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Blaze, Cal U's mascot, enjoys the temporary, overnight accommodations in Residence Hall B, which are now available to commuter students.

Students Back in Class After Strike

Students and professors returned to classes Oct. 24 after a three-day strike by the Association of Pennsylvania State College and University Faculties (APSCUF), which represents faculty at all 14 State System universities, including Cal U.

The first strike in the history of the State System, it affected more than 100,000 students statewide.

Faculty took to the picket lines after working for 15 months under terms of an expired contract. At Cal U, about 86 percent of faculty took part in the strike.

A tentative agreement reached Oct. 21 in Harrisburg calls for a new contract that would run through June 30, 2018. Once the two sides agree to final language, the contract must be ratified by the APSCUF membership before it can be brought to the State System's Board of Governors for final approval.

"Today is an opportunity for a fresh start," Chancellor Frank T. Brogan said in a news release issued shortly after the tentative agreement was announced.

"Throughout this process, our students have been remarkably patient, and they should be applauded. Now, we look forward to making sure the rest of the year ends strong for them and for our talented faculty."

University President Geraldine M. Jones also issued a call for amity in a message to the Cal U community.

"Our job now is to come together and, with mutual respect, return to our primary purpose: providing every Cal U student with a high-quality academic education and a college experience that is second to none," she said.

"We will move forward in the spirit of our core values — Integrity, Civility and Responsibility. I am proud to say that those values were on display even during the past three days, and I expect them to guide our interactions in the days ahead."

She thanked students for their "patience and cooperation" during the strike.

"You are the heart of our University; the reason that our faculty and staff come to work every day," she told them. "I will be glad to see you back in our classrooms."

New Housing Open for Commuters

Commuter students faced with inclement weather, a late-night activity or an early-morning meeting may wish they could spend the night on campus rather than drive home.

Now Cal U students seeking short-term, on-campus accommodations can find them on the first floor of Residence Hall B.

University Housing and the Office of Commuter and Non-Traditional Student Services have instituted Blaze Express Housing, which provides temporary overnight housing for commuters.

Students can register online through the Vulcan Information Portal's "Housing and Dining" section.

"We think it's a great opportunity for commuters who

maybe never had the opportunity to stay in a residence hall. They can see what it's like — and perhaps (living on campus) is something they might want to consider in the future," said Sheleta Webb '88, '94, the commuter office's director.

"Most important, it's convenient for commuters who want or need to be here late at night or early in the morning."

Rooms are available from Sunday nights through Friday mornings during the fall and spring semesters. Guests may "check in" for no more than three nights per week and a total of six nights per month.

Cost is \$40 a night, which includes linens. Each room is equipped with a flat-screen, high-definition television and Wi-Fi access.

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Experts to Dissect Election Outcomes

Just one week after American voters choose their next president, a popular team of political experts will return to Cal U to examine the reasons behind the results.

Political Analyst Jon Delano, of KDKA-TV, will serve as moderator for the 2016 Election Analysis Forum, a free event at 7 p.m. Nov. 15 in Eberly Hall, Room 110.

Presented by the American Democracy Project at Cal U, the program is open to the public. Panelists are:

- Alan Abramowitz, professor of political science at Emory University, Va.
- William C. Binning, chair emeritus of the Department of Political Science at Youngstown State University, Ohio.
- Louis Jacobson,



Jon Delano, of KDKA-TV, will moderate the 2016 Election Analysis Forum.

- deputy editor/senior writer for the Pulitzer Prize-winning PolitFact.com website, a contributing columnist and elections handicapper for *PoliticsPA*, a state politics columnist for *Governing*, and senior author of *The Almanac of American Politics 2016*.
- Costas Panagopoulos, director of the Center for Electoral Politics and Democracy and the graduate program in Elections and Campaign Management at Fordham University, N.Y.

Delano and several of the panelists visited Cal U shortly after the 2012 presidential election, and all of them returned to discuss mid-term elections in 2014.

"We are so fortunate to have these national experts return to discuss the results, answer insightful questions and

tell us what they mean just one week after the election," said political science professor Dr. Melanie Blumberg, campus director of the American Democracy Project.

The ADP is a multi-campus initiative focused on higher education's role in preparing the next generation of informed, engaged citizens.

Presenting the Nov. 15 event are the campus chapter of the American Democracy Project, the Office of the President, the Office of the Provost/Academic Affairs, the College of Liberal Arts, and the Department of History, Politics and Society.

"This is an excellent opportunity to hear from world-class experts," said Dr. Michael Slaven, chair of the Department of History, Politics and Society.

