



AURORA UNIVERSITY

MAGAZINE ————— VOLUME 4, ISSUE 1 — SPRING 2018



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Each year, daffodils grace the ground just outside the south wall of Eckhart Hall, offering fresh hope that spring and warm weather are near.



Rebecca L. Sherrick
REBECCA L. SHERRICK
PRESIDENT

I have been reading my way through the early months of 2018. Walter Isaacson's interpretation of the life of Leonardo da Vinci left me inspired . . . and breathless. In the absence of papers and letters, Isaacson worked from the 7,200 pages of notebooks compiled by his subject. By contrast, historian Ron Chernow's biography of Ulysses S. Grant relied upon more traditional sources and presented a familiar cast of characters. Missing, however, was the caricature of Grant found in many accounts of the Civil War era. Instead I was left with a deep appreciation for the general's courage and resilience, as well as a newfound understanding of his advocacy for the freed slaves and opposition to the Ku Klux Klan.

Walt Whitman, a keen observer of mid-19th century America, once noted that Grant was "nothing heroic and yet the greatest hero." Whitman saw in Grant the stature that scholars so often have missed. I caught some sense of this in the autobiography that Grant wrote late in life, long regarded as one of the most important in the American canon. The book was born of Grant's final struggle.

The former President had fallen victim (again) to a swindler and was penniless. He was losing his battle with tongue and throat cancer and feared leaving his family without income. And so Grant did something he had long avoided. During the blistering hot summer of 1885, he wrote. And then he died, just as the final chapters of his memoir reached the hands of publisher Mark Twain.

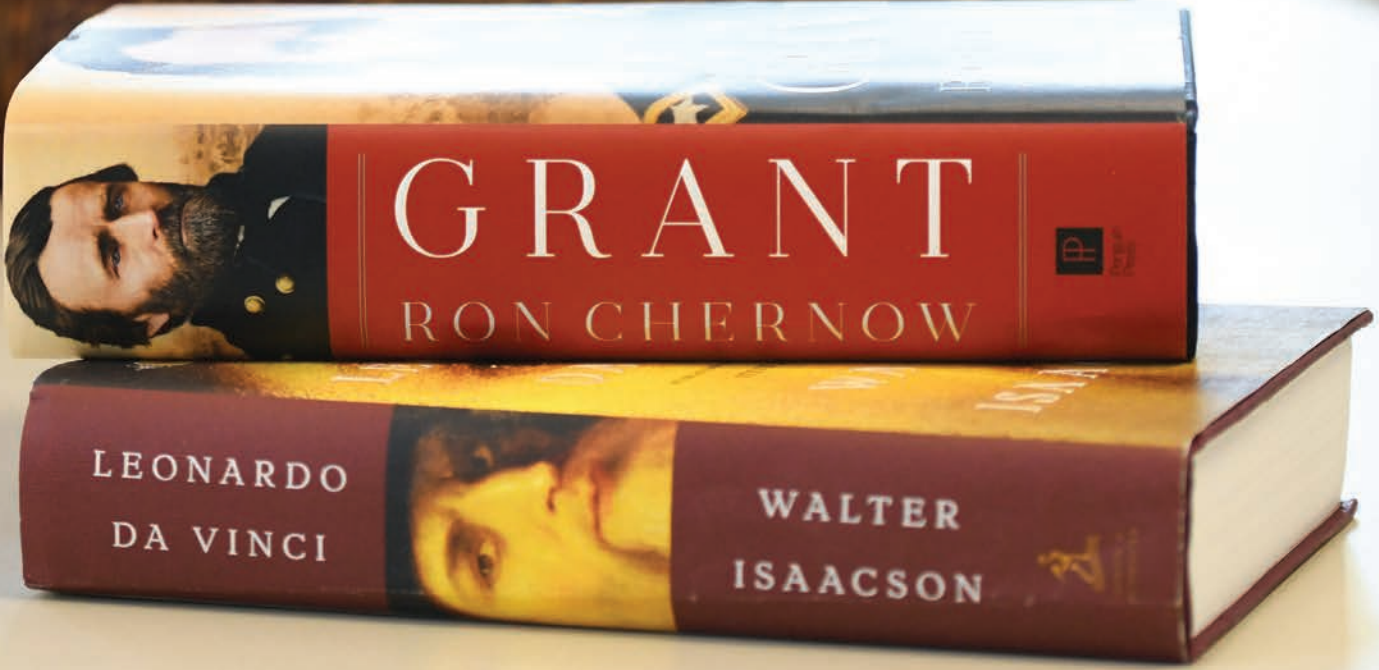
Through January and February, I mingled my days on campus with evenings devoted first to Leonardo and then to Grant. And always, the goal was the same, to make meaning of the larger human story that unfolds across time. Each AU student has a story of his or her own. Our privilege as university educators is to walk alongside as our students discover what truly matters and prepare accordingly.

Many of the stories in this edition of the magazine recall such moments. We begin with a salute to Dr. Sam Bedrosian and word of the plan to name the new softball stadium in his honor. The magazine includes also a feature on one of our most popular academic programs and the dean who is ensuring that each student realizes his or her full potential. Audrey is a fictional member of the 2018 freshman class in another feature. As a participant in the university's new First Year Experience program, she joins other members of the class in getting an early start on studies.

After the features, you will find news briefs and short articles about exciting new programs, including this summer's innovative partnership with Landmark College and the new engineering science curriculum (just approved by the Higher Learning Commission). We conclude with a glimpse of the new Aurora University presidential chain. Its symbols relate a powerful story that reaches back into the 19th century and the determination of two small colleges to illuminate the future through learning.

Thanks for reading.

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A Lasting Memorial to Dr. B

Dr. Sam Bedrosian was not only a man of integrity, he was someone who *taught* integrity. Although he was a coach, athletic director, professor and administrator in his 31 years at Aurora University, he may be best remembered for how he mentored his student-athletes off the field and court.

