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## Healthcare Advocate to Address Scholars

**B**layre Holmes Davis '12 will deliver the honors address when Cal U recognizes more than 1,300 of its most accomplished scholars at an Honors Convocation at 2 p.m. April 7 in the Convocation Center.

The University honors Presidential Scholars at this annual event, recognizing academic excellence on the part of students seeking master's, bachelor's and associate degrees.

In addition to meeting other requirements, Presidential Scholars carry an undergraduate grade-point average of 3.25 or higher; graduate students must have a GPA of 3.75 or higher.

Both full- and part-time students are eligible for the award.

The names of qualifying students will be announced individually. Each student will receive a personal greeting from University President Geraldine M. Jones, along with a certificate and a special Presidential Scholar pin.

President Jones will preside over the Convocation, and provost Dr. Bruce Barnhart will introduce the platform party. Dr. Dana Keener will serve as faculty mace-bearer.

Dr. Ayanna Lyles will be the herald.

Three faculty recipients of the Presidential Distinguished Merit Awards for Excellence will be recognized at the convocation. Award winners are Dr. Carol Biscetti, for excellence in teaching; Dr. Barbara Heas, for excellence in service; and Dr. Mark Tebbitt, for excellence in research.

Each recipient will receive a medallion and an award, plus a scholarship to be



Healthcare director Blayne Holmes Davis '12 will be the guest speaker at Honors Convocation at 2 p.m. April 7 in the Convocation Center.

awarded in his or her area of study.

### About the speaker

In keeping with tradition, a distinguished graduate will address the scholars.

Davis is the director of Community Partnerships at Adagio Health, where she works to ensure that residents of rural areas throughout western Pennsylvania have access to healthcare, education and nutrition.

She is vice president of the Young Leaders Board for the YWCA Greater

Pittsburgh and has mentored young women as a program manager for the Women and Girls Foundation of Pittsburgh. Davis was recognized in the inaugural *Who's Who in Black Pittsburgh* and *Young Black Pittsburgh* publications.

While earning a bachelor's degree in communication studies, Davis, a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., joined AmeriCorps through the University's Center for Civic Engagement. She served two years as a Community Service Leader, creating

community partnerships and planning events.

She received the 2017 Jennie Carter Leadership Award during a ceremony Sept. 9 in the Convocation Center courtyard.

The award, presented during Family Day festivities, is named for Elizabeth "Jennie" Adams Carter, Class of 1881, the University's first African-American graduate.

Davis and her husband, state Rep. Austin A. Davis, live in McKeesport, Pa.

## Author's Work Based in Mon Valley

**P**aul Hertenky, author of *Rust Belt Boy: Stories of an American Childhood*, will present a lecture and reading from 11 a.m.-noon on March 29 in the Old Main Hall Chapel.

Sponsored by Cal U's Department of English and the Northern Appalachian Network, the free event is open to the University community and to the public.

*Rust Belt Boy* tells the story of a man who grew up in the heyday of steel production in the Mon Valley.

Hertenky, who was raised in Ambridge, Pa., shares his childhood memories in this engaging memoir that takes readers back to a time when ethnic neighborhoods and industry played crucial roles in western Pennsylvania life.

"His deft ability to weave history and memory together with whimsy makes *Rust Belt Boy* a highly readable read."

said event coordinator Dr. Christina Fisanick, associate professor of English at Cal U. "His chapter on pierogies is not to be missed!"



Paul Hertenky

The Northern Appalachian Network is a multidisciplinary network promoting teaching, scholarship and service focused on Northern Appalachian residents and their environment. The network includes members with backgrounds in the arts and humanities, education, social science, and the sciences.

"Sons and daughters lucky enough to feel attached to a distinct hometown know how it works its way under our skin and into our being." Hertenky writes in the introduction to the book. "The relationship thrives at a distance, explaining why there are Steelers bars from Vancouver to Miami and Belfast to Shanghai."

For information about Hertenky's appearance, email [fisanick@calu.edu](mailto:fisanick@calu.edu).

