

THE POINT



BUILDING A NEW DOCTORATE

Ed.D. program attracts experienced leaders with unique balance of theory and practice

City University Life

New core course provides skills for success in Pittsburgh's diverse urban community

Bison Brotherhood

Rugby Football Club achieves goals on and off the field



Dear alumni and friends,

With another memorable spring commencement season behind us, and summer on the horizon, you might think things are a bit quiet on our Downtown campus.

Nothing could be farther from the truth. A lively atmosphere of building and growth is always humming on campus and behind the scenes at Point Park, and this season is no exception.

For example, first-year students and their families will be joining us this summer for our enhanced Pioneer Experience orientation program. It's always a treat to meet them personally and share in their joy and enthusiasm of starting a new chapter of their lives at Point Park. At the Pioneer Experience, we also provide details about key academic and other student-focused initiatives that have recently been established to ensure each student's success.

We've also been building on the graduate level. For example, the past academic year marked the first year of studies for a group of experienced leaders that embarked on Point Park's very first doctoral degree, an Ed.D. in leadership and administration. Response to the new degree has been extraordinarily positive and we look forward to welcoming new doctoral students to campus this fall and in the years to come.

In addition, Point Park has initiated an ambitious, comprehensive effort to build the University's online degree programs. No matter where they are in the United States or around the world, our online students benefit from the University's faculty expertise, emphasis on real-world

experience, and intense commitment to student success. You can learn more about these programs at online.pointpark.edu.

Finally, one of our most exciting projects will soon be taking shape on Forbes Avenue: the new Pittsburgh Playhouse at Point Park. We are wrapping up the design process, working with state and local governments on final approvals, getting ready to prepare the site, and continuing our fundraising efforts. The new Playhouse will offer a range of interdisciplinary opportunities for students and faculty across the entire University. We predict that it will be a real game-changer for Point Park and our Downtown community.

We invite you to stop by and see what we're building at Point Park. We'd love to show you what's new on our dynamic urban campus.

Warm regards,

Dr. Paul Hennigan
President



Photo by Victoria A. Mikula, photojournalism major.



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ON THE COVER: The inaugural class in Point Park's first doctorate program nailed down strategies on leadership and team building at a kick-off event at the Carpenters Union Training Center last fall. Together they built desks for Holy Family Academy, which serves students of limited economic means. Photo by Chris Rolinson.

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TALK TO US!

The Point wants to hear from you. Send your comments and suggestions to:

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The Point is published by the Department of Marketing and Communications, Point Park University, 201 Wood Street Pittsburgh, PA 15222. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of published information. Please visit our web site at www.pointpark.edu for current information regarding University programs, departments, alumni activities and events.

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This policy affirms Point Park University's commitment to nondiscrimination, equal opportunity and the pursuit of diversity. Point Park University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, ancestry, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, genetic information, marital status, caregiver status or familial status in the administration of any of its educational programs, activities or with respect to employment or admission to the University's educational programs and activities. This policy is in accord with local, state and federal laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Age Discrimination Act of 1975 and the Pittsburgh Human Relations Act. Inquiries regarding these regulations, policies or complaints of discrimination should be referred to the human resources officer, telephone number 412-392-3952. Inquiries regarding Title IX and the Title IX regulations should also be referred to the senior vice president, academic and student affairs, as the Title IX coordinator, or deputy coordinators, the human resources officer or the dean of students.

FEEDBACK

A Long Way

Point Park has come a long way, from Point Park Junior College, to Point Park College and now Point Park University. I remain a proud alumnus. Thank you.

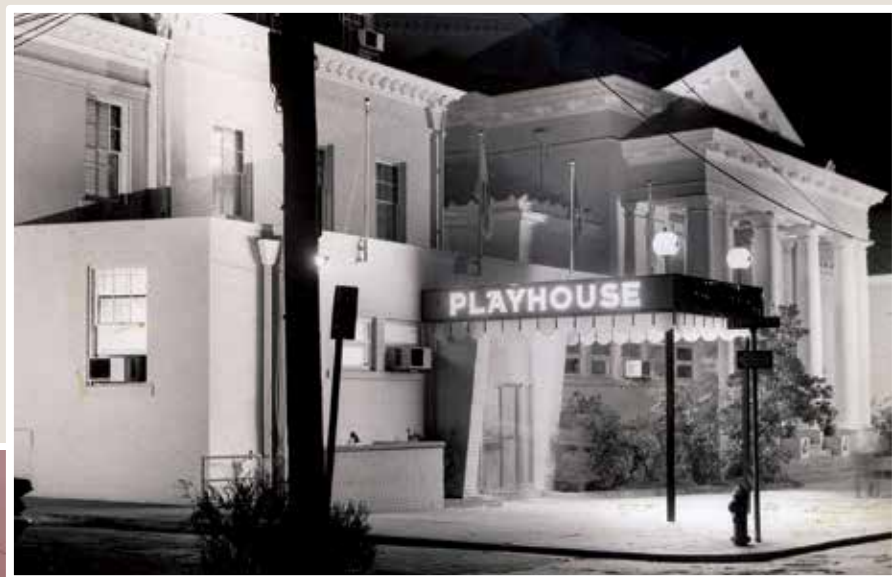
Jim Desch (BUS 1970)
Harrison City, Pa.

Playhouse Past and Future

The new Playhouse in downtown Pittsburgh will be beautiful ("Ready for a New Stage," Winter 2015). It will benefit not only the Conservatory of Performing Arts programs and the entire University, but will truly connect the Playhouse to the Downtown Pittsburgh arts community. I

am also happy to see that the plans for the new building include several theatres that will be able accommodate everything from large, main-stage shows to smaller, more intimate productions. That has always been an important characteristic of the original Playhouse in Oakland. As a theatre arts graduate who worked on numerous stage productions in the 1970s, I have a deep love and affection for the original Playhouse. I've made a life in entertainment and have worked in theaters all over the country, and there are none that feel as comfortable to me as the Rockwell Theatre. It's my favorite stage in the world. My hope is that the new Playhouse will also offer some of the unique intimacy, and sense of history, that so many alumni appreciate in the Oakland original.

Marty Schiff (Theatre Arts 1979)
Pittsburgh, Pa.



NEWS & VIEWS

Professional Advancement

Robert McInerney, Ph.D., **Brent Dean Robbins**, Ph.D., and **Matthew Allen**, Ph.D., members of the psychology faculty, joined students in presenting research work March 26-29 at the Eighth Annual Conference of the Society for Humanistic Psychology (led by Division 32 of the American Psychological Association) at the Chicago School of Professional Psychology. The student trip was arranged by the Confluence Psychology Alliance student group and supported by United Student Government, the Department of Humanities and Human Sciences and **James Thomas**, Ed.D., associate vice president for Academic and Student Affairs. "It was enlightening to be a part of such a caring, thoughtful, open and energetic community," said M.A. in clinical-community psychology student **Kevin Gallagher**.

Herman Reid, Ed.D., director of academic outreach, was honored Feb. 28 at the Fourth Annual Black History Celebration "Legends" Dinner, hosted by Classic Events, a Pittsburgh-based public relations and marketing consulting organization. He was recognized for his numerous educational contributions to the Pittsburgh region. Reid served for more than three decades as executive director of the Negro Educational Emergency Drive, which under his leadership provided more than \$12 million in college scholarships to more than 16,000 needy and deserving students. Reid established the BOLD program as part of Point Park's Urban Accounting Initiative. Through this collaboration with the Manchester Academic Charter School, middle school students have opportunities to explore the fields of accounting and finance through programs and special events.

Camille Downing joined the faculty in the School of Communication as a full-time instructor in January 2015. She has more than 30 years of professional experience in the communications industry. Downing began her career as a journalist, worked in public relations and fundraising communications in the health care and education fields before founding Downing Communications, a consultancy that specializes in nonprofit communications planning and implementation. She was previously an adjunct associate professor for 16 years.

Sean Elliot Martin, Ph.D., has been appointed a full-time instructor for the Department of Criminal Justice and Intelligence Studies. He taught as an adjunct instructor at Point Park for 15 years and was trained by a member of the CIA on presidential brief writing. Martin is an international freelance researcher and writer and serves as an unarmed combat instructor for members of the Pittsburgh Police Department and various military and security personnel. In addition to teaching, he is researching the connection between natural resource distribution and global conflict and crime.