He was both unknown and inexperienced when he arrived in 1957, at only 25 years old. As it turned out, he had a heart for the institution's mission, working tirelessly to make a positive impact on student-athletes' lives.

Those student-athletes have fond memories of how Bedrosian — known as Dr. B — expected others to live their own lives. He cared about his student-athletes and their success in not only their chosen sport but also in their relationships with others. To him, building character was even more important than building a winning program.





President James Crimi recognized this trait early in Bedrosian's career. In the March 1961 issue of the *Aurora College Bulletin*, he noted, "... Mr. Bedrosian's teams have continued to represent the finest in the Aurora College tradition of sportsmanship, courage, and gentlemanly conduct both on and off the court. At every college where they have played they have made friends and earned respect, even while they were beating the home team on the basketball court."

"He was a man of great principle and ethics," agreed Therese (Plachetka) Nelson '83, '96, who played softball under Bedrosian. "He taught us more about life than about softball, although he did both. He was a father figure. He could be tough, but he was certainly a friendly and caring person."

Now, in appreciation of a generous gift from his wife, Carolyn, the new softball stadium at Spartan Athletic Park will be named in honor of Bedrosian during Homecoming 2018. The opening of the field this spring marks the first time since 1976 — when he initiated the softball program — that the team has had a true home-field advantage.

“He was a man of great principle and ethics. He taught us more about life than about softball, although he did both.
—Therese (Plachetka) Nelson '83, '96”

"A small college or university thrives on the strength and commitment of its faculty and staff," said President Rebecca Sherrick. "Shortly after I arrived on campus in 2000, I began to hear stories about Dr. B. It gave me enormous pleasure when he returned to the AU campus after a long absence for a special Homecoming celebration a few years ago. Only one name belongs on the new stadium. We are honored and humbled by the generous gift that his family gave in his memory."

It will be thrilling for our softball Spartans to play in Bedrosian Stadium for years to come. Now that's a home-field advantage."

Softball was one of Bedrosian's passions. In 1959 and 1961, he had been a member of the winning Aurora Sealmasters fastpitch

softball team, giving him singular insight into the sport. At AU, his final record in 18 years of coaching women's softball was exemplary: a 384-164 career record. His teams won 12 conference championships.

Bedrosian had many impacts on AU other than his leadership of the softball program. As the athletic director, he brought football back to AU in the mid-1980s after an

Sam Bedrosian by the Numbers:

12

Northern Illinois-Iowa
Conference titles won

10

All-Americans
coached

8

National Collegiate
Athletic Association
Division III regionals
(participated in)

4

Northern
Illinois-Iowa
Conference Players
of the Year coached

5

1994 national
rank among
National Collegiate
Athletic Association
Division III coaches

1

National Collegiate
Athletic Association
Final 4 tournament
(qualified for)



absence of nearly 35 years. As a coach, he shepherded the basketball, baseball, tennis and golf teams. He was heavily involved in the design and construction of Snell Baseball Field and Alumni Hall, the latter of which gave Aurora College its first permanent gymnasium, as well as a weight room, lockers and coaches' offices. Today, the plaza directly to the east of the building is named for him.

Although Bedrosian left Aurora University in 1994, he was inducted into the AU Hall of Fame in 2002. Fittingly, he received the university's Athletic Lifetime Achievement Award. He died in February 2015 and is survived by Carolyn and their three daughters, Ruth, Nancy and Carrie, among other family members.

Bedrosian's former colleagues and athletes know how much he would have appreciated the new 300-seat stadium that will bear his name. The stadium offers the players topnotch benefits such as high-quality mounds, a digital scoreboard and light towers.

Plan to attend the formal dedication of Bedrosian Stadium and Spartan Athletic Park on October 13, during Homecoming Weekend.

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Join us in honoring Dr. Sam Bedrosian with a gift to the new softball stadium at Spartan Athletic Park!

For more than three decades at Aurora University, Dr. B had an extraordinary impact on his student-athletes. The roughly 400,000-square-foot stadium reflects his record of winning softball teams (continued under Coach Mike McKenzie) and AU's commitment to providing its student-athletes with quality facilities. On Saturday, October 13, during Homecoming 2018, the stadium will be named in his memory. (Learn about the stadium at spartans.aurora.edu.)

You also can honor him by naming one or more of the many components that make up the stadium. Look inside the envelope below for the opportunities available. Fill out the contact information, indicate the opportunity that interests you and send the envelope back to us. Or for more information, contact Meg Howes, vice president for development, at (630) 844-5256 or mhowes@aurora.edu.



Planning Your Philanthropy in 2018

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, signed into law in December 2017, is meant to simplify the tax code and reduce taxes. We offer a great primer on the tax changes at aurora.edu/plannedgiving. If you would rather talk with us directly about the tax advantages of making a gift to Aurora University or George Williams College through a will, annuity, life insurance and/or life income agreement — or if you have named or are considering naming AU or GWC in your estate plan — contact us using the information below.



Meg Howes

Meg Howes grew up in a family that was heavily involved in volunteering and philanthropy. As a student at Georgetown University, she got a first taste of working at a nonprofit with an internship at the Smithsonian. These and other formative experiences led to a career focused on fundraising.

She started out at the Art Institute of Chicago, then next moved to Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art and the Avery Coonley School in Downers Grove. At Elmhurst College, she managed day-to-day fundraising operations and developed a keen understanding of how to match donors' passion with the students' needs.

Howes came to Aurora University last November as the vice president for development. She is passionate about the work she does and driven to make a difference. "I am so thrilled to join the team at AU," she said, "and feel very lucky to be part of a wonderful community so committed to student success."

Office of Development

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Teri Tomaszekiewicz

Aurora University's mission — to transform students' lives through education — is a personal one for Teri Tomaszekiewicz, who serves as vice president for alumni relations. In college, her own life was transformed because of dedicated faculty and staff, and she is committed to creating similar opportunities for AU students.

