caveat: Diener’s findings are based on group averages, and specific findings may not apply to every individual. That said, here are the four X factors Diener’s research has shown to be key to a happy life:

1. **Build up your social capital**

   You need enough money to meet your basic needs and then some, but after a certain point, more money results in only a modest increase in happiness. What happy people invest in—and what brings them even greater happiness—are social relationships.

   Happy people are committed to making time for and enjoying friends and family. They have people they count on and trust. They are more likely to get married and less likely to get divorced. They get along with others, and they tend to volunteer and donate more, which is good for society.

   Here is an important point, especially in Utah, the state with the highest marriage rate in the country: This doesn’t mean you have to be married to be happy, but you do need to surround yourself with a supportive social network. It also doesn’t mean you need to have children. On average, children don’t contribute to or detract from personal happiness. To some people, having children means everything; to others, it is not as important. The key is understanding yourself and what will bring you happiness.

2. **Boost body and soul**

   It works both ways: happy people are healthier and live longer, and people who take care of themselves physically and spiritually—whether that’s religious engagement or communing with nature—are happier. Positive emotions that connect you to things larger than yourself boost happiness: awe, gratitude, thanksgiving, wonder at the universe, seeing beauty outside yourself.

   The bottom line is that getting happy is good for you. There is clear and compelling evidence from numerous scientific studies showing that happy people have stronger cardiovascular and immune systems, and are more likely to engage in healthy behaviors and live longer.

   Happy people also set goals and engage in work they enjoy and feel has value. They tend to take...
fewer sick days and are more productive at work—all reasons for businesses to invest in supports that make people happier. That includes good pay and benefits, yes, but also flex time, day care, building a culture of respect and equality, ensuring employees have the right tools, and clearly communicating the organization’s aims as well as what’s expected of them individually.

This does not mean you have to be employed to be happy. What matters is being engaged in activities you enjoy. For some, that will be filling a role as a homemaker or as a volunteer. For retirees, it means engaging in hobbies, second-act work, and active leisure pursuits that are enjoyable.

Governments also have a role to play in this area through policies that affect well-being, especially related to such things as air quality, zoning laws, transportation, access to greenspace, etc. Difficult commutes, lack of greenspace, and bad air quality are just some environmental elements that generally negatively impact life satisfaction. “We’ve always had this idea that the pursuit of happiness was what people had a right to, and that meant each person was to pursue it on their own,” without government interference, Diener says. “Individual happiness does depend on making good decisions in your life, and to some degree your inborn temperament, your marriage, and so forth, but happiness [also] depends a lot on where you live, the conditions and the policies.”

3. Engage your mind

When we look around the world at what happy people do, we find that universally, these are people who like to learn new things and who are engaged in the world beyond themselves. They set long-term goals. They value helping others. We humans are designed to learn new things and to seek challenges, whether that’s on the playing field or in the lab. It doesn’t matter what it is. Happy people are constantly learning, facing new challenges, and having new experiences. And people who try more things are more creative, which is a trait also found in happy people.

Happy people pay attention to the good in others and the things that are going right. That’s part of Diener’s AIM model, which stands for Attention, Interpretation, and Memory. They interpret other people and events around them in a positive light, and see opportunities and possibilities. And they take time to remember and be grateful for the good things in their lives.

4. Develop resilience

The good news is that a majority of people rate themselves as “pretty happy.” And while each of us has a genetically based disposition, that doesn’t mean you’ll always be happy or depressed. It is possible to move the needle to the sunny side. Conversely, everyone experiences problems and sadness at some point in their lives. The difference is that happy people build resilience to life’s challenges by learning to experience, not bury, negative emotions. Happy people don’t let disappointments define them, and they are better able to work through difficult situations—to move forward, embrace a positive attitude, and know that life is still full of joy.

Happy people are better able to control their world view, Diener explains. “They train themselves to not make a big deal out of trivial hassles and to keep working toward their goals while focusing on the good things in their lives,” he says. 

——Brooke Adams BS’91 MS’12 is a communications specialist with University Marketing & Communications.

Happy people have stronger cardiovascular and immune systems, and are more likely to engage in healthy behaviors and live longer.
NO FLASH IN THE PAN

HOW “FLASHING THE U” BECAME AN ICONIC, UNIFYING SYMBOL.

BY JANELLE HANSON
Scan the stands of any University of Utah sporting event, and among the sea of red-clad Utah fans, you’ll be hard pressed to find someone who isn’t raising the block “U” with hands pointed toward the sky. If you ask those fans where this now worldwide symbol for the U began, you’re likely to get a variety of answers ranging from a specific football player, to any of multiple sports teams, to The MUSS.

But one story and two integral people involved with Utah Gymnastics come up again and again: Melissa Vituj and John Bircumshaw.

**THE MOST-TOLD ORIGIN STORY**

Vituj BS’05 was a first-year student at the U during the 2001 gymnastics season. Her parents lived in Michigan and couldn’t attend every gymnastics meet. So in stepped Bircumshaw, a Utah booster and Utah Gymnastics super fan who attended nearly every home and away meet (and still does). “Melissa’s father, Bill, asked me for a favor, to be there for her during the meets when he couldn’t,” Bircumshaw says. “He needed someone to represent him, and I was fortunate enough to be able to fill that role.”

