Linfield

How higher education talks about affordability
True cost
Putting a price on opportunity

There is a lot of discussion these days about the cost of higher education. The cost-benefit analysis of obtaining a degree, on the other hand, is rarely brought up. The data is clear. According to reports recently published by Georgetown University and US News & World Report, the pay gap between those with a college degree and those without one is at an all-time high. College graduates on the mean make $17,500 more every year than those who don’t have a college degree. This pay gap increases as one moves through life, leading to about a $1 million income differential over a lifetime.

It is important to contrast this earning potential with the national average student loan debt of $29,650. If you could invest $29,650 and get $1 million back, would you make the investment? Most people would.

That said, a college education should not be evaluated only on its economic return. Colleges like Linfield offer life-enhancing and life-changing experiences for students. It is hard to put a price on the opportunity to interact one-on-one with a professor who knows your interests and invites you to do collaborative research. How does one calculate the value of being part of a student-led club or athletic team, or a member of the school newspaper or forensics team? What does it mean to your life to make friends with peers from different backgrounds, to spend time abroad or to learn a new language?

Linfield was recently ranked the best value among liberal arts colleges in Oregon by two different publications – US News & World Report and Money magazine. These rankings came about not as a result of Linfield being the least expensive college, but as a result of the quality of the educational experience and the resulting outcomes for students.

I invite you to share your experiences and outcomes with us. Please let us know how your Linfield education and time on our campusess benefited and shaped your life.

I am humbled to lead this institution at this time in its history and I look forward to hearing from you.

– Miles K. Davis, president

Mission statement: Linfield Magazine tells bold, ambitious and entertaining stories of Linfield College. It strives to explore pressing topics, in undergraduate education and the world, and inspire active participation in the Linfield community by fostering the people, places, teams, events, successes and challenges that make up the life of the college. The magazine is published twice annually for alumni, students, faculty and friends of the college by the Office of Communications and Marketing.

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LETTERS & ADDRESS CHANGES: We welcome your thoughts. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and should include name, address, email address and telephone number.

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Linfield

Linfield College

In the board game The Game of Life, one of the first choices to make (after selecting the color of your car) is between college and the workforce. In reality, the choice is no game and infinitely more complex than simply drawing a card.

Private college? Public college? Community college? No college? Just how affordable is higher education today? Our cover story attempts to unpack some questions potential students have to ask themselves.

As always, we welcome your thoughts on this and other topics included in these pages at linfieldmagazine@linfield.edu. This is your college, and these are your stories.

Happy reading,

– Laura Davis, editor
Linfield College has agreed to purchase the University of Western States campus in Northeast Portland.

University of Western States will lease back the facilities until May of 2020, when Linfield will take possession. The Linfield-Good Samaritan School of Nursing has been located at Northwest Portland’s Legacy Good Samaritan Medical Center since 1982, and the nursing program will continue to operate in that location for the remainder of this academic year and the next.

“This was a once-in-a-century opportunity for us to expand in Portland,” said Miles K. Davis, Linfield College president. “It guarantees that our school of nursing will have a secure home, and it gives us additional opportunities to expand in the state’s largest metropolitan area.”

The facilities at the existing Linfield-Good Samaritan School of Nursing are at full capacity, leaving the college’s nursing programs with long waiting lists.

“Our new campus will allow us to significantly expand to meet the healthcare needs of Oregonians. The timing of our new campus is critical as one quarter of Oregon’s registered nurses and one half of Oregon nursing faculty plan to retire in the next decade,” said Kim Dupree Jones, Linfield’s dean of nursing.

The station, located on the south end of the McMinnville campus, records temperature, dew-point temperature, relative humidity, wind, rainfall, atmospheric pressure and solar radiation, and calculates a UV Index.

Rain or shine

A new weather station began posting real-time atmospheric conditions from Linfield this fall.

The station, located on the south end of the McMinnville campus, records temperature, dew-point temperature, relative humidity, wind, rainfall, atmospheric pressure and solar radiation, and calculates a UV Index.

New program aids first-gen students

Linfield is offering a new program for students who are first-generation college students. The Linfield First Scholarship program aims to address the unique challenges first-generation students face. It includes scholarships, mentoring, early-arrival programs and more. Learn more at linfield.edu/first-scholarship.

Linfield earns accolades

Linfield received top rankings from national news outlets this fall.

Money magazine released its rankings for the “Best College for Your Money” in 2018, and Linfield occupies the No. 1 spot among liberal arts colleges in Oregon.

For the third year in a row, Linfield holds the top place among Pacific Northwest liberal arts colleges for “Best Ethnic Diversity,” according to the 2019 U.S. News and World Report rankings.

Linfield’s Online and Continuing Education program earned a designation as one of the “25 Best Bachelor’s in Project Management Online” in the United States for 2018 by TheBestSchools.org. See page 51 for a full listing.

Combined bachelor’s-master’s degree in wine offered

The U.S. college with the first interdisciplinary wine studies degree will now be the first U.S. college with a five-year program leading to both bachelor’s and master’s degrees in wine studies.

Linfield is teaming up with Ecole Supérieure d’Agriculture (ESA) in Angers, France, for the initiative. Students who complete the program will receive a bachelor’s degree in wine studies from Linfield and an international vintage master’s degree from ESA.

“This program provides an accelerated pathway for students to gain both a bachelor’s and master’s degree, and to gain important work experience in the heart of Oregon’s wine country and in three or more European countries,” said Greg Jones, director of the Evenstad Center for Wine Education.

The station is maintained by the Evenstad Center for Wine Education, and will be used campus wide to learn about climate, says Greg Jones, director of the center and a research climatologist in the Department of Environmental Studies. Learn more at linfield.edu/weather.

What happens when scientific revolution meets human depravity? The Linfield Theatre Program, in its 95th season, explored that question with Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in early November. The production included a post-show question-and-answer session with the designers and director along with a monthly feature on “Monstrous Psychology and Biology” featuring faculty from the departments of English, biology, psychology and theatre. Professor Janet Gupton directed the 13-member cast.

Civic engagement

Linfield hosted two gubernatorial candidates to discuss civic engagement and political participation in October, one week before election day. Students and community members met with Nick Chen, Libertarian Party candidate, Oct. 29 and Rup Kaur Khaira, Republican Party candidate, Oct. 30. All of Oregon’s gubernatorial candidates on this year’s ballot were invited, including the incumbent, Gov. Kate Brown.
College or career?

As would-be students weigh one of the most important decisions of their lives, society in general and higher education in particular are sending mixed messages about affordability.

Editor’s note: Affordability. It’s the elephant in the room during every conversation about higher education these days. Ideas from free public universities (New York) to free community college (Oregon and Tennessee) are being debated widely. Politicians regularly question the value of degrees in the liberal arts, and media coverage about rising student debt is commonplace.

So we decided to talk about it. Not only that, but to hire a veteran business and finance reporter to make sense of it for Linfield Magazine readers. Donna Freedman spent 18 years as a staff writer at newspapers including the Chicago Tribune and the Anchorage Daily News. She has worked at MSN Money and Money Talks News, and remains a personal finance columnist and freelance writer from her home in Alaska.

The elephant in the room: It’s there and it’s big. Let’s step up and take a close look.

– Laura Davis, editor

*Average rate, 2008-2018
As a high-school senior, Brian Gerritz ’98 had two acceptable schools and one “long shot” college in mind. The middle of three sons being raised by a single mom, he figured the dream school was unachievable—until the Linfield College financial aid package arrived.

Suddenly the long shot was “within reach,” recalls Gerritz, a math major. A mix of work-study, Pell grants and hustling hard every summer let him finish with $27,000 worth of loans—about a year’s starting salary back then.

When it comes to paying for higher education, sticker shock is real. Universities and colleges work with families to bring down the net cost of a degree, but the average student in this country still graduates with a loan balance of about $30,000. (Average student debt for Linfield students is $34,244.)

The numbers don’t bear this out. College grads in the 25-to-34 age bracket have an unemployment rate of 2.9 percent (about four percentage points below those with only a high school diploma). As noted above, college graduates earn better salaries—to the tune of $1 million more throughout their careers.

That’s the long view, though. In the short term, it’s easy to buy into the media hype and apply only to the least expensive schools. However, private institutions may be more affordable than you think. Nine out of 10 freshmen at private colleges receive some kind of institutional grant, according to a 2017 study from the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO). Those grants covered more than half (56.7 percent) of tuition and fees.