"The students and their success are our number one priority, which alumni can certainly appreciate and value," she said. "We continue to offer a personal and purposeful education, one rooted in character and scholarship, faith and service."

Tomaszekiewicz has worked in alumni relations and development for more than three decades. Her department fulfills the university's mission through events such as Homecoming and Coming Home weekend, as well as ongoing communications, all of which keep alumni connected with the students and with each other.

"I have an appreciation for personal histories, so I find inspiration in those stories of connections being made," she said.

Office of Alumni Relations

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Vice President for Alumni Relations
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Sarah Russe

Although a few years in higher education in Texas intersect Sarah Russe's career, she considers Aurora University her second home. Her MBA is from AU and she has spent most of her career here. Plus, two of her three children earned their undergraduate and graduate degrees from AU.

For nearly 30 years, Russe has been involved in many facets of the AU experience, including enrollment, student life and alumni relations. "I have enjoyed making a positive difference in the lives of students, whether helping them afford tuition, become student leaders or find jobs after graduation. That's why I have kept learning as much as I can about higher ed," she said.

Today, she is in charge of all university events, such as Music by the Lake and Commencement. Although the responsibilities are great, there are perks: "I get to meet artists and authors, which I never would have thought possible!"

Office of Community Relations

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Vice President for Community Relations
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MUSIC BY THE LAKE



PRESENTED BY GEORGE WILLIAMS COLLEGE
2018 SUMMER EVENTS



Sunday, June 24, 4 p.m.
COMMUNITY SHOWCASE WITH THE
LAKE GENEVA SYMPHONY
LAKESIDE MATINEE



Saturday, July 7, 7:30 p.m.
BRUCE HORNSBY & THE NOISEMAKERS



Saturday, July 14, 7:30 p.m.
WYNONNA & THE BIG NOISE



Saturday, July 21, 7:30 p.m.
BARITONE NATHAN GUNN
CHICAGO PHILHARMONIC
AN EVENING OF LOVE SONGS



Sunday, July 29, 4 p.m.
RALPH'S WORLD



Saturday, August 11, 7:30 p.m.
THREE DOG NIGHT



FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE SEASON OR TO PURCHASE TICKETS, VISIT MUSICBYTHELAKE.COM.



COMING HOME
JULY 13–15, 2018



HOMECOMING
OCTOBER 12–14, 2018



1

Athletic Training Facilities

The Athletic Training program has moved into new classroom and laboratory facilities in Alumni Hall. The facilities feature state-of-the-art therapeutic equipment, anatomical models, clinical assessment tools, a Smart Board and more. Students use the classroom and lab to study and practice clinical skills and competencies throughout the semester.



2

Athletic Training Room at Spartan Athletic Park

A new 600-square-foot athletic training room at Spartan Athletic Park houses four treatment tables, three taping tables, two therapeutic whirlpools and new therapeutic modality machines. All of the students' pre- and postpractice needs can be met in one location. Plus, the proximity of the athletic training room to the field provides space for staff to evaluate and treat injuries that happen in practice or games.



3

Michael J. Birck Collaboration Center for Innovation

The Michael J. Birck Collaboration Center for Innovation in Stephens Hall features 3,200 square feet of modern technology to help area high school students learn about concepts and processes common in engineering practice, as well as related fields. Students work with engineering professionals as they design and prototype inventions. The Tellabs Foundation provided funding for the facilities.



4

Wireless Internet on the Quad

On the quad, an outdoor wireless internet system consisting of 11 unobtrusive antennae now provides full coverage. Students can cross the majority of the campus without losing the wireless internet signal. The students report great satisfaction with the service, and the Information Technology Services Department continues to seek input to ensure their needs are being met.



Giant Steps

on the Road to Discovery

A young woman reaches her junior year in high school and begins thinking about the next stage of her life: college. Around her, friends are planning their futures with great confidence. One is destined to be a marine biologist. Another surely will command a surgical suite. But this young woman — let's call her Audrey — just doesn't know. She applies to Aurora University because she has a vague idea that a career in social work might be interesting. She and AU accept each other.



Audrey and her parents arrive for AU4U Registration and Orientation in early summer. She knows it should be time to discover what matters and begin building her life around it. But still, her mind is filled more with doubt than decision.

Fortunately for Audrey, this summer she will begin taking part in a new First Year Experience (FYE) program at AU. Many schools offer a version of FYE that revolves around guiding students into a career choice. But for AU, there is something more vital on the other side of an education than a career ladder. Here, it's

about vocation. It's about taking the time to ask and answer relevant questions that get to the heart of not just students' aptitudes but also their values, passions and life experiences. It's about pinpointing that calling that will fill them with excitement, fulfill them long into adulthood and motivate them to serve in the community.

During AU4U, students and their parents head to campus to register for classes and generally get to know the surroundings. This year, however, the students will be part of a brief discussion about what the idea of vocation means. They will also learn they will be taking an interactive career

assessment called Focus 2 over the summer. This online tool matches results with AU's academic opportunities.

A summerlong component is one of the factors that make AU's FYE program unique. Most colleges and universities schedule a day like AU4U — but they would also leave Audrey and other incoming freshmen to play or work the summer away. Over the summer, the students will not only complete the assessment but also undertake assignments such as writing journal entries — all meant to stimulate a conversation not only within themselves but also with their loved ones.

"It was intentional for us to start this in the summer," said Amir St. Clair, executive director of AU's Wackerlin Center for Faith and Action. "Beginning at AU4U lays an important foundation so that each student can start exploring what vocation is and determining what the important questions are before the fall. The summer also presents a valuable opportunity for parents and other family members to become involved in this discussion using the language of vocation. Discovering what matters often can be best supported through reflection and engagement with others."





Lakeside Life Choices

During Welcome Weekend 2018, the students will meet their facilitator, who will then spend the entire fall semester guiding them and their fellow cohort (of about 30 students each) through a host of classroom-free activities — some mandatory, such as writing an essay and participating in online forums, and some voluntary. (Another unique aspect of AU's FYE: it is required for all freshman students as part of their general education course work.) For students like Audrey, whose direction in life is undecided, these exercises are intended to stimulate thoughtful discussions about a meaningful career.