Before coming to the U, Vituj said she would look for her parents in the stands during her meets and see them doing hand signals to communicate with her. She would sign back to them. “They felt connected to me down on the competition floor, just as I felt connected to them,” she says. Vituj’s father would sign “I love you” from the stands. As Bircumshaw thought about how he could show Melissa he was there to support her, he started signing “I love U”—making a block “U” with his fingers instead—and she would do it back.

“I remember back during the 2001 season, noticing that John and Melissa were exchanging this hand symbol, and I thought, ‘What is that?’” says Liz Abel, U senior associate athletics director and director of communications. “He explained to me that it was a ‘U’ and he and Melissa were using it to communicate with each other.”

That communication and support Vituj received made a huge impact. “I’ll never forget that feeling of standing down on the floor competing. You finish and 15,000 fans stand up and are screaming for you,” Vituj says. “And John is there, too, giving you the ‘U’ and making you feel special, making you feel loved.”

The “U” hand signal soon became a symbol of Utah Gymnastics, and the student-athletes began using it. Before long, the signal was being flashed at other U sporting events as well.

**CATCHING FIRE**

Utah fans and student-athletes continued to flash the “U” during the years after its inception in 2001, but as John Fackler BS’89 BS’94 MprA’95, a director of alumni relations and former MUSS board adviser, remembers, it really took off after the Sugar Bowl in 2009. The game was preceded by a perfect season for Utah football, and people were paying close attention.

“Boom! That was the moment. Everyone, and I mean EV-ERY-ONE, started doing it after Matt Asiata [BS’10] flashed the ‘U’ in the end zone during the Sugar Bowl,” Fackler says.

And he recalls it also being a time that separated the U’s hand symbol from the University of Miami, which has a similar
“U” hand sign. “Athletes had done it before, fans had done it before, but this was the moment that really got it out there,” he adds. “Everyone saw it, and it’s been gaining momentum ever since.”

Bircumshaw and Vituj didn’t set out to start something and see if it would catch on, Vituj notes, “but it has spread like wildfire. It’s a huge surprise and an honor to the gymnastics team for creating something special.”

In 2012, Utah Gymnastics team captain Stephanie McAllister BS’13 suggested to her teammates that they begin incorporating the block “U” hand signal into all of their floor routines. And if you’ve been to a meet lately, you’ve seen how the crowds go wild when they see the gymnasts flash the “U” and hoping to be featured.

Scroll through the Instagram tag #FlashTheUFriday to see how far the tradition has traveled—from the Great Pyramid of Giza to the depths of the ocean in the British Virgin Islands—and almost everywhere in between. “It’s a fun way for alumni, students, and fans to stay engaged with the U, and it’s a great way for the university to build affinity among our community,” says Landerghini.

What began as a symbol of love and support 16 years ago between an athlete and a fan has now grown into a tradition unifying the U community across all sports and beyond, with fans and U supporters from around the world seen raising their fingers to the sky, showing their devotion to their team and their university.

“It’s become a real rallying cry,” Abel says. “You can pass someone on the street or in the grocery store, and you can flash the ‘U’ and everyone knows what you mean. It bonds people together.”

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REFLECTING ON

Photo by Austen Diamond
Alum Kael Weston, a former State Department official, examines the human costs of conflict.

By Elaine Jarvik
when the U.S. government was desperate to prove that Iraq could hold an honest national election, Kael Weston HBA’96 was serving with the State Department in sprawling Anbar province. Weston was 33 then, a University of Utah graduate who hoped for a long career as a diplomat.

He had been assigned as a political adviser to the Marines, and on this January day he and the Marines were faced with a dilemma.

Word on the street was that Sunnis would boycott the election, but, as Weston pointed out, if polling places weren’t provided in isolated areas, Sunnis could claim the vote was unfair. The question on the table was whether Marines should be helicoptered out to provide election support that the Iraqis couldn’t afford.

Finally, after top Marines argued against the move, Weston was told: “It’s your call.”

A few weeks later, an election-support helicopter carrying 30 Marines and one Navy corpsman to a remote Anbar town crashed in the desert.

It’s not guilt Weston feels but accountability, so the 31 deaths are a thread that runs through The Mirror Test, his 2016 book that provides an unflinching look at the costs of going to war.

The book’s title refers to that moment when someone—a soldier perhaps who has lost lips, ears, a nose in a roadside blast and has undergone multiple surgeries—is finally willing to look in the mirror. It’s a metaphor, of course. “When we look into that mirror,” he writes about the rest of us, “let’s not turn away.”

Immediately after the late 2004 Battle of Fallujah, the most deadly battle in the Iraq War, Weston was sent to a makeshift morgue the Marines had set up in a potato factory, where decomposing Iraqi bodies retrieved from the city’s ruins were kept in coolers and then put in body bags. The body count eventually reached 1,052, mostly Iraqi insurgents but likely also civilians who had not evacuated the city. The Marines buried the bodies in what was essentially a mass grave.

And then came the questions from Fallujah’s leaders. Were the bodies properly buried? Was it true that dogs had carried some away? Families were intent on digging up the bodies, finding their missing kin, and burying them facing Mecca. It’s a time like this when a friendly, straight-talking American in blue jeans can maybe make a difference.

Weston arranged a meeting with Sheikh Hamza Abbas al-Isawi, Fallujah’s grand mufti, by then a close contact in the war-torn city. “Please tell them we are treating the remains with respect,” Weston asked the religious leader, hoping to avert a large-scale disinterment or protest. After a long silence, Hamza replied. “I will tell people to stay away. I trust you.”