Almost every Linfield freshman received some institutional aid in 2016-17. “It can actually be cheaper to go to a high-cost school because of all the financial aid. The big-name schools are the ones most likely to give you more help,” says Sandy Baum, a senior fellow in the Education Policy program at the Urban Institute and professor emerita of economics at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

In fact, the average net tuition and fees price at private colleges has gone down slightly in the past decade. However, phrases like “Student Loan Crisis” or “Useless Degrees” make irresistible headlines. We hear about new grads who can’t find jobs and are saddled with impossible-to-pay loans.

In terms of lifetime income, college debt is good debt. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median weekly salary for bachelor’s degree holders is $1,173; for those with high school diplomas, it’s $712. However, phrases like “Student Loan Crisis” or “Useless Degrees” make irresistible headlines. We hear about new grads who can’t find jobs and are saddled with impossible-to-pay loans.

Why sticker price doesn’t tell us the whole story
97% of Linfield students receive financial aid
$30,200—average financial aid package at Linfield
90% of Linfield graduates finish in eight semesters or fewer
26% of Linfield students are Pell grant eligible (low income)

Why is financial aid so complicated?

Most aid is based on income, rather than academics or athletics. But it plays out differently for every student because each situation is unique.

Think of the college as an airline: It’s likely no two people pay the same price to get on the plane. Two students with similar economic backgrounds might be offered entirely different aid packages depending on variables like special abilities or test scores. Another student might get a price break because a sibling attends the same college, or because of first-generation status or a particularly compelling essay.

As a high-school senior, Araceli Cruz ’09 realized that she might wind up owing “more money than my parents made in that year.” And she did: Cruz borrowed about $65,000 for a Linfield bachelor’s degree in Spanish and sociology and a Lewis & Clark master’s degree in student affairs administration. Now the associate director of financial aid at Linfield, her expertise is more than theoretical: She’s still paying off the loans.

Yet as a first-gen student who had to help support her family while still in high school, Cruz appreciates how far she’s come: “I’ve done things in my life that I never imagined I could do.”
Ask questions, and keep looking

Some super-motivated students earn enough scholarships and grants to pay for all four years. With luck, that will be your student – but it won’t be every student. High school seniors should apply to schools with the best fit, regardless of price, because financial aid might make it possible. (A simple way to do that is to use the Common Application website, commonapp.org, which has more than 750 member colleges.) As acceptance letters arrive, compare financial aid packages. Remember that the initial offer is just that: an offer. If you feel it has too many loans, ask about options like institutional grants and scholarships. “Negotiation happens all the time. It’s pretty common,” says Ken Redd, NACUBO’s senior director for research and policy analysis. Admissions personnel do have some wiggle room, he says, and might adjust an offer. Schools also have limits. So if the answer is “worry, no,” then ask for help finding non-loan-based aid sources: private scholarships, grants from community groups and the like.

Gabrielle Zeman ’17 applied to two private colleges and one public university (which offered less aid than the colleges). A first-gen student whose father emigrated from the Czech Republic, she decided on Linfield even though it cost more: “I wanted a school that saw value in social sciences as well as hard sciences,” she says.

She paid a few thousand dollars per year over and above financial aid, which included a work-study job and $70,000 worth of loans. Finding the right fit at Linfield made it worth the out-of-pocket cost and the debt.

“I figured I would have to borrow no matter what,” says Zeman, who graduated with a dual major of anthropology and psychology and will apply to medical school next year.

The truth about loans

The reluctance to borrow money is understandable. Yet if it’s possible to get an excellent education by taking on a reasonable amount of debt, the higher earnings later on will more than make up for the initial investment. Borrowing in and of itself isn’t a bad thing, Baum notes. It’s common to finance an automobile, which now costs an average of $36,115 and begins to depreciate the instant you drive away from the dealership.

It takes the average borrower about a dozen years to reach the break-even point on higher-ed loans, according to The College Board. That is, the borrower will have earned enough to pay for the education and make up for being out of the workforce during college. This study is based on students who graduate in four years and pay 4.3 percent interest for a decade. Ninety percent of Linfield graduates finish in eight semesters or less.

Do majors matter?

A popular online meme features two pictures. One is a stereotypical slacker dude lamenting that he “spent $60,000 on a worthless degree and no one will hire me,” and the other is a clean-cut young man smilingly announcing that “I spent $6,000 at a trade school and make $85,000 a year.” Obviously, every person who goes to trade school won’t automatically pull in the big bucks. And contrary to the meme, earning a non-occupation-specific degree – literature or philosophy vs. engineering or teaching – doesn’t mean you’ll struggle financially for the rest of your life. Leaders of companies like American Express, General Dynamics, Frontier Communications and Priceline have degrees in subjects like history, liberal arts and government, yet still become CEOs.
Maximizing non-loan options

College can be expensive, but schools are ready to work with families. Students who are motivated to look for additional non-loan aid sources before and during school may further reduce the amount paid out of pocket. Some reputable options:

- **Sallie Mae**
  - salliemae.com/collage-planning-tools/scholarship-search/
- **BigFuture**
  - bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search
- **Peterson's**
  - petersons.com/collage-search/scholarship-search
- **FinAid**
  - finaid.org/scholarships/

Not all aid is federally funded. According to the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, nearly every state education department has at least one grant or scholarship program. The NASFAA maintains an interactive map at nasfaa.org/State_Finan_Cial_Aid_Programs. Some potential funding sources are local—and not all are immediately apparent. Does your teen volunteer for an organization? Perhaps that group offers scholarships or grants. Maybe a parent belongs to a service club or works at a company that offers employee benefits. It pays to ask, “Do you pay?” and “Do you volunteer?”

According to Ken Fled of NACUBO, roughly $150 billion in financial aid—much of it in grant form—is available. “It pays to ask,” he says, “and be persistent.”

More than a vocation

Not that it’s only about money. Gerritz suggests that high school seniors ask themselves, “Where am I going to have the very best opportunities to apply myself, explore the world and have that love of learning?”

Personal growth and community involvement are a big part of liberal arts programs. An ongoing project from NACUBO called “The Value of Higher Education” shows the long-term benefits of a college education are quite valuable.

“Of a college education’s benefits can be measured in both financial and non-financial terms. Financial benefits are usually measured as the difference between incomes earned by college graduates and those who do not have college degrees. Studies of this difference consistently show that on average college graduates earn much more over their lifetimes than people without college degrees. This suggests that the financial benefits of a college education are quite valuable.

Non-financial benefits of a college education accrue as students develop the critical thinking skills necessary to evaluate complex arguments and defend their thoughts. These benefits are hard to measure. But there are distinctive, and noticeably expensive, characteristics of private colleges that help to produce them. They can include a residential community that fosters peer learning, productive student-faculty interaction, a curriculum centered on the liberal arts that offers a selection of majors focused on pre-professional preparation, and an active co-curricular environment that includes things like service learning activities, clubs and athletics.

Are private colleges affordable? Based on a comparison of the average attendance cost and the financial benefits, the answer to that question is likely to be yes. This conclusion is strengthened if students and parents also value a private education’s non-financial benefits.

There are, however, at least two reasons to be concerned about private colleges’ affordability. First, even though increases in the average attendance cost did not outpace the growth of income over the last two decades, the realized income gains have been unequally distributed. Some households have seen income rise faster than the average, but many have seen it rise by much less. This means that for an increasing number of households, a private college education has probably become less affordable. Combine this with decreases in the number of high school graduates and government policies that often discriminate against private higher education, and the result is that many private colleges are under great pressure to reduce their average attendance cost.

A second reason for concern about affordability is that purchasing a college education is increasingly viewed in vocational terms as a market transaction necessary only for gainful employment. As a result, the distinctive characteristics of private colleges that are so necessary to generate many of its non-financial benefits are often seen as frills. This view can make a private college education seem less affordable even at a lower average attendance cost.

The challenge for most private colleges, including Linfield, is to remain affordable by controlling the average attendance cost and finding innovative ways to provide financial and non-financial benefits that students value.

— Jeff Summers

Jeff Summers is a professor of economics and chair of the Department of Economics at Linfield College. His research focuses on the economics of higher education.