"We're asking them to consider not just *which* academic major they would pursue but also *why* they would pursue a major. What do they really care about? Questions like that are new to FYE this year," said Matt Kneller, director of general education.

At the same time, the students will be given opportunities to grow skills they will need to succeed in college, such as managing their time, accessing campus resources and interacting with others.

FYE (which is partially supported this coming year by a grant from the NetVUE Foundation) is the beginning of

a process to develop students who will explore, reflect and think critically in all they do for the rest of their lives. On the other end of that process is the Junior Mentoring program, which will be in its third year this fall. If FYE is an entrance into college life, Junior Mentoring — when juniors begin working with a faculty member to learn skills such as writing a résumé and looking for a job — is an entrance into a career.

At the end of FYE and after much inquiry about what is important to her, our young friend Audrey decides to pursue that career in social work. She becomes a testament to the power of Aurora University to transform lives.

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As will be the case with FYE at the Aurora campus, incoming George Williams College students are required to devote time to learning essential college skills and reflecting on their career choices. But their experiences look different.

The mandatory GWC Experience course is an already established program that relies on firsthand activities — from sailing and horseback riding to visiting a food pantry and homeless shelter — to engage students in learning opportunities that complement lectures, discussions and writing assignments. All activities help students interact with each other and discover what they need to know for future success in college.

GWC Experience participants also are assigned a Common Read book that serves as a jumping-off point for related activities and events on campus.

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"The experiences we had in labs and lessons we learned from the Common Read truly opened my eyes to the world around me," one student said on a course evaluation.

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For Nurses,

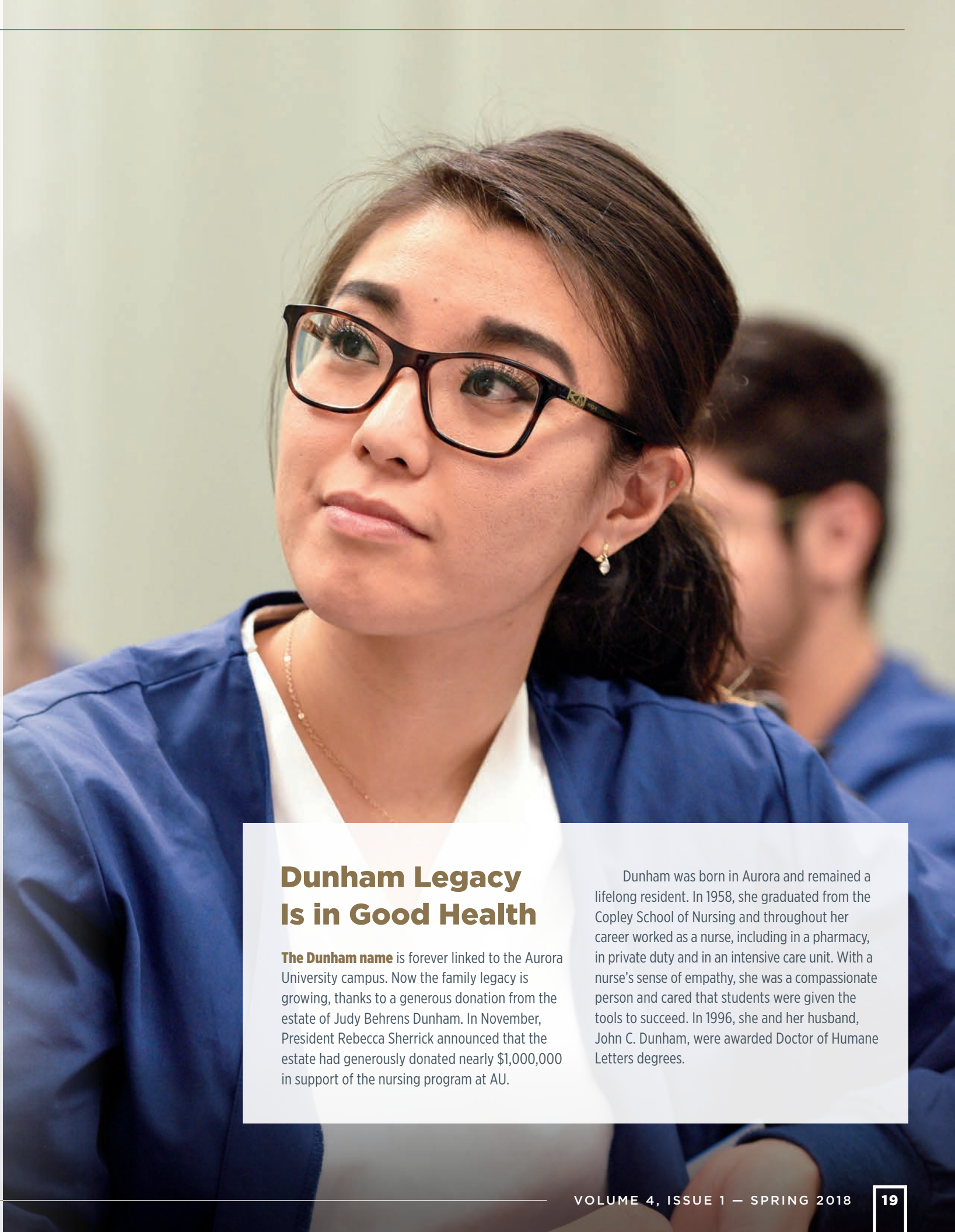
Quality Education = Quality Care



When Dr. Jan Strom arrived last summer to take on the role of dean of the School of Nursing, she found a program that cultivates graduates who are respected in the field for their knowledge and experience. But based on her extensive background in nursing and higher education — including holding positions such as director of the Department of Nursing at Elmhurst College, chair of the School of Nursing and Health Studies at Northern Illinois University and president and chair of the Illinois Association of Colleges of Nursing — she knew that, like any program that should reflect the evolving reality of a professional industry, the curriculum requires periodic examination and necessary revisions.