Weston eventually became known among the locals as Kael al-Falluji (Kael the Fallujan). It wasn’t a title bestowed lightly, says Saad Manthor, a Fallujah policeman. “Kael was a special guy, a man who listened and spoke to everyone,” Manthor explained recently in an email from Fallujah.

Weston ended up spending almost three years in the city, as the situation there improved, then deteriorated. Here’s an image retired Marine Lt. Col. Patrick Carroll remembers: Weston walking, unarmed, day after day, to the Police Station or City Council building, across the same couple hundred yards where two Marines had recently been shot by snipers.

“He was eager to engage everybody, people who agreed with us and people who didn’t,” remembers Lt. Gen. Larry Nicholson, who worked closely with Weston in both Iraq and Afghanistan. “He would wade right in.”

And he wasn’t afraid to question the strategies of the colonels and generals, Nicholson adds. “It was good to have someone always ready to speak truth to power.”

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that more often than not it was 3-year-old Kael who got to sit on the tricycle seat while Kyle pushed. Kyle calls his twin “the pragmatic one who likes to get things done,” the one who “likes sitting around a table working toward a consensus.”

“Kael’s great quality is compassion,” says Prof. John Francis, a mentor since the 1990s, when Weston majored in political science (with a minor in history) at the U. “On the one hand he’s hard-headed, able to survive under challenging conditions, but that’s combined with a sort of innocence of believing the best about people.”

After getting a degree at the U, Weston got a master’s from England’s Cambridge University. Following a year as a Fulbright Scholar in Amsterdam, he passed the State Department’s Foreign Service exam and took a job in the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, where he served on the Al Qaeda and Taliban Sanctions Committee. He was in the UN Security Council chamber in 2003 when Secretary of State Colin Powell made his game-changing speech arguing that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction.

Weston thought Iraq was “the wrong war” (and points out that the war initially had bipartisan support). Despite his misgivings, he was ready to represent the U.S. in Baghdad, arriving in the summer of 2003. But he soon discovered that the administration had entered Iraq unprepared to run a country left leaderless after Saddam was toppled.

State Department officers sent to outlying areas, as Weston was, are expected to send frequent cables back to the embassy, assessing the situation. Weston wanted to make sure his included Iraqi voices, and he didn’t shy away from, say, the smell of rotting bodies at the potato factory.

You hope, he says, that your cables might affect policy. But the more realistic aim was to make a tactical difference on the ground. There was, for example, the case of Sara al-Jumaili, a young woman from a prominent Sunni tribe who was twice detained by an Army Delta Force team, enraging Fallujans to near revolt. The Delta Force squad had swooped into town in their Black Hawk, blindfolded her, bound her hands, and then flown away with her to question her about her connection to Abu Musab al- Zarqawi, Al Qaeda in Iraq’s self-proclaimed leader.

“The detention risked becoming the ideal flashpoint extremists needed to turn Fallujans against us, and for good,” was Weston’s assessment. Again, he went to Sheikh Hamza for help. “You Americans are putting me personally at risk,” Hamza said. Still, he agreed not to support public demonstrations. Weston then sent four-star Gen. George Casey an email explaining that “Sara’s face will launch a thousand IEDs in Fallujah.” The Delta team brought her back later that evening, and Weston oversaw her release.

A month later, Hamza was gunned down outside his mosque, one of a dozen of Weston’s Iraqi collaborators who were killed for helping Americans.

At the request of a Marine who wanted a memento of the historic 2005 Iraqi election, Weston kept several hundred empty ballots. Later, he discovered that some families of fallen service members had put framed ballots on their walls.

“All of those purple fingers meant that my son, and all the other fallen, did not die in vain,” one father wrote to him.

Yet war is complicated, especially this war, and so are Weston’s reactions. He feels for the parents looking to come up with an equation for their loss but points out that only about two percent of potential voters in Anbar ended up voting. He argues that the election only served to divide Iraq between Shia and Sunni.

But if Iraq was “the wrong war” in Weston’s calculation, Afghanistan seemed like the right one. He was happy to be reassigned to Khost in 2007, and was soon meeting regularly with provincial officials, imams and tribal leaders, ex-Taliban and Guantanamo detainees, and with university and madrassa students.

At Khost University, he was greeted at first suspiciously, especially by a student Weston identifies in the book as Sohaib, who challenged him to prove that America didn’t plan to occupy the whole Muslim world. Despite this initial reaction, Weston kept going back week after week for a seminar with the students. And in a recent email, the initially distrustful student wrote that men “like Kael are born once in a half century.”

“I believe that a few more Kaels can more easily and honorably fix the issue of Afghanistan than a few hundred generals.”
Weston had expected a career as a diplomat, but after seven consecutive years in two wars, he left the State Department in 2010. In the seven years since then, he has worked as a consultant in Washington, D.C., but also spent much of his time back in Utah writing his book. As an outsider, he decided, he could be blunt about America’s involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan. But “the ultimate ‘mirror test’ will never be written by Americans in these wars, he says. “It will have to be the Iraqis and Afghans. They’re the only ones credible and qualified to hold us to account.”

There are many days, he says, when he wakes up missing his old job, and he still feels pulled to public service. “War taught me what the cost of bad policy is. I’m not yet finished, I hope, in trying to make sure we don’t start another wrong war.”

