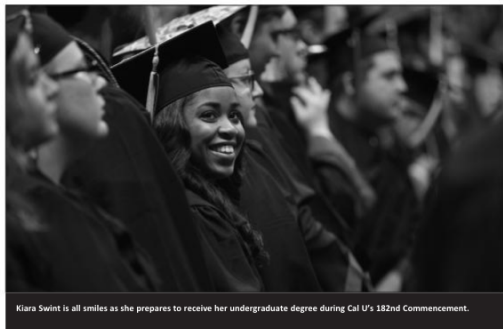


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Klara Swint is all smiles as she prepares to receive her undergraduate degree during Cal U's 182nd Commencement.

2016 Graduates Look Ahead to Careers

Graduation ceremonies May 6 and 7 marked an academic milestone for the Class of 2016, but nothing could match the excitement of those students who were poised to begin a career after walking across the stage at Cal U's 182nd Commencement.

Daniel Meighan, who earned bachelor's degrees in both computer engineering technology and Arabic language and culture, already had begun working as a scientist with the Department of Defense in Washington, D.C., where he interned last summer.

"I believe Cal U has helped open doors and opportunities for me," said Meighan, an Avonworth, Pa., resident who was an Alumni Ambassador for four years, is a past vice president of the Young and Gifted Gospel Choir, and was a three-year member of

both the Black Student Union and Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity.

"The good mix of academics and people skills from the different organizations I was part of helped me learn a lot about my field and about myself."

In his role as senior class envoy, Meighan also presented University President Geraldine M. Jones with a check for nearly \$18,000 contributed by graduating seniors and their families.

With this gift, more than \$150,000 has been raised for an endowed scholarship since the first senior class donation was delivered at the spring 2010 Commencement.

Commencement speaker Vanessa DeSalvo Getz '93 described Meighan and his fellow graduates as

— Continued on page 2

Cal U Partners with Schools in India

California University is one of six State System universities participating as a full partner in the Pennsylvania Global Education & Business Hub, an initiative begun nearly four years ago to help promote Pennsylvania colleges and universities to students from India.

Representatives of more than 20 public and private schools in Pennsylvania, along with the Ryan International Group of Institutions in Mumbai, India, signed an international partnership agreement April 29 in Harrisburg.

Founded in 1976, Ryan International has established more than 130 schools in India and the United Arab Emirates, and it now serves more than 270,000 students in grades K-12.

A pair of Pennsylvania Education Centers, in Mumbai and Bangalore, already have been established through the Penn Hub initiative to promote universities, including Cal U, to potential students. The centers are funded and staffed by partner institutions in India.

"India's population is so large that universities there simply don't have the capacity to enroll tens of thousands of young people who are seeking higher education," explained Elizabeth "Bessy" Bemmelick, Cal U's director of International Programming.

"This partnership provides a clear pathway for students from the Ryan schools in India to further their education in the United States."

Signing the partnership agreement is just the first step toward bringing students from India to Cal U, Bemmelick added. The program must introduce Pennsylvania's universities to Indian teachers and guidance counselors, and work with individual students and their families to find a U.S. school that's the right fit.

Cal U has been a member of the Penn Hub group for two years, Bemmelick said. The formal partnership agreement recognizes that "we are committed to diversifying our student population and attracting

Continued on page 3

Annual Event Celebrates Cal U Women

Blayre Holmes '12 came back to her Cal U "family" April 19 as the keynote speaker for the annual Celebration of Women Dinner.

Holmes described her work as coordinator of the Pittsburgh-based Women and Girls Foundation's GirlGov program, which teaches young women in grades 9-12 about civics, government, philanthropy, community involvement, women's history and leadership.

"Since I was little, this University has prepared me for the world ahead," she said, recalling childhood visits to campus with her mother, Darla Holley-Holmes, a longtime Cal U staff member.

As a Cal U student, and particularly as an AmeriCorps volunteer, "I found my passion for helping people."

