

# CRIMSON & BLACK

Central  
Washington  
University  
Fall 2021







# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## FALL 2021

### Web Extras

Go to [CWUCrimsonandBlack.com](http://CWUCrimsonandBlack.com) for an expanded digital edition of the magazine. Find extended versions of stories, read web exclusive articles, and view related videos.



### FEATURES

- 6 Farm Fresh
- 8 Why It Matters:  
Action Today Impacts  
Life Tomorrow
- 12 Students Seeing Beyond  
Green: Society, Planet,  
Economy
- 14 Dirty Snow Has Global  
Consequences
- 16 The Power to Create Change
- 18 CWU's Sustainability  
Report Card
- 20 Green Construction Saves  
Dollars and Makes Sense
- 24 Distinguished for a Reason

### DEPARTMENTS

- 2 President's Message
- 4 News & Briefs
- 26 Profiles & Briefs
- 32 In Focus

**On the Cover:** Geology professor Susan Kaspari and geology majors Rylynn Carney, Stephanie Bartlett, and Erlana Acob ventured up the slopes of Mount Rainier this summer to study the reflectivity of snow fields. Photograph: David Dick.

**Left:** Anderson Nsabanga, a student assistant with the Wildcat Neighborhood Farm, harvests cucumbers in one of the three high-tunnel greenhouses on Alder Street. Photograph: David Dick.



## CRIMSON & BLACK

Central Washington University  
*Crimson & Black*

is a semi-annual free publication.  
Issue number: Vol. 3, No. 2.  
Issue date: November 2021.

### Address:

*Crimson & Black* magazine  
Central Washington University  
Public Affairs  
400 E University Way  
Ellensburg WA 98926-7505

© 2021 Central Washington University.  
All rights reserved.

Views expressed in *CWU Crimson & Black*  
do not necessarily reflect official policy of  
Central Washington University.

### CWU PRESIDENT

Jim Wohlpart

### EDITORS

Kremiere Jackson, Vice President of  
Public Affairs

Paul Elstone, Vice President of  
University Advancement

Rich Moreno, Executive Communications  
Director, Public Affairs

### CONTRIBUTING WRITERS/EDITORS

Barb Arnott ('09), Robin Burck ('17),  
Emilie Hobert, David Leder, Rich Moreno,  
Kathleen Singleton ('22), Rune Torgersen ('18),  
Annie Young, and Lauren Zeutenhorst

### GRAPHIC DESIGN

Bret Bleggi, Kevin Hill ('12)

### PHOTOGRAPHY

David Dick ('97),

Department of Public Affairs stock,  
and others as credited.



Central Washington University is an  
EEO/AA/Title IX Institution.  
Alternative format: DS@cwu.edu.

### COMMENTS:

editor@cwucrimsonandblack.com

### UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION AT:

cwu.edu/alumni/update-your-information  
or

Office of Alumni Relations

400 E University Way

Ellensburg WA 98926-7508

Email: alumni@cwu.edu

Call: 509-963-2160 or 1-877-846-2287



Over the last few months, as we have settled into Ellensburg, everyone in the Wildcat community has embraced my wife, Sasha, and me making us feel welcome and accepted. We have spent this time meeting with as many people as we can—faculty, staff, students, alumni, community members—so that we can listen to your thoughts and ideas and learn from you. I have come away with a deeper understanding of Central, which is truly a remarkable institution with exceptional employees who care deeply about students and each other. We are proud to serve as your president and first lady.

Since the day I started, I have sought to establish a stronger culture of collaboration, cooperation, and transparency at Central. Through being truly inclusive and open to divergent opinions, we can develop a cohesive vision and mission for the future of our university.

An area in which CWU has exhibited leadership for many years is something that is important to both Sasha and me: sustainability. As last summer's unprecedented heatwaves in the western U.S. and record levels of flooding in Europe and China have shown, we must address the challenges of climate change and accelerate our efforts to have more sustainable lifestyles and institutions.

One of the ways our commitment to sustainability manifests at Central is in how we construct our buildings and conduct our operations. Nearly all of our most recent construction projects have exceeded the state requirements for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification. Additionally, we are in the process of converting our motor pool fleet to more energy efficient vehicles and have already adopted the use of sustainable products in our dining areas.

Of course, we can do more. I will be calling on the CWU community to work with me in developing new and even more innovative ideas for how to help make our campus more sustainable moving forward. This might include additions or changes to our curriculum, bringing in important speakers, and connecting with the local community.

In addition to being environmentally sustainable, it is equally important that we ensure the sustainability of our university, which depends upon recognizing and honoring our most essential asset: our employees. Together, over the past year and a half, we have faced and overcome the many challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, while maintaining our commitment to student success and engagement. Central is fortunate to have the support of such a dedicated and passionate workforce that is so supportive of our student body.

Please enjoy this edition of *Crimson & Black*, which is the first issue produced during my short time here. We chose to focus on sustainability, which is a priority for me because it has become one of the most critically important issues of our time. I am proud to be part of an institution that believes so strongly in its responsibility to build and nurture a more sustainable future.

Go Wildcats!

Jim Wohlpart  
President

Central Washington University acknowledges the people who have been on this land since time immemorial. The Ellensburg campus is on lands ceded by the Pshwanapum and other bands and tribes of the Yakama Nation in the Treaty of 1855. The Yakama people remain committed stewards of this land, cherishing it and protecting it, as instructed by elders through generations. We are honored and grateful to be on their traditional lands, and give thanks to the legacy of the original people, their lives, and their descendants.



# EMPOWER WILDCATS

Support Central Washington University today to ensure every student has access to the exceptional academics, personalized experiences, and practical learning opportunities that contribute to their success.



**UNIVERSITY  
ADVANCEMENT**

**[cwu.edu/give](https://cwu.edu/give)**

CWU is an EEO/AA/Title IX Institution.  
For accommodation e-mail: [DS@cwu.edu](mailto:DS@cwu.edu).



Sasha and Jim Wohlpart

## Wohlparts already feel at home in Ellensburg

President and first lady have high aspirations for the university and their new community

By Lauren Zeutenhorst

**“We both really feel that, as individuals living this life, we are a small piece of the bigger picture. And the way we live here and now impacts all kinds of future generations.” —Sasha Wohlpart**

It was an eventful summer for CWU’s new president Jim Wohlpart and his wife, Sasha. In early June, the couple packed up their belongings, along with their two dogs, Annabelle and Leopold, and moved 1,663 miles from Cedar Falls, Iowa, to Ellensburg.

Since arriving, the Wohlparts have maintained an active calendar—participating in welcome back barbecues with CWU employees, attending the Board of Trustees summer retreat, sitting in on countless university planning sessions, meeting with alumni, faculty, staff, and students, visiting local government officials, and watching a few sporting events.

But despite their busy schedules, the new president and first lady have been able to settle in to their new home and even carve out some time to do a bit of exploring and hiking.

“What has been fascinating is the diversity of ecosystem in this region,” Sasha noted. “To go from a steep desert environment to these amazing mountains and then the humid, mild west side. It’s so awesome to have all of that within our immediate reach. We appreciate the kind of oasis that is Ellensburg.”

The president said he has been most impressed by how welcome he and his wife have been made to feel since relocating from the Midwest. He described it as “a feeling of being embraced. People have really embraced us and the fact that we’re here.”

“We have felt really welcomed in ways that make us feel like we came home,” Sasha added. “We really were intentional in thinking about where we might go next. We looked into not only the university but the region. We felt like we knew where we were coming and were excited and ready. It has not at all disappointed.”

Both said they were pleasantly surprised by the wealth of shopping and restaurants, and other entertainment and social opportunities available in Ellensburg.

“We were very happy where we were [at Northern Iowa University] and were not looking [for a new place to work],” the president said. “But we thought, if there was an opportunity, we would think about it. When we saw this opportunity, we really decided to explore just this, specifically.”

Wohlpart said a number of things about Central piqued the couple’s interest, including that it was a large, public university that provides access to higher education for a whole range of students who can’t, or won’t, attend large research institutions. They also liked that Central’s environment fosters the development of close relationships with faculty and staff.

Additionally, the president said they were attracted by the way faculty and staff help students understand their potential and encourage them to succeed once they leave the university.

“That mission of student engagement and student success is very attractive to me, especially for groups of students who wouldn’t necessarily have that access otherwise,” he said. “One of the things we like about this place is the diversity of political perspectives and the ability of people with different beliefs/



backgrounds to come together and work together to advance the community, the region, and the institution.”

As for what he would like to bring to Central, Wohlpert believes there are three particularly pressing issues of our time, including climate change, racial injustice, and the fraying of American democracy. As a result, he is a strong advocate for student engagement and involvement, both of which he has seen a good deal of at CWU.

“We are very interested in transformative (relational) leadership and recognizing the way in which everything is interdependent. The way in which everything, everybody, every office has a place in elevating the good work of the institution,” the president said. “It’s not about us, ever. It’s about the institution always and the ways in which things are interconnected.

“I’m most excited about seeing the amazing work that happens here in transforming students’ lives and thinking about how we can do that work more intentionally, developmentally, strategically, so that we can take that work to the next level,” he continued. “In other words, we are a really good institution of higher education, so how can we be a great institution of higher education? How can we do it better and different? That’s exciting to me.”

Sasha said she is most looking forward to identifying where her skills and passions can best be applied to serving the university.

“That’s going to be exciting for me to see how I can fit in,” she said. “That’s about relationship building. So, this next year will really be about getting to know people, getting to know the programs, and assessing their needs.

“We look forward to seeing students and feeling the energy that comes with classes in session,” she added. “The feeling of enthusiasm for this place [from students, alumni, faculty, and staff] is contagious.” ■

**Jim Wohlpert** previously served as provost and executive vice president for academic affairs at the University of Northern Iowa. He holds a PhD in English from the University of Tennessee, an MA in English from Colorado State University, and a BA in English and Philosophy from the University of Tennessee.

**Sasha Wohlpert** has an MS in environmental science and earned a BS in geology. She is the former vice president of the Cedar Falls Community School Board and has been active in a number of civic organizations, including the YWCA, the Cedar Falls Lions Club, and the Iowa Nineteenth Amendment Centennial Commemoration Organizing Committee.