Dr. Jan Strom enjoys seeing students earn their Bachelor of Science in Nursing and practice nursing according to the profession's inherent values of altruism, autonomy, human dignity and social justice.

And with that, she reached out to the community — specifically, the nursing community — to establish advisory councils on both the Aurora University and George Williams College campuses. These councils are made up of industry professionals such as hospital and nursing home administrators, hospital medical directors, community college nurse administrators and AU alumni, all of whom have an interest in the graduates' successes. Advisory groups are staples in university nursing programs, but what's notable about the new councils at AU and GWC is that faculty are included in their membership. It's a distinction that makes sense. Faculty are gaining direct and firsthand familiarity with standard practices and trends in the industry, along with requirements the profession expects from graduates, while council members have the chance to learn about issues the students may be facing and suggest solutions.



Dunham Legacy Is in Good Health

The Dunham name is forever linked to the Aurora University campus. Now the family legacy is growing, thanks to a generous donation from the estate of Judy Behrens Dunham. In November, President Rebecca Sherrick announced that the estate had generously donated nearly \$1,000,000 in support of the nursing program at AU.

Dunham was born in Aurora and remained a lifelong resident. In 1958, she graduated from the Copley School of Nursing and throughout her career worked as a nurse, including in a pharmacy, in private duty and in an intensive care unit. With a nurse's sense of empathy, she was a compassionate person and cared that students were given the tools to succeed. In 1996, she and her husband, John C. Dunham, were awarded Doctor of Humane Letters degrees.

“What’s important is that the nursing community hears the faculty and the faculty hear the community,” said Strom. “It’s a conversation about making sure the students reach their full potential as nurses.”

Input from the councils is helping the faculty analyze the current program and make adjustments — including offering a greater understanding to the students about what their future may hold. While graduates may anticipate working in a hospital, current trends indicate that about half of them will find a calling elsewhere: in community agencies, in schools and in private homes. In nursing, the scope of responsibilities is extensive, with practitioners not only focusing on direct patient care but also establishing standards and managing whole care systems for a wide variety of organizations.

“The amazing part about nursing is that there are hundreds of different job opportunities,” said senior nursing student Carly Wood ’18, who is also the president of the Student Nurses’ Association at AU. “Each professor has a unique background, and it’s interesting to hear where they have worked and what they have accomplished. It’s inspiring to get a glimpse of what’s out there for us.”

That vision for a larger role in the nursing world is being built into the curriculum, with the expectation that the students should not only stay up-to-date on industry norms but also become leaders in the industry. As with Wood, they are encouraged to gain leadership skills by engaging in activities such as taking on governance roles in student organizations.

Nursing faculty and administrators are currently pursuing another, less tangible goal. Each year for the last 16 years, the polling organization Gallup has reported that the public regards nurses as having higher ethical standards than those working in 21 other occupations. Strom and the other educators want the nursing students to graduate with dedication to the idea that their purpose is to serve.

“Giving back to the community as a nursing student is more than just being in the hospital. It is important to give back to causes we believe in. Knowing I am making a difference in more ways than one is a reward.”
—Alli Carpenter ’18

“The core value of nursing is altruism,” said Strom. “We are working to show the students what that is. They are standing on the shoulders of millions of nurses who came before and who were ethical and compassionate.”

Students take part in philanthropic activities such as collecting mittens and hats for those in need. This past year, AU students accumulated 438 cold-weather items for the nearby Hesed House shelter for the homeless, while GWC students collected 52 for Love, Inc., which serves disadvantaged families in Racine County, Wisconsin.

“When they drove the mittens and hats over to drop them off at Hesed House, they were so proud,” said Strom, herself proud of their efforts.

“Communities should be treated just as a patient would,” said senior nursing student Bret Ciesielski ’18. “We educate them to prevent illness, we provide for them in their times of need and we help them get back up on their feet when they’re at their lowest. Even if it is just giving blood once a year or giving cans for a food drive, the smallest acts make a difference.”

Service to the community — specifically the citizens of Walworth County, Wisconsin — is why George Williams College began accepting nursing students in fall 2017. Although a young program, it boasts modern facilities and state-

of-the-art simulation equipment in the Simms Family Nursing Center. As with the AU program, high-fidelity simulation teaches nursing students clinical judgment in a safe environment.

Nationally, new programs like the one at GWC are needed. According to the National Academy of Medicine, only 55 percent of nurses in the work force have degrees at the baccalaureate or doctoral levels — far short of the Academy’s recommendations.

Changes to the curriculum and to admission standards may start attracting more students. For one thing, related classes are being adjusted to be geared more toward nursing — with science classes for nurses teaching cellular biology instead of photosynthesis, for example. For another, direct admission to the nursing



program is now available to incoming freshmen who meet certain academic standards. Students who progress satisfactorily will complete the Bachelor of Science in Nursing without having to apply for admission as sophomores.

To ensure students do want to progress, they are now offered classes in their major during their freshman year.

“I am discovering what I am passionate about earlier,” said freshman nursing student Sadie Jones ’21. “I am also learning all of the theories in nursing care and will know where and when to apply them later on.”

“We want to help the students understand sooner what the nursing profession requires,” said Strom. “At the end of their freshman year, we want them to feel confident about their decision to become a nurse.”

For the nursing students, that decision should have a positive outcome. The Bureau of Labor Statistics is projecting that registered nurses are in the midst of a surge in jobs. With the continued quality of the Aurora University nursing

program, graduates are sure to have a powerful impact as professionals in the care community.

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85%

2016 state and national pass rates for NCELX-RN*

*Required to become a registered nurse

97%

2016 Aurora University pass rate for NCELX-RN

Engineering Comes to AU

In fall 2018, Aurora University will start offering a Bachelor of Science in Engineering Sciences. While there has been much demand for an engineering program, few institutions of higher education in and around northern Illinois offer one — and even fewer are small enough to give students the individualized attention this demanding profession needs.