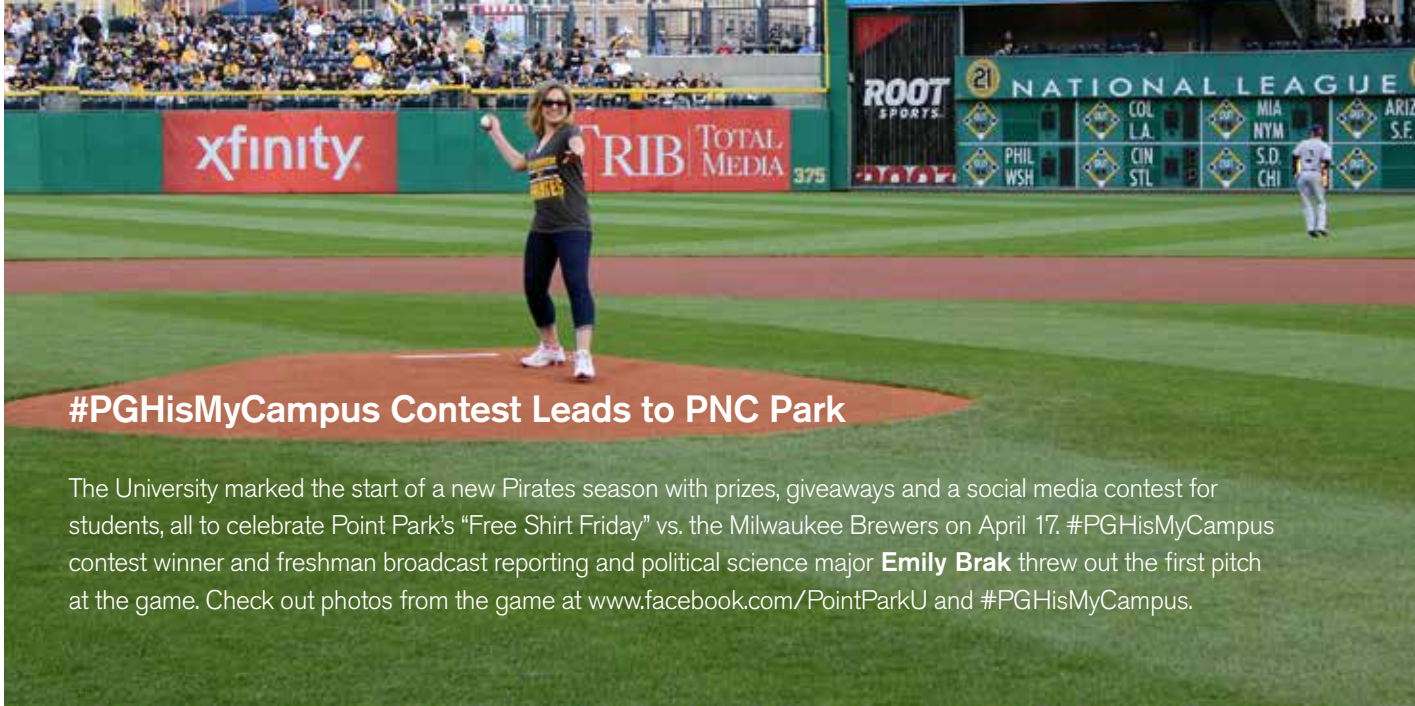
Charlie Batch Speaks at Commencement

Charlie Batch, a former Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback and noted community advocate, author and entrepreneur, was the featured speaker at Point Park's undergraduate commencement ceremony on May 2 at Consol Energy Center. Batch, a Homestead native, played in the NFL for 15 years, 11 of those with the Pittsburgh Steelers and including two Super Bowl victories. It was during his playing career that Batch established himself as a community advocate, philanthropist and public speaker. In 1999, he created the Best of the Batch Foundation,

which gives children living in the city of Pittsburgh a safe place to learn and grow. "Through hard work and perseverance, Charlie has been successful in everything he's done, which would be enough to make him a valuable voice for our students to hear," said Point Park President Paul Hennigan. "But his life also is marked by a commitment to give at-risk Pittsburgh youth the support and encouragement they need to become the best they can be. That's the kind of person we are proud to have standing before our students." **Megs Yunn**, a 2007 M.B.A. graduate of Point Park, was the keynote speaker for the University's graduate hooding on April 26. Yunn is the founder of the nonprofit Beverly's Birthdays, based in Pittsburgh, which provides birthday cheer for children experiencing homelessness or whose families are in need. "Megs is the perfect example of the kind of students Point Park is proud to send out into the Greater Pittsburgh community and beyond," Hennigan said. "Her entrepreneurial spirit and passion for helping others are traits we strive to encourage in all of our students."

Humanities and Human Sciences Symposium

Point Park's sixth annual Humanities and Human Sciences Symposium, held April 24, featured keynote speaker and former Point Park professor **Megan Ward**, Ph.D., discussing "The Imaginary Archive," as well as research presentations and readings of poetry, fiction and nonfiction from students. Students presented on a diverse range of topics, including psychology, English, global cultural studies, aesthetics, dance and biology. After teaching literature courses at Point Park for five years, Ward is now assistant professor of English at Oregon State University. Her work on realism and technology has appeared in journals such as *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, *Configurations* and *Victorian Periodicals Review*.



#PGHisMyCampus Contest Leads to PNC Park

The University marked the start of a new Pirates season with prizes, giveaways and a social media contest for students, all to celebrate Point Park's "Free Shirt Friday" vs. the Milwaukee Brewers on April 17. #PGHisMyCampus contest winner and freshman broadcast reporting and political science major **Emily Brak** threw out the first pitch at the game. Check out photos from the game at www.facebook.com/PointParkU and #PGHisMyCampus.

Think Global, Act Local

Point Park students from across the U.S. and around the globe welcomed spring at a colorful, flavorful — and loud — celebration that had Lawrence Hall lobby hopping to the rhythms of a Brazilian drum band. This year's Global Festival Celebration, held March 19 by the Office of International Student Services and Enrollment, featured foods and crafts from Brazil, China, India, Israel and Sri Lanka, all to celebrate the

end of winter and return of spring. "After the winter we have had, nothing says spring more than a party," said **Rebecca Lee**, ISSE director. "It's like we bring in the fresh air with great music, some wonderful dishes to sample and good friends to laugh with. It is the same recipe for a good party all over the world — it's another way to show we are all connected." Point Park has 158 international students from 36 countries. At this year's celebration, international students and U.S.

students sampled foods such as spring rolls from China, samosas and pekora from India, kiri bath and chutney from Sri Lanka, and hummus with bread from Turkey. Students decorated masks in feathers and glitter in the style of Brazil's Carnival, wrote their names in Chinese characters on paper lanterns, and jotted wishes on ribbons to tie on a Turkish wish tree. Photo by Chris Squier, photo-journalism major.



THE POINT SPRING 2015

Cinema Students at Sundance

Five Point Park students were part of this year's Sundance Film Festival, which ran Jan. 22 to Feb. 1 in Park City, Utah. **Daymon Long** of Lebanon, Pa., **David Randolph** of Wexford, Pa., and **Justin Illig** of Eighty Four, Pa., all freshmen cinema production majors, and twin brothers **Neiman and Aaron Outlen** of Baltimore, both senior theatre arts majors, interned with companies at the independent film festival run by legendary actor **Robert Redford's** Sundance Institute. The students earned the opportunity by applying with Hollywood, Calif.-based The Creative Mind Group, which connects the next generation of talented television and film professionals to the entertainment industry through the most prestigious film festivals and markets. **Travis Duncan**, director of Global Programs for The Creative Mind Group, said thousands of

applications are received per year. "There is a very tight vetting process," Duncan said. "What we look for is people who are passionate and actively driving themselves — people who are taking charge of their creative future." **Lexx Truss**, a senior cinema production major at Point Park, attended the Toronto Film Festival last fall through The Creative Mind Group.

Students Document Shark Finning

Three Point Park students will travel to Cape Town, South Africa this year to film a documentary highlighting the horrors of shark finning, a practice that has caused some shark species to reach the brink of extinction. **Jordan Durham** and **Jaz McKibben**, both majoring in cinema production, and **Blaise Kepple**, a global studies major, are aiming to raise \$10,000 to pay for travel and equipment. They

created a Kickstarter page under the film's title: *Rock Bottom: The Truth Behind Shark Finning*. "This is a great opportunity for students to incorporate filmmaking skills they're learning in the classroom with a unique and valuable learning experience outside the classroom, while highlighting an important issue," said **Jeremy Braverman**, chair of the Department of Cinema Arts. The students will travel via GoEco, which serves those who want to travel while contributing to the community, wildlife and environment.

New M.A. in Media Communication

Beginning in the fall of 2015, the School of Communication will offer a 36-credit Master of Arts in Media Communication. Formerly the M.A. in Journalism and Mass Communication, the M.A. in Media Communication is journalistically centered



HOLLY'S STORY

"I'm so grateful for the education I received at Point Park. I want to give back the way that I can now."

Holly Kobia
B.A. Journalism and
Mass Communication, '02

**POINT
PARK**
UNIVERSITY
pointpark.edu

Former scholarship recipient and volleyball player ... now a philanthropist through Point Park University's Founders Society

Holly wanted to give back to Point Park and support the education that helped her achieve so much in her career. She became a philanthropist by simply designating Point Park University as a beneficiary in her financial retirement plan.

To join Holly in supporting the next generation of Point Park students:

Make a commitment to Point Park University in your will, trust or estate plan. Contact Beth Exton, director of development, at 412-392-4777 or bexton@pointpark.edu, or visit plannedgiving.pointpark.edu



Bloody Good Workshop

Using household items like corn syrup, chocolate fudge, food coloring and detergent, theatre production majors learned how to make fake blood and wounds at a special effects and blood workshop led by **Steve Tolin** — owner/operator of Tolin FX — at the Pittsburgh Playhouse. “My job is to create special props and effects. I get to plug into other people’s creative endeavors at the spot where they need attention for a special challenge and it’s great,” Tolin said. “One of the things that is really cool about working in theater and film is that

collaborative artwork is so different than fine art.” Associate professor **Stephanie Mayer-Staley** organized the workshop and said her students admired Tolin’s “MacGyver” spirit, referring to the 1980s TV show. “My students were excited to see that Steve creates professional rigs out of a mixture of household and professional-grade items. They were impressed that he founded his company and is now working in the U.S. and abroad,” said Mayer-Staley. Photo by Chris Squier, photojournalism major.

and designed to meet the needs of an ever-changing media landscape for professionals looking to advance their careers. Students in the M.A. program can choose from three specializations: public relations and advertising; documentary; and journalism. “This program is unique in its broad range of specialties and the ability of the student to shape a curriculum to his or her individual needs,” said **Steve Hallock**, Ph.D., associate professor of journalism and director of the School of Communication’s graduate programs. Learn more: bit.ly/1DENFBY.

Chair’s Challenge Competition

School of Business students put their accounting, finance, marketing and business management skills to the test in the inaugural Chair’s Challenge Business Case Competition held April 9. “The purpose was to provide our students with the experience of preparing a business plan incorporating the knowledge they have acquired in class over the past two to four years,” explained **Edward Scott**, C.P.A., M.B.A., chair of the Department of Business and George Rowland White Endowed Professor of Accounting and Finance. Teams were required to submit a written business plan detailing

the operating, marketing and financial functions of a fictitious start-up business. The winning team was made up of accounting seniors **Chris Cerda**, **Marcy King**, **Khouanchay (Kay) Krueger** and **Jonathan Robbins**. Their mock company was “Wags to Riches,” a full-service lodging and wellness center for dogs.

Intelligence Majors Assist Drill

Undergraduate and graduate students from Point Park’s Department of Criminal Justice and Intelligence Studies recently met with soldiers of the 303rd Psychological Operations Unit at the U.S. Army
continued on page 8

IN MEMORIAM

Ron Tassone

Professor Ron Tassone, a legend in the dance world and faculty member in the Conservatory of Performing Arts since 1974, died at his home in Pittsburgh on February 21. He was 76. “Ron was beloved by students and faculty. He brought tremendous joy to his students and the university, and our world is less rich with his absence,” President Paul Hennigan said. “Ron loved his students and helped launch many a dancer’s career. His legacy will live on through the work of his students. We extend our sincerest condolences to his family.”