CWU President Jim Wohlpert meets with students from the Filipino American Student Association. The group was one of many participating at the Equity and Services Council block party held outside the SURC.



A woman wearing a white knit hat with three buttons, glasses, a purple hoodie, and olive green shorts is standing in a field. She is holding a large bunch of freshly harvested carrots with green tops. The background is filled with tall corn stalks, and the scene is bathed in the warm, golden light of a setting or rising sun, creating a soft glow and long shadows. The overall mood is peaceful and productive.

# FARM FRESH

By Emilie Hobert



**O**n the corner of Alder Street and 14th Avenue on the Ellensburg campus, the Wildcat Neighborhood Farm staff is busy growing a bounty of healthy and delicious fruits and vegetables.

Established in 2019, the farm provides fresh, seasonal produce that is served in dining facilities across campus. It grows a wide variety of produce, from staples like green onions and cucumbers, to more specialized produce like okra, heirloom tomatoes, and Washington state heirloom squash.

The farm also includes a community garden, where students and residents can sign up to take care of their own plot for a season.

While most of the farm's vegetables are delivered to CWU Dining Services for on-campus dining, some are served by 1891 Catering, the newly refreshed CWU catering program. Any surplus produce is donated to local food pantries, including the student-run Presidents United to Solve Hunger (PUSH) pantries on campus.

Farm manager Kate Doughty has chosen to employ organic practices on the farm—specifically by following sound ecological practices that are gentler on the land and use fewer resources that limit the need for synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. These practices include crop rotation, composting, and planting cover crops.

“The practices we employ naturally follow organic program standards, because we work from a ‘soil first’ approach,” Doughty says. “Soil health is our priority, and our methods are designed to support the thriving biotic communities under our feet.”

Housed within Auxiliary Enterprises, the Wildcat Neighborhood Farm also serves as a sustainability

center and outdoor classroom, giving students and faculty an opportunity to complete hands-on research projects.

“Working with students is one of my favorite parts of this work,” Doughty says. “I encourage student projects and research as much as possible.”

For example, a student researched and built worm bins for composting on the farm, taking many factors into consideration when developing the design. Another ongoing student research project is looking at ways to increase accessibility in the community garden that will result in the construction of accommodated garden beds.

Every aspect of the farm's operations considers how resources are used, with a goal of reducing its carbon footprint whenever possible to grow produce more sustainably. Even the selection of seeds is purposeful: Doughty makes a concerted effort to source seeds from the Pacific Northwest, searching for unique crop varieties to introduce to Dining Services' program.

The program also supports seed non-profits such as the Experimental Farm Network and Seed Savers Exchange, that preserve traditional seeds and offer organic and heirloom varieties.

One of the farm's goals is to increase sustainability on campus. The team does this through helping Dining Services reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by providing hyperlocal produce. Meanwhile, the farm's practical outdoor learning space makes it possible for students to engage in hands-on projects and set themselves up for career success.

“Food has a history of being a source of connection in our communities,” Doughty explained. “And that is what we are trying to center on in our operations.” ■



## Responsible Sourcing and Delivery

- **LOCAL SOURCING:** Partnering with the Wildcat Neighborhood Farm, Dining Services serves quality seasonal produce in its dining locations. It supplements items from the farm with more locally grown selections from Charlie's Produce, and sources products from Central Washington businesses like Winegar's Ice Cream, Thomas Hammer coffee, and ABC Donuts.
- **COMPOSTABLE PACKAGING:** Dining Services uses compostable packaging for its disposable items, including hot and cold coffee cups. The products are sourced primarily from WorldCentric, a Certified B Corporation with a record of sustainable production and support for social and environmental organizations. In the last 12 months, Dining Services used 27,700 compostable containers and cups.
- **REUSABLE PLATEWARE AND UTENSILS:** Dining Services will soon return to using only reusable plateware and utensils in select dining locations like Holmes Dining Room, reducing waste at those facilities.



*Left: Farm production assistant Ginger Marsicano harvests carrots from the Wildcat Neighborhood Farm, located east of Student Village.*







**WHY IT MATTERS:**

**ACTION TODAY**  
**IMPACTS LIFE**  
**TOMORROW**





# GIVING FUTURE GENERATIONS **A BETTER CHANCE**

By David Leder

Photo Illustration By David Dick

Many Americans don't give much thought to the plastic straw sticking out of their latte cup after they toss it in the garbage. Or the single-use plastic bags that follow them home from the grocery store. Or the assortment of plastic utensils and condiment packets that inevitably wind up in the landfill.

In 2018, Americans generated 292.4 million tons of municipal solid waste, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. That's 4.9 pounds per person per day. More than 35 million tons were plastic products—12.2% of the country's generated municipal solid waste, according to the EPA.

These products live on in our rivers, streams, lakes, and oceans, polluting fish habitats, soil systems, and drinking water supplies. And even though humans have long known plastic waste is causing great harm to the environment, the EPA reports plastics in the United States have grown from 8.2% of solid waste generation in 1990 to 12.2% in 2018.

This waste generation is among the industrial activities our modern civilization depends on, which have raised atmospheric carbon dioxide and warmed our planet significantly over just the past 50 years. It's no wonder scientists are sounding the alarm about Earth's long-term well-being.



# In its most basic form, sustainability comes needs without compromising the ability

These behaviors are the definition of unsustainable, explains Susan Rivera, a senior lecturer in the Information Technology and Administrative Management (ITAM) department at Central.

“We have a linear economy where we mine raw materials, make things out of them, use them, and then throw them in the dump. And, as we are seeing now, there are a lot of problems with that,” said Rivera, one of a growing number of CWU faculty and staff members who have been working to identify and confront sustainability issues.

“The key is to change our ‘take, make, waste’ habits and move toward more of a circular economy,” she added. “We have to think about what we can do as consumers and professionals to divert some of that waste from the landfills and waterways. Better yet, designing and advocating for systems that repurpose waste as raw material for another process or system, the way a natural life cycle does.”

According to those spearheading sustainability initiatives on campus, people need to think about how to implement more sustainable practices into our daily routines.

“We live in a disposable society where convenience is key, but there are many ways we can be smarter about how we use the things we use every day,” said Clay Arango, an associate professor of biology whose research focuses on microplastic pollution in the Yakima River. He believes change is possible if more people develop a new mindset.

“In environmental studies, we always look at the life-cycle analysis—where did the resources come from to make a certain product and where will that product end up?” Arango said. “We’re trying to be more mindful about how we use the everyday, mundane things around us, and how they affect the entire life cycle.”

Rivera, Arango and their colleagues—who span disciplines from sociology to business to environmental studies—have been taking a more global approach to sustainability in recent years, treating the concept as more holistic than the traditional definition of protecting the environment. After all, the economic, social, and environmental pillars of sustainability are all intertwined.

“Sustainability encompasses so much, but our end goal with all of this should be to make our existence more harmonious,” said Carey Gazis, a geological sciences professor involved with Central’s sustainability initiatives for the past 15 years.

“We should want to save some endangered species and lessen our impact on the planet, but there are also economic and social aspects that we need to consider. For example, agriculture is

a major part of our state’s economy, so we need to find ways to balance the economic side and the ag side. We also need to strike a healthy balance socially when it comes to things like health care, housing, and food supply.”

## More Than the Environment

Social sustainability concerns tend to get overlooked because environmental issues often garner the lion’s share of public attention. But at CWU, social, environmental, and economic sustainability are on equal footing.

Sociology department chair Pam McMullin-Messier has been involved in the university’s sustainability movement since 2009, focusing her attention on the interconnections of social and environmental justice issues.

McMullin-Messier has come to realize how interrelated every facet of sustainability is in building for the future.

“We have to be willing to see things in a different way and think more broadly about what sustainability means in today’s world,” she said, adding that our nation needs to look at the holes in the safety net and address the issues we are failing to meet.

“Just in the past year, we have seen food insecurity, evictions, lack of education, lack of adequate health care, people not being able to find jobs—even a basic, sustainable internet structure,” she continued. “These are things most of us take for granted on a day-to-day basis, but ... if you don’t have the basic hierarchy of needs being met for everyone, then you’re not a very sustainable society at all.”

She also pointed to the importance of recognizing gender equality, combating intimate partner violence, developing children’s nutrition programs, and creating safe community spaces as ways that communities can build a more sustainable future.

“We need to be talking more to people in the community and find out what it is that we can be providing,” McMullin-Messier said. “What are the partnerships they see as necessary, and how can we further those relationships and connections? There are so many disciplines that are deeply connected to sustainability, and we need to think more broadly about what we can do to help people in our communities.”

Awareness and accessibility are the primary obstacles for advocates to reach marginalized community members who stand to benefit from social services, such as food banks, rental assistance programs, and mental health counseling.

Aside from merely providing these services, McMullin-Messier believes it is vital to be more deliberate in communicating that they are, in fact, widely available.

# down to humans' ability to meet our current of future generations to meet their own.

"We have food banks in our community that some people don't even know about, or they feel too ashamed to ask for help," she said. "We have to figure out what the barriers are and how we can normalize services like food banks, rental assistance, and mental health counseling. These safety nets are here for everyone, and we have to look at why people aren't using the available resources."

The Sustainability Certificate program is one way the CWU faculty has been bridging that gap. By expanding the definition of "sustainability" across campus, Central has been able to attract students from a wide range of specialty areas who want to apply sustainability concepts to their career paths.

"Sustainability isn't just for environmental science and business majors," McMullin-Messier said. "There are so many other disciplines that are deeply connected to sustainability, and we are trying to help more students understand that these concepts can be applied much more broadly. We want our students to think bigger when it comes to sustainability, and the certificate program is making more people aware of what's out there."

## Tying It All Together

In its most basic form, sustainability comes down to humans' ability to meet our current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own.

Whether the focus is on environmental, social, or economic aspects, the CWU faculty and staff members driving the conversation on campus want to help their students and co-workers be more cognizant of the connection between the actions we take today and the impact those decisions have for tomorrow.