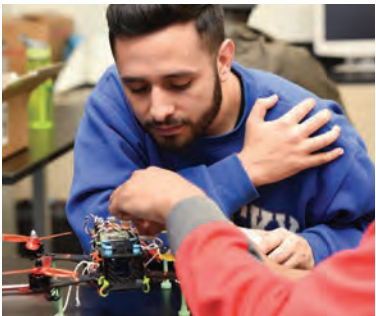
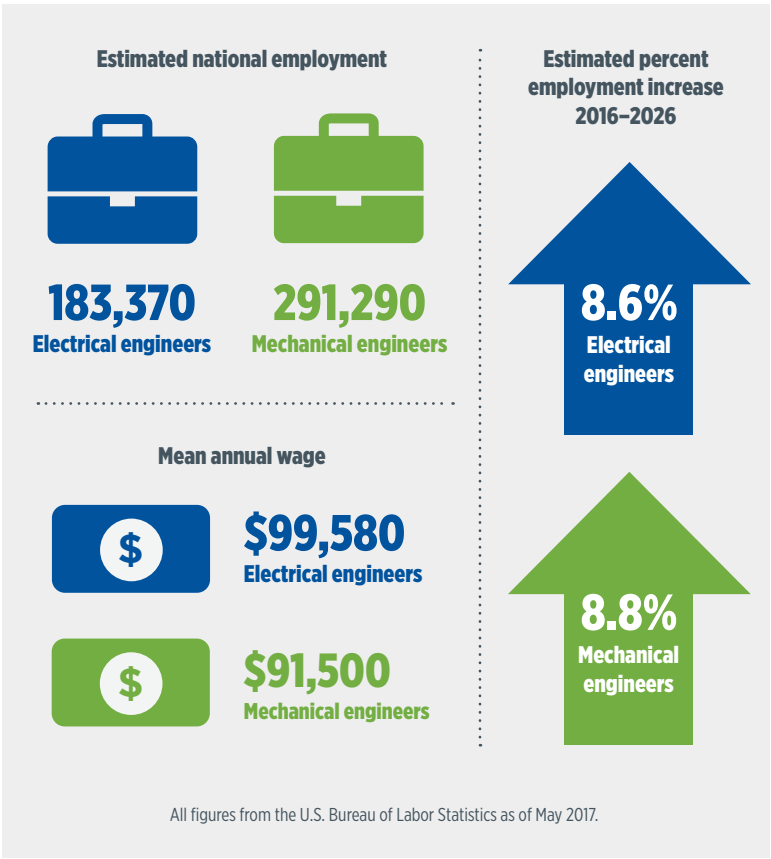
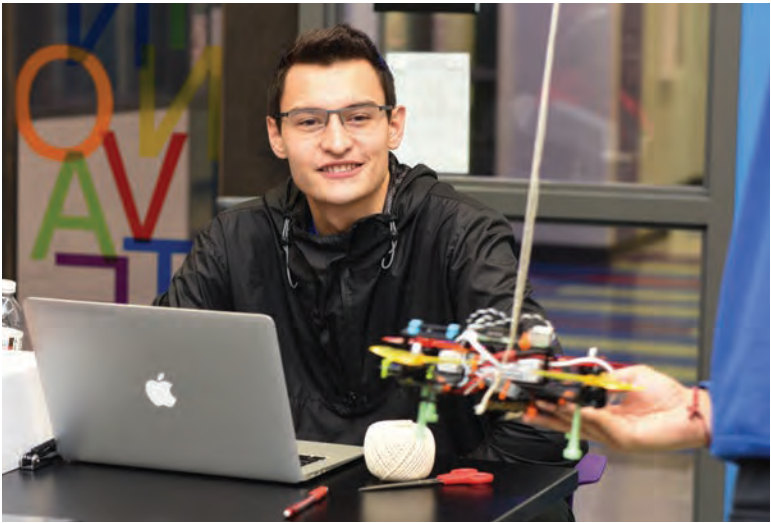
“At the freshman level, the students come in with a wide range of experiences in their skill set,” said Dr. Marie Dahleh, who started at AU last summer as the chair of the Department of Engineering, Mathematics and Computer Science. “We will address that with small class sizes. The faculty will be able to get to know the students and guide them in their education and, eventually, in their career choices.”

The Department of Engineering, Mathematics and Computer Science is an amalgam of existing mathematics and computer science courses and the new engineering degree. The first degree offered will be general, in engineering science, and more specific disciplines such as mechanical engineering and electrical engineering will become available after that.

The engineering degree is a natural extension of the curriculum offered to third- through eighth-grade students at the John C. Dunham STEM Partnership School at Aurora University. In the middle of the continuum between the STEM School and the engineering degree, high school students have the chance to take summer engineering classes at AU’s Michael J. Birck Collaboration Center for Innovation to earn university credit.



Dr. Marie Dahleh loves to create. She shares this passion with students and colleagues by helping them create everything from numerical algorithms to courses and academic programs.



Opera Gives Alumni Chance to Shine

The Aurora University Music Department is built around dedication to study, charisma in performance, a sense of mission and, of course, a passion for music. These characteristics led Music Department alumni Kate Pomrenke ’15 and Eunice Ayodele ’17 to study vocal performance in Bowling Green State University’s graduate program.

The two are now enhancing their repertoire and continue to gain performance experience. This has not gone unrecognized by the community, as Ohio’s Defiance College featured Pomrenke and Ayodele as the soprano and alto soloists, respectively, in Handel’s *Messiah* this past December.

“To be a soloist in *Messiah* and other concert works feels amazing as a young singer,” said Pomrenke. “I am extremely grateful for such an incredible opportunity.”