The celebration marks Women's History Month by recognizing groups and individuals that support women on campus. It was hosted by the Office of the President, the Cal U Women's Center, the Women's Studies program, Cal U



Enjoying a moment at the Celebration of Women Dinner with President Geraldine M. Jones are (from left) Dr. Marta MacIntosh-Comeaux, director of women's studies and associate professor in the Department of History, Politics and Society; Rhonda Alford, student recipient; Rhonda Gifford, staff recipient; and Dr. Kimberly Wozniak, faculty recipient.

Women United, the PASSHE Women's Consortium and the President's Commission for the Status of Women.

The event also recognized recipients of the spring 2016 Women of the Year

Award: Rhonda Alford, a senior social work major; Rhonda Gifford, director of the Career and Professional Development Center; and Dr. Kimberly Wozniak, associate professor in the Department of

Chemistry and Physics.

The awards are given to those who support and encourage the advancement of women at Cal U.

Alford was an intern at the Women's Center at Cal U as part of her social work practicum. She was a leader with the Activist Club, and she helped to organize *The Vagina Monologues* performances. She has also become involved in issues related to sexual assault.

"I believe that this award is important because too often, women do not get the recognition that they deserve for being an influential female figure in her community without there being some type of negative backlash," she said.

Gifford was chosen for her development of programs and workshops, such as the Diversity Networking Event, where women and LGBTQ individuals were matched with employers, as well as the countless ways she works across offices at the University in order to

— Continued on page 2

Conference Sparks Student Research

For Nathaniel J. Fix, the second annual Strike a Spark Conference was more than a chance to present his research into caffeine and the quality of college students' sleep.

The April 21 conference was also a rehearsal, of sorts, for his presentation at the 19th annual Laurel Highlands Undergraduate Psychology Conference in Greensburg, Pa.

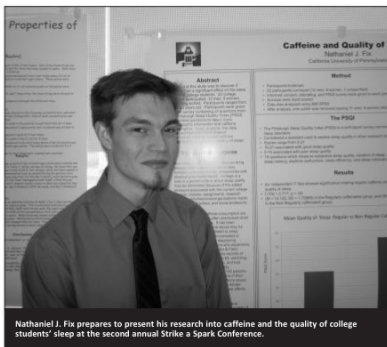
"(Strike a Spark) was my first conference, and I wanted to get experience in presenting and talking about my research," Fix said. "The timing could not have been any better."

With its theme of "Bridging Across Disciplines," the Cal U conference showcased the research, scholarship, creative activity and application of some 150 students through presentations, performances, posters and other displays.

It gave Fix, who received his bachelor's degree in psychology on May 7, a chance to discuss the research project he completed for a research methods course with Dr. Rebecca Regent.

Fix used a Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index self-report survey on two-dozen college-age students, adding a question about their use of caffeinated beverages. "I ran an independent t-sample test that showed regular caffeine users have a significantly poorer quality of sleep," he said. "But in general, the scores showed that college students are not getting a good quality of sleep, which I believe is important in determining overall physical and mental health."

Disatisfied with the self-reporting aspect of the study, Fix said he intends to pursue further study in neuroscience, "where I can study sleep more objectively



Nathaniel J. Fix prepares to present his research into caffeine and the quality of college students' sleep at the second annual Strike a Spark Conference.

using brain scans and things like that."

Criminology major Jordyn R. Skaggs focused her research on the reliability of eyewitness testimony. She briefly showed a suspect's photo to two groups of 30 people, telling just one group that she would return for a follow-up. Two weeks later, she compared the subjects' recollections.

"There was no significant difference between the two groups, which in the long run was a good thing," she said, noting that in many cases eyewitness testimony has proven to be unreliable.

Had this been a real criminal case,

"you don't want people (to differ) on what they saw based on their awareness of being questioned."

Presenting the conference's keynote address was Patrick Mullen, director of the Office of Undergraduate Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity in the University of Pittsburgh's Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences.

"My first experience with research complicated my world view, enriched my education and, as a first-generation college student, it empowered me to attain goals that as a high school student I never would have thought possible," he said.