## Banquet Celebrates Women's Contributions

**T**he Cal U community gathered to celebrate Women's History Month at the ninth annual "A Celebration of Women" banquet on March 5 at the Convocation Center.

"Women's History Month is an opportunity to highlight the contributions women have made to our nation's past and to contemporary society," University President Geraldine M. Jones said in opening remarks.

"Women's achievements, leadership, courage, strength and love have played a vital role in shaping our world. Today, more than ever, we see women standing together and speaking out to challenge social and legal structures, to demand an equal voice and to insist that women, men and families receive the respect they deserve."

Numerous groups, academic programs and activities that focus on women's roles at Cal U were represented at the dinner: the President's Commission for the Status of Women, the State System Women's Consortium,

*"Today, more than ever, we see women standing together and speaking out to challenge social and legal structures, to demand an equal voice and to insist that women, men and families receive the respect they deserve."*

— University President Geraldine M. Jones

the Women's Center, the Women's Studies minor, the *Vagina Monologues* cast, Cal U Women United, and the Serene Institute Leadership Retreat.

The President's Commission for the Status of Women honored one faculty member, one staff member and three graduating seniors with Person of the Year awards for creating a positive campus climate for women's issues:

• Dr. Sheri Boyle, chair of the Department of Social Work, is a former member of the President's Commission who inspires students

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Getaway High School students Cynn Williams (left) and Sai Namasyavayam, put their skills in science, technology, engineering and math to the test during the Pennsylvania Science Olympiad's Southwest Regional at Cal U.

## Cal U Hosts Science Olympiad

Nearly 600 students from 43 Pennsylvania schools visited campus March 7 as Cal U hosted the Pennsylvania Science Olympiad's Southwest Regional.

Middle school and high school students from 13 different counties used their skills in science, technology, engineering and math to compete in a variety of challenges.

"Looking out and seeing all these excited students and dedicated teachers involved in this exciting initiative is an invigorating reminder as to why we do this," said Dr. Swarndeep Gill, tournament director and associate professor in Cal U's Department of Earth Sciences, during the event's opening remarks in the Convocation Center.

He said Cal U was a proud host with the facilities to host such a large tournament and that so many visiting students interested in science and technology is a great opportunity.

"We focus on making sure this tournament runs well because when students have a great experience at the tournament, they have a positive outlook about Cal U," Gill said.

"Many of the Science Olympiad students have come here more than once and are used to being here, which is obviously a good thing."

Two returning students — Bedford Middle School eighth-graders Josie Shuke and Riley Ruffely — partnered for three different competitions, Anatomy and Physiology, Poisons and Poisons, and Wright Stuff.

Neither minded beginning their day with a 4 a.m. wakeup.

"It's exciting and nerve-wracking, but working together helps," Shuke said.

Ruffely was competing for the third time at the Southwest Regional and was looking forward to the Wright Stuff model airplane competition.

"The experience from previous years helps, and we just hope to have some good flight time," she added. "Science is interesting as for a career, and I suppose we'll both just see what happens."

George Kuhne, Shuke and Ruffely's science teacher at Bedford, has brought his students to Cal U and the Science Olympiad for six years.

"With so much emphasis on standardized testing, we tend to cover a lot of curriculum and not get as in-depth as much as we'd like to," Kuhne said.

"But these projects really give the kids a chance to do hands-on science and take it from the start to the end."

"It's a very good extracurricular activity."

Sixth-grader Nikhil Gandhi,

from Winchester Thurston School in Pittsburgh, Pa., enjoyed designing and building a roller coaster, using spherical vehicles, to travel the track as close as possible to a target time between 20 and 45 seconds.

"I want to be a rocket scientist," he said. "I like these kind of events because they help me think as opposed to just writing things down."

Dr. Brenda Fredette, dean of the Eberly College of Science and Technology, who started at Cal U in January, welcomed students to the competition.

"As a new dean, I find this to be a very inspiring start as I see all of these students that have come out on an early Wednesday morning because of their interest in science," Fredette said.

"I hope you enjoy your experience here, get to know the campus, meet some of our faculty and hopefully by the end of the day fall in love with Cal U as I did."