Notes on the data: Data for the sticker price and the average attendance cost referenced in this article are measured in constant dollars and drawn from The College Board, Trend in College Prices 2017. Data for U.S. per capita income is also measured in constant dollars and drawn from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, personal disposable income grew by 32 percent. Since the tuition sticker price rose by more than income, you might conclude that a private college education has become less affordable. But that conclusion could be wrong. To gauge affordability, we must think beyond the sticker price by properly measuring the cost students actually pay and compare that to the benefits of a college education. In economic terms, a college education is more affordable the larger are its benefits relative to its cost.

Thanks to financial aid, a majority of students at private colleges pay less than the sticker price. Let’s call the amount they do pay the average attendance cost. It is calculated as the sticker price minus the financial aid grants and tax benefits families receive to help them pay for college. Over the last two decades, the average attendance cost at private colleges rose by 29 percent. This increase in average attendance cost is a bit less than the 32 percent increase in income over that period, suggesting that a private college education may be more affordable today than it was 20 years ago. Remember, though, to reach this conclusion we must compare the average attendance cost to the education’s benefits.

A college education’s benefits can be measured in both financial and non-financial terms. Financial benefits are usually measured as the difference between incomes earned by college graduates and those who do not have college degrees. Studies of this difference consistently show that on average college graduates earn much more over their lifetimes than people without college degrees. This suggests that the financial benefits of a college education are quite valuable.

Non-financial benefits of a college education accrue as students develop the critical thinking skills necessary to evaluate complex arguments and defend their thoughts. These benefits are hard to measure. But there are distinctive, and noticeably expensive, characteristics of private colleges that help to produce them. They can include a residential community that fosters peer learning, productive student-faculty interaction, a curriculum centered on the liberal arts that offers a selection of majors focused on pre-professional preparation, and an active co-curricular environment that includes things like service learning activities, clubs and athletics.

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Dabbling is at the heart of composing for Andrea Reinkemeyer, assistant professor of music composition and theory. “I tinker. I improvise across the keyboard. I scratch things out,” she says. “If I come back to it three times, I know I’m on to something.” As she writes, she makes notations, sketches ideas, plays her violin and sings a lot, too. It’s practical advice she passes on in her classes. “I tell my students to use every tool at your disposal. Sing into your phone, use your laptop, save your ideas however you can.”

A world-class composer, Reinkemeyer’s most recent commissioned piece, Water Sings Fire, was commissioned for the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra (LPO) by the League of American Orchestras’ 2017 Women Composers Readings and Commissions program, administered by American Composers Orchestra, and supported by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation. It will premier in January with Carlos Miguel Prieto conducting the LPO. The 13-minute movement was inspired by a feminist re-telling of The Little Mermaid, and includes rich chords that “sink down into the depths of the ocean.”
Stephanie Willis ’21 remembers clearly her first meeting with Miles Davis. “He walked up to me in Dillin Hall and said, ‘You’re Stephanie Willis. I know of you,’” she recalls. “I was freaking out. This is the president, yet he knew who I was.”

Since that August day, Willis has had many conversations with Linfield’s new president, cheered with him at sporting events and joined other resident advisers spending time with his family.

“Every interaction I feel like I’m listened to,” says Willis, an education major and member of the Black Student Union. “He wants my point of view as a student.”

Davis had never heard of Linfield College, nor set foot in Oregon, when a recruiter first contacted him about the presidency. Now, only months into his appointment, Davis compares the time to being in a different country as he adjusts to the food, climate, language and cultural nuances.

“I feel a bit like an anthropologist, getting to know and explore all the things that make Linfield, McMinnville, the state and the Pacific Northwest distinctive,” says Davis, who admires Linfield’s strong foundation and long history. “If you want to engrain yourself in the culture, you have to spend time in it.”

Follow Davis on social media (Instagram @milesdavisphd; Twitter @DrDtweeters; Facebook Miles K. Davis) and you’ll find he’s doing just that. You’ll see him attending community events, cheering at Wildcat games, diving for fossils with faculty members, dancing with the marching band (also in its first year) and comparing colorful socks with all challengers (#sockchallenge, see page 19).

A science fiction fan, he likens social media to The Force in Star Wars. It can be used for good or for evil. “Social media lets me amplify my voice,” Davis says. “People want to know about who is leading the college.”

“A nontraditional route to the presidency

At a glance:
Hobbies: quantum physics and comparative theology
Favorite Miles Davis (jazz musician) song: Sketches of Spain
Book he frequently gifts: How to Win Friends and Influence People

“If you want to engrain yourself in the culture, you have to spend time in it.” - Miles Davis
“We can be liberal arts plus. It’s not an either/or. We can do both. The world needs people who can think and adapt to a changing world.” - Miles Davis

“During his years at Shenandoah, he sought out differing opinions as he diligently learned more about the academy and honed his leadership skills. Linfield is lucky to have him.” - Tracy Fitzsimmons

Miles Davis, shown here at a Linfield College football game, is immersing himself in the Linfield community and beyond, and “gaining an appreciation of the history and connection of the college to the area,” he says. He’s finding a rhythm in a job that has no distinct pattern. In addition to the demands of being president, family time, exercise, self-reflection and meditation are priorities. An early riser, he often sends messages at 4 a.m., and he and wife Naomi Pitcock start their mornings with coffee on the deck overlooking Cozine Creek, watching hummingbirds, before getting daughter Elisabeth, 11, off to school.

Davis has three distinct goals for Linfield – achieve sustainable financial footing, increase enrollment and increase the college’s visibility.

“Linfield has the potential to be the premier institution in the Pacific Northwest,” says Davis, who values programs that are based in the classical liberal arts and sciences but also have an applied focus. “We can be liberal arts plus. It’s not an either/or. We can do both. The world needs people who can think and adapt to a changing world.”

He’s also tempering his strong bias for action as he learns the intricacies of Linfield.

“I don’t know what you don’t know,” he says. “What to me may be simple on its face might have greater historical context. I know that some of my decisions are going to be wrong, but they will never be malicious. I will recognize when they are wrong, and I will apologize and make course corrections.”

Born and raised in West Philadelphia, Penn., Davis says he had to develop a stout work ethic helping to support his family as a young teen. He was the first in his family to graduate from college, beginning at the local community college, before transferring to Duquesne University. He later joined the Navy, where he served for six years, including during the first Gulf War. Next, he entered the business world, working as a managing consultant and principal for EDS Corp., and serving on the boards of numerous non-profit organizations and publicly traded companies. He ultimately earned a master’s degree from Bowie State University followed by a doctorate from George Washington University before joining the faculty at Shenandoah University where he served as dean of the Harry F. Byrd Jr. School of Business.

“I have the opportunity to connect with students who came from similar backgrounds. Some see in me a possibility. That’s why I do what I do.” - Miles Davis

As the number of college presidents grows, Miles Davis uses social media to amplify the institutional message, and his personality comes through as well. He often compares creative sock choices with students and friends who take the “sock challenge.”

“During his years at Shenandoah, he sought out differing opinions as he diligently learned more about the academy and honed his leadership skills. Linfield is lucky to have him.” - Tracy Fitzsimmons

Shenandoah University president

#SockChallenge

Like a growing number of college presidents, Miles Davis uses social media to amplify the institutional message, and his personality comes through as well. He often compares creative sock choices with students and friends who take the “sock challenge.” Find him on Instagram @milesdavisphd, Twitter @DrDtweeters and Facebook Miles K. Davis.

Though Davis didn’t expect to ever become a college president, others around him did, including Tracy Fitzsimmons, Shenandoah president.

“Miles stood out from the beginning as a future college president,” says Fitzsimmons. “During his years at Shenandoah, he sought out differing opinions as he diligently learned more about the academy and honed his leadership skills. Linfield is lucky to have him.”

Pointing to key mentors along the way in his own growth and development, Davis says he tries to take on that role for others.

“I have the opportunity to connect with students who came from similar backgrounds,” he says. “Some see in me a possibility. That’s why I do what I do.”

His time in the Navy and working in the business world also stand out, and aren’t necessarily the norm among college and university presidents. Jake Olson ’19, an international business major, calls Davis’ business background and leadership style inspirational.

“He talks about the value of our education, our ROI. This is music to my ears,” says Olson, ASLC club director and Japanese Club president who studied business in Hong Kong last spring. “He’s asked to see my business plan; he’s invested in student success.”

Davis leads by example, influencing rather than wielding authority, Olson continues. He’s one of the first people at an event and the last to leave.

“He’s asking how we can improve this college together,” says Olson. “Leadership and motivation go hand in hand.”