"There are a lot of people on campus who are really interested in making a difference, and CWU has made some pretty big strides with our stream restoration projects, revegetation projects, the campus garden, and more," said Arango, the biology professor. "This generation of students really wants to make some waves, and we have seen that through enrollment growth in programs like environmental studies."

Central has taken many forward-looking steps in recent years, such as hiring a full-time sustainability coordinator (Kathleen Klaniecki), introducing more green building practices, establishing the Wildcat Neighborhood Farm, and joining the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS) program, a self-reporting framework for colleges and universities to measure their sustainability performance. Institutions can earn points toward ratings from reporter, to bronze, silver, gold, or platinum. CWU has a bronze rating.

Emerging data reveal young adults are more likely to act on and engage with climate change issues than the generations before them. According to an April 2021 survey by Pew Research Center, 37% of Gen Z'ers and 33% of millennials say addressing global climate change is a top concern to them personally. Gen X, baby boomers, and older adults are less likely to call climate change a top personal concern (27% and 29%, respectively).

The survey found 32% of Gen Z'ers and 28% of millennials have taken at least one of four actions (donating money, contacting an elected official, volunteering or attending a rally) to help address climate change in the last year, compared with 23% of Gen X and 21% of baby boomers and older adults.

Another notable change at CWU was the introduction of the sustainability certificate program that is open to students from all academic areas. The general education certificate, which launched in 2019, gives future professionals a chance to develop and lead experiential, service-learning projects focused on improving sustainability outcomes for the university and community partners.

Rivera, the ITAM lecturer, believes the program has already been a success. Students are discovering that sustainability, at its core, comes down to problem-solving and thinking about solutions they initially thought weren't possible.

"We are showing our students that developing a sustainable mindset requires you to expand your thought process," Rivera said. "We have a lot more students graduating today who understand what sustainability is, and now they can apply those principles to any field they go into."

Likewise, Gazis, the geological sciences professor, has seen first-hand the value of the nascent Sustainability Pathway program. Most notably, the curriculum has helped tie everything together for students from divergent academic areas.

"Instead of just taking a bunch of unconnected content-area classes, now students are encouraged to take them all from one pathway so they can make those connections better," Gazis said. "If nothing else, the sustainability pathway has helped more courses bring up the subject with their students. ... I think we're really heading in the right direction as a university."

The progress made at CWU over the past two years is commendable, but there's still a long way to go.

"We can't rest on our laurels because there are always more changes we can make," Arango said. "I would urge everyone not to be complacent because we can always do better. The more we think about how to solve these problems, the better off everyone is going to be." ■





Jaeda Nelson

# STUDENTS SEEING BEYOND GREEN: SOCIETY, PLANET, ECONOMY

By Richard Moreno

Sustainability means much more than buying green products, recycling paper and plastics, and composting. Indeed, a growing number of sustainability advocates—including many CWU students—recognize the term also applies to other areas, such as food insecurity, systemic racism, inequality, affordable housing, and other issues that predominantly impact people of color.

According to the United Nations Environment Programme, the definition of true sustainability is “understanding how our lifestyle choices impact the world around us and finding ways for everyone to live better and lighter.”

It is with that in mind that Jaeda Nelson, a CWU senior studying business administration and specializing in leadership and management, has chosen to devote her efforts to fighting food insecurity among college students and advocating for the empowerment of women of color.

Nelson is student initiative coordinator at the Diversity and Equity Center (DEC) and head of THRIVE, a women of color empowerment program. She has also been active with PUSH (Presidents United to Solve Hunger), a campus organization that manages food pantries, an emergency meal fund, and pop-up events to provide boxes of food and hygiene products to students.

“For sustainability, we talk a lot about things, items, and objects, but we don’t always address people in sustainable ways,” Nelson said. “When a lot of students’ basic needs aren’t being met, they can’t do anything, or pursue a lot of the things they want to do, or feel comfortable moving in a lot of spaces.”

Her concern is echoed by Rachael Medalia, a junior environmental studies major with a specialization in public policy and a law and justice minor. Medalia, also the ASCWU





*Rachael Medalia*

Senate Speaker, previously served as the sustainability senator for student government.

After attending a sustainability conference last year, she said she came away with the realization that sustainability is not simply an environmental concern.

“Sustainability is more of a three-pillar issue between environmental, social, and economic,” she explained. “I hadn’t considered that social sustainability is an equally strong and important pillar as the environmental pillar, and there is much overlap between them.”

Medalia, who has been active in the Central Environmental Club since her freshman year, said it is important to recognize that people of color are more susceptible to food and housing insecurity due to factors such as the historic pay gap between white and non-white people, which has only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] has a term that is related to this, which is environmental justice,” she said. “You define environmental justice as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.”

Nelson said sustainability initiatives often focus on products and resourcing with little attention to systems that work against underserved communities.

“Initiatives on sustainability are often focused on products and resourcing with little attention toward systems that work against several underserved communities,” she said. “We have normalized food to be a low priority because society continues to dismiss its impact on student performance and well-being. Food insecurity affects students’ ability to show up for their communities and for themselves.”

Bianca Sanchez, a senior psychology major minoring in public health and the vice president of PUSH, echoed Nelson, noting that food and housing insecurity are very real problems for many students, including at Central.

“It affects, honestly, everything. It affects your physical health, your mental health, your school health,” she said. “It’s really tough going to class and not having anything to eat.”



*Bianca Sanchez*

Sanchez said she doesn’t think the problem of food insecurity is either well known or discussed very often at Central because many students aren’t aware of the resources available or are sometimes embarrassed to talk about their personal situations.

She said one reason college students struggle with these issues, especially once they have moved off-campus, is that they are learning for the first time how to manage their money and navigate the challenges of living independently, which include juggling the costs of utility bills, rent, and food.

“I believe that a good chunk of the student population has faced it at least once—not really knowing what to do for dinner or if they were going to have breakfast,” she said. “I’ve experienced that, so I know what it’s like to not have something to eat.”

She said food insecurity was the impetus for establishing a new centralized food pantry in Brooks Library (open to students on a more regular basis), as well as food drives, and pop-up food events held around the campus, where boxes filled with food are distributed to students.

“I also believe it’s hard for people of color to worry about sustainability because they don’t always have the resources to live sustainably,” she said. “It’s cheaper to buy a pack of plastic utensils than to buy real silverware that is better in the long run for the earth. It’s really difficult for people of color and those in lower-income communities to take part in these efforts because it’s not always affordable.” ■

## To Get Involved:

### **Diversity and Equity Center (DEC)**

Black Hall, Rm 101, 509-963-2127, [diversity@cwu.edu](mailto:diversity@cwu.edu)

### **Student Leadership, Involvement, and Community Engagement (SLICE)**

Student Union and Recreation Center, Rm 250, 509-963-1850, [slice@cwu.edu](mailto:slice@cwu.edu)

### **Presidents United to Solve Hunger (PUSH)**

[cwu.edu/push/about-us](http://cwu.edu/push/about-us)

### **Environmental Student Club**

[cwu.edu/environmental/environmental-student-club](http://cwu.edu/environmental/environmental-student-club)

### **Wildcat Neighborhood Farm**

[cwu.edu/wildcatfarm](http://cwu.edu/wildcatfarm)



**“This really is our decade to do something about the climate, and we have got to buckle down and do things now.”**

**—Susan Kaspari**



# DIRTY SNOW HAS GLOBAL CONSEQUENCES

By Richard Moreno

It feels like you're on top of the world. Ahead is Mount Rainier, with its rounded peak wreathed in snow. All around are clouds so thick and substantial you think you could walk on them to the other peaks, like majestic Mount Adams, that poke through.

This is Susan Kaspari's world. Over the years, the CWU geological sciences professor has spent many days and nights studying places like Mount Rainier to determine how natural and man-made factors impact snow and how it melts.



## Last summer, Kaspari and three CWU undergraduate students

—Stephanie Bartlett, Erliana Acob, and Rylynn Carney—made the trek to the slopes of Mount Rainier, which is the highest mountain in the state of Washington, to collect snow samples and measure the reflectiveness of the snowpack.

“The aim was to provide the students with undergraduate research experiences, especially with instrumentation,” Kaspari said. “They collected samples that they then spent the rest of the summer measuring in the laboratory.”

She said all three students, who she had taught in classes last year, had approached her individually to ask about field research opportunities.

“They were all really good in the field,” Kaspari said. “And they worked together so well in the lab this summer. They were just such a pleasant group to work with and it was a really great experience.”

One of the students, Bartlett, said the field work was enjoyable but worrying at the same time.

“We had a great team, and we were surrounded by breathtaking views. However, when our attention was diverted from the scenery to the snow, I was shocked at how much snow algae we saw,” she said. “I never realized how dirty the snow on mountains was before, and I was also intrigued by the varying types and colors of particles on the snow over a small area.”

Bartlett said the experience opened her eyes to the impact humans are having on the climate and environment of the planet.

“It has inspired me to put a lot more effort into mitigating my own personal impact on our environment,” she added.

Kaspari said the Mount Rainier research was part of larger body of work focusing on light-absorbing particles on snow that she has been doing since arriving at Central in 2009. That work has taken her, often with students, to Mount Olympus, Lake Ingalls in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness, South Cascade Glacier, and other places throughout the Cascades.

“For a long time, I have worked to collect ice cores from around the world and we use them to reconstruct climate and environmental conditions,” she explained. “The second focus of my research is looking at light-absorbing particles. These include black carbon, dust, organic material, and volcanic material.”

“As you know, snow, when it’s fallen freshly from the sky is very white and reflective. When light absorbing particles are deposited on the snow surface, the snow surface is darkened, and then the snow absorbs more energy from the sun, and that causes accelerated melt,” she continued.

The result of the more rapid snow melt is a loss of snowpack, which serves as a natural water reservoir for the Pacific Northwest region during the warmer months, as well as increased flooding.

Kaspari said while some particulate matter in snow is natural, such as dust from eroded and crumbling rock, some can be traced

to things such as the burning of fossil and bio fuels, smoke and ash from wildfires—particularly bad this year—as well as dust created by agriculture and other land use change.