In the meantime, he’s been hired as a Writer in Residence at Westminster College in Salt Lake and will teach a course called “Going to War” beginning in January. There are plans for him to teach in the U’s Capstone program in the fall of 2018. He is also in the planning stages of a second book about the wars.

He thinks, always, of those 31 men killed in the helicopter crash in 2005. Every year since his return he has visited at least one of their graves, and he plans eventually to visit them all, crisscrossing the United States to pay his respects.

—Elaine Jarvik is a Salt Lake City-based journalist and playwright and a frequent contributor to Continuum.
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rom where he stood observing the surgery, Brody King could see that the product the surgeon was squirting into the patient’s body would be ineffective at preventing scar tissue adhesions. It was too liquid to work after going through the tiny laparoscopic incision. A few months later, King launched a company, XLynk Surgical, to work on a better product, and he brought on a chemical engineering friend, Jordan Davis, to help with the chemistry. Soon, they had devised a solution that could be sprayed into the body and cover an affected area without dripping away before it could do any good.
After speaking with several physicians and pharmaceutical chemists, King and Jordan partnered with Dr. Raminder Nirula, chief of Acute Care Surgery at the U, and then hired Arielle Hassett to tackle marketing. Now, King, Davis, and Hassett (along with Nirula) are plotting their multi-year path through development, clinical studies, and FDA approval. Not bad for three University of Utah undergrads still juggling classes, homework, and part-time jobs.

XLynk Surgical is just one of more than 700 student startup teams supported by the U’s Lassonde Entrepreneur Institute.
GIVING ENTREPRENEURSHIP A BOOST

In 2001, gold mining and investment legend Pierre Lassonde MBA’73 donated $50,000 to the U’s David Eccles School of Business to honor his late wife, Claudette MS’73. Pierre and Claudette had left Canada in 1971 to pursue master’s degrees at the U (hers in nuclear engineering). Pierre credits his MBA as being the most important degree he’s received, setting him on a path toward success, and he wanted his donation to reflect his and his wife’s melded passions for business and science by creating an interdisciplinary entrepreneur center. The Pierre and Claudette MacKay Lassonde New Venture Development Center would help graduate students develop business plans to commercialize faculty innovations.

By 2006, students were coming to the center asking for help launching their ideas. So Lassonde gifted $12 million more to expand the entrepreneur program. Only five years later, the U hit the Princeton Review’s top 25 universities for entrepreneurship (where it has remained every year since).

Then the Great Recession hit, and technology and the Internet were changing how businesses operated. “Students were coming to us saying, ‘I’m probably going to have to create my own future and control my own destiny, and I need the tools to do that,’” says Troy D’Ambrosio BA’82, executive director of what is now called the Lassonde Entrepreneur Institute.

And further, just being on par with other entrepreneur programs wasn’t good enough for Lassonde or the U. So in 2013, Lassonde returned to the university with a question. What could we do to push the U’s program to the forefront of entrepreneur education, allowing it to compete with not just other universities, but with the growing popularity of online programs?

Taylor Randall HBA’90, dean of the U’s business school, says, “We were tasked with coming up with something unique and different that would bolster the University of Utah’s reputation and take us decades ahead.” First, the center needed a physical location to make its programs more visible. Next, Randall, D’Ambrosio, and Lassonde wanted an innovation space (also called “maker” space)—labs and workshops where students can build and test ideas. Finally, they wanted to try something new: to fold in a residential component where innovators could live and work together.

Yet no one was quite sure what all of that should look like. So they turned to the students. And what they came up with was an innovative approach to innovation, and the perfect building to house it all in.

A WORLD-CLASS INNOVATION INCUBATOR

The 160,000-square-foot, $45 million Lassonde Studios building opened in August 2016. Its upper floors—the residence floors—are sheathed in copper, and they float above a ground floor encased in glass, where natural light illuminates students studying in small groups, using the woodshop or metal-working tools, 3-D printing a prototype of their latest idea, grabbing a meal at the Miller Cafe, and maybe testing out a video game. In offices scattered around the floor, businesses are hatching, with brainstorming ideas sketched in dry-erase marker on glass walls, products stacked on desks, and help-wanted notices scribbled on a community white board.

It looks like the headquarters of a hip technology company. It definitely does not look like a typical college dorm.
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As a freshman, Adam Shelton lived in the Lassonde Studios last year and worked with two other freshmen on a phone app startup company. "Whoever designed the building was very ingenious about the social aspects of how people interact," he says.

That genius? Turns out it was students just like Shelton, whose ideas designer Mehrdad Yazdani tapped for direction. Yazdani, design principal at Yazdani Studio of CannonDesign, says, "What was intriguing to me was the notion of creating a living and 'making' environment for student entrepreneurs on the campus, which is rather unique on university campuses."

Buildings are usually based on how similar spaces were used historically. Yazdani and his colleagues, along with architect of record EDA Architects in Salt Lake City, reversed that process, first identifying the culture of the students who would be living and creating there, then designing the building around that culture.

When asked what they wanted in living and creative areas, students requested "spaces that were non-institutional, spaces that students can make their own, spaces that were not intimidating, spaces that promoted easy collaboration and interaction," says Yazdani. "It's important that students feel comfortable. That doesn't mean plush carpets or plush furniture, but spaces where they can make a mess. If an idea comes to them, they can immediately set it up, and they don't have to worry about spilling something on the carpet."