Ayodele explained that prior experience singing the alto soloist arias ensured she knew them well enough to give her best performance. She also credits skills she learned at AU. “Although I knew how to read music before attending AU, I learned how to perfect the music I am working on. AU gave me the tools I need to be an independent artist,” she said.

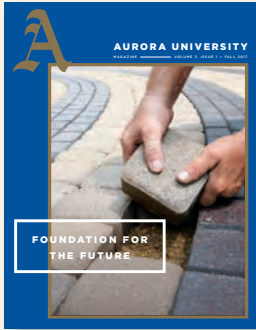
Pomrenke also believes that AU helped her prepare for life as a singer. “I wouldn’t be where I am without the amazing music professors and my experiences at AU,” she said.

Pomrenke graduated from Bowling Green with a Master of Music in Vocal Performance in May 2017 and is now an employed singer at the Rosary Cathedral and Toledo Opera Chorus in Toledo, Ohio. Ayodele will graduate with a Master of Music in Vocal Performance in May 2019. Both aspire to join a young artists program with an opera company.



Kate Pomrenke and Eunice Ayodele

Labyrinthine Answers



The Labyrinth — located just outside Aurora University’s Wackerlin Center for Faith and Action — was featured in the last issue of *Aurora University Magazine*, and since then, many people have wanted to know more about it. Marty and Debi Kermeen, owners of

Labyrinths in Stone (labyrinthsinstone.com), created the Labyrinth, which was dedicated during Homecoming 2017, thanks to a generous gift from the Class of 1967. Here they talk about the Labyrinth.

Q: Why did you create a 7-circuit labyrinth for AU?

A: In keeping with the inclusive tradition of the Wackerlin Center, the classical 7-circuit pattern labyrinth is an ecumenical spiritual tool, with respect for all religious beliefs. This beautiful pattern spans human history and can be found in 27 countries and on six continents, from as far north as Iceland and Arctic Russia, throughout Scandinavia and Europe, and as far east as Java and Sumatra. After discussing at least a dozen labyrinth designs, the alumni who gave the gift chose this pattern as the most appropriate. Furthermore, this particular design exemplifies the Wackerlin Center’s goal to be inclusive of all races and ethnicities.

Q: What is unique about the Labyrinth’s design?

A: The space was designed not just for individuals but small groups as well. There is a gathering space at the entrance, and the enlarged center accommodates group activities.

Q: Have you noticed anything about how people are using the Labyrinth?

A: We have so many stories about how the Labyrinth has helped people through times of triumph and trouble, happiness and tears. At the dedication, we witnessed an elated alumnus who walked the entire Labyrinth in the pouring rain wearing his graduation cap. An elderly widower told us he walked the Labyrinth with the memory of his late wife, who had only recently passed away. We have seen families walk the Labyrinth together, as well as people sitting in contemplation on the surrounding benches.



Program Helps Students with ASD Transition to College

All high school juniors or seniors face some anxiety about the thought of attending college, as do their families, but that feeling can be even more intense for students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Now Aurora University is pairing with Landmark College to offer the Summer Transitional Enrichment Program (STEP), which will help rising juniors and seniors with ASD manage that transition.

“Aurora University is at the forefront of exploring how learning transforms students’ lives. In Vermont, Landmark College is discovering and implementing practices to support students with ASD. We realized how closely our missions align, and a partnership is the next logical step,” said Dr. Donna DeSpain, executive vice president for enrollment.

From 15 to 20 students will spend June 20 to 29 at George Williams College, learning techniques for how to be successful in the college classroom

while also developing social skills. Trained faculty from AU, GWC and Landmark College are developing interactive classroom experiences through which these students can practice skills they will need, such as writing, studying, joining group discussions and being organized and on time. Outside of class, they will gain an understanding of what it’s like to share a residence hall with others.

The George Williams College campus in Wisconsin offers the chance for many adventures, and participants will have the choice to explore particular careers as they engage in afternoon activities such as learning about robots, discovering the world of animals and nature, taking part in cooking demonstrations and even figuring out how to break codes.

Experts will work with the students on their strengths and challenges, and at the end of the 10-day STEP, parents will receive a personalized assessment to help their son or daughter move forward to this next important stage in life.

For more information on how to enroll your high school student in this innovative program, contact Donna DeSpain at (630) 844-3840 or ddeSpain@aurora.edu.

A



GWC Dives Into Discussion of Oppression

Last fall, the George Williams College community challenged itself to think outside the box and break down the walls of oppression through a program called, appropriately enough, Boxes and Walls. This initiative about social justice and diversity is designed to give participants a firsthand perspective on oppressed groups.

“We brought Boxes and Walls to GWC as a way to educate students on how to have respectful conversations about difficult issues concerning diversity and oppression,” said Jenni Herrick, assistant dean and director of student success and engagement. “We also wanted them to gain a greater awareness that experiences and perspectives different from their own exist.”

The interactive, museumlike exhibit has been replicated on

other college campuses, with each one determining what aspects of oppression to address. GWC students, faculty and staff designed its own experience to focus on gender, race, immigration and sexual orientation.

“Different rooms were dedicated to exploring those four topics,” explained Herrick. “We also created a ‘tunnel of oppression’ that exposed participants to discriminatory language and terminology.”

Junior social work major Lorena Villagomez decided to help create Boxes and Walls as a way to educate herself and others on a topic that she realized few people know very much about.

“Stories of oppression and discrimination surface in the media every day, but most of them are not here in Williams Bay,” she said. “Even though it’s happening



somewhere else, it’s still affecting us. It’s important for the GWC community to participate in experiences like Boxes and Walls to educate ourselves about oppression.”

To bring as many students as possible in on the discussion, Herrick hopes to make the Boxes and Walls experience an annual one, and plans for a fall 2018 session are underway.

A

UNLOCKING

the GWC Door Story

For more than 100 years, the George Williams College campus has been considered a door of opportunity for visitors and students. It's fitting that two structures that stood on the western part of campus until the mid-1970s — dubbed House of Doors and Out of Doors — were constructed mostly of doors.