"It transformed my identity," Mullen described research as "curiosity that drives explanation."

"To conduct research as an undergraduate is to leave the door open and take that step into the unknown. That's where the most important things come from," he said.

Conference organizer Dr. Gregg Gould, director of Cal U's Center for Undergraduate Research, said he believes it's the faculty's obligation to lead students through that open door.

"By the time they emerge, students need to be setting forth into new areas, teaching themselves something new and making a contribution to their discipline.

"As a faculty member, it inspires me and reminds me of what that learning process is like, and it's gratifying to see the students going through that," he added.

"The entire campus community should be proud of our student presenters."

Running concurrently with the conference was the 10th annual Celebration of Student Writing, which recognized the work students put into writing personal essays, research papers, analyses, journalism articles and creative pieces.

"Undergraduate research is considered a high-impact practice, which has a very positive effect on retention and on student achievement," said Provost Dr. Bruce Barnhart.

"We have a good student-to-faculty ratio here at Cal U, but this gives students that one-to-one interaction with expert faculty in their field. You just can't duplicate that."

Event Celebrates Women

— Continued from page 1

provide the best experiences and opportunities for all students.

"As a former commission member who reviewed nominations of previous Women of the Year nominees, I am honored to be considered for this award," Gifford said. "There are many who work behind the scenes to support women and who serve as role models in their daily lives. We are blessed to have these students in our lives, and they inspire us to remember the impact we can have on others."

Wozniak is president of the PASHU Women's Consortium and Cal U's representative for the consortium. She is a member of the President's Commission for the Status of Women.

She has worked on two National Science Foundation grants that focus on recruiting, retaining and promoting women from diverse backgrounds in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math. She also has co-edited a book titled *How the Chemistry Professor*.

Wozniak plans to take a leadership role in the American Chemical Society's national Women Chemists Committee. "It is fantastic to be a woman in the United States in the year 2016, but there are still some issues where more work can be done to help women achieve equity," she said.

Graduates Look Ahead to Careers

— Continued from page 1

"part of the most educated generation to ever walk this planet."

"We landed on the moon with less technology than you carry in your pockets right now," she said. "You hold almost all of the world's knowledge in the palm of your hand."

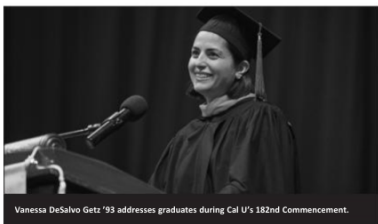
Getz is founder and president of Salvo Strategies, a public and government affairs firm based in Pittsburgh. She has been a strategist, information analyst and event planner for campaigns from school boards to the Supreme Court, and she has raised funds for political candidates and charitable organizations across the country.

"History has its eyes on you — but here's the catch," she reminded the graduates. "Anything you write, say or post ends up anywhere at any time. It defines you as a person and a professional. So live your life like your biography is being written by the choices you make."

In all, President Jones conferred degrees upon more than 1,200 undergraduate and graduate students. Not all of them attended the ceremonies at the Convocation Center.

During her welcoming remarks, President Jones praised the graduates for their accomplishments but urged them to look ahead.

"You have important work ahead of you — the work of building a meaningful life and contributing as a member of this global society we live in. ... It is up to you as knowledgeable, purposeful and caring human beings to



Vanessa DeSalvo Getz '93 addresses graduates during Cal U's 182nd Commencement.

change lives, reshape communities and make the world a better place."

Those words resonated with Destine Askew, of Pittsburgh, who served on the Black Student Union's executive board while earning her bachelor's degree in criminal justice.

"It was a good experience to be able to make a difference for minority groups on campus," she said. "I have plans to be a lawyer. I liked the criminal justice program."

Bria Jay '14 also is involved in criminal justice. She earned a master's degree in applied criminology and has been conditionally hired as investigative specialist with the FBI.

"My greatest experience here was an internship with crime victims at the Washington County Courthouse," she said. "It really helped me to become versatile and aware of the different things that happen in the criminal justice field."