-Born and raised in West Philadelphia, Penn., Davis says he had to develop a stout work ethic helping to support his family as a young teen. He was the first in his family to graduate from college, beginning at the local community college, before transferring to Duquesne University. He later joined the Navy, where he served for six years, including during the first Gulf War. Next, he entered the business world, working as a managing consultant and principal for EDS Corp., and serving on the boards of numerous non-profit organizations and publicly traded companies. He ultimately earned a master’s degree from Bowie State University followed by a doctorate from George Washington University before joining the faculty at Shenandoah University where he served as dean of the Harry F. Byrd Jr. School of Business.

“During his years at Shenandoah, he sought out differing opinions as he diligently learned more about the academy and honed his leadership skills. Linfield is lucky to have him.” - Tracy Fitzsimmons

Shenandoah University president

Miles Davis, shown here at a Linfield College football game, is immersing himself in the Linfield community and beyond, and “gaining an appreciation of the history and connection of the college to the area,” he says.
Kat Denicola is scanning the web. She types in the Linfield College web address, and listens as her computer rapidly recites the content from the top of the page: “Link-skip-content-link-with-7-items-prospective-students-link-current-students-link-resources-link-heading-heading…” The dictation flies by at 125 words a minute.

“Do you want me to slow it down?” Kat asks. I did, but told her no. This was an opportunity for me to learn what Linfield’s website “looks like” to someone who can’t see.

As the person in charge of Linfield’s website, I have to remember that our site will be experienced on everything from 27-inch desktop monitors to iPhone screens. I have to remind content editors that a prospective student probably doesn’t know what “colloquium” or “paracurricular activities” are. I also need to make sure our site meets federally-mandated sets of accessibility regulations. In essence, those rules say Linfield can’t discriminate on the basis of disability. This includes our website. All the information there needs to make sure our site meets federal guidelines to make accommodation for those whose life experience is different from our own. Working with Kat puts the humanity in those laws.

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Kat Denicola, left, and Jonathan Pierce, Linfield College webmaster, discuss Denicola’s experience moving through Linfield’s website with a screen reader at the Oregon Commission for the Blind.

“Do you want me to slow it down?” Kat asks. I did, but told her no. This was an opportunity for me to learn what Linfield’s website “looks like” to someone who can’t see.

—Jonathan Pierce

Kat, who’s the assistive technology instructor for the Commission’s Salem office, is totally blind. She was thrilled someone would try to improve a website for people with vision limitations, and graciously gave up several hours to share her experience navigating the Linfield site.

A screen reader is software that lets her computer dictate the content of a web page, and lets her use key commands to move around that page. It also alphabetically sorts the links so the whole page doesn’t have to be read back to her to find one link. Experienced users accelerate the dictation to navigate more quickly. Kat was a pro and moved through a page as fast as I could read it.

After an hour, I was getting used to the rapid dictation. Kat explained that web page headings are among the most important navigation aids for her. That was the “heading-heading” I heard when she first started. By hitting the “H” key, she could jump from one heading to the next to get a summary of that page section before moving on. Over the course of an afternoon, Kat identified where she found content confusing. I explained what was happening on the page and if I was able, fixed the issue.

The time we spent together was so informative that we scheduled a group session with assistive technology instructors from across the state. I went to the Commission’s Portland office and worked with their team. Kat and several other instructors conferenced in and we navigated through an assortment of Linfield’s web pages. Filling out one of our inquiry forms, the instructor using the screen reader stumbled on a set of buttons. I changed the source code, then we talked about what I did and how easy it was to fix. That moment really was the crux of why I was seeking their help.

Like most of the Linfield community, I can see, hear and move without limitation. I will always frame my understanding of the world from that perspective. That’s why the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act exist. They give us guidelines to make accommodation for those whose life experience is different from our own. Working with Kat puts the humanity in those laws.

In Oregon, there are more than 100,000 people who identify as “vision impaired.” When we design to meet their needs, we all benefit. Web content, for example, sometimes tries too hard to be cutting edge or clever at the expense of basic usability. We’re all grateful when a site works well.

More importantly, when we forget about people with disabilities, or define them as such a small percentage that it’s not worth making accommodation for them, we are doing more than underestimating the number of people we are excluding; we are marginalizing a group. We are being cruel.

That’s not Linfield. We must keep working to remain true to our mission.

—Jonathan Pierce
It's controlled chaos at the Portland Product Werks office. Only a few weeks before the launch of a new brand, shoe displays line the walls, samples spill from boxes stacked three high and people hunch over computers with phones to their ears. Even a small dog stands at attention, gingerly sniffing deliveries and visitors.

In the middle of this whirlwind of activity is Sean Beers ’98, a Bluetooth earpiece firmly affixed as he makes yet another call. Beers looks at home among the frenzy, plowing through calls and action items. He laughs about it being a crazy week.

“They’re all crazy,” he jokes.

Beers is the model of the driven, successful CEO. His résumé is envy-inducing: a CPA license; a law degree from Lewis & Clark and admitted to the bar; a 12-year stint at Columbia Sportswear Co. culminating in him leading its footwear division; presidencies of Korkers Products and now Portland Product Werks.

But Beers had a different beginning than most accomplished businessmen. He dropped out of high school and was living a life, in his own words, of “extreme addiction, intravenous drug use, rampant alcoholism.” On April 29, 1992, he was arrested with five pounds of cocaine in a Drug Enforcement Administration sting in a Los Angeles mall. Ultimately, he spent 39 months in prison.

He came out of prison clean and sober, and, he says, “highly motivated to get as far away from my past as I possibly could.” He was facing his thirties, had a wife and children and he could feel the clock ticking.

While in prison, Beers had taken correspondence courses from Portland State University and wanted to finish his degree in accounting. He turned to Linfield College and its Distance and Continuing Education program (now known as Online and Continuing Education).

“I started looking around for the best accounting degree I could find,” he says. “Linfield enabled me to get an education and a degree from what I felt was the premier institution in the state, while still being able to work full time.”

Those days, he says, were a bit of a blur. “I was so busy that I was literally skidding into classes, racing out — I had to work early every morning — it was just a dead sprint.”

Beers graduated from law school in 2002. He passed the bar exam but was not admitted because of his felony conviction. That wasn’t good enough for Beers. He embarked on a three-year battle to be admitted to the bar. Again, he says, it was about putting the past behind him, to prove that he was a different person now. His main objective, he said, “was to get as far away from that past as possible.”

On Aug. 18, 2005, the Oregon Supreme Court ruled unanimously in Beers’ favor. The court ruling hinged on Beers showing he had reformed — in effect, that he had fully put his plan for the course capstone. Beers wrote one for a capital equipment lease finance business, but wouldn’t turn it in until Bell signed a non-disclosure agreement.

“Isn’t that the point of the class, to make something real?” Beers laughs, shaking his head at his hubris. “I was pretty indefensible on those things and pretty confident.”

After getting his accounting degree at Linfield, Beers started at Columbia Sportswear. He was initially in charge of investor relations before moving to the product, merchandising and marketing side of the business. Eventually, he began law school while still at Columbia.

The amount of work was enormous. “You’re reading 100 pages of case law a day,” Beers says. He snatched study time whenever and wherever he could.

Tim Boyle, president and chief executive officer at Columbia Sportswear, said via email, “Sean was always working, and I remember him with his nose in a law book every chance he got!”

Beers says that he earned his law degree on Tim Boyle’s airplane, flying around the country on Columbia Sportswear business trips.

On top of his law studies, he took the CPA exam, and passed all four parts on his first try. The average pass rate is just under 50 percent. “I was pretty driven, I guess,” he muses.

“Sean is a force of nature,” says Boyle, “and it confirms that significant effort can yield geometrically greater results.”

Beers believes everyone has the ability to expand their knowledge and effectiveness by working smarter, not necessarily harder.

“I remember days where I was so overwhelmed...how do I expand my brain to have a greater capacity? And, you can do it!” He nods. “You can always take on more substance.”

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past behind him. The case is now taught in law schools. After 12 years at Columbia Sportswear, Beers was leading the footwear division and decided it was time for a change. In 2008, he became the chief executive at Korkers, overseeing its first boot designed for use on icy terrain. In 2012, he created Portland Product Werks, a company that partners with brands that want to enter the footwear marketplace but lack the experience to do so. Portland Product Werks became the licensee for Woolrich for that company’s slippers and footwear. Now, Portland Product Werks has launched Dovetail Workwear — a line designed specifically for women and sold directly on Amazon, Zappos, Orvis and Nordstrom, among others.