"Dr. Blumberg does an outstanding job of bringing in the best analysts in the country for one of the most informative and entertaining events we have on campus."

Registration is not required for this popular event, but seating is limited.

Campus Enjoys 'Carnival' Homecoming

Neither a faculty strike nor a chilly drizzle could put a damper on Cal U's carnival-themed Homecoming celebration.

The festivities opened Oct. 18 in the Natoli Student Center with a performance by musical duo Shane & Emily and the announcement of the Homecoming Court.

One night later, local families joined students and staff in the Convocation Center for a free performance by the Cincinnati Circus. The one-ring, 10-act circus delighted the audience with clowns, acrobats, a face painter and stuffed animals.

On Homecoming Day, Oct. 22, newly inaugurated University President Geraldine M. Jones served as grand marshal for the annual parade. The Cal U Marching Band and bands from six local high schools provided musical accompaniment for a lineup of floats and marching units.

While Alumni Relations moved its Picnic on the Patio inside the Kana Alumni House, a petting zoo and other family-friendly activities brought Cal U graduates and community members to campus.

"I can't remember ever missing the Homecoming Parade," said Amy Augustine '02, an office manager with ViaQuest Home Healthcare in Monongahela, Pa.

"I love the parade and now enjoy taking my children (Adam, 9, and Alex, nearly 2) to it and all of the other activities. It's a tradition."

Parade judges awarded Phi Sigma Sigma sorority and Acacia fraternity first-place honors for their float, "Theme Park." Alpha Sigma Alpha sorority and Theta Xi fraternity took second place with "Cal Du Solei," and third place went to Gamma Sigma Sigma sorority for "Jumping Through Hoops for Service."

Alpha Sigma Tau sorority and Sigma Tau Gamma fraternity received the Spirit



Above, a few raindrops can never dampen the spirit and excitement of the annual Homecoming parade. At right, President Jones lines up with Homecoming royalty past and present. Taking part in the half-time coronation at Adamson Stadium were (from left) King Jonathan Hershey, Co-Queen Samantha Middlemiss, 2015 King Ernest Brackins Jr., President Jones, Co-Queen Lakjai Bynum and 2015 Queen Shannon Barnett.

Award for "Animal Circus Train."

Among the high school bands, Alderice High School marched off with the first-place award. Peters Township took second place and Charlevoix third.

The fun continued with an afternoon of Vulcan football at Adamson Stadium, where nationally ranked Cal U remained unbeaten, rolling to a 35-14 victory over divisional rival Gammon.

After a tie in the voting, students Samantha Middlemiss and Lakjai Bynum both were crowned Homecoming Queen, and Jonathan Hershey was named King. Their coronations occurred



during halftime festivities at the stadium.

"I always enjoy coming back to Cal and reliving the best years of my life," said Derek Della Valle '05, a senior recruiter with E&C Services in Coropolis, who reminisced about playing on an undefeated intramural

basketball team.

"Now, working most of the time with so many commitments, it makes me appreciate how much fun I had here. Homecoming Day is always a great day to come back, because so much is going on."

GRANTS AWARDED

The Office of Sponsored Programs and Research reports that:

- Laura Giachetti, of the Department of Trio Academic Development Services, has been awarded two Upward Bound continuation grants from the U.S. Department of Education. For the 2016-2017 project year, Upward Bound has been awarded \$398,576 for Fayette County and \$270,375 for Greene County. The program helps to prepare eligible high school students for success in college.
- Dr. Kevin Koury, dean of the College of Education and Human Services, has been awarded a \$389,738.00 continuation grant from the U.S. Department of Education for the Cal/U/ESI Professional Development Project.
- Christine Crawford, of the Department of TRIO and Academic Services, has been awarded a \$293,297 continuation grant from the U.S. Department of Education for Student Support Services. Since 1971, the Student Support Services TRIO grant has assisted more than 2,000 Cal U students with their goals of college attainment.

• Donna George, of the Department of Student Affairs and the State System's alcohol and other drug (AOD) coordinator, has been awarded \$5,000 from the Washington County Drug and Alcohol Commission to conduct a conference titled "Exploration and Evaluation: A Conference on Addictive Disorders." This conference to schedule for 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Oct. 10 in the Convocation Center.

• Donna George, also of Student Affairs, has been awarded \$2,500 from Cardinal Health for the PASSHE Peer Educators Prescription Drug Misuse Training Program.

• Dr. Louise Nicholson and Dr. Janie McClurkin, of the Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences, have been awarded \$2,412 from the DEP Environmental Education Grants program for their project, "Cal U Biogas Energy Academy (BEAM)."