The resulting building blurs the line between living and working, immersing students in a unique, collaborative environment. The residence areas are designed for maximum interaction, with single, double, pod, and loft dorm rooms clustered around common areas with kitchens, tables, and seating areas. These open, sunshine-filled common areas entice the 400 residents out of their rooms to join study groups or brainstorming sessions, or just to socialize. Each residence floor has a separate theme: Sustainability and Global Impact; Products, Design & Arts; Adventure and Gear; and Games and Digital Media.

Downstairs, the heart of the Lassonde Studios is the Neeleman Hangar, a 20,000-square-foot "maker space"—think of a cross between lab space, workshops, and a rec room, complete with pool table and a 24-hour cafe. But it wasn't enough to provide the workshop space. D'Ambrosio and his colleagues filled it with hand tools, sewing machines, metal and wood-working equipment, and whatever else might help a student launch their startup product or service. Better yet, it's all free and available to all U students.

One thing that's missing? Classrooms. You won't find faculty offices here, either. That's because the Lassonde Institute is focused on student leadership. Walk into the 3-D printer lab, and an undergrad will show you the ropes. Want to use the laser cutting tool? No problem, but first you'll get a quick student-designed training lesson. Want to attend a workshop on writing business plans? A young scholar set up that workshop and brought in industry experts to present it. About 160 students receive scholarships to run the institute's many programs.

The Lassonde Institute is more than just a building, but the building allows the institute to attract attention from students, other universities (more than 100
have toured the Lassonde Studios), and the business world. Named one of the “nine best new university buildings around the world” by Architectural Digest, the building has appeared in Fast Company and The New York Times. The institute is ranked first in the country for aspiring entrepreneurs by LendEDU, first for technology commercialization by the Milken Institute, and 15th in entrepreneurship programs for graduate students and 18th for undergraduates by the Princeton Review.

In addition to Pierre Lassonde and the Lassonde Family Foundation, other major donors and partners including alum David Neeleman ex’81 (founder of JetBlue), the Larry H. & Gail Miller Family Foundation, Zions Bank, the Fidelity Foundation, the Kalhert Foundation, and University of Utah Housing & Residential Education have helped the Lassonde Entrepreneur Institute and the new Lassonde Studios become “world class and cutting edge in terms of student entrepreneur education,” says Dean Randall. “This building is remarkable in terms of gaining visibility. It lets us showcase what we think are the best practices in teaching entrepreneurship,” Ruth Watkins, vice president of academic affairs, agrees: “It was immediately clear that the Lassonde Studios would be transformative for the U—a facility that would bring together entrepreneurs and innovators from all fields of study to live, learn, and create together. And all of that in the context of a stunning building.”

ELIMINATING BARRIERS

As stunning as the facility is, all the space, tools, and 3 a.m. pizza in the world won’t get a startup off the ground without the know-how to pull it together. That’s why Lassonde Institute resources include workshops on topics like writing executive summaries, using Adobe Creative Suite, or finding a social cause. Students are paired with mentors and experts such as attorneys, venture capitalists, designers, and marketers. Get Seeded, a monthly micro-grant competition sponsored by Zions Bank, lets students apply for grants to jump-start their projects. Last year, 49 student startups shared $100,000 in Get Seeded funding.

“Get Seeded was my first real experience at the Lassonde Institute,” says King, whose company XLynk Surgical is actually his third startup. “From there, it was like, ‘Come to our mentors workshop.’ I met with the director of software development at Adobe. Then I met with IP [intellectual property] lawyers, and then I met all of these other people. It was like this chain of reactions. You can get anything you need just by being involved. It doesn’t cost me anything. I don’t pay extra tuition for it. It’s just something I can do whenever I have the time, which is awesome.”

LASSONDE
BY THE NUMBERS
(2016-17 SCHOOL YEAR)

32,000 Feet of 3-D printer filament used (just over 6 miles)
76,000+ Cups of free coffee consumed in the Neeleman Hangar
49 Student startup projects receiving Get Seeded grants
Average grant in Get Seeded program: about $1,800
Total scholarships awarded to Lassonde students: $600,000, to 150+ students
Total prizes awarded to student startup teams: $500,000
Start up projects formed under the Lassonde Entrepreneur Institute: about 300
1,200+ Applicants for Lassonde Studios housing (400 accepted)
40+ Areas of study represented by Lassonde students
Estimated gender ratio in the Lassonde Studios: 48% female, 52% male
It all adds up to an ideal minimal-risk environment for students to explore the entrepreneurial world. Many student startups may not succeed. Many real-world startups fail, too. But here, failures are embraced as learning experiences. "You can be a fine arts student or an engineering student, and you can come in here and get engaged, run a business, and get that experience," says D’Ambrosio. "You might fail, you might succeed, but nobody rides a bike the first time. This is a safe place to try, test, experiment, and not be penalized for failure."

Such real-world experience helps students stand out in the job market. "It’s the skill building at this point that’s really valuable," says XLynk Surgical’s Hassett, whose role in the medical device startup has expanded from making videos and presentations for potential investors to supporting every facet of the business, including helping with the general design and building of the prototype. "Your idea doesn’t have to be amazing. They just want to see that you have an idea, and that you have your next milestone that you want to get to, so that you can try it and see if it works.” As a bioengineering and modern dance double major, Hassett had never considered entrepreneurship until King hired her. Now she’s hooked, and she’s co-directing the institute’s Utah Entrepreneur Series competitions.