Beers, characteristically, is looking toward the next challenge. “The main thing,” he says, “is creating something that doesn’t exist. I’m not interested in working on things that are already working. I’d like to work on things that are horribly broken or don’t exist yet.”

“I’m not burning to make a million dollars, that’s not how I keep score,” he continues. “By solving problems. By making a difference.” To that end, Beers finds it important to talk about his history. “It was a stigma for a lot of years,” he says. “I’ve spent a lot of time on re-entry efforts with felons who are coming back to society.”

He volunteers with Social Ignition, a nonprofit that teaches entrepreneurship to prisoners and those recently released from prison. He tries “to help teach prisoners about how to apply their entrepreneurial insights to real businesses in the real world.”

And then he switches his earpiece on, ready to take the next call, make the next sale, launch the next brand.

— Christian Feuerstein
Jeremy Weisz, professor of biology, wasn’t sure what they’d find as he and 12 students scampered down a Newport sandbank on a drizzly afternoon to peer into tide pools. But that’s exactly the point. Exploration and discovery are the focus for Weisz’s marine ecology class during three fieldtrips to the Oregon or Washington coasts each semester. It’s a chance for students to poke around the habitats they discuss in class.

“I can show them all the video and photos about marine life, but nothing’s better than getting out there to see it firsthand,” he says. “I never know what animals we’ll find; it’s just fun to go explore.”

— Timothy D. Sofranko
Inspired to serve: Representing the U.S. overseas

The idea of working overseas conjures thoughts of exotic locales and exciting adventures. For Joshua Johnson ’04 and Kelsey Lyle ’07, the joys of being an expat are simpler than that. “I like walking down the street and taking in the sights, dodging traffic,” says Johnson.

“I love being around people who think differently than me,” Lyle adds. “The constant adjustments and misunderstandings keep me on my toes and engaged.”

A passion for serving others, combined with their liberal arts education and study abroad experience, has driven the couple’s careers. It led the pair from the Peace Corps in The Gambia, a West African country of 2 million, to serving in the U.S. Foreign Service at the American consulate in Chennai, India, with more than 10 million residents inside city limits alone.

“Some things they have in common are an openness to new experiences, the ability to become comfortable being uncomfortable, an interest in language and culture, flexibility and patience.” – Joshua Johnson ’04

Nearly 8,000 foreign service officers (FSO) serve in 270 embassies, consulates and diplomatic missions around the world. This is up from 6,588 in 2007. Even so, they make up a small percentage of the 75,000 people that work for the U.S. Department of State.

“My colleagues come from the military, from the press, from the private, public and academic sectors,” says Johnson. “Some things they have in common are an openness to new experiences, the ability to become comfortable being uncomfortable, an interest in language and culture, flexibility and patience.” – Joshua Johnson ’04

“Linfield inspired us to want to serve,” Lyle says. “The professors and international friends I made at Linfield opened my eyes to ways of thinking and being that I was unfamiliar with.” – Kelsey Lyle ’07

“Studying liberal arts gave me a wide range of knowledge, which was a great help on the Foreign Service exam,” he says. In the Peace Corps, Lyle was a health volunteer and Johnson volunteered in agroforestry. That led to Johnson getting work at the U.S. State Department as a civil servant before taking the Foreign Service exam.

Today, they both work for the consulate in Chennai, in southeastern India. Johnson is a foreign service officer and Lyle works as the community liaison officer. In his role, Johnson assists U.S. citizens and non-citizens in various activities dealing with the U.S. government. For example, his office issues passports, helps register the births of U.S. citizens overseas, and assists Americans who have been hospitalized or arrested. It also processes visa requests from foreigners wishing to come to the United States, including student and immigrant visas. In her role, Lyle assists new families as they adjust to living and working in India and helps plan activities.

“Studies liberal arts gave me a wide range of knowledge, which was a great help on the Foreign Service exam.” – Joshua Johnson ’04

Both Johnson and Lyle graduated with majors in psychology, and each studied abroad while at Linfield. Johnson spent a semester studying in Austria, while Lyle took a January term philosophy course in Spain. Both also took on leadership roles and became active in service projects.

Joshua Johnson graduated from Linfield with a degree in political science and an emphasis in international relations. “My professors and international friends I made at Linfield opened my eyes to ways of thinking and being that I was unfamiliar with,” he says. Lyle graduated with majors in psychology and Spanish and a minor in international studies. “Linfield inspired us to want to serve,” she says. “The professors and international friends I made at Linfield opened my eyes to ways of thinking and being that I was unfamiliar with.”

Johnson has these three pieces of advice for those interested in foreign service. First, “make sure it is something you truly want to do. It’s not a constant vacation. Working overseas can be stressful at times and you are a long way from friends and family.” Second, look at all your options for government service overseas. The Foreign Service is just one of a number of opportunities via the U.S. government, including USAID, the Department of Agriculture’s Foreign Agricultural Service, and the Department of Commerce’s Foreign Commercial Service. Finally, keep trying. “Never, never, never give up. I didn’t pass the first two times I went to the oral assessments, but in no sense did I fail,” Johnson says. “The hiring process is incredibly competitive and after each attempt I continued to learn and grow and gain additional experience, both paid and voluntary.”

Johnson and Lyle’s careers have taken them to over 10 countries, including India, Mexico, and Sweden.

“Linfield inspired us to want to serve. The professors and international friends I made at Linfield opened my eyes to ways of thinking and being that I was unfamiliar with.” – Kelsey Lyle ’07

“At the end of the day, it’s all about your attitude. I keep pushing myself and I keep questioning things. ‘What could I do better? What more could I do? Why am I doing this?’” – Kelsey Lyle ’07

“I love being around people who think differently than me,” Lyle adds. “The constant adjustments and misunderstandings keep me on my toes and engaged.”

“In addition, there is the language component. It has definitely kept me on my toes. I love the way language can change from city to city. ‘Bula’ means ‘hello’ in Farsi, which is a big part of the language component.” – Joshua Johnson ’04

“Studying liberal arts gave me a wide range of knowledge, which was a great help on the Foreign Service exam,” he says. “There’s a lot of immigration law and history you need to know. In the Peace Corps, Lyle was a health volunteer and Johnson volunteered in agroforestry. That led to Johnson getting work at the U.S. State Department as a civil servant before taking the Foreign Service exam.”

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Their next assignment in the Foreign Service is in Mexico City. They hope to move to a new assignment every two to three years, with a possible stint in Washington, D.C. mixed in. They enjoy the cultural experiences their 2-year-old daughter, Ingrid, receives by living overseas.

“We hope to retire in the Pacific Northwest someday,” Lyle says.

Kevin Curry ’92

5 steps to foreign service

Joshua Johnson ’04 outlines the path:

1. Take the Foreign Service officer test: “I love trivia so this test was actually a lot of fun for me.”

2. Submit personal narratives: “If you pass that test then you are invited to submit concise personal narratives about your leadership and cross-cultural experiences.”

3. Attend the Foreign Service oral assessment: “The next stage is a full day of assessments measuring your ability to problem-solve, work with others, use good judgment, and written oral communication. I was invited to orals three years in a row and passed on the third attempt. It is a tough but fair assessment.”

4. Receive a job offer…maybe: “If you pass the orals then you are placed on a register ordered by score and may receive a job offer.”

5. Get clearance and start: “You must receive top secret clearance and receive a positive final suitability review before joining what’s called an A-100 orientation class.”

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Another kind of classroom

The home locker room at Broadway Field is silent. Nobody is taping ankles. Nobody is listening to music. Everybody is reading.

Inside a badly out-of-date dressing room in Seaside, Ore., the football team sits on wooden benches and pours over a four-paragraph letter written by coach Jeff Roberts ’97. In the letter, Roberts – also the school’s principal – urges players to “embrace the now” and reminds them of “unfinished business with Banks,” a league opponent Seaside hasn’t beaten since the team’s seniors were in first grade.

Roberts emerges from a tiny office as the players finish reading – cramped because the physical education teacher’s space converts to the coach’s office on game days. He paces between benches of football players, delivering a firm message, “Tonight we expect to win. ‘Nothing to lose’ is a bunch of crap. That’s for teams that don’t expect to go out and win.”