Kaspari explained that snow is typically whiter in the winter, when it is freshly fallen, then turns dirtier through the dry summer months. She noted that at higher elevations on Mount Rainier, where multiple years of snow accumulation is preserved, she can see alternating layers of white and darker bands, which show the seasons.

Kaspari and her students also studied snow algae at Mount Rainier. According to Kaspari, snow algae manifests in pink-colored patches (also known as watermelon snow). In some regions of the world snow algae is increasing due to more liquid water in the snowpack and changing nutrient availability supporting more algae growth.

She said the biggest reason for the changes she is seeing is climate change, which plays a major role in creating the conditions that are impacting the snow.

“First of all, we absolutely see less winter precipitation falling as snow. More precipitation is falling as rain, and that water is going into the rivers in wintertime instead of being stored in the snowpack,” Kaspari said. “We’re seeing less accumulation in the snowpack and the snow is melting earlier in the spring. All of these changes are driven by climate change.”

Kaspari was honored as CWU’s 2021 Distinguished Professor for Service for her role in supporting efforts to promote sustainability at Central over the past decade. She said efforts such as the Paris Agreement, which commits countries to reduce their carbon emissions and take other steps to combat climate change (the United States recently rejoined the accord), are a big step in the right direction.

“Paris is phenomenally important,” she said. “What you hear in the news about the impacts of climate change are true, and now is the time for action. This really is our decade to do something about the climate, and we have got to buckle down and do things now.”

“In the U.S., we need to fight for more substantial climate legislation that’s going to support transitioning away from fossil fuels and to a cleaner energy economy,” she added. “And that needs to happen now.” ■

Kaspari noted that people acting locally is imperative to minimizing climate change, and there are ample opportunities for students to get involved in efforts to reduce the university’s climate impact, including through CWU’s Sustainability Certificate, Sustainability Cafes, and the Environmental Club.

[cwu.edu/environmental/sustainability-certificate](http://cwu.edu/environmental/sustainability-certificate)

[cwu.edu/sustainability/cafe](http://cwu.edu/sustainability/cafe)

[cwu.edu/environmental/environmental-student-club](http://cwu.edu/environmental/environmental-student-club)

*Left: Geology professor Susan Kaspari (far right) led geology students Stephanie Bartlett, Erliana Acob, and Rylynn Carney, to study snow fields on the southern slopes of Mount Rainier.*



# THE POWER TO CREATE CHANGE

By Rune Torgersen



*Professor Elvin Delgado's Integrated Energy Management program prepares students to help Washington achieve its goal to become completely independent from fossil fuels by 2050.*

**Every aspect of our lives is touched by energy,**

whether it's the fuel in cars, the electricity in wires, or the wind in the sails of that boat on the horizon. The myriad ways in which we use what the world provides continues to expand with every innovation—and is impacted by every shortage.

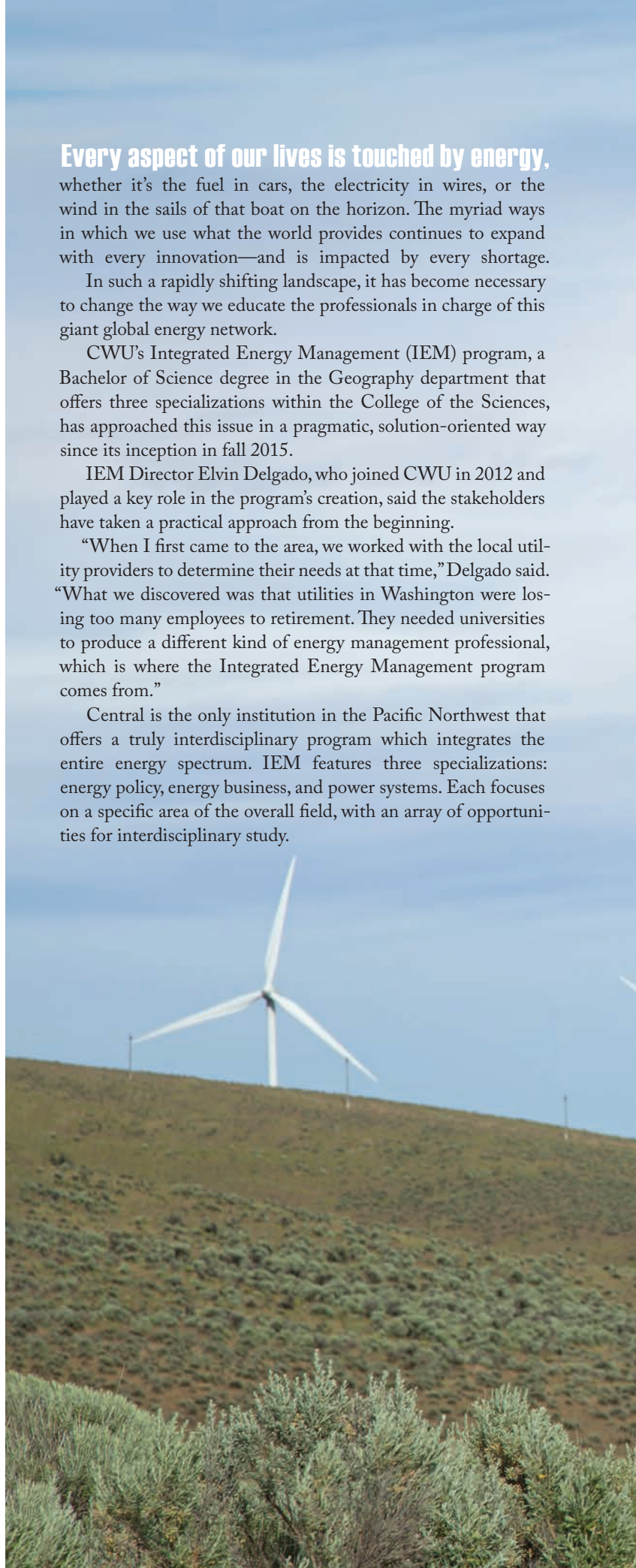
In such a rapidly shifting landscape, it has become necessary to change the way we educate the professionals in charge of this giant global energy network.

CWU's Integrated Energy Management (IEM) program, a Bachelor of Science degree in the Geography department that offers three specializations within the College of the Sciences, has approached this issue in a pragmatic, solution-oriented way since its inception in fall 2015.

IEM Director Elvin Delgado, who joined CWU in 2012 and played a key role in the program's creation, said the stakeholders have taken a practical approach from the beginning.

"When I first came to the area, we worked with the local utility providers to determine their needs at that time," Delgado said. "What we discovered was that utilities in Washington were losing too many employees to retirement. They needed universities to produce a different kind of energy management professional, which is where the Integrated Energy Management program comes from."

Central is the only institution in the Pacific Northwest that offers a truly interdisciplinary program which integrates the entire energy spectrum. IEM features three specializations: energy policy, energy business, and power systems. Each focuses on a specific area of the overall field, with an array of opportunities for interdisciplinary study.





"We don't train technocrats," Delgado said. "We're training administrators and managers—the professionals who will be working in energy businesses on the ground, and, depending on their specialization, facilitating the administration of those companies."

The energy policy specialization offers classes in geography, economics, and more to provide students with the tools they need to help energy companies comply with rapidly evolving environmental and regulatory legislation while running an efficient business. Energy business majors focus on the day-to-day tasks required to manage an energy company.

For this reason, many of the classes in the specialization are offered through the College of Business. Since CWU's business college is fully accredited, energy business majors come away with a leg up on the competition. The Integrated Power Systems track provides courses that train students in topics related to energy technologies, physical understandings of power systems, and the environmental implications of energy production, distribution, and consumption.

Delgado explained this breadth of knowledge is essential to the program he helped initiate.

"A traditional energy manager would be something like an electrical or systems engineer," he said. "We wanted to create something different, geared more toward the working sector and current job market. Based on our conversations with employers, we designed a curriculum that did not separate fossil fuels from renewable energy, but [instead], integrate them."

With the threat of anthropogenic climate change, it is tempting to focus entirely on renewable energy, as opposed to the fossil fuels partially responsible for the climate crisis. Central's IEM program is intended to be a hybrid of the two approaches to powering our world, in hopes of finding a smoother transition toward cleaner energy sources.

"Many energy management programs around the U.S. focus exclusively on clean, renewable energy—which is good," Delgado said. "However, fossil fuels are very much a part of the global energy landscape, and because of the interconnected nature of energy resources and trade, a working knowledge of how the fossil fuel market works is necessary for a successful transition to cleaner energy."

Recent data confirms that the investment in market research has paid off. The IEM program has seen a high job placement rate, partially because of the flexibility it offers students. While all CWU majors come with elective requirements, IEM majors may fulfill these electives with an apprenticeship or internship.

Some choose to take a variety of elective courses, while others choose to complete an apprenticeship instead, which can substitute for the electives. This allows them to take a combination of some electives and a shorter apprenticeship experience to fulfill the total number of credits required, helping them enter the job market equipped with a well-rounded knowledge that will help them stand out.

"Our first graduate did a double major in power systems and mechanical engineering," Delgado said. "She did a six-month apprenticeship in Auburn and was offered a full-time position six months before she graduated. We've been able to replicate that success story many times."

Washington has announced plans to become completely independent from fossil fuels by 2050, and programs like IEM train people who will make those goals more achievable.

In training a generation of integrated energy management professionals to be proficient with both fossil fuels and renewable energy, CWU has laid the groundwork for a transition to a cleaner energy future that doesn't involve massive job losses.

"Ideally, we want to be good stewards of the earth," Delgado said. "We understand that our consumption behavior needs to shift away from high-impact resource use." ■





# CWU'S SUSTAINABILITY REPORT CARD

By Rune Torgersen



**In 2019, CWU took a major step toward coordinating its university-wide sustainability efforts when it created a centralized sustainability leadership position to oversee various individual initiatives that were previously scattered across campus.**

**Kathleen Klaniecki was hired as the university's sustainability coordinator in January 2020, and she immediately began helping CWU start the process of reducing its carbon footprint and demonstrating more environmental responsibility. Over the past year and a half, Klaniecki—who holds a PhD in sustainability science—has successfully bridged the many sustainability efforts taking place on campus and created a comprehensive plan to guide CWU's efforts in the future.**

**Crimson & Black recently sat down with Klaniecki to ask her about CWU's approach to environmental issues, sustainability initiatives, and the general reduction of our collective impact on our ecosystem, economy, and society.**



**Crimson & Black: What is sustainability's role at CWU? Why is it such a large part of our university's identity?**

**Klaniecki:** Sustainability is a strategic initiative at CWU and it has been integrated into the fabric of our university for many years. Faculty have used the campus as a living laboratory, students have mobilized their peers and raised awareness about environmental issues, while staff continue to advocate for more sustainable practices in their workplace.