Jazz Master

Tassone established the jazz major within the Point Park dance program and assumed the role of director of dance for 10 years. He choreographed more than 25 jazz dance works at Point Park’s Pittsburgh Playhouse. He also choreographed and/or directed many musicals at theatres such as Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera, Kenley Players, Phoenix Star Theatre, Music Fairs, Inc., and West Virginia Public Theatre. He

was the co-choreographer of the American College Theatre Festival’s award-winning *Grand Hotel*, performed at the Kennedy Center in April 2002.

Tassone began his career in summer stock and earned his B.F.A. at Julliard. He made his Broadway debut in *Gypsy*, followed by seven other Broadway shows, including *Subways are for Sleeping*, *No Strings*, *Here’s Love*, *Fade-Out*, *Fade-In*, *Funny Girl*, *George M.* and *Billy*. He also appeared on various television shows and in films. He served as adjudicator for Dance Masters of Pennsylvania, Dance Masters of America, Lucas & Co. and Headliners regional and national competitions.

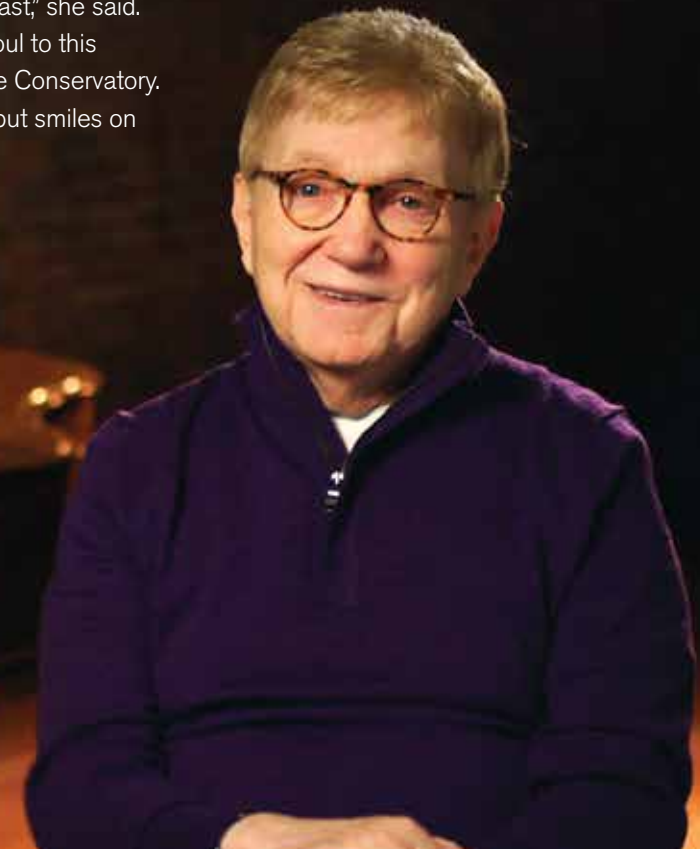
Heart and Soul

“He created the dancer and human being that I am today,” said Kiesha Lalama (COPA 1995), associate professor of dance. “Everything I am is because of that man. The legacy he has established is legendary, to say the least,” she said. “He gave his heart and soul to this dance program and to the Conservatory. All he wanted to do was put smiles on

people’s faces through dance. He has touched thousands of dancers lives and launched so many careers. He is one of those teachers you will always remember because he is one of those who helped shaped your career and who you are as a person.” See a video interview with Tassone: <http://bit.ly/1BxqknF>.

A TRIBUTE TO TASSONE

All are invited to celebrate Tassone’s life in dance at a tribute event on May 31 at 3 p.m. in the Rockwell Theatre at the Pittsburgh Playhouse. A scholarship fund for dance students will be established in memory of Tassone. To contribute to the fund, contact Penny Schnarrs at 412-392-8060 or pschnarrs@pointpark.edu.





Novelist Stewart O’Nan at Point Park

Award-winning novelist **Stewart O’Nan** led a master class on campus March 11. It was packed with Point Park students majoring in English, English/Creative writing, acting, screenwriting and more. **Karen Dwyer**, Ph.D., assistant professor of English, arranged the master class as part of the University’s Writers’ Series. “O’Nan is a huge writer, a major presence on the literary scene; but he has a reputation for being kind and generous and deeply loves Pittsburgh,” remarked

Dwyer. “He’s high energy as a presenter, which our students really responded to.” O’Nan, author of 15 novels including a national bestseller and finalist for the Los Angeles Times Book Prize, engaged students in various writing exercises while encouraging them to “write toward what you do not understand. ... When writing, always ask yourself, ‘What is interesting?’ Look for the story that hasn’t been told or tell it in a better, different way.”

Reserves Center in Coraopolis, Pa., to assist them with a training exercise drill related to multinational interactions. “The soldiers couldn’t say enough great things about our students,” remarked **Sean Elliott Martin**, Ph.D., full-time instructor of criminal justice and intelligence studies at Point Park. As a volunteer instructor for the 303rd Unit, Martin accompanied the students on the trip. “Being able to practice techniques I have learned in my psychological operations classes was very beneficial,” remarked **Lauren Finkbeiner**, a senior double majoring in forensic science and intelligence and national security. Upon graduation, Finkbeiner plans to pursue a career path in the forensic analyses of different drug strains created by various drug cartels.

Remembering Joan Hamby

Joan Hamby, a former director of the University library and English teacher in the Humanities and Human Sciences Department, passed away on March 4 at her home in Maryland. Hamby graduated from Smith College and received her master’s degree in Library Science from the University of Pittsburgh. She previously retired, at the age of 84, from her library service and teaching at Point Park. Read more at her obituary: bit.ly/1EjPt9G.

IT Major Enhanced

The re-launched information technology major at Point Park, which has enrolled

new students for fall 2015, will focus primarily on helping students build applicable knowledge in advanced programming, big data and business entrepreneurship — all valuable skills for the rapidly changing fields of IT and software development. “We will be offering students the perfect mix of advanced technical programming skills while still giving them a solid background in business,” explained **Fred Kitner**, M.S.I.S., professor of information technology at Point Park. “Whether students decide to run their own start-up business or work for a large company, we want them to be educated to be tool builders rather than just tool users,” Kitner added. Courses in the newly revised IT program range from business analytics and big data applica-

tions to server management and software development for e-commerce. “In the IT field, the more technical you are, the more valuable you are to a company. Programming is such a powerful tool that is in really high demand,” said **Mark Voortman**, Ph.D., visiting assistant professor of information technology. Students can choose to concentrate their degrees in one of the following areas: data analytics; mobile development; software development; or a student-designed concentration based on a desired career path. Every student in the program will have a personalized virtual learning environment to gain hands-on experience in learning how to set up web servers and databases and then connecting them to the websites they built, according to Voortman. “All students will have the opportunity to showcase what they built from the ground up and can translate these advanced programming skills directly into the workplace,” he says. “It’s important to stay ahead of the curve. Our program is giving students that competitive edge.”

That’s the Ticket

Students in Point Park’s sports, arts and entertainment management program heard about trends in the ticketing industry at a workshop on campus March 25, featuring panelists who work for some of the most popular ticketing outlets and venues in Pittsburgh. SAEM adjunct instructor **Jason Varnish**, owner/consultant for BOM Advisers, organized the event. Varnish’s company provides expertise in the field of box office ticketing as well as support within the event circle of operations, marketing and social media. Prior to BOM Advisers, he was the box office manager for the CONSOL Energy Center. Varnish teaches special topics courses in ticketing and box office management at Point Park. “Over the past three years, I’ve had various guest

Desmond Richardson Leads Master Class

The Department of Dance welcomed **Desmond Richardson** — co-founder and co-artistic director of Complexions Contemporary Ballet — to host a master class with students on Feb. 6. “For me, it’s all about giving back; I had so many teachers who encouraged me and I love when I have the opportunity to teach,” said Richardson. “My message to the students is to focus on your passion and let it drive you to your heart’s desire.” Sounds of live drumming coupled with Richardson’s cues were heard during the master class as he taught his contemporary ballet repertoire. Sophomore dance major **Harris Turner** says, “Getting the chance to work with Desmond was awesome. I enjoyed talking to him after class to learn more about what life as a dancer is like in the real world.” Photo by Chris Rolinson.



speakers come into my ticketing class. The conversations between the students and speakers were amazing, so it made me think of how beneficial a workshop on this topic could be for the whole SAEM program,” he explained. Panelists at the ticketing workshop included: **Mark Davidson**, client service representative, Ticketmaster Pittsburgh; **Ben Lentz**, box office manager, Pittsburgh Steelers, PSSI Stadium Corporation; **Rob Mazzie**, owner/broker, Steel City Tickets; **Scott Michaels**, general manager, Petersen Events Center, SMG Management; and **Corey Roche**, box office manager, First Niagara Pavilion, Live Nation.

Students Support Pediatric Cancer Research

Seniors at South Fayette High School who took Point Park’s sports, arts and entertainment management introductory course used their new skills in event management to help host a Mini-THON April 17, raising \$43,201.75 for pediatric cancer research. “While my students learned about event management in theory, this was the first time they truly applied these concepts in a real-world context,” explained **Brandon Flannery**, a business teacher at South Fayette who teaches the SAEM 101 course. “They helped our student government with

almost every aspect of the THON from selling sponsorship packages to executing the 12-hour event." High school seniors had the opportunity to take the course at their high schools and earn three college credits toward an undergraduate degree at Point Park. Taught in collaboration with Point Park's SAEM faculty, the course provides students with a broad overview of the structure of the sports, arts and entertainment management industry as a business. "The South Fayette students were a hard-working, terrific group. The money they raised will certainly make a difference," said **Steve Tanzilli, J.D.**, SAEM associate professor and chair of the Department of Management. "This experience will provide positive results for the students and give them an advantage entering college in the fall!"