• Ryan Barnhart, of the Cal U Global Online Office, has been awarded a \$1,000 grant from The Sprout Fund to support the recent STEAM in the Valley conference held at Cal U.

Housing Helps Commuters

—Continued from page 1

The seven Blaze Express rooms are in a wing separated from the rest of Residence Hall B. Only Blaze Express "customers" will have access, and rooms are secured with a keypad.

A graduate assistant, Tyler Lieb, is the only other person living on that floor.

"This is a secure section of our building, with a staff person (Lieb) available if there are any issues," said Jackie Thorn '90, director of University Housing.

"(Blaze Express guests) have private access, but then everything on campus is accessible to them once they walk out of their room."

The idea for Blaze Express arose from an interest in enhancing commuter life and an idea that Webb, Thorn and resident hall director Shawn McCoy '14 heard about at a conference last summer.

Ryerson University, in Toronto, offers a hostel program for its commuter students.

One of three schools in Canada to offer commuter housing, Ryerson now has a waiting list of more than 400.

"From our research after this conference, we believe we are the first school in the State System and perhaps the United States that is offering this kind of option for our commuter students," said Thorne.

"Our goal is not to generate revenue, but simply to cover costs and provide an outreach

Pajama Party!

Celebrate the new Blaze Express Housing option at a "Pajama Party" from 5-7 p.m. Nov. 15 in Residence Hall B. Commuter students can tour the wing, listen to a WCAL deejay and enjoy snacks and giveaways, including Blaze Express t-shirts.

for our commuters. This is another way of showing that our students come first."

McCoy, who is finishing a master's degree in clinical mental health counseling, believes the new initiative shows a sincere commitment to commuter students.

"This is a way to integrate them into the University community and let commuters know they are valued and appreciated," he said.

Thorn credited University Technology Services' John Moore for creating the web application in VIP where students can make reservation and online payments.

Senior Michael Shaeffer, who works in the Multimedia Access Center and is vice president of the Studio 224 graphic design club, created the Blaze Express housing logo — the Vulcan mascot, wearing pajamas.

"It's been a team effort involving many areas that's been student-driven from the onset," Thorne said.



Panelists (from left) Dr. Elizabeth Larsen, Cal U senior Kirra Lent, Dr. Michael Slaven, Dr. Melanie Blumberg, Dr. Emily Sweitzer and Cal U senior Mari Boyle discuss the presidential election at an Issues Expo hosted by the Cal U chapter of the American Democracy Project.

Issues Expo: Beyond Social Media

Social media, voter engagement and gender-based politics were the hot topics Oct. 25, when the Cal U chapter of the American Democracy Project hosted its second Issues Expo of the 2016 election season.

Dr. Melanie Blumberg, Dr. Elizabeth Larsen, Dr. Michael Slaven and Dr. Emily Sweitzer, all of the Department of History, Politics and Society, were joined on the panel by politically active seniors Kirra Lent and Ellen "Mari" Boyle.

"Social media has engaged a lot of people, but they are not looking for facts or truths. They're looking for something to reaffirm their beliefs," said Boyle, Pennsylvania's delegate to CollegeDebate16, a nonpartisan initiative to engage young voters.

"There have been many false claims about both candidates circulated through social media, which has made this election somewhat shameful."

Negative advertising does little to engage voters, it seems, and apathy about both national and statewide candidates may be the result.

Lent, who interned with FOX News at this summer's Democratic National Convention, attended three DebateWatch

events held on campus. Several undecided student voters also turned out.

"They came, watched and were still undecided afterward, because neither candidate did a good job of showcasing their ability to run our country," Lent said.

"Our students did not get anything out of these debates, because they wanted to hear about specific issues that are not being addressed."

Don't blame the media, Slaven said. It is the electorate's creation.

"The media only exists because we watch and support them. For a lot of people, elections have become a source of entertainment. We don't want to hear specifics of Social Security reform (for example) because we are not experts. "It's all about the personalities."

The panel took note of similarities between the presidential contest and Pennsylvania's recent one — and extremely negative — U.S. Senate race between incumbent Pat Toomey and challenger Katie McGinty.

"It's a microcosm of the presidential election, in that people are torn between their internal value systems and what they see in the ads," said Sweitzer.

Slaven said the Senate race is less

about gender and more of a regional contest. In general, voters in urban and suburban Philadelphia, for instance, have different views than those in central Pennsylvania's rural communities.

"The interesting thing about Pennsylvania is that it's really two different states with very competing interests."

A candidate's gender is not as significant as it was in years past, Blumberg added.