Based on a percentage of teams registered at regional sites, the highest scoring middle school and high school teams from the region qualified for the state competition on April 28 at Juniata College in Huntingdon, Pa. The National Science Olympiad will be May 18-19 at Colorado State University in Fort Collins.

## Campus BRIEFS

### Cal U Cupboard Helps Public Library

March 30 is the final day to donate to the California Public Library Food Drive through the Cal U Cupboard campus food pantry.

California's public library is competing against other public libraries across Washington County. Money solicited from local businesses will be distributed evenly to all participants, with prizes awarded to those who have collected the most food donations by weight.

The Cal U Cupboard has food drive boxes on the ground levels of Mandero Library, Dixon Hall, Carter Hall and the Natali Student Center, as well as in Natali Room 119, where the cupboard is located.

Diane Hasbrouck, director of the Center for Volunteer Programs and Service Learning, said Cal U's food donation weight totals will be included as part of the library's total. However, the Cal U Cupboard will keep the campus-collected food; other food donations will be sent to the Greater County Washington Food Bank.

Cal U students have partnered with the public library in many previous projects such as the Big Event, a campus-wide day of service.

"This is just another way our students are showing they are grateful to be part of the local community and want to do their share," Hasbrouck said.

For more information email [cupboard@calu.edu](mailto:cupboard@calu.edu) or call 724-938-4793.

### Two Community Events for Musicians

Cal U's musicians will be part of two free community concerts this week.

On March 26, the Cal U Concert Band and Community Band South will perform a combined concert at Upper St. Clair High School beginning at 7:30 p.m. Community Band South provides the opportunity for former high school and college band members to continue playing.

Cal Singers and the Acapella Stella, Isolated Incident and Vulcanize a cappella groups will perform from 9:30 a.m. to noon March 29 at Monessen High School.

"These 'runout concerts' allow us to leave campus, perform and return back on the same day," explained Dr. Yugo Ikaoh, professor and co-chair of the Department of Music and Theatre. "They are a great way to expand our outreach."



### Sweet Sunday, Cal U Style

Cal U's Acapella Stella performs at the 24th annual "Sweet Sunday," a dessert festival and fundraiser benefiting City Mission of Washington, Pa. Cal Singers and Isolated Incident, a mixed pop a cappella group, also performed at the event on Feb. 25 at the Hilton Garden Inn at Southpointe. City Mission serves men, women and children at their point of crisis by helping them find stability, employment and independent housing. Cal U musicians in the University Choir and Concert Band will perform at Honors Convocation beginning at 2 p.m. April 7 at the Convocation Center.

## Program Helps Students Better Serve Students

**C**al U is making a commitment to providing outstanding customer service — including the service that students provide for their classmates.

That's why faculty who direct the Math Lab, Tutoring Center, Reading Clinic and Writing Center, along with the Department of Academic Success, are conducting leadership development workshops for tutors and peer mentor coordinators (PMCs).

Spearheading the workshop series are Dr. Kaddour Boukabar (Math Lab), Dr. Patricia Johnson (Reading Clinic and Tutoring Center), Dr. Brent House (Writing Center) and Dr. Karen Amrhein (director of Academic Success Initiatives).

Sessions held Feb. 25 and March 1 in Noss Hall focused on building effective communication skills, Bloom's Taxonomy and customer service.

Bloom's Taxonomy is a helpful framework for tutors & PMCs to implement during sessions to help foster critical thinking skills in fellow students.

"We are trying to make this University-wide training that hits on many skill sets," said Boukabar. "We want to help the tutors and peer mentor coordinators do a more effective job, so they can serve the students better."

Including both mentors and their protégés, about 1,270 students are involved in the peer mentoring program. Each peer mentor coordinator facilitates about 40 mentor-protégé relationships.

One of these is senior Allison Killen, a commercial music technology major



Kayla Germini, a first-year psychology major, reacts after successfully completing a blind-folded block-building task as part of a peer mentoring workshop in Noss Hall.

who is in her second year as a PMC. "I like working with people, and I had a really good mentor my freshman year," she explained. "I knew then that I wanted to sign up and get involved to return the favor. I'm excited to learn more here today. It can only help."