Jeff Roberts ’97, left, and Jon Eagle ’83 are two of at least 21 Linfield alumni who are current head football coaches at the high school level. Both are passing on lessons they learned as Linfield football players.
In all sports, coaches are judged on wins and losses. But far more important is their ability to help young people learn lessons they won’t receive anywhere else, or learn in any other way.

High school coaches deal with student-athletes suffering from extreme stress, frustration and pain – physical and emotional – and are sometimes the only ones around to offer a word of kindness or encouragement.

For high school football coaches, the classroom is a patch of turf 100 yards long and 53 1/3 yards wide. Class is in session on autumn Friday nights, sometimes in front of thousands who will remember plays and debate individual coaching decisions for decades. That, though, belies the reality that most of the job happens when few are watching and nobody is cheering.

Ad Rutschman ’54 decided long ago that being able to handle adversity is an essential character trait. The College Football Hall of Fame inductee and former Linfield head football, baseball coach and athletic director has for years had a habit of asking successful people about the importance of honesty, work ethic, commitment to excellence, teamwork, relationships and resilience.

“I get basically the same answer every time – it’s everything,” says Rutschman, who believes athletics is the ideal venue to develop those skills. “I can teach honesty better on the football field than I can in the classroom.”

At Camas High School in Southwest Washington, students in sixth-period weight training class taught by Jon Eagle ’83 are wearing cargo shorts and jungle-themed shirts. It’s homecoming week, and today is Safari Day.

In a scene that could be straight out of “Friday Night Lights” or “Hoosiers,” Roberts picks up intensity during a two-minute address that culminates with a roar from the teenagers that becomes a chant.

Let’s go! Let’s go! Let’s go!

Hours earlier, Roberts leads a senior player into the principal’s office for a closed-door conversation. The player’s father won’t come to the Banks game – on senior night, in which other 12th-grade players will be escorted onto the field by parents for their last home game.

For long minutes after the player leaves, Roberts sits silently. A man who knows personal details about each of the school’s 377 students and prides himself on being upbeat and involved in the hallways, finds himself temporarily at a loss for words.

Jeff Roberts ’97 led the Seaside High School football team for four seasons before being named principal in 2016 and stepping away from coaching for a season. He now balances principal and head coach responsibilities.

At Camas High School’s Die Hard’s Stadium is the place to be on fall Friday nights. In order to attain the best seats, locals line up more than two hours prior to kickoff, and once the stadium’s gates open, students sprint to their seats, which fill up rapidly.
“What’s tomorrow’s theme?” Eagle asks into a wireless microphone that dangles from a black lanyard onto his Camas Football jacket.

“It’s Dress-Like-a-Teacher Day,” a voice calls from the back of the room as students jog around the state-of-the-art workout facility. “I’m dressing like Eagle!”

Eagle is known for motivating his students to work hard, and encouraging them to be as fit and healthy as each can become. When he arrived at the Camas, Wash., school in 2008, his first weight-training classes were all male. These days, an increasing percentage of his students are female.

“He’s just so encouraging,” says Madison Peffers, now a scholarship track-and-field athlete at Washington State University. “No matter where you start, he’ll get you where you want to be.”

Eagle inherited a middling Camas program in 2008 – it had never won a state playoff game – and soon turned the Papermakers into a juggernaut. The 2010 team won the school’s first state playoff game, the 2013 team reached the state championship, the 2016 team won the Washington 4A state title and the program won 58 consecutive regular season games between Sept. 23, 2011 and Oct. 27, 2017.

Eagle obsessively reviews his team’s performance and watches his opponents on HUDL, an online video platform. Papermakers players watch an hour of film each day, and occasionally Eagle’s students gather in his classroom for an impromptu session. Some watch more on their own. Isaiah Abdul, senior wide receiver, views an additional hour of film at home after completing homework. “It’s fun to learn,” he says.

“What we can control is developing our kids,” says Eagle. “We might not look as talented as our opponent, but we’re going to try to have our kids super prepared.”

Roberts is amused.

“We always lose pre-game,” he says, watching his Seaside team stretch quietly as their opponents yell and cheer loudly in the opposite end zone. His kids are a close-knit bunch, but quiet. With kickoff fast approaching, Roberts huddles the team together.

“Laser-like focus tonight,” he says, looking players in the eye. “Every play, best effort. Let’s assert who we are.”

The Camas Papermakers are confident. They have a 13-0 halftime lead over their rivals from Vancouver’s Union High School, and their 59th straight regular-season win seems within reach.

The team jogs off the field, into the tunnel under Doc Harris Stadium’s 4,000 fans. They assemble on locker-room benches facing the front of the room, quiet and focused. Class is in session.

In addition to being head coach, Eagle also directs the team’s offense. For eight minutes he draws plays on a classroom-style whiteboard, quizzing student-athletes on what is happening on the field. His sparse teaching tools are a dry-erase pen and his memory.

“Are they playing the run or are they playing you?” Eagle asks Kyle Allen, senior quarterback.

“It’s been more RPO (run, pass option) first,” Allen says.

“Good! That’s the answer we need. Very good,” says Eagle, enthusiastically.
At the half in Seaside, Roberts unlaces his white Nike shoes and begins to change socks in a coaches-only meeting, while defensive coordinator Bill Westerholm dissects the team’s performance. Westerholm is Roberts’ “idea guy” and pitches – for the umpteenth time – an offensive play called the “naked boot.” Roberts grins at the suggestion and is calm, even though his team is behind 14-13.

Roberts concludes his strategy session with the coaches and walks out to address the team. If they are going to beat No. 5-ranked Banks, they’ll need more of his motivational talks. Standing in a small sea of red uniforms, Roberts reminds the team of a 49-14 loss earlier in the season.

“We have been a completely different team since that day,” he says. “Think back to what that was like, and let’s get after it.”

At the end of the third quarter, the Camas Papermakers hold a 13-0 lead and another league championship is 12 minutes away. Then comes the unexpected: a fourth-down, 19-yard touchdown by Union. Then another touchdown six minutes later, which ends up being the difference in a 14-13 upset for Union.

Camas’ 58-game winning streak is over, but the Camas band continues to perform its traditional post-game songs, young children still play catch and students take selfies on the field.

In the midst of it all, Eagle gathers his team in the stadium’s west end zone. Fans crowd around to listen.

“You coaches love you very much,” he says calmly. “You’re our guys. You’re Camas guys. Don’t ever forget that.”

It’s the other side of an emotional, come-from-behind contest on the Oregon coast. Roberts and the Seagulls come storming back to upset Banks 19-14 on a rain-soaked night.

It’s impossible to hide the excitement on Roberts’ face. The coach works his way down the sideline hugging his coaching staff. The teams trade “good game” handshakes during the traditional post-game show of sportsmanship, and the Seagulls head to the north end zone to celebrate. Eventually, Roberts scans the team kneeling in front of him – and the 300 classmates, parents and fans standing behind them – and lets out a long “wow” that sets off cheers from the crowd.

Roberts praises his student-athletes’ resilience and commends the town for its support. It’s going to be a night of celebration, but Roberts can’t resist turning this into a teachable moment.

“This is big,” says Roberts of the victory and the state playoff berth that comes with it. Going forward, he says, “Do not be selfish. Make good decisions.”

The boys huddle together and sing their traditional post-game song.

As the crowd wanders into the night afterward, Roberts stands alone for a little while, soaking in the moment. Then he stoops, reverting to his job as school principal, to pick up a bouquet of flowers left behind in the celebration.

– Travis McGuire
A mother’s work

As the nursing workforce moves toward a mandate for BSN degrees, three sisters, inspired by their mother, turned to Linfield to boost their careers.

Cornelia Nitu had dreams for her children when she immigrated to the United States from Romania in 1988. She opened a small business – an adult foster care home – and worked 18-hour days over the next two decades to make those dreams a reality, with education a top priority for her children. Oana Nitu ’14 was three years old then, with brothers Daniel, 5, and Sebastian, 1 1/2. Her twin sisters, Debra ’17 and Elisa ’17, were born four years later.

As they grew, the Nitu children watched their mother care for the residents in their home. They helped with cleaning and cooking, greeted doctors and nurses who visited, and the sisters became certified nursing assistants.

"Nursing made sense for us. We grew up in that environment so it felt very natural to us," says Elisa.

Cornelia’s education dreams have become a reality. All three daughters earned associates degrees from Mount Hood Community College, before transferring to the Linfield RN to BSN program. Now, all are nurses.