Shadowing a Dinosaur Expert

Ecology students **Michael Bowen** and **Matthew Love** recently shadowed a nationally recognized dinosaur expert at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh, ranked one of the top five natural history museums in the country. **Matthew Lamanna, Ph.D.**, assistant curator of vertebrate paleontology, guided the Point Park students through the

museum and PaleoLab while discussing his research focusing on dinosaurs, birds and crocodylians living during the Cretaceous Period. "I loved dinosaurs growing up, so it was really fun to see someone living that dream," remarked Bowen, a senior secondary education biological sciences major. Bowen and Love had the opportunity to hold rare dinosaur fossils more than 150 million years old. "I was a bit starstruck when he showed us the actual first-ever T-Rex bone found," said Bowen. "This shadow assignment was a once-in-a-lifetime experience." While at the museum, the students also shadowed **Dan Pickering**, PaleoLab manager and scientific preparator, and **Joe Sawchak**, scientific preparator. "Shadowing provides excellent networking opportunities for our students. I've had professionals offer students summer internships and take them on fossil digs," explained **Matthew Opdyke, Ph.D.**, associate professor of environmental science, who teaches Ecology 235.

Storytelling and Human Rights Symposium

The Third Annual Storytelling and Human Rights Symposium focused on the marginalization of human rights by

examining the issue through a variety of disciplines including psychology, humanities, journalism and the arts. Sponsored by the Honors Student Organization, the Department of Humanities and Human Sciences, United Student Government, Confluence Psychology Alliance and Global Solutions Pittsburgh, the theme of the Feb. 20 symposium was "Voices on the Margins" and featured **Nathaniel Granger, Ph.D.**, professor at Saybrook University, as the keynote speaker. Granger discussed the psychology of racial microaggressions and gave a moving interpretation of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. Additional symposium panelists and workshop presenters included: **Michael Fuoco**, reporter for the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette; **Hadeel Salameh**, student at the University of Pittsburgh and president of Pitt Students for Justice in Palestine; and **Hana Valle**, psychology and global cultural studies double major and member of the Student Solidarity Organization at Point Park. "The symposium was founded on the idea that stories have the power to reshape the way we collectively encounter the world," explained **Justin Karter**, who founded the symposium. Karter is an M.A. in journalism and mass communication alumnus, M.A. in clinical-community



Painting the Town

Members of the Graduate Student Association enjoyed a social outing to Paint Monkey in Pittsburgh's Lawrenceville neighborhood earlier this year. Each had the opportunity to illustrate their own view of Point Park's hometown, Downtown Pittsburgh. Photos by Chris Squier, photojournalism major.

psychology student and graduate assistant for the Honors Program.

Spring Break in New York, New Orleans

Spring break 2015 offered students a variety of opportunities to explore big cities, enjoy great concerts and stage performances, sample regional foods — and volunteer to help others in need. A group of 30 students (Honors Program, School of Communication, broadcasting, fashion club, and sports, arts and entertainment management club) traveled to New York City for a trip that combined networking, volunteer work and sightseeing. Accompanying the students was **Teresa Gregory, M.F.A.**,

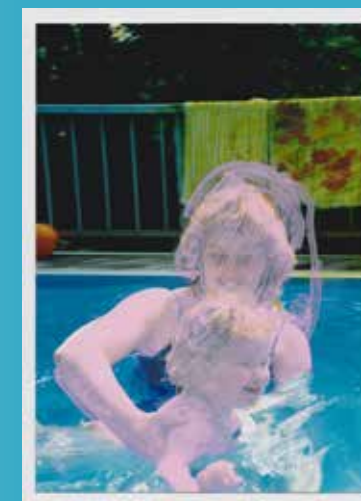
CFRE, assistant professor of sports, arts and entertainment management, and **David Fabilli**, professor of broadcasting. The broadcasting students attended the 75th Annual Intercollegiate Broadcasting System Conference and College Radio Awards. The students attended a networking reception with Point Park alumni, saw the Broadway musical *On the Town* (featuring former Point Park student **Tony Yazbeck**), did a volunteer activity and workshop with Materials for the Arts, and met with Monroe College Honors Program students for a City as Text exploration to visit and explore landmark buildings. Eight student members of Point Park's Student Accounting Association also had the opportunity to spend Spring Break in New York City,

one of the world's great financial centers. The students were accompanied on the trip by **Amy Cesario, C.P.A., M.B.A.**, SAA advisor and visiting assistant professor of accounting. The group toured both Wall Street and the Financial District, as well as other well-known destinations in New York City. Another group of 11 students headed to Lafayette, La., for nine days to explore the New Orleans area and volunteer at a Habitat for Humanity work site, helping build new homes for those in need. They were accompanied by **Sarah George**, director of student engagement. At the housing work site, the students contributed 429 hours of manual labor, including hanging siding, assembling fascia, and installing hurricane brackets and trim. They also assisted at the organization's Lafayette office with painting trim and clean-up work — and made an \$1,800 contribution to the group. The students were interviewed by a Baton Rouge TV station for a story about college students spending spring break doing volunteer work. ❖

Screen Memories at Lawrence Hall Gallery

Screen Memories, an exhibition of four Pittsburgh-based artists, opened on April 17 at Point Park's Lawrence Hall Gallery. The exhibit presents works of painting, sculpture and photography that explore the complexities of memory. Each artist demonstrates the challenges of bringing the past into the present, and reveals how memories — like images — blur, fade and change over time. The Pittsburgh-based

artists featured are **Atticus Adams**, **Gavin Benjamin**, **Elizabeth Rudnick** and **Travis Schwab**. The exhibit is sponsored by Point Park and The Andy Warhol Museum. **Jessica Beck**, assistant curator of art at the Warhol, is the show's curator. There is no cost for admission, and the exhibit can be viewed whenever Lawrence Hall's doors are open.



A photograph of President Paul Hennigan, a man in a dark suit and tie, smiling and walking through a modern university hallway. He is surrounded by several students, including a young man in a blue shirt to his left and a young woman in a purple top and a young man in a red plaid shirt in the background. The hallway has large windows and a clean, bright atmosphere.

Students First

President Paul Hennigan guides Point Park students on the pathway to success

Hennigan with students on the bridge between Academic Hall and Lawrence Hall. Photo by Richard Kelly.

When prospective students toured Point Park during Open House days last fall, some got an inside look from a particularly knowledgeable and enthusiastic guide: President Paul Hennigan, Ed.D.

Hennigan not only regularly leads some Open House campus tours, but he also pops up to work during the Pioneer Experience (Orientation), pedals alongside student leaders on his annual educational bike tour of Pittsburgh, and helps families haul belongings into the dorms. There's nothing better than personally meeting students and sharing in the excitement of beginning their college careers, he says.

As an educator and as a parent (with wife Colleen) of two college-age sons, Hennigan understands the needs of students and families in the rapidly changing environment of higher education. And, at a time when many important and innovative student-focused initiatives

have been rolled out on campus, he says, there's never been a better time to be a Point Park student.

Focus on Relevance, Student Success

Last fall, the University welcomed the largest freshman class in its history, with more than 600 U.S. and international students starting their college careers at Point Park. The 2014-15 freshman class hailed from 35 states and 10 foreign countries and was nearly 20 percent larger than the freshman class of fall 2013.

This was the first group of first-time, full-time students to benefit from a new core curriculum, developed as part of the Point Park 2020 initiative — a comprehensive effort to enhance key pillars of the student learning experience. The initiative encompasses many of the “high impact educational practices” advanced by nationally known educator George Kuh, including first-year experiences, learning communities, writing-intensive courses, diversity/global learning, service-

learning and community-based learning, internships and capstone projects.

Point Park's new core includes such key elements as a foundational course in City-University Life, designed to help first-year students develop skills for success in studying in a diverse urban community, academic requirements balanced with flexible options, and a capstone project.

“Our goals are to provide a relevant curriculum, linked to key themes and competencies, that will culminate in a senior-year capstone project,” says Hennigan. Through the capstone, which will serve as an assessment tool and as a potentially valuable part of a portfolio, students will demonstrate proficiency in defined areas within their major and within the core, he explains. “That's how we'll measure the effectiveness of a Point Park education.”

“We want every student to graduate with a portfolio that can be presented to a potential employer,” says Hennigan. “It's

a bit unusual to have a portfolio in hand after completing an undergraduate degree. We believe this will be among the hallmarks of a Point Park education.”

Pioneering Pathways

In addition, the University's advising system has been expanded to encompass an eight-term advising model, Pathways to Success, in which students connect with both an academic advisor and an advisor in Point Park's Center for Student Success during each semester. “Every new freshman is assigned not only an academic advisor but also a success counselor,” says Hennigan. The goal is to establish a partnership to help guide students through each of the eight terms toward completion of their degree.

The Pioneer Experience, the University's orientation program held each summer, has also been expanded and improved, according to Hennigan. A key element is educating students and parents about the new core curriculum, the expanded eight-term advising model, and other comprehensive efforts to ensure their success.

“Before their first class begins, we clearly explain to first-time students, and their parents, what they can expect for the next four years — and what each student needs to do to be successful at Point Park,” says Hennigan. “It's all laid out beautifully during the Pioneer Experience. And when I see how well-organized and well-structured it is, and when so many parents take the time to personally express their gratitude afterward, it's a great feeling.”