As an institution of higher education, CWU is committed to developing and implementing sustainability initiatives that will make a real difference and build a better future. We are a campus community that cares—we want to contribute positively to our local community, we want to empower students with the skills to solve pressing environmental challenges, and we want to minimize the environmental impact of our actions.

The integration of sustainability as an institutional priority has occurred in two phases. In 2007, former President Jerilyn McIntyre signed The American College & University Presidents' Climate Commitment, appointed a Climate Commitment Task Force, and committed CWU to achieving carbon neutrality and preparing sustainability-literate graduates. The university also appointed a carbon reduction coordinator and a sustainability coordinator at that time.

That commitment was reinvigorated over the last few years with the creation of Sustainability Cafes, the completion of the AASHE STARS certification, the launch of the Sustainability Certificate, the development of the Wildcat Neighborhood Farm, and the hiring of a full-time sustainability coordinator and a full-time farm and sustainability manager.

**C&B: What steps have already been taken to reduce CWU's environmental footprint? Are there any initiatives in the works?**

**KK:** Each member of the CWU community has an opportunity to contribute to building a more sustainable future. We've seen individuals and departments step up and implement sustainability initiatives, and we've advanced sustainability discussions among academic departments, campus operations, and administrators. Recent accomplishments of note:

#### **OPERATIONS:**

- Partnering with Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group to plant native species in the riparian areas of Wilson Creek.
- Becoming a certified Tree Campus Higher Education campus for our commitment to campus trees.

#### **ACADEMICS:**

- Implementing the Sustainability Certificate for any degree-seeking CWU student interested in learning the

# “Today’s students are demanding that their universities take positive action toward achieving sustainability goals.”

—Kathleen Klaniecki

principles of sustainability and who wants to plan and implement a campus sustainability project.

- Launching the Provost Fellows for Sustainability initiative to further integrate sustainability principles into curricular and co-curricular activities.

## **ENGAGEMENT:**

- Launching a sustainability peer educator program to lead sustainability education and outreach programs.
- Adding the Senator for Sustainability position to the ASCWU.

## **PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION:**

- Launching the Council on Investor Responsibility to analyze CWU’s investments according to ESG criteria.
- The Sustainability Council continuing to provide guidance and recommendations for sustainability initiatives on campus.

Our work has just begun. We will continue to build on the progress we have made toward a more sustainable future, and we remain committed to making our community and the world at-large a better place to study, live, and work.

In 2022, we’ll engage the campus community in the development of the university’s first Sustainability Strategic Plan. This document will build on our sustainability progress and establish a long-term vision for sustainability, with goals and milestones for climate action, sustainable operations, and curricular and co-curricular engagement with sustainability topics.

We are seeking broad representation from faculty, staff, students and alumni in the strategic planning process. This is an opportunity to shape the next five years of climate action and sustainability at CWU. Anyone who would like to provide their insight can participate at [cwu.edu/sustainability/plan](http://cwu.edu/sustainability/plan).

## **C&B: What kinds of architectural decisions have been made around the CWU campus to improve sustainability?**

**KK:** When Dean Hall was renovated in 2008, it became CWU’s first LEED-certified building on campus. It received a Gold certification for its sustainable design and construction features, including energy-efficient lighting, water-conserving fixtures, waste diversion efforts, and native landscaping.

Since then, CWU has constructed three more LEED-certified buildings on campus, including the Hogue Technology Building (Gold), Barto Hall (Platinum), Discovery Hall (Gold), and Samuelson Hall (pending). In addition, the new Health Sciences Building is being built to meet Gold certification and features a 9,500-square-foot solar PV array on the roof and multiple electric vehicle charging stations.

Across campus, we’ve installed bike racks to promote active transportation, bottle-filling stations to encourage reuse, and

recycling bins to encourage waste diversion. In addition, Tree Zero paper can be found in campus printers, compostable containers in dining facilities, and LED lightbulbs in fixtures across campus.

## **C&B: How successful have these measures been in reducing our energy consumption and waste output?**

**KK:** While CWU has seen an increase in its building square footage since 2000 with the addition of several new state-of-the-art academic and residential buildings, our consumption of natural gas has decreased during this time. This is attributed to energy efficiency projects being implemented across campus, construction of more energy-efficient buildings, and the 2015 installation of a waste heat recovery system that allows Samuelson Hall and Discovery Hall to be heated without burning additional natural gas.

We still must make significant progress to meet Washington state Greenhouse Gas (GHG) reduction regulations and bring our actions in line with current climate science. This will require buy-in from stakeholders across campus, shifts in transportation and consumption behaviors, and a commitment to lowering energy consumption and shifting to renewables.

## **C&B: Where do you see the global conversation about sustainability heading within the next few years? Will that have any impact on how we approach it here at CWU?**

**KK:** In the 10 years since I entered the field, there has been a significant shift from simply raising awareness of environmental topics to focusing on GHG emissions reductions and mitigating climate impacts. Due to accelerating climate change and lack of significant action by government and businesses to slow emissions, we’re facing a shortening window of time to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

At CWU, this means continuing our commitment to equipping students with the knowledge and skills to contribute to solving national and global challenges, ramping up our efforts to reduce our GHG emissions, and further developing partnerships to increase our impact in our region and state.

We’ve also seen recycling markets collapse as countries refuse to import more waste. This has shifted the conversation from “what can we recycle?” to “how do we produce less overall waste?” This gets us talking about sustainable consumption and production patterns, which leads us to more systemic changes and more impactful outcomes.

Sustainability is about human connection, strong communities, and a shared belief that we can do better and contribute to a better future for all. ■



# Green Construction Dollars and Makes

By Richard Moreno

When the state of Washington adopted a law in 2005 requiring all new state-funded building projects to achieve a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating of at least Silver, CWU decided to go for the Gold—and occasionally Platinum.

Dean Hall renovation was the first LEED project on the university's Ellensburg campus. Completed in 2008, the \$31.5 million project incorporated improved water efficiency, sustainable building materials, and design elements that helped Central earn its first LEED Gold rating.

"Within operations we have a rather rigorous commitment to sustainability," said Shane Scott, CWU's associate vice president for campus planning and facilities management, who oversees university operations. "I bet I talk sustainability at least once per day, about some topic, be it energy conservation, water conservation, or appropriate tree and plant plantings throughout the campus. We have been rather sustainably focused in operations for quite some time."

Scott explained that several years ago, Susan Kaspari, a CWU Geological Sciences professor, played an important role in helping the university start on the path toward sustainability by introducing the institution to the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education STARS (known as AASHE STARS), a sustainability tracking, assessment, and rating system used by colleges and universities to measure their sustainability performance.

However, he added, it was the hiring of Kathleen Klaniecki in 2020 as the university's sustainability coordinator that permitted Central to focus on sustainability at every level, including in the construction of new buildings.

"Kathleen has really helped take this in the direction of where we can demonstrate that we are on a sustainable path," he said. "I really appreciate having her in operations, because she adds that sustainability voice to all of our topics. She helps us come up with sustainable solutions."

Scott also pointed to Joanne Hillemann, CWU senior architect on the Capital Planning and Projects Team, as a key player in Central's efforts to achieve LEED certification. Hillemann, in fact, is the only architect at the university

who is a LEED-accredited professional. She's also been involved in the planning and construction of every LEED project on campus.

Hillemann, who has taught about the importance of LEED buildings to CWU students, said the overarching principles of green construction include building for the long term (projects that will last at least 50 years), building for our children (making a safe environment), and building for the planet (using sustainable building materials).

"LEED is required for large, state-funded buildings, but it is also important to CWU for the health and safety of the students and staff that spend time in the buildings," she explained. "It's better for our planet and to mitigate global warming. Improved sustainability is also one of the three main university-wide goals."

## So, what makes a LEED-certified building?

According to Delano Palmer, director of the Capital Planning and Projects Team, many considerations go into making an energy-efficient building that earns LEED certification.

"You look at how the building is heated and cooled—whether you're using steam or hot water, and how you are re-using heat waste in the mechanical system," he said. "Are you using solar panels? Wind power? There are so many different elements to it. They are also looking at the actual materials used in the building. Some reflect more heat. Some absorb more heat. That's important depending on what climate you're looking at."

Palmer said another aspect is the lifespan of the building materials "because, obviously, the longer a material lasts, the fewer times you have to replace it." Other factors include the amount of carbon emissions used in the process of producing the building materials, the carbon footprint of transporting the materials, and even the amount and type of waste produced during the process of creating building materials.



# n Saves Sense

“CWU is trying to limit its carbon footprint,” he said. “Not only are we doing it from a regulatory standpoint, but it’s also the right thing to do. Anything that we can do to benefit our environment, it’s going to be better for us.”

For example, Palmer said the Health Sciences Building, currently under construction, features a number of energy-saving elements, including a solar heat plenum, which is a preheating system that uses solar radiation to partially warm air as it is drawn into the building. As a result, the system uses less energy to heat air. Additionally, the building will have 9,000 square feet of solar panels and three electric vehicle charging stations.

“New academic buildings are required to go to LEED Silver,” Palmer said. “But our goal is to build it to LEED Gold. That is the standard that we’ve set for ourselves, which is to exceed what the state expects of us.”

Palmer said the cost of incorporating more energy-efficient building materials and systems into a structure is more expensive initially, but they provide for future savings in energy usage, operations, and maintenance.

“There are typically higher upfront costs but lower operating costs in the long term, especially if we’re thinking in terms of regulatory agencies that are going to be requiring more stringent energy efficiency needs in the future,” he said.