Entrepreneurship isn’t just for technology. JoCee Porter, a computer engineering major, started a nonprofit in her parents’ basement while in high school. Loaning a prom dress to a financially struggling student blossomed into a full-blown nonprofit entity called Celebrate Everyday, providing hundreds of free prom dresses to underprivileged populations. "I was running my nonprofit every day, but I didn’t know what business was; I had no interest in it," she says. "Going into Lassonde, I realized a nonprofit needed to be run like a business. I can serve more people by using business strategies.”

Students at the institute aren’t just the ones with the big business ideas. Few people can run an entire company alone. They need help from people with different skill sets, like marketing, design, law, accounting, fundraising, programming, or manufacturing. So Lassonde is also a place where students can find each other, team up, and see where the possibilities take them. The Neeleman Hangar is a hot spot for interaction. "If you’re in the library, everybody’s kind of head down. Here it’s okay if somebody is working on something to walk up to them and interrupt them to say, ‘Hey, what are you working on? That’s really cool. Can I help you?’ or ‘Can you help me, because I’m trying to solve that same problem?’" explains D’Ambrosio.

The Lassonde Studios’ interactive floor plan invites hardworking students to relax, too. "If you want to make new friends, Lassonde is the place to go," says phone app creator Shelton, a pre-med finance major and a swimmer. "It’s a very social, vibrant community. There is always something going on. Lassonde never sleeps!"

The Lassonde Institute has undeniably taken the lead in entrepreneurship education. "The Lassonde Studios is a true partnership of an academic unit and student affairs," says Watkins. "I think that this type of partnership is likely to be much more common in the future. We are fortunate to have a highly successful model of collaboration at its best.”

For students, the transformative experience can be far-reaching. "There are so many resources at Lassonde, but the biggest resource is the people,” says Porter. "In 10 years, when I start my tech company, I know my cofounder will be someone I met in this building. They’re the people I’m going to call, because they’re going to be great people in their industry, and great friends.”

—Kelley J. P. Lindberg BS’84 is a freelance writer based in Layton, Utah, and a frequent contributor to Continuum.
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SYDNEY DUNCAN: A Physics-Loving Dancer

By Amanda Taylor

When Sydney Duncan was a little girl growing up in Texas, she couldn’t sit still. So her mother, who had danced in college, enrolled her in a dance class, which Duncan says sparked her interest. Then, when she was about 8, her mom took her to see The Nutcracker. Duncan watched the dancers intensely and said, “I want to do that.” And she meant it. Soon after, she started rigorous classical ballet training. “I loved every second of it,” she recalls. “There was never a day when I didn’t want to go to class.”

By 14, Duncan had decided to become a professional dancer. But she had also started to discover another passion—science. “I was falling in love with science during the day at school, and falling in love with dance at night,” Duncan says.

Her father, who is an electrical engineer, encouraged her to pursue her interest in science. And she found an intersection between her two passions as she learned about space and movement in both fields. By the time she was approaching the end of high school, she concluded she wasn’t ready to be a professional ballerina quite yet. But she wasn’t fully committed to science, either.

In researching universities, Duncan discovered that the University of Utah has outstanding programs in both ballet and the sciences—and so she enrolled and chose to study both astrophysics and dance. “I searched for a school where I didn’t have to choose,” says Duncan BFA’16 BS’16.

Although she was technically “allowed” her taxing double major, she says some of her professors thought she was crazy. Neither one is a major you can do halfway. Duncan says that while some people tried to get her to think “realistically,” others supported her in her split pursuits. “There were ballet professors writing letters of recommendation that got me into astrophysics internships, and physics professors who took the time to come see my performances,” Duncan says fondly.

After graduation, she was plotting a move to New York City, but she knew she wouldn’t be leaving Utah behind for long. While finishing up her final semester, she was asked to join the cast of The Will Rogers Follies at the U’s Pioneer Memorial Theatre. She graduated, moved to the Big Apple for a stint, then came back to Salt Lake for the six-week run. “People would see me walking down the street in Utah, and they’d be confused,” Duncan laughs. “Then I’d politely explain ‘I’m here for the money.’”

Back in New York, the auditions continue. She says that sometimes, as a black woman, her tryouts don’t go the way she hopes merely because she doesn’t fit a “type.” But she stays positive and feels encouraged by the example she’s setting for her younger peers by having graduated from two rigorous university programs. “Sometimes I get messages from other young black dancers saying they want to pursue higher education and their artistic passion as well,” Duncan says. “It always reminds me that I am doing something that is bigger than me.”

Duncan remembers being a child in Texas, seeing black bodies on stage with the Dallas Black Dance Theater, and how formative that was to her ambition and desire to become a professional dancer. “You have to stay on your toes (literally) and keep pushing yourself,” Duncan says. “There is no slowing down when you feel you haven’t reached goals.” She is excited about a recent invitation to join Avant Chamber Ballet as a professional ballerina, and to experience her first professional season in Dallas this fall.

But she hasn’t forgotten her passion for astrophysics, either. She says maybe in the future she’ll go work for NASA. “I want to learn more about outer space,” Duncan says. “I’m not done with physics, just focusing on dance right now.”
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By the time Jake Gibb graduated with a business degree from the University of Utah, he knew exactly where he was headed: the beach.