John Juran, of New Salem, Pa., held two part-time jobs while earning his bachelor's degree in computer science. One week after Commencement he began a full-time software development job with PTC in Uniontown, Pa.

"My education definitely prepared me well," he said. "Now I'm looking forward to using it."

President Jones acknowledged Taylor R. Brennan, Morgan Dee Huegel, Ethan Garret Klersy and Jessica Laguerre-Joseph for earning bachelor's degrees while attaining a perfect 4.0 grade-point average. Eleven other students earned two separate degrees simultaneously.

Before conferring their degrees, President Jones reminded the Class of 2016 to celebrate their achievements.

"Please pause to take in the moment and savor your success," she said. "You have worked hard, you have persevered, and you have accomplished something significant."



Janice Zivic

Alumna Returns for Lavender Graduation

A major supporter of LGBTQ+ programs and initiatives at Cal U returned to campus April 19 to speak at the third annual Lavender Graduation.

The event, organized by the Lambda Bridges LGBTQ+ Program Office, celebrates the personal and academic achievements of graduating LGBTQ+ students and their allies.

This year, 10 students received a lavender stole to be worn during spring Commencement ceremonies.

Janis M. Zivic, a graduate of Cal U, has endowed a scholarship to provide assistance to undergraduate students who have participated in LGBTQ+ organizations or activities on campus or in the region. She also has provided support for Lambda Bridges, a speaker series and library services. Zivic has received awards at Cal U, including the Cal U Alumni Association Professional Excellence Award in 2013.

A leader in professional and civic organization in the San Francisco area, she addressed the eight students in attendance at the ceremony.

"You can be anything you want to be," she said. "It's going to take courage, but you can. Anything you want is reachable. You're here, you're graduating, and your next step will be a huge step."

University President Geraldine M. Jones also addressed the graduates, along with their families and friends.

"We want this University to be a place where every student can flourish... a place where you can 'come as you are,' no matter how you identify, and where you can find allies, mentors and advocates who will stand beside you and guide you toward success."

Senior Priscilla Lupo received the first Jan M. Zivic Outstanding LGBTQ+ Leadership Award, presented by Shereta Webb, the director of Multicultural Affairs, Diversity Education, and Commuter and Non-traditional Student Services. Lupo is a sociology major who is involved in the Rainbow Alliance and the Lambda Bridges program on campus.

"I'm extremely honored and grateful to have received this award," she said. "To know that my peers and my mentors appreciate and support who I am and the work that I do is really a gift."

"I am so proud of the work we do to provide an inclusive and welcoming environment for all Cal U students," Webb said.

Screenwriter on Trail of Success

Screenwriting wasn't even on Don Ammon's radar in 1997, the year he completed his master's degree in communication studies at Cal U.

Nearly two decades later, he and writing partner Kristopher Veenis are promoting their award-winning screenplay, *Summerings*, and seeking investors for the feature-length film.

Ammon and Veenis discussed screenwriting and the technical side of filmmaking at a campus presentation April 13. Their talk was hosted by the English Department's newly formed Literary Series.

Summerings takes place in the 1980s as the steel industry falters in Pitcairn, Pa.

The film's website describes it as "a coming-of-age drama" about two boys, Billy and Sid, who "discover a shared vulnerability and forge an unexpected friendship" amid the collapse of the industrial economy in a small Pennsylvania town.

The screenplay was adapted from *On Genovis's Corner*, a short story Ammon wrote as a junior in high school. He met Veenis and shared the story while he was teaching at Saint Vincent College in the early 2000s. "Kris really got the ball rolling," Ammon said. "Otherwise, the story would've gone back in the cellar."

Ammon and Veenis spent 10 years writing and rewriting the script, then filming a preview with director Melissa Martin and cinematographer Mark Knobil. The independent screenplay won an award from Stelton Entertainment in March 2015.

At their campus talk, the screenwriting duo offered advice that contrasted with their blueprint.

"Be diligent. We weren't," said Veenis, a producer for the award-winning documentary *A Shot to Save the World*, which premiered on the Smithsonian Channel in 2013.