New Playhouse for a New Era

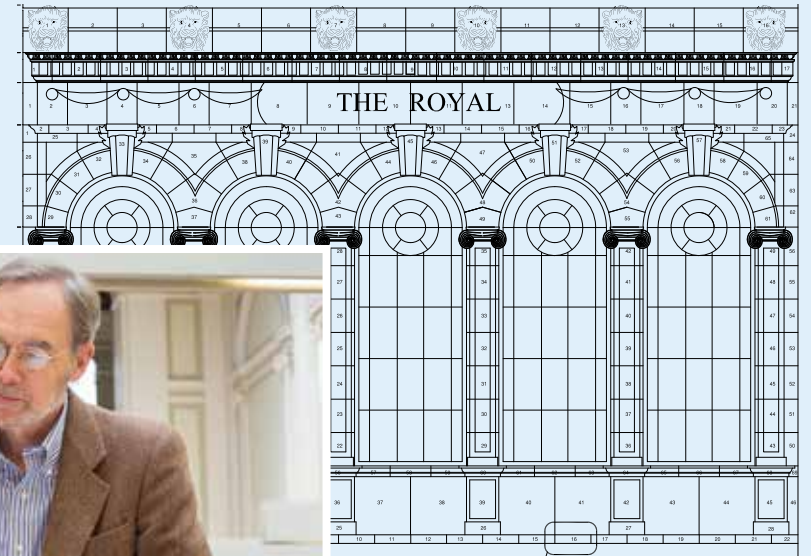
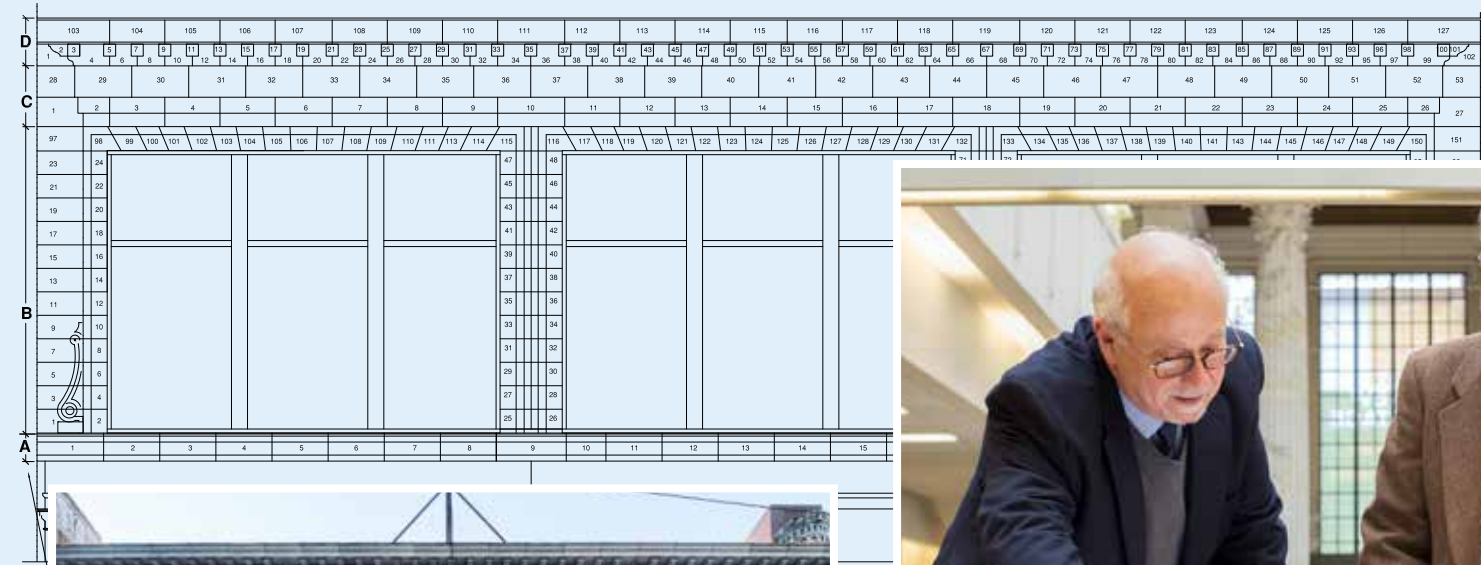
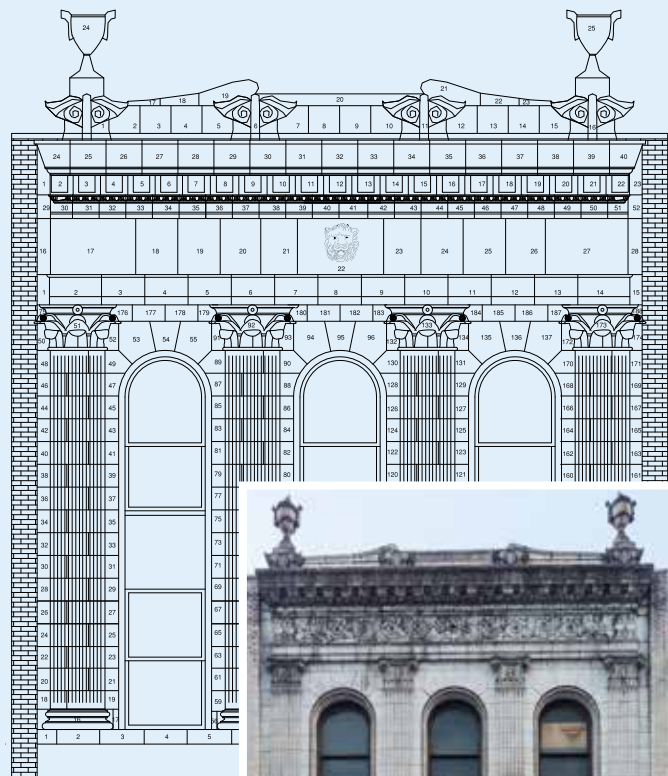
The class of first-year students that entered the University last fall will also experience yet another first: the new Pittsburgh Playhouse at Point Park University. The 92,000-square-foot cultural and educational hub will be “a game-changer for Point Park and for Downtown Pittsburgh,” says Hennigan.

“The new Playhouse will be a creative crossroads that provides a wealth of interdisciplinary opportunities for students and faculty in the Conservatory of Performing Arts as well as communications, broadcasting, arts and sciences, business management and much more. This unique facility will also provide a view into 100 percent of the creative process: a 24/7 operation.

“It will be a symbol, of sorts, for the innovative learning, collaboration and intense focus on student success that characterizes Point Park.” ❖

PAST IS PRESENT

Deconstruction and preservation paves the way for construction of the new Pittsburgh Playhouse



Inside the University Center, University Architect Elmer Burger (left) and LDA preservation architect Ellis Schmidlapp discuss façade deconstruction. Photo by John Altdorfer.

Preservation is a key element in plans for the new Pittsburgh Playhouse, a 92,000-square-foot cultural and educational hub that will be located on a 1.6-acre parcel between Forbes and Fourth Avenues in Downtown Pittsburgh.

Point Park will soon embark on the first phase of the Playhouse construction process: meticulous deconstruction of three historic Forbes Avenue façades that will be reconstructed as major focal points in the new building.

Led by preservation architects at Landmark Design Associates (LDA), which has worked closely with the University since the beginning of the Playhouse design process, the façades at 320, 322 and 330 Forbes Ave. were documented and numbered in preparation for careful dismantling, cataloging, storage and eventual reinstallation in an urban courtyard that will be part of the new Playhouse.

Meticulous Deconstruction

"The historic value of these buildings rests in the terra cotta ornament on the façades, so we have concentrated our preservation efforts there," says Ellis Schmidlapp, president of LDA. Although the lower sections of the three façades were removed (by previous owners) long ago, the upper façades represent a fine example of the commercial architecture that once characterized the district, he says.

"The most sculptural is the façade of the Royal building," says Schmidlapp. Designed by well-known architects Alden and Harlow, that building later served for decades as the home of Honus Wagner Sporting Goods. The Royal, as well as the neighboring two façades, will be reconstructed in the Forbes Avenue courtyard of the new Playhouse.

The process requires skilled tradesmen who are accustomed to working with historic terra cotta. Masonry contractor Franco Associates is collaborating with LDA and Point Park to complete the work. "This isn't like removing tile from a wall. There are different depths, armatures and brackets," says Schmidlapp. All information will be documented to guide the puzzle-like process of reinstallation on the finished Playhouse.

Urban Sustainability

In addition to the façade work, materials such as brick and metal in the Forbes Avenue buildings will be recycled as part of the deconstruction, according to University Architect Elmer Burger. Construction Junction, a local organization that promotes conservation through reuse, was invited to walk through the buildings to reclaim wood and other materials that can be reused.

Signage from Pittsburgh's past, including an old, lighted Honus Wagner Sporting Goods sign found in the Royal building, and a sign from the former DeRoy Jewelers long embedded in the Forbes Avenue sidewalk, will also find new homes.

Recycling "in place" means that some of the bricks and masonry can be ground up and used for fill," says Burger. Deconstruction (rather than demolition) is a sustainable concept that has been incorporated into many modern urban construction projects, including the new PNC Tower across the street from the Playhouse site.

History in the Making

Plans for the new Pittsburgh Playhouse incorporate two historic structures – the University Center and the Stock Exchange building – with a new five-story addition that includes space for theaters, technical production, and cinema facilities.

Point Park's University Center, which will be part of the completed Playhouse, has already been extensively restored and maintained as a University library and space for Cinema Arts. The center is made up of four former bank buildings, the oldest of which dates back to 1893. Also part of the Playhouse will be the Stock Exchange building, designed in 1903 by Charles Bartberger.

"A lot of attention has been paid to the design of the Playhouse to ensure it fits well with the character and scale of the street," says Schmidlapp. "The new uses and old elements really have to be able work together. The vision for the Playhouse is that it will be a great teaching and learning center and theater. "Point Park has been a very good urban steward. This project will bring new life to the block." ❖

CITY UNIVERSITY LIFE

New core curriculum course gives students skills for success in Pittsburgh's diverse urban community

Point Park's freshman class of 2014-15 was the first to benefit from a new core curriculum course — City-University Life — designed to help them develop key skills for success as a student in a diverse urban community. From walking tours of the University's Downtown neighborhood (led by history professor Jehnie Reis, Ph.D.) to pierogie-making lessons at St. Mary's Ukrainian Orthodox Church (with photography profes-

sor April Friges), students learned about the city's rich history and cultural diversity. Throughout the semester, freshmen explored such locales as Stage AE, PNC Park, The Mattress Factory, and Carnegie Museum of Art and Natural History and heard guest lectures from such Pittsburgh luminaries as WOED-TV producer Chris Moore and concert promoter Rich Engler. Students also created mock crime scenes on

campus and test-drove research methods in the University's library. "I love everything about Pittsburgh. It's so important to learn about the city you live in, especially for me because I am new to the area," said Tabea Dalliard, a sports, arts and entertainment management major from Switzerland. "I love the people and I love how there are so many things to do so close to campus." Additional reporting by Victoria A. Mikula.

Photos by Victoria A. Mikula, photojournalism major.





LEADING THE WAY

New doctoral program provides balance of theory and practice for experienced leaders

A leader's role is to raise people's aspirations for what they can become, and to release their energies so they will try to get there," according to David Gergen, a former advisor to four American presidents.

Those words helped to guide development of Point Park's first doctoral degree program, a 54-credit Ed.D. in Leadership and Administration that was initiated at the beginning of the 2014-15 academic year. Thirty-eight doctoral students began their studies last fall, filling the new program to capacity.