"Not only were we the first of our family to go to college, but we were the first of our generation to be in the United States. Both feel like huge accomplishments," says Oana. She was hired as a staff nurse at Providence Portland Medical Center in 2008, before a BSN was required, but quickly realized her career growth was limited without one.

"Having a bachelor’s degree opens up career options exponentially," says Oana, who now focuses on projects to improve quality for surgical patients. "I wouldn’t have this job if I didn’t have my BSN."

Simply being enrolled in Linfield’s RN to BSN program helped Elisa and Debra get their first jobs.

For decades, associate degree-prepared registered nurses have made up a significant percentage of the nursing workforce. But in 2010, the Institute of Medicine recommended that 80 percent of the nursing workforce have a baccalaureate degree (BSN) by 2020. Since then, employers have increased their efforts to hire and retain a workforce with higher levels of education. Research shows that a higher percentage of baccalaureate nurses on a unit leads to better patient outcomes.

Now, as the Nitu sisters found, most U.S. hospitals are hiring nurses with at least a BSN. In 2008, 35 percent of nurses held BSN degrees, but by 2013 that number had jumped to 55 percent, according to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing.

A BSN program prepares nurses to take on a wider variety of roles within a health system, including teaching, consulting, research and administration. The Nitu sisters were particularly drawn to Linfield’s liberal arts approach to nursing education, which gave them a broad foundation of classes. One of Debra’s favorite classes was in history. And she learned about vulnerable populations while volunteering at a local community clinic.

“Having the opportunity to work out in the community opened my eyes, and I can see what needs to be done beyond the surgical aspect to help patients get better," Debra says.

Because Linfield’s RN to BSN classes are online, the Nitu siblings continued working as they earned their degrees. And while their RN training focused on patient health, the BSN program extended to other aspects of life. Elisa, a non-confrontational person, learned to communicate more directly.

“The BSN program taught me to be a better nurse and a better person," Elisa says. "I learned skills I’m applying throughout my life to more than just nursing.”

For her part, Cornelia encouraged her daughters as they pursued their careers.

“I am very, very proud of my girls," she says. “They are the fruit of my labor being a single mom. I always told them, ‘it’s a big dream in us and you can do it.’”

– Laura Davis

linfield.edu/fall-2018-videos
Women’s soccer

This year’s women’s soccer team led the Northwest Conference in goals scored with 39, and forward Sydney Kuehn ‘20 (left) tied for second in goals scored with 8. The team finished the season with a record of 10-5-5.

Fast facts:
- Finished in the top five of the Northwest Conference every year since 2009.
- Emily Fellows ’14 is the only four-time offensive player of the year in Northwest Conference history. She broke the Linfield all-time career goal scoring record her freshman season.
- Head Coach Cole McCool is the second winningest coach in program history.
- Practice 126 hours per year.
- Linfield Female Athlete of the Year for two consecutive years – Fellows in 2014 and Emma Vukic ‘16 in 2015.
- Known for pregame dance parties and the annual creative Halloween costume practice.

Follow Linfield College soccer and other Wildcat teams golinfieldwildcats.com

Seven enter Hall of Fame

Seven former Linfield College student-athletes were inducted into the Linfield Athletics Hall of Fame this fall.

The Class of 2018 includes Michael Fress ’85, Northwest Conference track and field champion; Petra Johnson-Williams ’86, record-setting track sprinter; Josh O’Connor ’95, cross country and track and field distance runner; Ryan Carlson ’98, football All-American; Shannon Hopkins ’02, second on the career scoring list for men’s soccer; David Moore ’95, four-time all-conference third baseman; and Stephanie Riea ’03, two-time softball All-American.

Simmons joins staff

Steve Simmons has been named assistant athletic director and director of soccer at Linfield.

Simmons brings 15 years of Division I coaching experience at Oregon State University and Northern Illinois University, in addition to serving five years as head coach of the Linfield men’s and women’s soccer and women’s lacrosse programs from 1996 until 2000.

Tennis teams earn academic accolades

Strong performance in the classroom has earned the Linfield men’s and women’s tennis teams recognition from the Intercollegiate Tennis Association. Both squads received team awards for maintaining a minimum combined grade point average of 3.20. The women’s team had an average GPA of 3.73 and the men’s team earned a 3.42 cumulative GPA. In addition to the two team citations, 10 Linfield women and four Wildcat men were singled out for ITA Scholar-Athlete status, having maintained a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.50 during the 2017-18 academic year.

The streak continues at 63

The Linfield football team secured another winning season to push the streak to 63 years in a row, the longest in college football history.

The Wildcats locked it down with a 41-7 win over Pacific Lutheran University Oct. 27.
160 years of leadership

It’s been 160 years since Linfield’s founding in 1858. This year we have celebrated that milestone by highlighting 60 founding in 1858. This year we have celebrated that milestone by highlighting 60
founding in 1858. This year we have celebrated that milestone by highlighting 60

We’ve been proud to honor the history of Linfield and to recognize those who shaped this institution and its legacy. It’s been inspiring – and humbling – to comb through the past, and encouraging as we look to our future.

See the complete project at linfield.edu/alumni (select Linfield 160 in left sidebar).

– Debbie Harmon Perry ’90
Director of alumni and parent relations

Full circle

Joanne Hanson ’77 closed a six-decade circle when she completed her degree at age 78 – 60 years after first enrolling in college.

“I just plain made sense to me,” Hanson says of her decision to complete her degree.

Hanson, an arts and humanities major, started college in 1957 and took classes at two local colleges for 12 years as she raised five children. Eventually she put her education on hold.

As her kids grew, she watched all of them go off to college – three attended Linfield, Eric Hanson ’91, Suzanne Hanson-McKenzie ’10 and Molly Hanson, who finished her degree at Portland State University.

“I saw in my children the changes being made in their lives and wanted the experiences from a formal education myself,” she says.

Motivated, she applied to Linfield in 1997 and spent the next two decades working toward her degree. Her thesis, “Music Gifts Spirituality,” focused on Hildegard of Bingen, a 12th Century Benedictine nun. Next on her list – learning American Sign Language to sign the Gregorian chants that were part of her thesis.

“Taking all these classes finished the circle for me,” says Hanson.

– Liam Pickhardt ’20
James Taylor ’79 of Portland is one of the organizers of the Vanport Jazz Music Festival, hosted at Portland Meadows Aug. 4.

1980-89

William Settle ’80 of Lancaster, Calif., received “The African American Community of Pacoima, California - Life Time Achievement Award Honors.” Lallou Smith ’80 of Arcata, Calif., received “The African American Community of Pacoima, California - Life Time Achievement Award Honors.”

Chris Shiek ’81 of Lake Oswego has been a professional auctioneer for 35 years at wholesale automobile auctions and fundraising events including Linfield’s Wildcat Open. He is also a drummer, most recently as a member of MOONLIGHT, a four-piece acoustic rock band.

Valerie Figs Razzi ’83 of Palmer, Alaska, received the BP Teacher of Excellence Award for 2018.

Betty (Youngs) Logan ’84 of Vancouver, Wash., received an Air Force medal for her civilian contributions.

Russell Reed ’87 of Atlanta, Ga., is the managing director of UPS Thailand.

Lisa Shipley Holstrom ’88 of Portland retired from Legacy-Health.


1990-99

Curt Shelley ’92 is assistant superintendent of Tillamook School District 9 for the 2018-19 academic year.

Ritchie Martin ’93 of Oregon City is a football coach at Jefferson High School. He played eight years as a receiver in the Canadian Football League.

Brian Twaddle ’94 of Ellenburg, Wash., is managing director for Duff & Phelps, leading the firm’s cyber security technology platform.

Michelle Johnston-Holfuss ’95 of Portland is senior vice president, general manager of the Sales and Marketing Group and interim chief marketing officer at Intel Corporation.

Michael Quiner ’99 of Lake Oswego has been a professional auctioneer for 35 years at wholesale automobile auctions and fundraising events including Linfield’s Wildcat Open. He is also a drummer, most recently as a member of MOONLIGHT, a four-piece acoustic rock band.

For more information contact us at 503-883-2547, alumni@linfield.edu or linfield.edu/alumni.
Tell us your story

We are proud of our alumni and the impact they have on their communities. Read the profiles of these and other alumni at linfield.edu/alumiprofiles. And submit your own!