Junior George Day has a dual major in physics and secondary education, but he finds time to work as a tutor in the Math Lab.

"It provides help for other people and develops my one-on-one skills, so that when I'm a classroom teacher I can help students who are having difficulties with

physics," said Day, who is also a veteran.

"Tutoring will help to prepare me, because the best way to learn is by teaching."

To demonstrate the importance of communicating clearly, the tutors and PMCs engaged in a hands-on exercise: One person was blindfolded, then tasked with building a tower of blocks following a partner's instructions.

First-year student Kayla Germini, a psychology major and peer mentor coordinator, followed directions given by first-year student Ryan Long, a sport management major who's also a PMC.

"It was a little stressful, but he did a good job guiding me," Germini said. "He was my eyes."

Long's peer mentor recommended him to be a PMC last semester. He landed the position after an interview with Dori Eichelberger, director of peer mentoring.

"From the beginning I just liked being involved with peer mentoring," he said. "I want to help (new students) enjoy the same experience as I had, and hopefully not worry about things."

Senior Renee Fries, a social work major, is in her first semester as a peer mentor coordinator.

"This helps me with my major, which obviously deals with people," she said. "Doing something like this also gets me out of my comfort zone, and I feel that is important."

House called the workshops "an interactive and fun opportunity" for the tutors and mentors to improve their communication skills and instructional methods.

"As professionals, we get the opportunity for professional development — and you deserve the same," Amrhein told the students. "Listening is such an important part of your roles as tutors and mentor coordinators. What you do on this campus makes such an impact."

Nearly 50 PMCs and tutors attended the first two workshops in the series, Amrhein said. Next month's workshop for tutors and PMCs will focus on the importance of recognizing different personality types of individuals and among teams.

### GRANTS AWARDED

The Office of Sponsored Programs and Research reports that:

- Dr. Carol Biddington, of the Department of Exercise Science and Sport Studies, has been awarded a \$1,500 grant from the Pennsylvania Health and Welfare Fund for a project titled, "Cal U Fitness Memberships." The project is designed to introduce the benefits of regular physical exercise to faculty members diagnosed with chronic conditions.
- Frances Fayish, of the Wellness Center, has been awarded a \$1,500 Health Awareness Initiative grant from the Pennsylvania Faculty Health and Welfare Fund. This award was used for health-related materials for the 30th annual Cal U Health Fair last fall.
- Dr. Mark Lennon, of the Department of Business and Economics, has been awarded a \$1,500 grant from the Richard M. Schulte Family Foundation used to support Cal U's Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship.
- Dr. Kevin Koury, dean of the College of Education and Human Services, and Dr. Mohammed Benbourenane, of the Department of Math, Computer Science and Information Systems, have been awarded a \$1,000 grant from Southwest Training Services to implement an English, math, science and technology tutoring program for Trinity High School students.

## Women's Contributions Celebrated

— Continued from page 1

in and out of the classroom.

"It is truly special for me to be recognized by my peers and friends, whom I have had the honor and pleasure of working with for the past 13 years," Boyle said. "My message to younger women in the audience was to seek out those women whom you can work with to do good work."

• Patricia McClain, program assistant for the Faculty Professional Development Committee. She was chosen for her professionalism and collegiality.

"The President's Commission is an important organization, and its efforts on behalf of women at Cal U are commendable," said McClain, who was unable to attend the dinner. "I appreciated the nomination that was submitted on my behalf, and was truly honored to be selected for the award."

• Joelle Swyka, a nontraditional undergraduate, will graduate in May with a degree in psychology and a minor in criminal justice. Swyka, who lost her sight several years ago, was honored as a role model for other students. She is a tutor in the Math Lab, and is considering pursuing her master's degree to provide instruction to others who are visually impaired.

"I was shocked when I read the information about the award," Swyka said. "I feel, as women, that we have to find our place in the world, because men are still given the most power and status. However, women who are very dedicated to succeeding can climb to the top of the ladder."