"Party alignment and the economy remain the important factors. People are not voting for someone just because she is a woman. A woman candidate is not unique."

Despite the angry rhetoric that has marked this year's campaigns, Larsen pointed out a possible positive outcome. When a nontraditional candidate enters the race, voters may set partisanship aside.

"When someone acts very differently from what is expected, it can ... cause both parties to come together," she said.

"Sometimes by reacting against what they disagree with, they develop a unity and a solidarity they would not have had if the deviant had not come in and shaken things up."

Campus BRIEFS

Election Watch Tuesday in Natali

The Cal U community and public are welcome to attend a 2016 Election Watch party beginning at 8 p.m. Nov. 8 in the Performance Center, inside the Natali Student Center.

Students, employees and community members will share informal conversation as results of the presidential election and other key races unfold.

Election Watch is presented by the campus chapter of the American Democracy Project, the Office of the Provost/Academic Affairs, the College of Liberal Arts, and the Department of History, Politics and Society. Admission is free, and the Natali Food Court will be open until midnight.

One More Fall Discovery Day

Cal U will hold this year's final fall Discovery Days program from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Friday, Nov. 11. Check-in at Steele Hall begins at 8:30 a.m. On Discovery Days, high school students beginning their college search may tour the campus and learn about Cal U's academic offerings, housing options and student activities.

For more information or to register, visit www.calu.edu/discoverydays. Faculty or staff members who are interested in leading tours should email Carrie.Piviti@postis.calu.edu.

Award-winning Author Discusses 'Concussion'

Although the physician who first identified chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) firmly believes that minors should not play football or other high-impact sports, the author who wrote his story wants more discussion about how to make these sports safer and find a cure.

Award-winning writer Jeanne Marie Laskas, author of *Concussion*, visited campus Oct. 20 to hold a thought-provoking public conversation as part of the Noss Lecture Series.

She shared insights about her reporting and writing process, and discussed the work of her book's central figure, Dr. Bennet Omala, the Nigerian-born pathologist whose research uncovered the traumatic effects of repeated concussions on the brains of NFL football players.

After examining the brains of deceased athletes, such as Pittsburgh Steelers Hall of Fame center Mike Webster, Omala theorized that the repetitive hits football players endure cause repeated brain trauma that can lead to CTE.

"Football helmets have made the problem worse, because players have gotten bigger, stronger and faster these past couple of decades, and their heads don't hurt when they bash into things," said Laskas.

"You can put on a layer after layer of thick padding, but the brain is still sloshing (inside the skull). The real issue is, what



Jeanne Marie Laskas autographs a copy of her book for Cal U graduate student Meredith Joly.

can be done to take the head out of the game?"

A New York Times best seller, *Concussion* was published in December 2015 to coincide with the release of a film by the same name, starring Will Smith. The book is based on her 2009 *GQ* article "Game Brain," which addressed the National Football League's response to the findings of Omala and other researchers.

"It began as a routine assignment by my editor at *GQ*," Laskas said. "I didn't expect I'd follow it up until I kept finding

back stories, such as missing brains, that weren't adding up."

After spending time with Omala, Laskas quickly realized she wanted to tell his story.

"I wanted to tell his version of events. I wanted the reader to think about how they would feel if they were this guy."

She admits that not all scientists agree with Omala's stance regarding contact sports for children and young adults.

While professional sports teams appear to be taking concussions more

seriously than they did in the past, she does not believe the public should expect the NFL to take the lead on this issue.

"The NFL is a gigantic \$10 billion entertainment industry that depends on all of us watching football," she said.

A former syndicated columnist who has written five other books, including *Hidden America*, Laskas teaches at the University of Pittsburgh, where she is a professor and director of the creative writing program.

She told the audience of mostly English and athletic training majors that she finds the actual writing to be the hardest part of her creative process.

"When I begin writing, I try to decide what is the one thing that grabbed me emotionally and I know I need to include somewhere in the story. So I start writing about that and dig in."

Laskas emphasized the important role that athletic trainers can play in helping athletes overcome their reluctance to speak up if they may have suffered a concussion.

"Keep an open mind, be honest and upfront in securing new information," she said. "Be almost a parental figure to your athletes."

Because Omala experienced deep depression as a young man, she believes he will continue his research into possible connections between suicide and brain science.

"People are still sending him brains."



More than 350 Cal U students took part in a 5K Glowrun on Oct. 5 as part of the 'Whine Free Wednesday' programming offered by Student Affairs.

After Dark, It's 'Whine Free' Fun

More than 350 Cal U students took part in a 5K Glowrun on the night of Oct. 5.