As for the future, Palmer said the university is looking at continuing to make its buildings more energy efficient and perhaps adding additional electric vehicle charging stations on campus, along with more solar panels. He applauded university groundskeeping crews, who have been looking at ways to make landscaping less water-intensive through the use of more native vegetation and less plant density.

“We’re also going to be soliciting the opinions of engineers and architects to find ways we can be more innovative with the structures we have,” he said. “The bottom line is we want to do what best serves our student body and create a world-class learning environment for our students.” ■

## What Does a LEED Rating Mean?

The United States Green Building Council, established in 1993, is a private, nonprofit membership organization that promotes sustainability in building design, construction, and operation. In 2000, the group developed the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) green-building rating system to provide third-party verification of environmentally friendly structures.

Building projects apply for LEED certification, which is a point-based evaluation of a structure’s green features, such as water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, and materials and resources. There are four LEED rating levels, with the highest being platinum (more than 80 points), followed by gold (60-79 points), silver (50-59 points), and certified (40-49 points).

In 2005, the state of Washington adopted legislation requiring all future state-funded buildings to achieve a LEED rating of at least silver.

## Central’s LEED Buildings

Name	Year Completed	LEED Certification
Dean Hall	2008	Gold
Hogue Hall	2011	Gold
Barto Hall	2012	Platinum
Discovery Hall	2016	Gold
Samuelson Hall	2018	Pending
Health Sciences Building	2022	Will seek LEED certification



## Keeping Building Material Out of Landfills

According to Senior Architect Joanne Hillemann, between **25% and 40% of solid waste generated in the U.S. is building-related—and only 20% of construction waste or demolition debris is typically recycled.** The majority of waste goes into landfills.

Hillemann noted Central has done a far better job of reusing and recycling building materials in recent construction projects, including:

- **Dean Hall** – More than **75%** of the existing building shell and structure were protected and remained intact during reconstruction of the building, which diverted substantial waste from landfills. Additionally, the contractor utilized a construction waste management plan that **diverted more than 68% of demolition and industrial waste (over 2,100 tons) from landfills.** Demolished concrete was sifted to remove metal rebar, then crushed at the site for reuse in structural fill or sent to Ellensburg Cement Products for reuse in new concrete.
- **Hogue Technology Building** – More than **96%** of envelope, interior structural wall, floor, and roof elements were maintained from the existing building. The contractor's waste management plan **diverted more than 75% (235 tons) of on-site construction waste from landfills.**
- **Barto Hall** – At least **75%** of construction waste material was diverted from landfills by recycling and reusing concrete, wood, metal, and gypsum board. Concrete salvaged during demolition of the original residence hall was crushed on-site and reused as structural gravel underlayment for the new Barto Hall. The process reduced energy use and conserved natural resources associated with the extraction of new materials, and also **diverted 13.1 million pounds of concrete from landfills.**
- **Discovery Hall** – More than **95% of construction waste was diverted from landfills.** Materials recycled from the construction waste included cardboard, wood scraps, concrete, asphalt, brick, and other materials. Since Discovery was built on the site of a previous parking lot, **100% of the asphalt was recycled.**
- Numbers are not yet available for **Samuelson Hall** or the new **Health Sciences Building.**

## Being Mindful with Discarded Equipment

Every year, CWU departments discard thousands of outdated or nonfunctioning computers, monitors, printers, and other electronics as well as broken or unneeded furniture, file cabinets, shelves, and other office equipment.

According to Jason Bakeman, who oversees Central's surplus property and inventory, last year CWU recycled approximately:

**75 tons of scrap metal**  
**50 cords of firewood**  
**10 tons of wood products and scrap lumber**  
**8 tons of electronics, including computers and monitors**

## Recycling PPE in the Lab

Laboratories are one of the most resource-intensive spaces on campus with the sheer amount of energy required to run the necessary equipment and the personal protective equipment (PPE) required to keep everyone safe in research and teaching labs. One department, however, is taking a stand to reduce the environmental impact of its labs.

Angela Halfpenny, the **Murdock Research Laboratory** manager in the **Department of Geological Sciences**, has introduced a number of sustainable practices in the department's laboratories. The first major system Halfpenny has introduced is a **PPE recycling program.** This program allows disposable gloves, lab coats, masks, booties, protective eyewear, and hair nets to be collected and recycled. After collection, the materials are shipped to Terracycle, a volunteer-based U.S. recycling business, to be repurposed.

# HOW YOU CAN HELP

Everyone has a role in climate action. According to *Green American Magazine*, some of the best ways we can individually fight climate change are:

- **Eliminate Food Waste**

Shop for what you need, eat leftovers, compost scraps, and donate your excess food to local food banks.

- **Eat Plant-Based Foods**

Transitioning to a diet that includes more vegetables, fruits, nuts, and other non-meat food can reduce your carbon footprint.

- **Use LED Lighting**

Light-emitting diode (LED) lights use 90% less energy than incandescent bulbs and half as much as compact fluorescents, so replace your old bulbs with LEDs.

- **Rethink Transportation**

When possible, use public transportation, purchase electric or hybrid vehicles, reduce total trips taken, and ride a bike.

- **Recycle**

Acquiring virgin resources—from logging trees to mining minerals—exploits more resources than recycling existing materials.

Other ways to help include installing smart thermostats in your home, installing solar panels, replacing older seals and weatherstripping, unplugging devices and appliances at night, and working with your local utility to conduct an energy audit of your home.

The United Nations Environment Programme defines true sustainability as:

**sus•tain•a•bil•i•ty** [sə-,stā-nə-'bi-lə-tē] *noun*

Understanding how our lifestyle choices impact the world around us and finding ways for everyone to live better and lighter.

[cwu.edu/sustainability](http://cwu.edu/sustainability)



A close-up portrait of a middle-aged man with dark hair and glasses, smiling slightly while reading a large, thick book. The book has a reddish-brown cover and white pages. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting an outdoor setting with foliage. The title 'Distinguished for a Reason' is overlaid on the top right of the image.

# Distinguished **for a Reason**

By David Leder

Four CWU faculty members were honored last spring as the 2021 Distinguished Professors. The annual awards recognize faculty who have excelled in teaching, research or artistic accomplishment, and public service.

The awards, established in 1977, are presented by the CWU Board of Trustees and represent the highest level of performance and achievement by faculty. Honorees receive a monetary award and their names appear on a continuing plaque.

## This year's recipients are:

### **Christopher Schedler — Distinguished Professor in Teaching**

Schedler (English) has presented 30 different courses during his 18 years at Central. His teaching embraces both undergraduate and graduate, face-to-face, hybrid, and online courses, not only in his areas of expertise, but also in other areas that he has researched in order to meet students' needs.

In addition, Schedler helped pave the way for many faculty to be able to teach online during the pandemic while serving as director of Multimodal Learning for several years. His expertise in online teaching goes far beyond CWU, and he often shares his knowledge and experience at regional and national conferences.

### **Robert Holtfreter — Distinguished Professor in Research/Artistic Accomplishment**

Holtfreter (business) is a locally, regionally, and nationally recognized scholar, specializing in the area of cyber fraud. He has been teaching in the College of Business for 30 years. His research credentials are extensive, with 112 double-blind peer-reviewed articles in numerous academic professional journals; four editorial-reviewed journal articles; 50 research-related conference proceedings and panel presentations; and 27 book chapters.

Holtfreter's research is widely regarded around the country, and he is considered a leading authority around the world in the identity theft/cyber security-related research areas. As a result, he is also in high demand as a speaker, serving on the editorial review boards of 21 academic and professional journals. He also received a Distinguished Professor award from CWU in 2010.

### **Susan Kaspari — Distinguished Professor for Service**

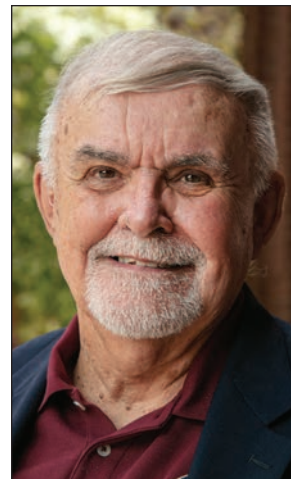
Kaspari has been a faculty member in the Department of Geological Sciences and the environmental studies program since 2009. She was chosen for the 2021 service award because of her efforts as an advocate for sustainability on campus, in the community, and through her research.

Kaspari's service has made CWU a greener campus, with a burgeoning culture of sustainability. She has spearheaded numerous efforts on campus that have both improved sustainable practices and created a community of faculty, students, and staff. She chaired the CWU Sustainability Council from 2018-20 and helped organize regular Sustainability Cafes, where members of the CWU community work to implement sustainability projects across campus.

### **Robert Shaffer Claridge — Distinguished Non-Tenure Track Faculty, Teaching**

Claridge (law and justice) has contributed to the Department of Law and Justice in countless ways since coming to Central in 2014, first as a lecturer and then as a senior lecturer. He was selected because of his dedication to teaching, the inventiveness of his methods, the consistently high evaluations and appreciation he receives from students, and the many contributions he has made to both the law and justice and the family and consumer sciences programs.

Among his accomplishments, Claridge has developed six new courses, revived and advised the Mock Trial Club, and regularly mentored award-winning presentations at the SOURCE research conference. A practicing lawyer in Ellensburg, Claridge has covered 23 unique courses over six years. ■



*Robert Holtfreter*



*Susan Kaspari*



*Robert Shaffer Claridge*

*Left: Christopher Schedler*





*Ron Erickson speaking at the 2019 State of the University.*

## Outgoing BOT Chair Ron Erickson Leaves Lasting Legacy

By Richard Moreno

Ron Erickson is a big believer in the value of communication. Throughout his 11-year tenure on the Board of Trustees (BOT), three as chair, he sought to establish strong connections among CWU faculty, staff, and students, as well as members of the Ellensburg community.

"There are three things I am most proud of accomplishing during my time on the board," Erickson explained. "The first is listening to the Faculty Senate at an open meeting and hearing what I called, 'disquietude,' and asking to meet with them ahead of trustees' meetings in order to learn more.