The program is designed to educate leaders who will be able to: function as a skilled instructional and/or organizational leader in an educational, nonprofit or business environment; understand the complex interrelationships among stakeholders; use six performance domains (developed by Drs. Charles Schwahn and William Spady in *Total Leaders* and adapted by the Pennsylvania Leadership Development Center) of authenticity, vision, culture, quality, service systems and communication to lead and effect change; and understand the role of research in guiding assessment and progress.

The doctorate offers three tracks: Professional Leadership (including those working toward Superintendent Letter of Eligibility); K-12 Administration (including principal certification); and an individualized concentration that allows students to

transfer post-master's credits and focus on personalized goals. The program also includes core courses that focus on research methods and dissertation development.

Built for Working Professionals

"The Ed.D. program is designed for working professionals, those who want to improve their effectiveness so they can address the changing needs of their organization or school," says Dr. Darlene Marnich, professor and chair of Point Park's Education Department, who led the effort to establish the degree. The program is distinctive, she says, because "this is a degree that is practice-based and where research is used to directly apply to workplace goals and challenges."

Courses are offered in a hybrid format, with on-site commitments reasonable enough to establish a community among students and faculty but combined with off-site learning (via electronic media) to make it possible for professionals to meet personal obligations while finishing required courses and a dissertation in three years. Other features include: ability to transfer in up to 18 credits of post-master's credits (can complete program in two years); work closely with mentor(s) in the student's field, leading to a comprehensive portfolio; learn from faculty and guest speakers from diverse disciplines; and benefit from an interdisciplinary framework and partnership with Pennsylvania's Professional Leadership Development Center.



Cheryl Hall-Russell, CEO of Hill House.

Photos and video at the Carpenter's Union by Chris Rolinson.

Nailing Leadership Strategies

The inaugural class had the opportunity to nail down strategies on leadership, service, community and team building at a kick-off event at the Greater PA Carpenters Union Training Center in Pittsburgh last fall. They met for the first time in late August and spent a day working together to build desks for students at Holy Family Academy, an independent private Catholic high school in Emsworth, Pa. for students of limited economic means. The event was designed to introduce students to each other in a creative way, and have them become comfortable being leaders "out of their element" while engaging in an act of service to the community, according to Helen Sobehart, D.A., associate vice president for graduate education at Point Park.

Sobehart says the event set the tone for the foundation of the program, which is to create total, well-rounded leaders who build upon their strengths to foster productive change in the community. Response from the first-year students has been enthusiastic and overwhelmingly positive, she says.

"When I moved to Pittsburgh ... I began to hear so much about Point Park University," says doctoral student Cheryl Hall-Russell, president and CEO of Pittsburgh's Hill House Association and Hill House Economic Development Corporation. "The Downtown campus atmosphere was familiar to me, because I graduated from a university that was located in Downtown Indianapolis.

Also, when I was interviewing for the Ed.D. program, I was really impressed with the faculty. I saw that Point Park was progressive and a university in which I would be proud to be affiliated with."

A Strong Foundation

Doctoral student Renee Hurley, director of patient relations at Monongahela Valley Hospital, agrees. "The instructors display the leadership characteristics and behaviors that we as students are learning about. The other classmates bring so much experience and expertise to the learning environment," she says. "I believe that I am making some lifelong friendships." According to Yvonne English Roebuck, director of talent acquisition for Vibrant Pittsburgh, the Ed.D. program offers "a very strong foundation in the theory of leadership. We all have leadership experience," she says, "but when you study the theory and science behind it, it makes you a better leader. It's about moving from being a good leader to a great leader."

Additional reporting by Amanda Dabbs.



Point Extra

To learn more, visit: www.pointpark.edu/leader. See a video at www.pointpark.edu/thepoint



TITLE IX AT POINT PARK

Comprehensive measures ensure that campus members are safe and knowledgeable if sexual misconduct is experienced or observed

Awareness of personal rights and responsibilities related to sexual misconduct, particularly on the nation's college campuses, has increased significantly in recent years.

With this heightened awareness has come a corresponding increase in questions and reports related to Title IX, the federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in any program of a school that receives federal funds, and requires schools to respond to knowledge and reports of sex discrimination in a specific manner.

Point Park places great importance on the safety and security of its students and employees and does not tolerate sexual

misconduct. To that end, the University has implemented a number of measures to ensure that campus members are not only safe but also knowledgeable about what steps can be taken if any sexual harassment or assault is experienced or observed, according to Karen McIntyre, Ph.D., senior vice president of academic and student affairs and Title IX coordinator at Point Park.

Safety and Security

These measures range from policies and practices designed to promptly and appropriately address complaints of sexual harassment and sexual violence, to comprehensive resources, training and ongoing education for the campus

community. New software tools are in place to ensure that the University is keeping accurate records on Title IX-related processes, says McIntyre.

Elizabeth Rosemeyer, J.D., Point Park's assistant director of Title IX compliance, collaborates with McIntyre (and staff from key areas such as the campus counseling center, health center, public safety and student affairs) to ensure that all reports of sexual misconduct are handled in a manner that is not just compliant with Title IX, but that eliminates barriers to reporting and enables students to make informed decisions. If an investigation is initiated, Rosemeyer helps guide the process as a resource for both complainant and respondent.

Perhaps most importantly, Rosemeyer serves as a resource and works to ensure that members of the campus community have a clear understanding about the range of services and reporting processes that are available to them. An open door policy is one of the most important policies, she says.

Advocate for Students

"The goal is to help students feel empowered and in control of the process," says Rosemeyer, who also helps coordinate prevention education materials, programming, and initiatives on underlying issues such as unhealthy relationships, sexual violence, and the connection between alcohol use and sexual



Karen McIntyre, Ph.D., senior vice president of academic and student affairs and Title IX coordinator (left) and Elizabeth Rosemeyer, J.D., assistant director of Title IX compliance.



assault. Health and community organizations, such as Pittsburgh Action Against Rape (PAAR), are key partners in these education efforts, she says. Informative training sessions on Title IX have also been presented to all full-and part-time faculty and staff.

"We want our students to know what their rights are, and how and where to make a report if they feel their rights are violated," says McIntyre. "We want faculty and staff to know how and when to intervene, and who to contact if necessary.

"The bottom line is to make our campus safer, and ensure that our students feel they've been helped and respected," says McIntyre. "That's at the core of our Title IX processes and resources."

For more extensive information on Title IX compliance and resources at Point Park, visit www.pointpark.edu/StudentLife/TitleIXSexualMisconduct or contact Elizabeth Rosemeyer at 412-392-3980.

BISON BROTHERHOOD

Rugby Football Club achieves goals on and off the field



Photos by Chris Squier, photojournalism major.



Point Park's Bison Rugby Club, formed by just a few enthusiasts in 2010, has grown rapidly to become a dedicated squad of about two-dozen players that kicks off against universities such as Carnegie Mellon and Robert Morris in the Three Rivers Rugby Conference.

In the collegiate rugby conference, the Bison and other players compete in a seven-week season with teams from Western Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Ohio. Conference games are played in the fall and exhibition games in the spring.

Named Student Organization of the Year in 2014, the Bison Club has gained recognition not only for its prowess on the pitch (a rugby field) but also its commitment to community service. The members have supported the Jubilee Soup Kitchen, the Special Olympics (through the Polar Plunge) and a bone marrow drive (in conjunction with the national rugby conference). The Bison also hope to expand their volunteering to teach young students how to play the game.

Twins Troy and Travis Johnston, both May 2015 graduates of Point Park's School of Business, joined the fledgling club three years ago. Both brothers have served the Club as captains, a

role equivalent to coach. Former high school football players who wanted to pursue a similar sport in college, the Johnston brothers have been instrumental in building the Bison on and off the field.

"It's been gratifying to be a part of a new sport at Point Park, especially considering the popularity rugby has been receiving across the nation as a whole," says Travis. "It's been very exciting being one of the original members, especially seeing the support we have received from our classmates, but I'm more proud [that] the Club has become a large part of this campus community in such a short time."

According to Troy, "I want to leave a lasting impression on the players that I have led and hopefully influenced over the past few years. As captain, I have had an understanding that I had to be ... the hardest working guy out there. I hope that's how my fellow teammates will remember me: as the guy who would never give up. Most of all, I hope I have been able to teach these men what it is to be a Point Park Bison, which takes a lot of blood, sweat and heart but most importantly — brotherhood."



Point Extra

See a video at:
www.pointpark.org/thepoint



Sharna Olfman in her office in Pittsburgh's Regent Square neighborhood. Photo by John Altdorfer.

CHILD GUIDANCE

Psychologist Sharna Olfman explores better ways to treat children's mental health

As a young child psychologist in the mid-1990s, looking for a kindergarten for her son, Sharna Olfman, Ph.D. was "taken aback to discover how much emphasis was placed on formal academics, rather than creative play. Many schools had 'entrance exams,' a

concept that seemed so foreign to me, for four-year-olds!" It was an experience that helped her see a connection among developmentally inappropriate school environments and children's mental health. A professor of developmental psychology, Olfman explores this topic and others in her latest book,

The Science and Pseudoscience of Children's Mental Health. Aimed at mental health practitioners, concerned parents and child advocates alike, Olfman's book is an effort to better understand the causes of children's psychological disturbances — and as a result, the proper treatment of

By Barbara Vilanova

these issues. A native of Montreal, Olfman relocated to Pittsburgh in the early 1990s and has been teaching at Point Park for 22 years. She spoke with The Point about her work and the importance of connecting with children in a meaningful, thoughtful way.

How did you become interested in children's mental health?

SO: Parenting in a culture that doesn't always support children's developmental needs certainly heightened my interest in, and advocacy on behalf of, children. My book series *Childhood in America* for Praeger Publishers offers me a platform to research and write about child psychology. I'm fortunate in that I get to meet and work with scholars, activists and clinicians who are leaders in the field of children's mental health, and I bring this experience into the classroom.

What are your key areas of research?

SO: I'm interested in identifying environments that best support children's psychological and neurological development; for example, optimal parenting practices and educational settings. I have explored the importance of creative play in natural settings and the impact of screen technologies on children's mental health, and I've written extensively about the overuse and abuse of psychiatric drugs in treating children. When we create environments that are not ideal for children, rather than changing the environment, we often medicate them to conform.