Gibb BS’02 began playing volleyball on a neighboring high school’s club team when he was 17, practicing with his fraternal twin, Coleman, on a makeshift court in their backyard in Bountiful, Utah. And, he says, he wasn’t very good back then. But Gibb fell in love with the sport and kept playing—right on through his student days at the U, where he played indoor club volleyball and grew another three inches to top out at 6 feet 7 (Coleman stopped at 6 feet 1). Gibb’s future was set after he qualified for the Association of Volleyball Professionals (AVP), the premier U.S. volleyball tour, in 2000.

“I knew I wanted to move to California and pursue a beach volleyball career when I graduated,” says Gibb, the youngest of 11 children.

And so he did.

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And so he did.

Today, Gibb is a three-time Olympian (2008, 2012, and 2016). And this past July and August, he represented the U.S. at the FIVB Beach Volleyball World Championships in Austria, playing with teammate Taylor Crabb. It’s the biggest event in the sport outside of the Olympics.

“I keep telling myself and others that I’m not 41 years old and that I’m just a young buck out here, but no one seems to believe me,” Gibb jokes.

Gibb’s climb to the pinnacle of his sport has come with challenges. He is a two-time cancer survivor, having fought melanoma in 2004 and testicular cancer in 2011—just as he was preparing for the 2012 Summer Olympic Games in London and the birth of his first child with wife Jane (a former college volleyball player herself whom he met on a volleyball court).

Gibb was initially told he would need three rounds of chemotherapy, a crushing treatment plan that would have cost him his chance at the Olympics. But after the surgery, he learned he didn’t need chemo after all. It was, Gibb said, game on.

Gibb was able to compete, and 2012 proved a spectacular year for him career-wise. Playing with former partner Sean Rosenthal, Gibb took home first at the 2012 AVP Championships and finished 5th at the Olympics that year, feats that earned him recognition as FIVB’s Most Inspirational Athlete in both 2013 and 2014.

More recently, Gibb and Crabb had two fifth-place finishes on the 2017 FIVB World Tour and then competed in the 2017 FIVB World Championships this late July to August in Vienna. He and Crabb were among eight U.S. pairs (male and female) who made the cut for this summer’s World Championships, Gibb’s seventh straight appearance (and Crabb’s first).

“What keeps me going is my love for the sport of beach volley,” Gibb says. “If I had a regular office job, I would be out on the weekends playing with friends. I love playing, and I love the life it provides for me and my family.”

Oh, and did we mention Gibb’s middle name? It’s his mother’s maiden name, one he shares with all five of his brothers: Spiker.
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Rachel Harry
BA’85, a drama teacher at Hood River Valley High School, in Oregon, has received the Tony Awards’ Excellence in Theatre Education Award. The honor, announced at the 71st Annual Tony Awards, at Radio City Music Hall, recognizes a K-12 theater educator in the U.S. who has demonstrated monumental impact on the lives of students and embodies the highest standards of the profession. Harry will receive $10,000 for her theater program. A native of northern Wisconsin and a former dancer, she received her bachelor’s degree in English at the University of Utah, and a second bachelor’s degree in theater as well as a master’s degree in theater production at Central Washington University. In addition to teaching at Hood River for 30 years, she is an instructor at Columbia Gorge Community College.

Carl L. Laurella
BS’82 has been recognized as the top financial advisor in Utah by Barron’s magazine in its annual “America’s Top 1,200 Advisors: State-by-State” list. Of six Utah advisors highlighted, Laurella was ranked number one in the state, based on client assets, return on assets, client satisfaction/retention, compliance records, and community involvement. At the University of Utah, Laurella serves on the Humanities Partnership Board and the College of Nursing Advisory Council and is a member of the Health Sciences Benefactors. He also supports scholarships for first-generation U students in humanities, nursing, and athletics. Laurella resides in Park City and has worked in Merrill Lynch’s Salt Lake City office for more than 31 years. He has been recognized on Barron’s Top Advisors list several times.

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION WELCOMES NEW BOARD PRESIDENT, VP, AND MEMBERS

The Alumni Association recently welcomed seven new members to its Board of Directors, as well as a new board president and vice president, and new presidents of three affiliate boards. The Board of Directors consists of approximately 24 members who serve three-year terms. Members meet regularly to help support association events and other endeavors, and also serve on committees across campus and at the association ranging from legislative advocacy to scholarships to community service.

The new president of the Board of Directors is Joe Sargetakis BA’80. The owner of Frog Bench Farms in Salt Lake City, Sargetakis is committed to providing organic fruits, vegetables, herbs, and microgreens for farm-to-table restaurants in the city. He previously held vice president positions at Paine Webber and Morgan Stanley. His involvement with the U also includes membership in the Copper Club at the Natural History Museum of Utah and being a longtime member of Red Butte Garden. His other volunteer work includes serving on the boards of the Swaner Nature Preserve, Ronald McDonald House Charities, and Ducks Unlimited, and being on the founding board of the Sugar House Farmers Market. As the association’s board president, Sargetakis will also serve on the U’s Board of Trustees.