"Second was raising questions about the nature of Central's general education requirements, which became a catalyst for a thorough review of those requirements. Third, I am proud of commencing meetings between the trustees and leaders in the Ellensburg community."

At a recent BOT meeting, current chair Robert Nellams, who served alongside Erickson for the past three years, described him as a gifted and talented consensus builder with deep ties to the community.

"Ron grew up in the Ellensburg community and graduated from Ellensburg High School and Central Washington University," Nellams said. "His family has been in the Kittitas Valley for nearly 150 years, so he has been able to provide valuable insights and historical perspectives to the board."

Erickson, who earned a BA in history from Central in 1966, said he wanted to serve on the CWU Board of Trustees because of his great affection for the university and the community.

"I have deep roots in the Ellensburg area, going back to 1876," he said. "I felt that I could make a contribution to the



*Robert Nellams*



*Ray Conner*

### BOT Names Robert Nellams as New Chair

CWU's Board of Trustees unanimously approved Robert Nellams as its new chair and Ray Conner as vice chair. Nellams, a 1982 CWU College of Business alum, began his six-year term on the Board of Trustees in 2015 and previously served as vice chair under outgoing BOT chair Ronald Erickson. Nellams is the director of the Seattle Center, where he manages a staff of 240 full-time employees and more than 650 intermittent staff. Conner is the former vice chairman of The Boeing Co. He graduated from CWU in 1979 and joined the BOT in 2018. He currently sits on the board of directors of Alaska Airlines and for Adient, a global supplier of seats to the automotive and aerospace industries.

governance of the university as a consequence of my long-term experience as an attorney and businessman, with a deep commitment to public education.”

Erickson’s father, Ed K. Erickson, was a lifelong educator, who served as a professor and chair of the Department of Education at Central for many years. He spent much of his childhood on the pioneer farm owned by his mother, Ayleen Frederick Erickson, which her family had homesteaded in the Kittitas Valley in 1876.

Following his graduation from Central, Erickson earned an MA in American studies from the University of Wyoming and a law degree from the University of California, Davis.

Erickson was appointed to the board in October 2010 by former Washington Governor Christine Gregoire and served as chair from 2018-2021.

With more than 35 years of experience as an attorney and entrepreneur, including leading a number of global technology enterprises, Erickson said his initial goal was to simply contribute to making the university a well-run organization that adhered to its mission of providing a quality, student-centered education. But over time, after learning more about the university’s inner workings, he began to focus on accessibility and affordability, and developing a robust general education curriculum.

Erickson said his favorite memories about his time on the board involve having the opportunity to meet new people and make new friends.

“There is no substitute for the wonderful collegial environment that develops among trustees over time,” he said. “And, I was also able to meet many faculty and staff as well. I looked forward to our trustee meetings and seeing friends.”

Erickson said one thing he felt he never quite achieved was developing a better connection between the Central of today and its historic legacy.

“Left undone, in my mind, is building into the decision-making process today an awareness of the historic context,” he said. “There are long-term strategic initiatives that the university should address. They require the long view ... which extends beyond the terms of trustees, university presidents, and senior

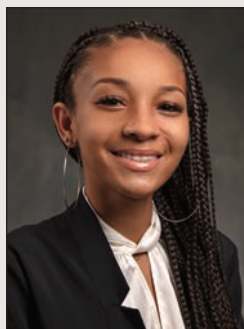


*Nellams and Erickson*

management of the university. They involve fundamental questions about the role that a residency university and *in situ* learning have in an increasingly virtual world.”

As for the future, Erickson said he plans to continue building Know Labs, Inc., a company pioneering non-invasive medical diagnostics technology, which he founded several years ago. When COVID-19 restrictions ease, he also hopes to travel with his wife, Dia, and spend more time with his children and grandchildren.

“I will always remain connected to Central although my engagement will now be more ad hoc and less formal.” ■



### **Governor Appoints Paige Hall as Student Trustee**

Governor Jay Inslee named Paige Hall as CWU’s student trustee for the 2021-22 academic year. Hall, a 22-year-old Renton High School graduate, will be a senior during her term and is majoring in family and child life with a specialization in child development. She is also pursuing a minor in Africana and Black Studies. Additionally, she serves as student initiative coordinator at CWU’s Diversity and Equity Center and is active with the Black Student Union.

### **Educational Opportunity Centers Receive \$2.67 million**

Central’s goal of reaching more prospective students from underrepresented communities around the state received a major boost this fall when the U.S. Department of Education approved two Educational Opportunity Centers (EOC) program grants worth \$2,672,960 over the next five years. This year alone, the EOCs will receive \$534,592 combined, with more than half of the funding—\$302,542—going to CWU’s existing TRIO EOC, housed at Yakima Valley College.



# VP of University Advancement Brings Decades of Experience

By Robin Burck

Following a nationwide search, CWU has selected Paul Elstone to serve as its new vice president for University Advancement and executive director of the Central Washington University Foundation.

Elstone's duties will include working with the academic colleges on various initiatives, facilitating fundraising for Wildcat Athletics, leading alumni relations efforts, and working closely with academic and administrative leadership to strengthen and increase fundraising efforts that advance CWU's mission and goals.

"I wanted to come somewhere where there was an intense focus on every student and their success," said Elstone, who started his new role in August. "This includes students from underrepresented backgrounds, first-generation students, and talented students who just need to find the right place for them. That was why I started looking at Central."

CWU Foundation President Angy Smith expects Elstone's influence to be felt immediately across the institution.

"Paul's deep experience includes developing a culture of philanthropy among internal and external stakeholders at his previous institutions," Smith said. "He has more than 20 years of experience in higher education development and will play a key role as we address our future development needs."

Prior to coming to CWU, Elstone worked for nearly two decades at the University of Oregon, where he served as the assistant vice president of schools and colleges development, interim director for donor relations, and, most recently, senior associate vice president of development.

The native of the United Kingdom holds a BA in economic and social history from the University of Liverpool and a



Paul Elstone

master's in education management from Roehampton Institute (University of Surrey).

He looks forward to bringing his experience and expertise to CWU as the university builds for the future. In just a short time, he's already begun building key relationships across the CWU community.

"I have received a very warm welcome at CWU," Elstone said. "It is clear to me that our alumni, donors, and friends are a critical source of inspiration and support for our students. I am excited to help develop those relationships even further."

In his spare time, Elstone enjoys spending time with his wife, Angie, and their four adult children. ■



## NSF Names Johansen as Section Head of Atmospheric Sciences

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has appointed CWU Professor of Environmental and Analytical Chemistry Anne Johansen as section head of atmospheric sciences. Johansen has been working with the NSF as acting section head since November 2020. With this appointment, she steps into a more official, long-term role with the agency. The purpose of the NSF is to review and fund promising research in science, engineering, and education.

## Need Creates Demand for Master's in STEM Leadership

CWU has begun offering the state's first and only Master of Education specialization in STEM Leadership. The 48-credit hybrid program, introduced this fall, is geared toward the needs of K-12 teachers, allowing them to attend classes in the summer without having to manage their daily teaching responsibilities. The degree, open to all elementary through 12th-grade teachers, typically takes two years to complete and is designed for those who want to improve STEM offerings at the school and district levels.

# Alumna Nurtures Sustainable Brand

By Kathleen Singleton

Christine Day is helping people reimagine what good business practices look like when they are integrated into the foundation of a brand.

Through her work with The House of LR&C—which stands for Love, Respect, and Care—the 1984 CWU alumna (BA Business Administration) has developed a fashion brand that encompasses multiple clothing labels.

Day co-founded the business with Seattle Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson and Grammy-winning singer Ciara. The brand's initial labels include Human Nation and Good Man Brand, with a third brand called LITA recently announced. LITA is a woman's brand that stands for Love Is The Answer and meets their goals of bringing accessible fashion together with sustainability and transparency.

"I have known Russell and Ciara for a number of years," Day said. "We enjoyed working together and decided to combine our experience and interests to create something from the ground up that reflects our shared values—an apparel company that's good for both people and the planet."

Three percent of every purchase made through the brand goes to the Why Not You Foundation, a nonprofit created by Wilson and Ciara that is dedicated to fighting poverty through education.

*Models wearing Human Nation apparel.*



*Ciara, Christine Day, Russell Wilson*

The House of LR&C is a Public Benefits Corporation and is working toward becoming a B Corporation, a certification that marks a high standard of public transparency, environmental performance, and legal accountability.

"We always want to be held accountable to delivering on our promise of being good for people and the planet," Day said.

Defining sustainability under the United Nations goals, The House of LR&C is committed to continually working toward a more sustainable future, starting from the ground up.

Day hopes her company's initial success might help inspire Wildcats to become interested in sustainability careers. She wants them to know that they are setting themselves up for a bright future.

"I believe this is one of those areas where the consumers are ahead of most businesses, so there is an opportunity to make great strides," she said.

When talking about her new venture, Day reflects back on her time at CWU, saying that her education provided her with a solid business foundation and an ability to innovate.

She says being a member of the Wildcat family helped her learn that "good business includes good impact, and you must live your values to create real value."

Day is also no stranger to business success. She is the former chief executive officer of lululemon athletica, one of the world's most recognized athletic apparel brands, and also founded Luvo, a Vancouver, Canada-based food and catering company that specializes in healthy frozen foods.

Learn more about Day's sustainable business plans at [thehouseoflrc.com](http://thehouseoflrc.com). ■

## Spanish-Language Math Program Earns National Diversity Award

A CWU-sponsored math program has been recognized with the 2021 Inspiring Programs in STEM Award by *INSIGHT into Diversity* magazine, the oldest higher education diversity publication in the U.S. The Circulo de Matemáticas en Español—also known as Kittitas Valley Spanish Language Math Circles, or KVMC—is hosted by Spanish-speaking CWU undergraduates, and invites elementary and middle school students to engage with math exercises in their native language, through non-traditional teaching methods. Students create art, play games, and discuss complex, real-world mathematical problems with their mentors, without the roadblocks a language gap can cause. [cwu.edu/math/KVMC-Espanol](http://cwu.edu/math/KVMC-Espanol)

## CWU-Des Moines Offers New Computer Science Program

Capitalizing on the long-standing partnership between CWU and Highline College, CWU-Des Moines is launching a new undergraduate Bachelor of Science computer science program in January 2022. Designed to address the strong demand for computer science professionals in the greater Seattle area, the new program seeks to prepare more CWU students for careers in the Northwest technology industry.