"I would not recommend going about a writing project the way we did."

The screenwriters emphasized the business aspect of the film industry.

"A great script is not enough," Ammon said. "You have to have a plan with a pitch, because an independent film is all about attracting investors."



Following his presentation to students in Eberly Hall, Don Ammon '97 discusses his award-winning screenplay with Cal U President Geraldine M. Jones.

Ammon's thesis project at Cal U was a staged performance piece. For *The White Circle* he gave a live reading of 20 original poems while surrounded by eight television sets that displayed the videos he'd created to accompany his writing.

"Fast-forward to his current project: The *Summerings* trailer was shown last fall at the Three Rivers Film Festival.

"If nothing happens beyond the preview, I'll be satisfied," Ammon said. "Those boys [characters Billy and Sid] have been with me for 35 years. Kris and I have read this back and forth to each other for years, but when you hear the teenage actors reading the lines, it's chilling."

"This film will break your heart."

Ammon admits that filmmaking is a challenging field with no guarantees of financial success, yet he urged the Cal U students to follow their passion.

English Department faculty member Dr. Carole Waterhouse said bringing back graduates to share their successes is one of her greatest joys in teaching.

"As a student, Don displayed a tremendous amount of talent," she said. "His work was always creative, edgy, and he was never afraid to break ground and do innovative things."



As part of The Big Event, Cal U students perform service tasks at community sites.

Students Clean Up at Big Event

About 400 volunteers from more than 30 clubs and organizations worked at 33 community locations April 23 as part of The Big Event. The annual student-led service project aims to make a difference for Cal U's neighbors and local organizations.

"We had another strong turnout, and I believe the California community appreciated our students helping with a variety of chores," said Brendan Garay, student government president.

"This is a great way to close out the academic year before gearing up for finals week."

The Big Event began at Texas A&M University in 1982, when student leaders saw a need to give back to the community that had long supported their university.

Cal U's Student Government Association and the University's volunteer center have been teaming up since 2007 to encourage student volunteers to lend a helping hand around California Borough.

Diane Hasbrouck, director of Cal U's Center for Volunteer Programs and Service Learning, said Cal U students collectively worked more than 1,350 hours at this year's event.

"This was definitely one of the most successful volunteer opportunities during this past year and our most successful Big Event so far," she said.

"It is primarily student run, as well, and each year we are learning and growing in both student volunteers and community sites."

Cal U, India Schools Partner

— Continued from page 1

students who otherwise might not know about our Pennsylvania schools."

The partnership also provides educational opportunities for students and faculty from participating schools. These include faculty-led workshops in India, student and faculty exchanges, and lessons offered through virtual classrooms.

To date the program has conducted 18 workshops organized by Pennsylvania schools in India on topics such as life sciences, mass media, "flipped classrooms," leadership and business.

"We are excited to be working with our partners in India to be able to provide students and faculty a whole new range of educational experiences on an international scale," said Frank T. Bostan, chancellor of Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education.

"As this initiative continues to expand, it will benefit not only those directly involved in its programs, but also others on our campuses whose lives will be enriched through their interactions with the students from India who come here to study."

Cal U is participating in the initiative with sister institutions East Stroudsburg, Indiana, Millersville, Slippery Rock and West Chester Universities of Pennsylvania. More than a dozen private institutions also are partnering in the effort.

Alumni Awards Luncheon June 4

The Alumni Association will recognize some of Cal U's most distinguished graduates when it presents its 2016 Awards of Distinction at a luncheon at noon June 4 in the north wing of the Convocation Center.

Cal U has approximately 53,000 living alumni. The awards, presented annually since 1967, recognize service to the University and professional accomplishments by members of that group.

Alumni award recipients are Dr. George Crane, recipient of the John R. Gregg Award for Loyalty and Service; Dr. David Argent, the C.B. Distinguished Faculty Award; Shanley Hill '01, the W.S. Jackman Award of Distinction; Jess Strom, the Michael Duda Award for Athletic Achievement; Dr. Caryll Sheffield '73, the Pavlak/Shutsy Special Service Award; Michael Grace '95, the Professional Excellence Award; Cynthia James '02, the Young Alumni Award; and Carol (Netti) Riley '69, the Merit Award.