• Yareli Lora, a traditional undergraduate, is a psychology major



University President Geraldine M. Jones (center) with Yareli Lora (left), Dr. Sheri Boyle, Joelle Swyka and Allison Franco, recipients of Person of the Year awards. Patricia McClain also was honored.

with minors in creative writing and Spanish.

She is involved with the Women's Center and End Violence Center, the Hispanic Student Organization, the Frederick Douglass Debate Society and the National Society of Leadership and Success.

Lara spoke about being inspired by a "dúch pointer" with the familiar admonition to "be the change you wish to see in the world." She said she's taken the advice to heart and found that "nothing is more powerful than a woman who loves herself and empowers others."

• Allison Franco, a graduate student, will earn her master's degree in social work. She is active in the Graduate

Social Work Association at Cal U and participated in a Women's Studies campaign last focusing on working women. She also worked on *The Vogue Monologues*.

"I was honored by the award," Franco said. "It is not only an acknowledgment of the work I have done on campus for women, but also a challenge to continue to raise my voice, be bold, and to continue to advocate for women's equality."

The Office of the President, the Women's Center, Women's Studies, and the President's Commission for the Status of Women organized the banquet.

## Trustees Hear Spring Progress Reports

University President Geraldine M. Jones opened the March 7 quarterly meeting of the Council of Trustees with updates on the University's branding project, enrollment, Campus Master Plan and participation in a self-study that will culminate in spring 2020 with a site visit by a peer-review team from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. Cabinet members and Trustees had met earlier in the day with Dr. Ellie Fogarty, a vice president at the commission and the University's Middle States liaison. She also explained the self-study and accreditation process at an open session for faculty, staff and students.

"Self-study is beneficial as we pursue continuous improvement, but to be successful, it requires participation from all areas of our campus community," President Jones said.

She expressed her thanks to the many faculty, staff and students who have volunteered for committee assignments. Dr. Len Colelli, associate provost for assessment and accreditation, is leading the two-year project.

In her report, the President stressed the collaborative nature of the self-study, as well as other campuswide

projects. Faculty, staff and students are encouraged to participate.

"We all have something to contribute," she said, "and together we are doing great things, with even more outstanding opportunities ahead."

In other business: Dr. Bruce Barnhart, provost and senior vice president for Academic Affairs, reported on enrollment management efforts. He noted that inquiries by prospective students have increased by 52 percent compared to this time last year, and deposits for new and transfer students are up by 17 percent.

These are "leading indicators that make us cautiously optimistic" about fall enrollment, he said. Robert Thorn, vice president for Administration and Finance, received approval from the trustees for an updated five-year capital-spending plan that prioritizes construction of a new science building to replace Frich and New Science halls.

The capital spending plan, which must be approved annually, sets the new building's cost at more than \$38 million in State System funds. The plan also calls for a \$24.3 million renovation and expansion of Keystone Hall.

Thorn reported that the \$11 million

renovation of Coover Hall is 25 percent complete. The building is expected to reopen in 2019.

To highlight student media services, Dr. Nancy Pinardi, vice president for Student Affairs, introduced staff members Pam DeVerne, director of technology services; Gary Smith, director of CUTV and WCAL radio; and Jeff Helsel, director of print and multimedia journalism, including the Cal Times newspaper.

Each explained how these award-winning media outlets and the SAI Creative Technology Services Lab attract and retain students, while providing opportunities to build skills and explore potential careers.

"Our students are getting hands-on experience with equipment and resources that most other schools do not offer," Pinardi said. "Because of this, they are head and shoulders above others they are competing against when it comes to landing jobs and starting careers."

In his report on marketing efforts, Barnhart reviewed recent advertising campaigns, including signage in area malls and television spots during WPXI's coverage of the Winter Olympics.

He also introduced Christine Kindl, associate vice president

for Communications and Public Relations, who presented an initial report on the University's website. After just 30 days, many Cal U academic programs are appearing on the first page of Google search results, with a growing number showing up as the No. 1 result.