Brent Gentling

## YouTube Star Brings Old Things Back to Life

By David Leder

Sustainability isn't the cornerstone of Brent Gentling's business model, but that doesn't mean he lacks appreciation for the "reduce, reuse, recycle" mantra.

The owner of BYOT (Bring Your Own Tools)—a YouTube channel centered around do-it-yourself home remodeling projects—has always understood the importance of adhering to sustainable building practices.

While he often uses green building concepts in his on-line demonstrations, Gentling has found that it's even easier to introduce these techniques now that they have become so popular in the industry.

"With everything I build, I try to account for sustainability," said Gentling, a 2008 CWU construction management graduate who launched BYOT in 2016. "I'm not LEED-certified, but that's not my goal for this business. I just love the restoration process, and that's become a key aspect in everything I do."

Gentling's primary objective with the BYOT channel is to show other remodelers how to complete a wide variety of home-improvement projects, from making a bed frame or dining room table to building a deck or installing new floors.

One reason his videos have gained such a following—averaging one million views per month over the past year—is that he walks his viewers through every step of the building process, including voiceovers and common-sense explanations about his methods.

"My passion is helping other DIYers be creative with their own projects," said Gentling, 37, who lives with his wife and daughter in Shoreline. "I spend a lot of time trying to make the process as easy as possible. I tell people why I'm doing certain things, and how I'm doing them. That's what has helped differentiate my channel from many others that are out there."

### Vaccinated Students Receive \$10,000 in Scholarships

CWU awarded five scholarships in the amount of \$2,000 each to Central students who were fully vaccinated against COVID-19. The scholarships were funded by the Governor's Office and were part of the state's "Shot of a Lifetime" program, which incentivized vaccinations among Washington college students. The scholarship winners were Niki Abaglo, Law and Justice major; Jenny Hart, Business Administration, Human Resources Management major; Angela W. Park, undeclared; Unouna Pauu, Psychology major; and Catherine Wotherspoon, undeclared.

### Revered 'Nick on the Rocks' Program Collects Pair of Emmy Awards

CWU won two Emmy Awards this summer from the Northwest Chapter of the National Association of Television Arts and Sciences for the popular geological sciences program *Nick on the Rocks*. The show—which aired on PBS through last year and is still available on YouTube—was recognized for the "Teanaway Tropics" episode in the category Environment/Science, and for the episode "Saddle Mountains Buried in Ash" in the category Informational/Instructional. The Emmys were presented to Linda Schactler, executive producer; Nick Zentner, host/writer; and Chris Smart, producer/photographer/editor.

Another passion for Gentling, in business and in life, is figuring out how to add value to old or discarded materials. He often shops for used lumber at places like Second Use Building Materials and Ballard Reuse, and he's always keeping his eyes peeled for a stray piece of driftwood or an antique typewriter that can be repurposed.

Some of his recent hobby projects include a floating shelf he designed out of beach wood, a rebuilt 1930s-era Remington typewriter, and a walnut table that features piano keys encased in epoxy. He even installed a synthetic lawn at his home north of Seattle, allowing his family to save hundreds of gallons of water every summer.

"Sustainability just happens naturally for me because of what I'm interested in and what surrounds me in life," Gentling said. "I think it's fun to revive old things, and I believe we should all be doing more of this."

One of his recent BYOT projects involved building a shed and a deck out of recycled plastic products. He said the primary benefit of those structures is that they could last generations, compared with a wood deck that might last 50 years, if you're lucky.

"I'm always thinking of ways that I can produce less construction waste—and just waste in general—so, I try to use whatever materials are available," he said. "I like that I can help promote sustainable building practices with my business, but that's not my only goal. For me, it's all about bringing old things back to life."

Learn more about Gentling's growing business at [BYOTools.me](http://BYOTools.me), or on YouTube at BYOT. ■

## Wildcat Focuses on Responsible Sourcing

By Kathleen Singleton

One area that few people paid much attention to in the past has been thrust into the headlines today—global supply chain disruptions. The main culprits, according to experts, include the lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, an underinvestment in logistics, and a shortage of available workers.

Additionally, as the issue of climate change becomes more obvious around the world, supply chain managers are beginning to recognize the importance of transporting and handling goods in more sustainable ways.

That's where CWU graduate Alina Scarlett ('14), who works as a supply chain sustainability manager at Applied Materials, is trying to make a difference.

"I currently manage responsible sourcing, which includes supply chain due diligence for human rights, workplace health, and safety, environment, and ethics," Scarlett said.

Two of her primary responsibilities are collecting data about greenhouse gas emissions and properly sourcing minerals within the supply chain.

She said she has always been passionate about using her knowledge and experience to help people and the planet, which made a sustainability-focused career a perfect fit for her.

Scarlett completed a bachelor's degree in supply chain management at Central, and later earned her master's degree in supply chain strategy at Pennsylvania State University.

As for the future? Scarlett said her personal goals include incorporating more recycled minerals in place of raw minerals, as well as increasing efforts to protect human rights across the value chain.

In other words, doing good is a good day's work for Scarlett. ■



*Alina Scarlett*

### Food and Agribusiness Management Program Launches

The College of Business has rolled out a new minor/certificate program in food and agribusiness management and marketing. The program was established in response to the workforce and education needs identified around the region, along with increasing employer demand from the state's food and ag industries. It focuses on preparing students for careers in the food and ag sectors, specifically in the areas of marketing and management, human resources, operations management, food service management, and product management.



### New Fashion Marketing Specialization First in the Region

The Apparel, Textiles, and Merchandising (ATM) department now offers a fashion marketing specialization that is designed to take advantage of growing demand across the region. As the only program of its kind in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho, the new specialization is designed to educate future leaders in the fashion marketing industry by providing them with knowledge and skills they will need to start their careers—and make an immediate impact.





*Marc McPherson*

Marc McPherson doesn't consider himself an artist. In fact, he is a lieutenant in the CWU Department of Police and Public Safety. But when he's not out patrolling the campus, one of his hobbies is firing up a welding torch and creating a dragonfly, a dog, or a fisherman from old car parts, broken tool pieces, scraps of metal, and wire.

"I was a LEGO kid. I love putting things together. I would spend hours playing with LEGOs," he explained.

"When I got to college, I got my first project car; it was a '67 Mustang. And since I didn't have enough money to have somebody rebuild it or restore it, I fixed it up. So, I had to learn how to do everything by myself."

McPherson said that included purchasing "the cheapest welder I could find" to do body work. The Mustang project led to several other car rebuilds and, eventually, a garage filled with assorted car parts.

"I wouldn't call myself a hoarder but I am kind of a pack rat," he laughed. "If it looks like it could still be used, I hung on to it. And if they were kind of cool-looking, I would keep them, although I have no idea why."

McPherson amassed a collection of stray parts over time, and when he upgraded his welder a few years ago, he decided to practice on some of them before attempting to use it on a car project that might require more skill and experience.

"I had some broken tools and some broken parts and, of course with the advent of the internet, I looked up all the cool ideas for things you can make," he said. "Some interesting welded art pieces showed up, and I thought they were pretty cool and that I could probably do that."

# Accidental Art

By Richard Moreno





After crafting a handful of objects, including a scorpion made using an old spark plug, parts of an old screwdriver, and assorted widgets and wires, he showed them to his friends. The mother of one of his friends' wives, who works at the Clymer Museum & Gallery in Ellensburg, liked his work and asked him to submit some pieces for the museum's gallery.

The result was his first showing as part of a New Artists Wall exhibit at the Clymer earlier this year.

"I guess it took off from there," he said. "Somebody called and asked if I would sell them. Since then, a few pieces have sold and there are only a couple left down at the gift shop at the Clymer Museum.

"So, I kind of feel the pressure to build some more because they're [the Clymer Museum] making money off of them and I'd love to support a local business."

As for where he finds inspiration, McPherson said it can come from looking at works created by others and sometimes by just looking at an object and seeing what he wants to craft.

"There have been a couple of times when I looked at a part and said, 'I know what that's going to be,'" he said. "So, one becomes a dog's head and another becomes a cowboy. The latter was a U-bolt strap for a rear-wheel drive car and when you flipped it upside down, it looked like a bow-legged cowboy.

"So, the pieces sometimes dictate what you end up creating. A piece of welding wire makes a great lasso or a fishing rod."

A CWU grad (BA, Law and Justice, '96), McPherson originally intended to be a biology teacher—until encountering a couple of tough chemistry classes—then switched his major.

"It was pretty early on when I realized that the chemistry portion in biology was maybe not for me," he said.

After graduating from Central, and while his wife, Sharrie, completed her teaching degree at the university, he took a job as a corrections officer at the Kittitas County Corrections Center. In 2003, he was hired by his alma mater.

"I thought maybe I would work at Central for a few years and then go to the county or a bigger agency, but within a couple of years I fell in love with it," he said.

He said the job allows him to incorporate some of the skills he would have used if he had become a teacher, although in this case he is guiding students on how to safely enter adulthood, coping with being away from home for the first time, and ways they can keep themselves safe.

"I still enjoy mentoring and teaching and doing some of the same things I would have done as a teacher in my position," he said. "After a couple of years working here, I realized how much time we get to interact with students, which I enjoy.

"I love knowing that I can put on my uniform, go out and interact with them, and I can still be a bit goofy with them," he continued. "I can go into a residence hall and shoot pool or play foosball or whatever they're playing for a few hours and when I go back to my boss, I'll probably get a high-five and not a reprimand." ■







**Office of the President**  
400 E University Way  
Ellensburg WA 98926-7501



FOR AN EXPANDED DIGITAL EDITION, VISIT  
***CWUCrimsonandBlack.com***

**Join today.**  
[cwu.edu/alumni](http://cwu.edu/alumni)



ALUMNI  
ASSOCIATION