The board’s new vice president is Susan Hansen Porter BS’85 MSW’88. Porter has been a psychotherapist for more than 30 years, owning and directing her own clinical counseling practice in Salt Lake. A licensed clinical social worker and member of the National Association of Social Workers, she’s also an adjunct professor in the U’s Department of Psychiatry and a trustee for the Hospital Foundation. Her community service also extends beyond the U, as she has volunteered her time to many

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J. Aaron Sanders
BA’98 MFA’01
received a 2017 Lambda Literary Award for his first novel, Speakers of the Dead: A Walt Whitman Mystery.

Lambda Literary is the nation’s leading organization advancing lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender literature. The 29th annual awards were announced at a ceremony in New York City. Sanders’ mystery covers the investigative exploits of young reporter Walt Whitman as he navigates the seedy underbelly of New York City’s body-snatching industry in an attempt to exonerate his friend of a wrongful murder charge.

An associate professor of English at Columbus State University, Sanders received a bachelor’s degree in English and a master’s degree in creative writing from the University of Utah, and a doctorate in American literature from the University of Connecticut.

Sylvia Torti
PhD’98, research assistant professor of biology and dean of the Honors College at the University of Utah, won the Nicholas Schaffner Award for Music in Literature for her novel Cages.

Set in and around a research laboratory in which two scientists are experimenting on birds to discover the origins of memory and birdsong, Cages is a complex interweaving of biological, philosophical, and mystical themes. It is also a story of love, loss, and memory as the two scientists vie for the heart of a young research assistant. Torti previously received the Miguel Marmol Award for first fiction by an American of Latino descent for her novel The Scorpion’s Tail.

An ecologist and writer, she holds a doctorate in biology from the U’s College of Science.


organizations, including the Utah Food Bank and The Road Home shelter.

Sargetakis and Porter are replacing outgoing President Julie Barrett BA’70 and Vice President Scott Verhaaren BA’90 MBA’91, who made significant contributions to the university and to the Alumni Association during their tenure. Barrett also served as a member of the U’s Board of Trustees.

The new members of the board are Christine Burns MS’75, a psychologist in private practice; Leslie Corbett BS’87, the owner of Bjorn’s Brew; Sue Skanchy MBA’86, chief operating officer at Jones Waldo; Tom Carlson BA’90, senior director of Marketing and Business Development for Shell Energy North America; Glenn Seninger BS’88, vice president of North America Edge Applications with Oracle; Aden Batar MPA’15, director of Immigration and Refugee Resettlement for Catholic Community Services of Utah; and Kimberly Brunisholz BS’05 MS’11 PhD’15, a researcher with Intermountain Health Care.

Cheré Romney ex’94 is the new president of the Emeritus Board, Savannah Gelhard is the new Student Alumni Board president, the new MUSS Board president is Steven Havlik, and Brian Davis BS’07 is the new Beehive Honor Society chair. Brian Rosander BS’01 JD’05 continues as president of the association’s Young Alumni Board.

Sean O’Leary BS’93 MS’99 graduated with an advanced degree in electrical engineering, but still not without apprehension about embarking on his first full-time job hunt. Now 18 years later, he owns his own engineering business. As he reflects on the career path that got him where he is today, he says he couldn’t have done it without Alumni Career Services (ACS).

O’Leary first visited the career center after graduation in the late nineties to get help with his résumé and to practice interview techniques, both of which helped him land his first job. Twelve years later, he found himself out of work. He knew the resources at ACS were available to him, but he had to overcome his initial pride about going back for help. “I didn’t even want to talk in Job Club, I just wished I could go back to an office and do my job,” says O’Leary. “I learned you have to get outside your comfort zone.”

The U’s Job Club, which is free, gives attendees the opportunity to network, critique each other’s résumés, practice elevator pitches, and even perform mock interviews. But it also provides an emotional support group. “Having a group of people you can sit down and talk to about worries is really important. They’re dealing with the same kind of things that you are… fears, frustrations, and challenges,” says O’Leary. “It’s bonding. I still keep in contact with people I met in Job Club years ago.”

Assistance from ACS has proved to be an asset through his entire career, O’Leary says. Just over a year ago, he stepped into their offices again with the intention of starting his own business. Having worked with the previous ACS coach, Julie Swaner BA’69 PhD’11, O’Leary was concerned when he heard she had retired. And, as luck would have it, he was the very first job-seeker new coach Amy Gleason worked with in her new position (she’s pictured above with O’Leary). “Here I was, just terrified because I was changing everything I was doing,” says O’Leary. “But Amy was excited and pointed me in the right direction. The things that she told me to do were spot on.”

Between Swaner and Gleason, O’Leary learned about branding and marketing a company. And in July 2016, he officially became his own boss when he started Celtic Engineering Solutions. The company’s green logo with classic Celtic knots proudly highlights O’Leary’s Irish heritage. “I would definitely not be the successful business owner I am today without the repeated help of Alumni Career Services,” says O’Leary.
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*Based on college acceptance rates

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Museum Unmasked

When the Utah Museum of Fine Arts closed its doors in January 2016 to address needed building upgrades and repairs, its goals were to protect the collection, keep the community engaged, and create new experiences for visitors. Now reopened, one of those new museum experiences is a gallery devoted to African art. An example is this Kakungu mask, made of wood, raffia, and pigment, worn by male elders to keep away evil as they lead the nkandla initiation residence camps for young men in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The museum’s new exhibitions also include a Spencer Finch site-specific installation and a show that encourages visitors to create the art themselves. Come visit!
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