"We want prospective students and their families to see the Cal U name and our academic programs first," she said, adding that the number of students completing a "request for information" form has grown steadily since the website debuted.

"These are early indicators that the University's investment in the website is paying off."

Tony Mauro, associate vice president for University Development and Alumni Relations, reported that his office has raised more than \$3.3 million in donations in fiscal year 2016-2017 and through the first half of FY 2017-2018.

He reported that the University has begun an alumni affinity program with a widely known insurance company. The program will provide lower rates for Cal U graduates and bring the University at least \$130,000 in funds for student scholarships over the next five years.

The Council of Trustees is scheduled to meet again June 6.

## Negro League Perseverance Presented

Negro League Baseball ended several years after Jackie Robinson broke professional baseball's color barrier for good in 1947, but its talented players changed the game forever.

This was the theme of "Long Live Their Legacy: A Celebration of Negro League Baseball," a presentation delivered by Josh Gray, Pittsburgh Pirates' community outreach coordinator, as part of Cal U's Black History Month celebration.

Pittsburgh is the only city in the country that had two black professional teams — the Homestead Grays and Pittsburgh Crawfords, which were both highly successful.

Black History Month is very important, and obviously it's timely to tell the story of Negro League Baseball," said Gray. "You (at Cal U) are on the outskirts of Pittsburgh but are in the vicinity of where these guys played, lived and traveled through."

In 1884 catcher Moses Fleetwood Walker played 42 games for the Toledo Red Stockings of the American Association (AA). Several other African-American players were active on the rosters of white minor league teams during that period.

By 1897, an unwritten "gentleman's agreement" prevented non-white players from participating, and baseball's segregation lasted until Brooklyn Dodgers President Branch Rickey signed Robinson to a minor league contract with the

Montreal Royals after the 1945 season.

Andrew "Rube" Foster is credited with starting the Negro National League on Feb. 13, 1920. Gus Greenlee bought the Pittsburgh Crawfords in 1930.

Upset that his team could play at the Pirates or use the dressing room, Greenlee purchased land in Pittsburgh's Hill District and opened Greenlee Field in 1932. This was one of the first black ballparks; in later years, the Pittsburgh Stealers used the site for practices.

Gray said he was amazed to learn from his research "how ignorant the Major League owners were."

Gray emphasized the impact of Negro League Baseball with short overviews of some of its stars, including catcher Josh Gibson, who played for both the Grays and the Crawfords.

Gibson hit 84 home runs in 170 games during the 1936 season. The following year it was reported that he hit a ball 583 feet — nearly out of Yankee Stadium.

At 42, pitcher Satchel Paige became the oldest rookie in Major League Baseball history when he debuted with the Cleveland Indians on July 9, 1948. He became the first Negro League player inducted into



Jennifer Ramsey (left), chair of Cal U's Frederick Douglass Institute events subcommittee; Josh Gray, Pittsburgh Pirates' community outreach coordinator; and Shelia Camarillo-Webb, coordinator of Cal U's Black History Month activities, share a moment after Gray's presentation Feb. 23.

the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1971.

Speedy outfielder James Thomas "Cool Papa" Bell could circle the bases in 12 seconds. He ranked 66th on a list of the greatest baseball players published by *The Sporting News* in 1999. Gibson and Bell were inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1972 and 1974, respectively.

"These and so many other black ballplayers changed the game of baseball with their style of play," Gray said.

Gray said Negro League players typically would play three straight games in a day. They wore wool uniforms, even in hot weather, and commonly endured insensitive remarks by fans.

They weren't allowed to use the

shower facilities after games, and often travel 8-10 hours on a rickety bus to the next game. Barred from most hotels, players would sleep on a floor or share a bed at a place that would house them.

"They faced tremendous adversity just to play baseball," he said. "They overcame all of this and created a league that was so good it could not be ignored anymore."

"Their dreams and legacy live on, and I am living proof," Gray said. "If I lived back in their period, I would not be working for the Pirates, and you folks would have never met me."

"But those guys pursued their dreams and challenged the norm at the time."

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