Similar houses adjacent to the Williams Bay campus still exist. The story of these types of homes begins with the destruction of hundreds of buildings from the Great Chicago Fire in 1871. The rapid rebuilding of the city

in the years that followed led to a lumber shortage.

Chicago architect R. B. Williamson's solution was to use doors salvaged from a hotel razed to make room for the Chicago World's Fair. His designs called for large stained-glass panels to allow for maximum natural light. Years later, when electricity became available, the wires, outlets and switches were surface-mounted to the doors.

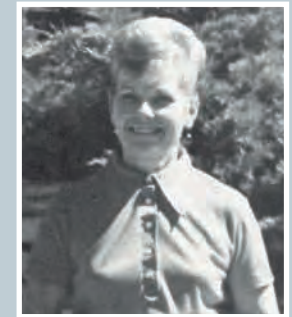
"I have many fun memories of spending time in GWC's own House of Doors," said Marilyn Slocum, a GWC staff member who lived in one of the cabins with her

husband and young children for several summers in the early 1970s. "The front porch had an amazing view of the lake. It was the perfect spot to play cards."

Coincidentally, the Great Chicago Fire also spurred development of lakefront homes on Geneva Lake. Families displaced by the fire spent the fall and winter of 1871–1872 at the lake awaiting reconstruction of their city homes. After returning to Chicago, many decided to spend summers there.

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Decades of Devotion



"House of Doors" may have been a nickname, but some buildings receive a designation as a form of honor. Last year saw the dedication of the Carolyn Burch Gramley Lodge at

GWC, a testament to the immeasurable contributions made by a truly remarkable woman.

Few names are more synonymous with the history of College Camp than Gramley's. She first came to the campus in 1961 as secretary to the camp director. A single mother of four teenage boys, she held several other jobs at the same time so her sons could attend college. Nearly 10 years after her arrival, she herself became director, a position she would hold until her retirement in 1985.

Today, more than 30 years later, Gramley's face still lights up when she speaks of her beloved College Camp. "It is such a wonderful place," she recently recalled. "I could not have been happier, and I don't know what else I would have done."

As director, Gramley pitched in wherever needed. When housekeepers had only a few hours to clean the entire campus before the next group arrived, there was Gramley, making beds. "I did everything except cook. They didn't want me in the kitchen!" she joked.

Dr. Richard Hamlin was president of GWC during Gramley's time as director. "I would call him for advice, but he trusted me," she said. So strong was their bond that Gramley and her late husband, Marvin, became travel companions with Dick and Joan Hamlin in retirement.



Photos of Williams Bay homes courtesy of Betsy Hamlin.

Reading Recs

Faculty and staff are enjoying — and recommending — these books!

PreparedU: How Innovative Colleges Drive Student Success
By Gloria Cordes Larson

The book speaks to the integration of the liberal arts with professional practice, particularly as it relates to business. The author invites the reader to consider a new hybrid learning model for higher education.

Submitted by Toby Arquette, Dean of the School of Business and Public Policy

Exit West
By Mohsin Hamid

In charting the journey and reception of a young refugee couple from an unidentified war-torn country in the Middle East, Hamid forces the reader to see the individual humans behind today's sweeping headlines and callous political discourse.

Submitted by Mark Soderstrom, Chair and Associate Professor of History

A Star for Mrs. Blake
By April Smith

This novel brings to life the historic Gold Star Mothers pilgrimage, through which mothers and widows whose sons and husbands died in World War I traveled to the grave sites. It provides a glimpse into what these women experienced during a two-week trip to France.

Submitted by Teri Tomaszewicz, Vice President for Alumni Relations

Blue Mind: The Surprising Science That Shows How Being Near, In, On, or Under Water Can Make You Happier, Healthier, More Connected, and Better at What You Do
By Wallace J. Nichols

This book presents scientific evidence of the emotional, cognitive and physical benefits of participating in water-based activities. It helps students understand, in a rational and academic way, the importance of recreational activities — especially those that involve water.

Submitted by Chris Wells, Chair and Associate Professor of Parks and Recreation Leadership at George Williams College

The Plenitude: Creativity, Innovation, and Making Stuff
By Rich Gold

This book argues for a return to playfulness in the learning process. It provides an interesting discussion on the interplay between art, science, design and engineering in the role of innovation.

Submitted by Marie Dahleh, Chair of the Department of Engineering, Mathematics and Computer Science

Lucky Boy
By Shanthi Sekaran

This is realistic fiction at its finest. This timely immigration story ultimately is an emotional tale about motherhood.

Submitted by Kathy Clark, Director of University Library



New Presidential Chain

Despite its structure and appearance, a leaf can be mighty. Imbue one with meaning and it can transform into an emblem of pride, tradition and scholastic standards achieved.

Aurora University has a new presidential chain that prominently features gold ivy leaves. Early in the 20th century, professor of Greek and Latin John W. Beach suggested that ivy leaves growing on the outside of Eckhart Hall could be awarded to students showing exceptional academic achievement each semester. In 1932, Aurora College created the Gold Ivy Leaf Award.

The tradition continues today as the university recognizes its most outstanding students each spring at the Honors Convocation.

Three medallions tell the story of Aurora University. One features the Aurora College seal and another the George Williams College seal. There are striking similarities to the two emblems. One features a torch and the other a lamp of learning, powerful testimony to our understanding that education is a source of illumination and truth. This is what we mean when we speak of the “transformative power of learning.” The two

college seals find their final expression in the new Aurora University emblem encircled with our signature AU blue.

Many of our academic traditions have their origins in the Middle Ages. In 15th century England, royalty bestowed such decorations as a form of recognition. In higher education, presidential chains and medallions — together known as livery collars — indicate that the wearer is the highest office holder at institutional ceremonies.

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CONNECT WITH US

Keep in touch! Aurora University is your university, and we want you to stay up-to-date about everything happening around the Aurora University and George Williams College campuses.