Has the approach to treating children's mental health changed for the better, or not enough?

SO: There have been changes; unfortunately some are misguided. We need to move away from the pseudoscience of

the 'chemical imbalance theory' and look to the real science of brain development and epigenetics, which identifies the inextricable interplay of genes and environments. This approach has led to breakthroughs in the understanding of children's psychological disturbances and serves to discredit the scientifically unsupported 'chemical imbalance theory' of mental illness.

How can the public at large be better informed about issues concerning children's mental health?

SO: Millions of children who are struggling with emotional and psychological disturbances are taking psychiatric drug cocktails that may be harming their developing brains. This issue is too important to be buried in obscure scientific journals. Platforms like my book series and film offer a more visceral way of presenting this information to the public. I'm so pleased to have launched my new book alongside Kevin Miller's new documentary, *Letters from Generation Rx*, last April. His films are not only compelling but they're based in sound science. Books and films have the power to deliver vital research directly into the hands of parents and professionals, so that they can make informed choices on behalf of the children in their care.



Point Extra

For an extended conversation with Sharna Olfman, visit www.pointpark.edu/thepoint

ALUMNI CONNECTION



Dear fellow alumni and friends,

I remember the eve of my commencement from Point Park University.

I had shined my banana yellow patent leather shoes. I had practiced pinning my cap to my head in vain – it still looked like a deflated black balloon with shoulder pads. I had ironed my billowing, black robe.

I had nothing else to do but sit with my friends and remember everything that had been, and how we would cease to be students come the morning. I'm certain that similar scenes played out in the residence halls on Wood Street and the Boulevard of the Allies, and in homes off-campus, this past May and many previous Mays.

In facing that existential prospect of “whatever will become of me,” there is some comfort in understanding the origin of the word “commencement.” It is derived from the Old French “comencement,” which means to begin or start. In 1850, universities began to adopt the word to describe the ceremony in which graduates receive their degrees.

What a perfect choice, since graduating from Point Park is merely the beginning of an entirely unique, personal journey on a career path, community engagement and self-discovery.

As the Class of 2015 joins the ranks of the Alumni Association, my greatest desire for all Point Park alumni lies in those three domains: a successful career, meaningful community involvement, and positive experiences in whichever corner of the world they may land.

Following commencement, these new graduates find themselves as a part of a larger community – the 26,000 alumni across the globe that make up the Alumni Association. I ask each of you to welcome these new graduates into our ranks. The engagement of our community with these new alumni serves as a terrific metaphor for the current investment in Point Park's future – relocating the Pittsburgh Playhouse to downtown Pittsburgh.

With multiple events happening this summer and fall (visit www.pointpark.edu/alumni for a comprehensive list), please make the time to connect with your fellow graduates, whether that's at a reception on campus at Hundred Wood or at a dinner in Los Angeles. We look forward to introducing new tools to make these connections even easier in the future. In the meantime, stay connected with Point Park, and with your classmates, on our Facebook and LinkedIn pages and follow us on Twitter.

As your Alumni Association president, I encourage you to commence in re-engaging with your University. New and exciting things are happening, and I'd love you to be a part of it.

I also encourage you to invest in your own pair of banana yellow patent leather shoes.

Best,

Carrie Potter-Murray, COM '09
President, Alumni Association

CLASS NOTES

1970s

Jim Desch (BUS 1970) writes, “it has been many years since my graduation. In 1965, I enrolled in Point Park Junior College. It was one of the few colleges willing to take a chance on me. During my time at Point Park Junior College and [later] Point Park College I met my late wife, Nancy Beckett Desch, and my best friend, Denny Hathrill. Denny and I graduated [with degrees] in business and Nancy graduated with an education degree. She taught in the City of Pittsburgh for 34 years. I later received my master's degree in education at the University of Pittsburgh and taught in the City of Pittsburgh for 36 years. I am now retired, and I am the head teaching pro at Cloverleaf Golf Club in Delmont, Pa. Point Park College gave me a chance, and I made the most of it. I remain a proud alumnus.”

1980s

William B. Fogle, LTC ret. (A&S 1983) is part owner of VCI, LLC, a Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned small business that was awarded a contract with the Department of Energy Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR). He writes, “this is the first time DOE SPR has awarded the A/E services to a small business. This award has made VCI the Engineer of Record for the nation's Strategic Petroleum Reserve.” He earned his bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering technology at Point Park in 1983.

Peter Wentzel (COPA 1982) recently reconnected with fellow dance alumnus **Rob Ashford** (COPA 1983, HON '10) when Ashford choreographed dance sequences for the feature films *A Million Ways to Die in the West* and *Ted 2*, both of which were produced by MRC Studios. Wentzel is vice president of production finance at MCR and Ashford is an award-winning director and producer for the Broadway stage, film and television.

David Perozzi (COM 1988) is now senior editorial producer at ABC News. In July 2014, ABC News re-hired Perozzi after a seven-year-departure. He is working closely with television legend Barbara Walters on a six-part series ABC News is producing for ID Discovery. The series revisits and updates some of Walters' biggest crime stories with fresh interviews and new updates. The series is being called *American Scandal* and is scheduled to air in September 2015.

Margaret Brindle (BUS 1988) writes, “I am a grateful alumna of Point Park University! Since graduating, I've become a university professor; authored four books; completed an M.P.A. and a Ph.D. at Carnegie

Mellon University; and created and directed a university arts management program. Recently, I've been working in Africa to create social entrepreneurship education programs for low-income women and am on the board of the African IP Trust (africaniptrust.org) and vice president of Light Years IP – returning income to Africans. The only reason I can boast about these achievements is this: I remember from where I came! A girl from Wilksburg, attending the Pittsburgh Playhouse for 10 years! And, that Point Park University believed in me well before I believed I could succeed. Thank you very much to my alma mater for giving me a springboard for success and opening a large window.”



Polar Pioneer

Nancy Davis-Kahrs (COM 1969, 1972) posted this photo — taken on a 2014 “polar expedition” to the town of Churchill in Manitoba, Canada — on the Point Park Boomer Alumni Facebook page (visit <http://on.fb.me/1IDC9el>). She writes, “I really intended to show off my Point Park sweatshirt, but the weather was WAY too cold for this southern gal to get down to that layer!” A resident of Mt. Pleasant, S.C., Davis-Kahrs traveled by train to get a close-up view of the most famous residents of northern Canada: polar bears. It was an “awesome trip,” she reports. Where have you been in your Point Park gear? Send us a photo, and tell us your story, at thepoint@pointpark.edu.

CLASS NOTES

1990s

Karen Ferrick-Roman (COM 1991) received her doctoral degree in educational leadership from Duquesne University's School of Education in December. Her dissertation focused on the relationship between schools and community, the community and economic impact of school closure and how schools might be reused in underserved communities. She gave a tabletop presentation of "The New Endangered Species: Community-Anchoring Public Schools" for the University Council of Educational Administration Center for Educational Leadership and Social Justice. Ferrick-Roman graduated summa cum laude with a master's degree in journalism and communications from Point Park, and magna cum laude with bachelor's degrees in journalism and sociology from Indiana University of Pa. Media relations manager for Duquesne University, she is active as

director of student and university relations for the International Association of Business Communicators and as a volunteer with Rochester Public Library.

John Tommasino (A&S 1993) graduated from the Southern California Health Institute, as a certified personal trainer, in 2014. He owns his own business, J.T.'s Fitness, in the San Fernando Valley.

2000s

Patrick Murray (A&S '00) writes that he "and fellow Point Park graduate **Jonathan Stewart** (A&S 1996) are proud to have offered a partner position to another Point Park graduate, **Christopher Thomas** (A&S '01)." Murray and Stewart founded Stewart, Murray & Associates Law Group, which handles mainly civil litigation and injury cases, in 2009. Thomas joined the firm several years ago to start a criminal

law department. He became a partner effective January 1, 2015 and now chairs the firm's department of criminal defense.

Abbey Helbling (COM '05) has been hired by PNC as a Marketing Specialist II for Investments and Retirement Marketing. She earned her degree in advertising and public relations in 2005.

2010s

Katherine Lancaster (BUS '13) is the new communications coordinator for the Pittsburgh CLO. She earned her M.B.A. degree at Point Park in 2013.

Jared Passante (COPA '14) writes, "Moved to Los Angeles in September, 2014. I'm currently living in Hollywood and working in a full-time, entry-level position at Sony Pictures Studios in Culver City, Calif." Passante earned his bachelor's degree in cinema and digital arts in 2014.

Amanda King (COM '12) has accepted a position as media coordinator at Carnegie Mellon University. She earned her degree in broadcast journalism at Point Park in 2012.

Julia Best Warner (COPA '13) played the part of Julie in the Pittsburgh City Theater production of *Oblivion*, directed by Stuart Carden, last March. Warner earned her degree in acting at Point Park.

Nicole M. Soriano (COPA '13) plays the lead role of Mama Bear in the national touring production of *The Bernstein Bears The Musical*. Soriano is also the resident choreographer for the Boston Children's Theatre in Boston, Mass.

Leigh Szczepanski (BUS '12) and **Alan Hallstein** (A&S '12) have announced their engagement. The couple met at Point Park, their alma mater. Szczepanski received her bachelor's degree in sports, arts, and entertainment management (SAEM) with a minor in business management. She is currently working in promotions. Hallstein received his bachelor's degree in criminal justice and is currently working in corrections. The wedding is planned for October 2015 at the Heinz History Center in Pittsburgh.

Robert Gregg (COM '10) writes: "On Jan. 14, 2015 I received two awards at a ceremony at the Delta Flight Museum in Atlanta. But it really wouldn't have been as special if



Pint Size Pioneers

Future Pioneers Carson, 4, and Molly, 1, the son and daughter of **Amanda Dabbs** (COM '11), show off their Point Park pride at home in Allison Park, Pa. Dabbs covers the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Business as web content editor for the University's Enrollment Marketing department. She earned her master's degree in journalism and mass communication at Point Park in 2011.