The race — third in a series of "Whine Free Wednesday" events planned for the fall semester — began at the Emeriti Fountain, on Third Street. Student Affairs organizes "Whine Free" events every other Wednesday during the fall and spring semesters as an alternative to alcohol consumption.

Co-chairs of the organizing committee are Diane Hasbroock, director of the Center for Volunteer Programs and Service Learning, and Rachel Michaels, Cal U's alcohol and other drug (AOD) education specialist.

Kim Cuppolo, Debra Custer, Fran Fayish, Paul Fazio, Tom Hasbroock, Joy Helisel and Gloria Stone

also serve on the committee.

"This program has been very popular with our students," Hasbroock said.

Runners and walkers who registered for the 5K Glowrun in a timely manner through OrgSync received T-shirts, glow necklaces and highlighters.

All students who attend Whine Free Wednesday events are eligible for end-of-semester drawings for prizes including a spring 2017 parking pass, tablet computer, Shop Dollars and theater tickets with a gift card for a "Night in the 'Burgh."

"While we can't stop someone from consuming alcohol, we can provide them with something worthwhile to do instead," Hasbroock said. "Hopefully, we can reduce the risk."

Sophomore Gary Johnson, a computer information systems major, said he enjoyed the after-dark run/walk. "It was really cool being out there at night. I plan on looking into other things they have scheduled for Wednesday nights."

The committee also has organized "glo-dances," free breakfasts during finals week, Pokemon-Go sessions and movie nights.

"This is just a healthy way of helping students find a nighttime activity where they can relax, have a good time and hopefully build relationships with one another," Michaels said.

For more information, email Rachel Michaels at michaels_rj@calu.edu or Diane Hasbroock at hasbroock_dj@calu.edu.

Hill Takes Third at PSAC Race

Junior Summer Hill produced Cal U's best finish at the PSAC Women's Cross Country Championships in 36 years with a third-place showing at the league race on Oct. 22 at Kutztown University.

Hill led the Vulcans and finished third overall in a field consisting of more than 160 runners. She ran the course in 22 minutes, 38.4 seconds, earning first-team all-conference honors.

Her result helped Cal U finish eighth out of 17 teams, with 200 total team points.

Sophomores Alyson Pierce and Maddie Thrasher were Cal U's next best competitors, finishing 33rd and 42nd, respectively.

Hill returned to the race after being sidelined by illness for several weeks. But her promise was evident earlier this fall when she took first place in three consecutive races — the Cal U, Bethany Bison and Kutztown invitationals.

Also a track standout, Hill finished ninth last spring in the 1,500-meter finals and earned second-team All-American honors at the NCAA Division II Track and Field Championships in Bradenton, Fla.

A dean's list student with highest honors, Hill is a three-time USTFCCCA Academic All-American. The sport management major owns a 3.89 cumulative grade-point average.

"Summer Hill is a resilient individual with everything she does," said Daniel Caulfield, Cal U's cross country and track and field head coach. "I think this is just the start of what we will see from her. I expect Summer will just continue to improve."

Hill's third-place showing at the PSAC race was Cal U's best since Rachel Brooks '85 won the 1980 PSAC title. Senior Julie Friend, a redshirt this fall, finished fourth at the 2015 PSAC Championships.

Hill and Friend are Cal U's only top-five PSAC



Junior Summer Hill took third place at the 2016 PSAC Cross Country Championships. Cal U's best individual finish at this event in 36 years.

finishes since Brooks.

Hill hopes to qualify for the 2016 NCAA Division II Women's and Men's Cross Country Championships, which will take place Nov. 19 at The Abbey Course in St. Leo, Fla.

Concerts Coming Up This Month

Cal U's Young and Gifted Gospel Choir's dinner and benefit concert will begin at 4:30 p.m. Nov. 13 at the Willow Room in Belle Vernon, Pa. Cost is \$20 per person.

The group's repertoire includes traditional spirituals and African-American gospel music. Membership is open to all Cal U students who wish to participate. Earlier this year the group performed at the Governor's Mansion in Harrisburg, and was featured as part of KDKA-TV's Black History Month celebration.

For reservations or more information about the Nov. 13 dinner and benefit concert, email yggc@calu.edu or choir director Dr. Randy Tillman at tillmanrj@calu.edu.

Cal U's choirs and orchestra will present their annual holiday concert at 3 p.m. Nov. 19 in Morgan Hall Auditorium. Admission is free, and the public is invited.

Performances will include numbers by the Cal Singers and a cappella groups Acapella Stella, Vulcanize and Isolated Incident.

For information, contact the Department of Music and Theatre at 724-938-4878.

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