Suzanne Taylor ’02 of Gunnison, Colo., was promoted to associate professor of physics at Western State Colorado University.

Donna Montoya ’04 of McMinnville received the 2018 Leadership Award from the Oregon Career Development Association, given to an individual who demonstrates exceptional leadership in the career development field.

Kyle Royse ’04 of Portland is construction services manager for the Willamette Group.

Kimberly Sheng ’04 of Portland is executive director for the American Leadership Forum of Oregon Board of Directors.

Ryan DeVlin ’06 of Paris, Alloa, Ca., earned a M.S. in data science with a specialization in analytics and modeling from Northwestern University in June.

Justine and Miranda (Miller) Johnson, both ’06, of Sherwood welcomed a daughter, Hadley Mae, on May 21. Miranda is principal of Edy Ridge Elementary School.

Rob Johnson ’05 of Boise, Idaho, is CEO at Original Uncle Doug’s, LLC, a Chicago-based natural foods company.

Jessica Balsam ’06 of Phoenix, Ariz., is sustainability director for APL Logistics.

Daniel Lawrence ’06 of West Linn is an engineer-in-training at Hickman, Williams and Associates Inc.

Jordan (Turner) Mills ’06 of Tahtal is principal of Bridgport Elementary School.

Michael ’03 and Kelly (Herd) Riise ’06 of McMinnville had a son, Acher Robert, Dec. 17.

Teresa Zaleski Whyte ’06 of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and her husband welcomed a son, Sam, March 1.

Leah (Caine) Bannan ’07 of Phoenix, Ariz., is an instructor at College America. She teaches various medical courses from beginning to advanced.

Brenna Beachell-Terry ’07 of Portland is principal at Taft Elementary School.

Tyler Lampella ’07 of Redmond is vice president of marketing at DreamStream, a web hosting and managed WordPress services company.

Nicole Wilson ’07 of Portland married Travis Kindler on Sept. 8.

Andrew ’07 and Kate (Leav) Baldwin ’09 of Beaverton welcomed a daughter, Caroline Lee, July 31, their first.

Aaron Larsen ’08 of Roseburg and his wife, Andre, welcomed a daughter, Victoria Rose, May 3.

Kevin Mills ’08 of Tahtal is principal at Lake Oswego Junior High School.

Ashley (Hollenbeck) Ridgway ’08 of Boise, Idaho, is an account executive at Oliver Russell.

Joe and Courtney (Davis) Seifert, both ’08, of McMinnville had a son, Easton Perry, July 29.


Susie Morrison ’09 of Beaverton and her wife Andrea welcomed twins, Aurora Rose and Marley Sky, April 17.

Ty Stanley ’09 of Vancouver, Wash., and wife Erin had a son, Teague, Feb. 5.

2010-18

Tai Edman ’10 of Tacoma, Wash., married Alyson Steker on May 18.

Devin Salinas ’10 of Malibu, Calif., is the managing director for Northwestern Mutual in Santa Monica, Calif. He recently competed in the Ironman 70.3 World Championship and on his 30th birthday raised more than $18,000 for charity while running 30 miles to raise awareness for the organization.

Kayla Reiner ’11 of Nolensville, Tenn., is a nurse on a cardiac surgical care unit at Centennial Medical Center.

Paloma Dale ’12 of Cornelius graduated from Willamette University Law School in May.

Emilie (Leppe) Gister ’12 of Givville, Wash., and her husband, Steven, welcomed a son, Ridge Joseph, April 30.

Jessica Guerguen ’12 of Nashville, Tenn., a singer and songwriter, was recently featured on Germanys’s The Wdr2 Women Tour.

Keith ’12 and Lindsay (Storkson) Mader ’14 of Lynden, Wash., welcomed Anja Princemose, July 24, their second child. Keith is program manager, PhD, and content for WESC, a credit union.

Emily Smith ’12 of Durham, N.C., earned a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of California, Irvine and started a postdoctoral position in the math department at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Chris Tanner ’12 of Lebanon is the field crops and watershed faculty member at the Oregon State University Extension in Malheur County.

Kayla Wilkens ’12 of Las Vegas, Nev., married Blair Schor ’12 Feb. 4 aboard the Ruby Princess Cruise ship.

Danica Gelindo ’13 of Salem welcomed a daughter, Liliana, June 16.

Brian Gakes ’13 of Monroe is a nurse practitioner at Samaritan Health Services’ Cardiology Department.

Karleigh Prestiani ’13 ’13 of Hillsboro married Austin Potter, July 7 in Dayton.

Aaron Tanabe ’13 of Hik, Hawaii, is athletic director at Seaside High School.

Dane Brown ’14 of Vancouver, Wash., is president of USNRF. USNRF operates four large manufacturing plants in the United States, Canada, and Sweden, in addition to more than a dozen regional engineering, service, and sales offices in North America and across Europe.

Apana Brielle Parthasarathy ’15 of North Hollywood, Calif., has a role in the NBC sitcom A.P. Bio.

Lauren Devore ’16 of Vancouver, Wash., completed the Erasmus Mundus European Public Health program and works in biostatistics with Sysmex Europe GmbH in Norderstedt, Germany.

Wos and Leigh Ann Hanson, both ’06, live in Lund, NL. Wos has been selected as a Presidential Management Fellow, part of a two-year leadership development program for the federal government. He will work as an agricultural economist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Climate Change Program Office.

Tavia Elder ’17 of Portland has been selected as a March of Dimes Nurse of the Year – Rising Star Finalist.

Alyssa Kaplan ’17 of Seattle, Wash., is studying at the Island Wood Gradu-
Official Alumni Notes

Alumni News

Harrington earns Fulbright Award

Sherilyn Harrington ’15 of Portland received a Fulbright U.S. Student Program award from the State Department and the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board.

Harrington, who earned a French degree from Linfield, is teaching English at the Latko National Technical University in Ukraine during the 2018-19 academic year. She has worked extensively with Ukrainian refugees since graduating from Linfield, at the refugee resettlement agency Lutheran Community Services Northwest and WorldOregon.


George Knaparian ’40 of Fresno, Calif., Sept. 15, 2017. Survivors include his brother Jim ’54.


Jack Phillips ’51 of Eastern, Md, April 7.

Clinton White ’51 of McMinnville, March 11. Survivors include his wife Doris (Shelburne) ’54.

Carl Jackson ’42 of McMinnville, May 5. Survivors include his wife Sharon (Pui) ’31.

Dick Olson ’12 of Nehalem, Aug. 19.

Heather (MacArthur) Wilcox ’12 of Tangent, April 14.

Roger Zwemke ’63 of Kooten, June 22.


Gary Lewis ’05 of Salem, March 9.


Joyce Rose ’36 of Tigard, Aug. 25.


Ken Lester ’67 of Tigard, Dec. 23.

John Reid ’67 of Painesville, March 24. Survivors include his brother Lawrence ’73.

Carol (Quinn) Myhre ’70 of Eugene, Nov. 20, 2017.

Nancy Johnston ’75 of Portland, Feb. 28.

Douglas Stell ’76 of Portland, May 1.

Alice (Kawasaki) Sumida ’76 of Portland, May 2.

James Conner ’77 of Madison, March 21.

Jim Yurovchak ’77 of Yakima, Wash., July 7. Survivors include his son Wesley ’13.

Thomas Clark ’78 of Pendleton, Aug. 28.

Robert Cowan ’78 of Portland, May 28.

Andrew Welch ’13 of Lithfield Park, Ariz., Aug. 22.

Linda Miller ’69 of Carlton, March 7. Survivors include son Brett Miller ’87 and daughter-in-law Heather (Harding) ’87.

Janice Marsh ’74 of McMinnville, Aug. 17. Survivors include son Jack ’93, daughter Mary (Johnson) Holder ’86 and daughter Jane ’14.

Leila Elliott ’81 of Lake Oswego, July 8. Survivors include her son Brett ’05.

Tiffany (Lenard) Hinkle ’81 of McMinnville, April 21.

Michael Aden ’12 of Sherwood, Sept. 16.

Eric Holcslaw ’13 of Gresham, Ariz., Sept. 9. Survivors include his wife Nicole ’15.

Got News?

Tell us about it. Have you changed jobs? Received a promotion? Returned to school? Did you get married or have a child in the past year? Submit a class note at linfield.edu/alumni. For more information, contact the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations at 503-883-2547 or alumni@linfield.edu.

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