Kristi Grey and Chris Perkins had not been there with me. They are the other [award] winners from the Pittsburgh International Airport. They are above wing workers and I am a below wing worker. However, as Chris said, "There shouldn't really be a distinction between the two. We are all part of one big team!" The above wing workers work directly with the passengers and the below wing workers focus on the baggage. [The above wing workers] have their own lingo but they never allowed me to feel as though I was left out, and we congratulated each other. [The] award was the kind that you want to find just the right spot for, because it is solid glass and says Delta Climber's Club Winner and your name, of course. We [also received a second award that] displays compliments that our peers shared anonymously. Supervisor Michelle was proud to read these aloud to the audience before handing them to us. Kristi told me that she enjoys dealing with the ramp below wing crew and I told her that I feel the same way [about] the above wing workers. Chris knows the territory [well] and, fortunately for the below wing workers, he is always willing to lend a helping hand ... We let the people at the

event know that the Steel City contains good and honest workers who are going to keep on climbing as the planes continue to soar. In conclusion, I will remember ... the day I formed a bond with two coworkers who I previously [knew] simply as two individuals who walked in and out of the same airport doors."

Patrick Scott (A&S '12) became an assistant principal at Woodland Hills High School last September. He previously spent seven years teaching computer applications at Mars Area Middle School. Scott earned his bachelor's degree from Robert Morris University and his master's degree and principal's certification from Point Park in 2012.

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Hunter Tresnicky (COM '14) is a news producer at WJAC-TV in Johnstown, Pa. He says, "I chose Point Park after attending the High School Summer Media Workshop. Working with the students, professors and equipment for an entire week confirmed for me my career choice of broadcast journalism." Tresnicky started with WJAC in May 2014 as an intern. "I serve as the producer for the 6 p.m. weekday newscast. My daily responsibilities include helping the noon anchor produce the noon newscast, I then both the newscast, meaning I time the show from the control room. After the noon, I begin work on the 6 p.m. show, which is filled entirely with local news." Tresnicky is also active in the arts community of Johnstown as an actor and singer. He earned his degree in broadcast reporting in 2014.

Tyler Scherer (COPA '12) is a member of the cast of the national tour of *Beauty and the Beast*, which stopped at Heinz Hall in Pittsburgh March 31- April 5. A Pittsburgh native, Scherer is also an alumnus of Central Catholic High School and the CLO Academy. As a Point Park student, he played such roles as Zak in *A Chorus Line*, Jigger in *Carousel* and Kodaly in *She Loves Me*. For the past two years Scherer has resided in Los Angeles, where he is involved in Playhouse West.

Erdem Kurtmen (BUS '13) is a special project engineer and project business analyst with Guralp Crane and Machine Construction Industry and Trade Inc. He earned his M.B.A. with a concentration in international business. A native of Turkey, Kurtmen served as secretary of the Graduate Student

Association and as a graduate assistant during his time at Point Park. He says, "An M.B.A. degree is another feather in the hat of an engineer who wishes to have a bright future. An engineering degree teaches you how to apply your knowledge practically. An M.B.A. degree teaches you how to manage people with engineering degrees who are going to be working for you. My own M.B.A. studies gave me many ideas on how to approach a variety of projects more effectively."

Munkhdelger Tsedenbal (BUS '14) is a market risk analyst for XacBank in Mongolia, where he was raised. He earned his M.B.A with a concentration in international business. "The M.B.A. program at Point Park offered a perfect blend of quality, flexibility and rigor. [It] provided me with the knowledge and skills to land a position as a market risk analyst at one of the leading banks in Mongolia. Point Park's distinguished professors with real-world experience broadened my horizons and business perspectives in unique ways. I must give kudos to Dr. **Dimitris J. Kraniou**, my academic advisor and one of my professors. Through the courses, he challenged and influenced me in ways that no other professor has."

Frank Sottile (COM '14) is marketing communications manager at Fourth Economy Consulting in Pittsburgh. His responsibilities include "managing, maintaining and updating several websites, both that of my own company as well as several others we manage for regional initiatives and other organizations. I also do a fair amount of graphic design work, email and social media marketing and organizing proposals to pursue new projects for the firm." Sottile says, "The best thing about the M.A. in journalism and mass communication program was that it really focused on the areas that I had been lacking for the modern workplace. I was able to tailor the program to meet specific goals I had in mind to improve my skill sets."



Jessica Ladow (COM '09) is a partner operations manager at Google Pittsburgh, where she provides operational support for major retailers who advertise on Google Shopping and other comparison shopping engines. A journalism graduate, Ladow says "I use a variety of internal tools to detect, diagnose and resolve issues that affect our clients and their product data. One of the biggest things that I do is provide clear communication of complex concepts to our clients and internal partners."



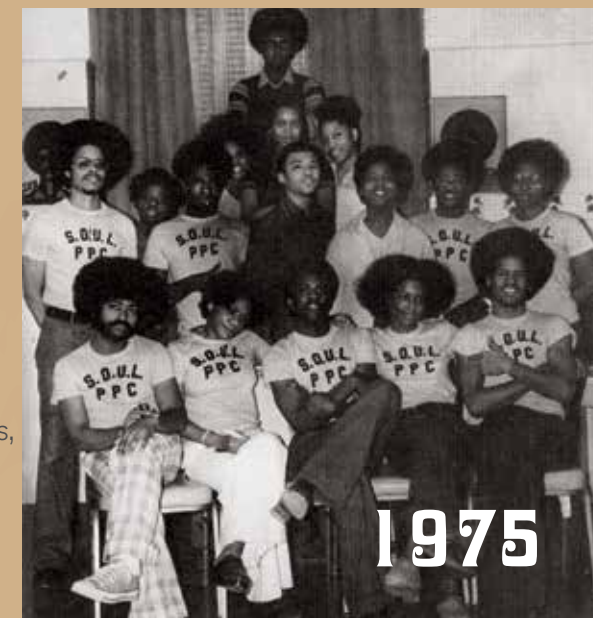
Callan Bergmann (COPA '10) returned to Point Park to host a Q&A with Conservatory of Performing Arts students on Jan. 22. Bergmann was in town performing in *Pippin the Musical* at the Benedum Center, located just a few blocks away from campus. Bergmann has performed in the Broadway production of *Cinderella*, off-Broadway productions of *Silence! The Musical* and *Lucky Guy*, and the TV series *Smash*. He says, "I grew up doing gymnastics, but I knew I needed training in musical theatre and dance. I credit Point Park for shaping me as a triple threat (or a quadruple threat if you count my gymnastics skills). Growing up in a small town, Downtown Pittsburgh was a perfect fit for me because I needed a stepping-stone before moving to New York City. Pittsburgh really is a great city!"

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1975



1971



1975



1975



REACHING HIGH

Pioneer volleyball wins conference championship in Student Center gym

by Kevin Taylor



Photos by Chris Squier.



SPORTS ROUNDUP

► WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

The Pioneers had another great season with a record of 25-5 overall and a run to the KIAC Tournament semifinals. Point Park nearly made it to their fourth straight NAIA DII national tournament but came up short in the conference playoffs with some key injuries. Point Park was 11-3 KIAC to place second in the KIAC North Division. Sophomore point guard Kelly Johnson and junior forward Ja'Nia McPhatter were named KIAC All-Conference. Johnson was named the KIAC Newcomer of the Year, and McPhatter was named the KIAC Comeback Player of the Year.

Head coach Tony Grenek is 102-24 (.810) in his four years at Point Park and is now the all-time winningest coach in program history. He passed Ed Meena, who won 81 games.

► MEN'S BASKETBALL

The Pioneers made a run to the KIAC Tournament championship game with a strong playoff run but lost in the finals to No. 19 IU East to fall one game shy of the NAIA DII national tournament. The final record was 16-13 overall and second place in the KIAC North Division.

Junior point guard Jerah'me Williams (19.1 ppg, 6.9 apg) was NAIA DII Honorable Mention All-American and the KIAC Newcomer of the Year. Seniors Alan Heter (14.2 ppg) and Barry Smith (12.3 ppg) were other top players. It was the 26th season for head coach for Bob Rager (A&S 1974), who has now won 364 career games to further his victory total as the all-time winningest coach in team history.

Eleven volleyball teams from the Kentucky Intercollegiate Athletic Conference descended on Downtown Pittsburgh last November for the KIAC Tournament hosted by Point Park University. In the end, it was the host Pioneers who held the championship trophy, winning the conference title in front of a raucous home crowd in the Student Center gym.

With the win, the Pioneers qualified for the NAIA national tournament for the second time in four years and the second time in program history. Point Park also reached

nationals in 2011, the only other time it won a conference championship.

For the team, it was a satisfying victory and the culminating moment of another excellent season.

Electric Atmosphere

"It was an electric atmosphere," said Point Park's 10th-year coach Mike Bruno. "It was great for our kids to win the conference title in front of their peers. All around, it was a great moment for Point Park volleyball and our campus."

The conference championship did not come easy as the Pioneers battled a KIAC schedule that had more talented teams than perhaps the conference has ever had. Point Park was 26-17 overall and 8-2 KIAC to take second place in the regular season.

But it was the Pioneers who were the last team standing after the KIAC Tournament. Point Park beat Brescia (Ky.), 3-0, in the first round on Friday night, Nov. 14. The next day, the Pioneers beat No. 3 IU Kokomo, 3-1, in the semifinals before defeating No. 4 IU South-

east, 3-1, in the finals. Point Park moved on to nationals, where it lost in the NAIA National Championship Opening Round to No. 15 Georgetown (Ky.), 3-0, — another great showing for the Pioneers.

Run of Great Success

"We continue to get more and more recognition in the NAIA volleyball community," said Bruno, on what the season did for the program. "And it continues to raise our expectations. Teams continue to get better in the KIAC, and we will have to work hard to maintain our status.

The bar has been raised for us, and in our conference."

The 2014 season continued a run of great success for the Pioneers program. Point Park is averaging nearly 30 wins per year the last six years, with 174 victories since 2009. The last six years produced two conference titles (2011 and 2014), two appearances in the conference finals, and also a run to the semifinals.

There were also plenty of individual accolades. Sophomore outside-hitter Shiloh Simonson and freshman right-side hitter Ashley Taylor were named All-KIAC First Team and AVCA All-Northeast Region. Sophomore setter Emily Meng and freshman libero Tabea Dalliard were All-KIAC Second Team. ❖

Kevin Taylor is director of athletic communications. Photographer Chris Squier is a senior photojournalism major.

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