Ticket price for the luncheon is \$25; the event is open to the public. For reservations, contact Staci Tedrow at 724-938-4418 or tedrow@calu.edu.



Enjoying a moment at the annual Society of Professional Journalists Region 4 conference are (from left) Jeff Hesse, multimedia journalism director, SAJ; students Daniel Brock, Zachary Filtz, Jose Negron, Lauren Griffith and Mari Boyle; and Dr. Anthony Carlisle, Society of Professional Journalists chapter adviser and a faculty member in the English Department.

Student Newspaper Wins Awards

The Cal Times student newspaper received five Mark of Excellence Awards for student journalism April 2 at the annual Society of Professional Journalists Region 4 Conference, held at the University of Cincinnati.

The awards recognize the best in college journalism at schools in Michigan, Ohio, West Virginia and western Pennsylvania.

Awards are given for collegiate journalism in print, on radio, on television and online.

The more than 400 entries in this year's regional competition were published in 2015.

Four of the Cal Times entries were first-place winners in Region 4. They will advance to the national SPJ competition in September.

First-place honors for in-depth reporting went to Stetson Provance '15 and Lauren Griffith '16, who published separate stories for a series, "Does Cal U Discriminate?"

Sophomore Matt Palichat earned a first-place award for his photo

illustration, "Cal U twirlers incorporate gymnastics and dance into their performances."

Jamene Dunbar '16 also won first place for her photo illustration, "Cal U Homecoming 2015 Preview Cover."

In addition, Connor Marshman '16 was a finalist for his photo illustration, "The Cal Times Ugly Sweater Christmas."

The national SPJ competition will be part of the Excellence in Journalism Conference Sept. 18-20 in New Orleans, La.

Women's Tennis Claims Another PSAC Title

The women's tennis team won a record-setting 10th consecutive Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference championship — the program's 12th championship overall — on April 30 at Bloomsburg University.

After defeating Millersville 5-0 in the semifinals of the league championship, the Vulcans earned a 6-3 victory over IUP in the finals.

It marked the sixth straight year that the Vulcans and Crimson Hawks squared off for the women's tennis conference title.

"This is without a doubt an incredible accomplishment for our team and program. To win 10 conference championships in a row, at any level, is a big deal," said head coach Pablo Montana.

"The little things that we work on week in and week out have been huge for us. I'm so proud of this team."

Junior Veronika Mikulis was named the PSAC Tournament's Most Outstanding Player. Cal U's top doubles tandem of senior Kiefer Shaw and junior Lena Dimmer won twice to improve



Two-time first-team all-conference selection Kiefer Shaw helped Cal U compile an 18-4 overall record in 2016.

their season record to 21-4 overall.

Dimmer has won 21 of 26 singles matches, while freshman Holly Bennett is 16-2 in singles and junior Alyssa Savill is 14-3.

Under Montana, Cal U has compiled

a 276-82 cumulative record. The tennis team leads all Vulcan programs with 12 conference titles; the first two came in 1991 and 1993, under former coach Rich Saccani '65.

Dr. Karen Hjerpe, Cal U's athletics

director, commended the tennis program for its accomplishments off the court, as well.

During the 2015-2016 academic year the team volunteered to mentor high school tennis players at local facilities, conducted free USTA clinics at Roadman Park, teamed with California United Methodist Church to help pack bags of food for hungry children in Washington County, performed service work at the Center in the Woods, organized a community tennis social, and helped to organize and operate a wheelchair donation program.

In addition, Cal U women's tennis has earned Intercollegiate Tennis Association All-Academic Team honors for the past 12 years.

"Coach Montana and our women's tennis student-athletes are simply outstanding representatives of California University," she said.

"They've been the dominant force in PSAC tennis, but we are proud of everything they've done on the court, with their academics and in the community."

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