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Alumni are Focus for Graduation Speaker

James Stofan '71, vice president for alumni relations at Tulane University in New Orleans, will address graduates this week at Cal U's 183rd Commencement.

University President Geraldine M. Jones will confer degrees upon 548 undergraduates and 714 graduate students, although not all will attend the ceremonies.

Students in the School of Graduate Studies and Research will receive their master's degrees at 7 p.m. Dec. 16. Candidates will be vested in their academic hoods during the ceremony.

Undergraduates in the College of Education and Human Services, the College of Liberal Arts and the Eberly College of Science and Technology will receive their diplomas at 10 a.m. Dec. 17.

Stofan will address students at both ceremonies, which will be held in the Convocation Center. The doors open at 5 p.m. Dec. 16 and at 8 a.m. Dec. 17. Graduates' families and friends are welcome to attend.

Cal U's 183rd Commencement recognizes students who completed their studies in August and December 2016.

About the speaker
At Tulane, Stofan oversees the strategic engagement initiatives for the university's 140,000 alumni worldwide.

Before joining Tulane, Stofan was the associate vice chancellor of alumni relations for Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn.

Prior to that, Stofan worked in alumni relations at the University of

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Hjar Mada fills a balloon with baking soda during an experiment at the Biogas Energy Academy at Cal U's SAI Farm.

Middle-schoolers Study Renewable Energy at SAI Farm

Cal U welcomed more than 100 eighth-graders from Pittsburgh Obama 6-12, part of Pittsburgh Public Schools, to SAI Farm for lessons in renewable energy.

The Biogas Energy Academy, led by Drs. Jamie McClurkin-Moore and Louise Nicholson in the Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences, stimulated the children to think about how much energy they and their families consume on a daily basis and taught them about sources of renewable energy.

The highlight of the Nov. 14 academy was a demonstration of the

biogas generation system at the farm.

"It turns waste into energy," McClurkin-Moore told the students.

"Manure, which we get from local farmers, goes in at the top, water is blended in, bacteria in the manure eats at carbohydrates and creates methane gas. The methane is captured and can be used for cooking, heating, lighting or electricity."

The Biogas Energy Academy was funded by a \$2,400 award from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Environmental Education

Grants Program.

"This is a key age," McClurkin-Moore said of the middle-schoolers.

"We want to get them excited about college as an option, let alone the thought that they could get a Ph.D."

From the pavilion to the farmhouse, McClurkin-Moore and Nicholson, aided by three Cal U biology majors, taught the Obama students about energy use and alternative sources.

At the pavilion, a bottle filled with vinegar and baking soda and capped with a balloon illustrated how

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Cal U students converse with students from the Perm campus of the National Research University Higher School of Economics in Russia.

Students Talk with Counterparts in Russia

Facebook isn't the only thing they have in common.

On a video-call to a classroom in the Russian city of Perm, Cal U students discovered many points of similarity with young adults more than 5,200 miles away.

Cal U's international studies program hosted the Dec. 1 video-call with students from the Perm campus of the National Research University Higher School of Economics, in Russia.

Perm, a city of about 1 million, is one of the easternmost cities in Europe. "This was a one-in-a-lifetime

opportunity, which I thought both student groups took advantage of," said Dr. Sean Madden, a professor in the Department of History, Politics and Society and director of the international studies program.

"All of the participating students enjoyed and benefited from an international conversation that stretched from one side of the world to the other."

More than two dozen American and nearly 30 Russian students discussed their university experience, culture,

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Panelists Analyze 'Fascinating' Election

Just one week after American voters elected a new president, four political experts analyzed Donald Trump's victory and offered insight into what might happen in the weeks and months ahead.

Students, faculty, staff and community members filled an auditorium in Eberly Hall as moderator Jon Delano, money and politics editor at KDKA-TV, introduced the panelists at the 2016 Election Analysis Forum.

Delano elicited thoughts and facts from experts Alan Abramowitz, professor of political science at Emory University; Costas Panagopoulos, director of the Center for Electoral Politics and Democracy at Fordham University; William Binning, professor emeritus at Youngstown State University; and Louis Jacobson, deputy editor/senior writer for the PolitiFact.com website and senior author of *The Almanac of American Politics 2016*.

Delano opened the forum by noting that although more than 123 million Americans voted on Nov. 8, the outcome of the presidential contest was decided by 117,000 votes cast in the battleground states of Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin.

"Had those three states voted for Hillary Clinton, she'd be the president with 278 electoral votes," he said. "It was a fascinating election."

The electorate was deeply divided, Delano pointed out. In Pennsylvania, where 6 million people made their choice for president known at the polls, only 78,000 votes swung the result in Trump's favor.

In 1992, all 10 western Pennsylvania counties voted Democratic, but only Allegheny County did so last month.

"The region is very much emblematic of the nation as a whole," Delano said.

Abramowitz pointed out that Clinton is just the fifth presidential candidate to win the popular vote while losing the election. The four others subject to this "Electoral College misfire" were also Democrats: Andrew Jackson in 1824, Samuel J. Tilden in 1876, Grover Cleveland in 1888 and Al Gore in 2000.

A series of charts and graphs showed how various groups — women, union members, LGBT voters, African-Americans and Hispanics — voted in 2016, compared to 2012.

"States with high diversity and a high percentage of college graduates moved toward the Democrats," Abramowitz explained, "while states with less diversity and a smaller percentage of college graduates swung toward the Republicans."

"The biggest story of this election is what happened with white, working-class voters," he added. "The shift among them ... put Donald Trump in the White House."

Although polls almost uniformly forecast a Clinton



Jon Delano, money and politics editor at KDKA-TV, offers insight during the 2016 Election Analysis Forum.

victory, the experts should have seen the possibility of a win for Trump, Panagopoulos said.

"In retrospect, we should not have been very surprised. Hillary Clinton was always facing an uphill battle as someone who was trying to claim a third term for the Democratic Party."

"She was a successor candidate, which is always a disadvantage. Voters were looking for change."

Many voters did not make up their minds until just before Election Day, Jacobson noted. It was reported that 13 percent of the electorate had not settled on a candidate until the final week of the campaign.

"Late-deciding voters were crucial," Jacobson said. So was the desire to see a fresh approach in White House policies.

"Many voters might not have liked Trump's behavior, but he was the anti-establishment candidate who represented change. Clinton and the other Republican candidates did not."

Binning commented on the role of the media, especially cable news outlets that appeared to be fascinated by Trump's unscripted comments.

"He received a lot of free media. Saying something outrageous would boost (ratings), so cable TV loved him," Binning said.

He contended that Trump's celebrity also influenced some voters, just as it did when California voters elected film actor Arnold Schwarzenegger as governor.

"Many people voted for a reality TV character, rather than someone they considered a professional politician. It's just like when California voted for the Terminator."

Delano brought up the role of women in politics — especially in Pennsylvania, which has never elected a female U.S. senator or governor, and where not a single woman holds a seat in Congress.

"I encourage you (college students) to get involved and see if we can make some changes," he said.

This was the sixth election analysis forum at Cal U, and Delano came prepared with predictions made when the panel visited after midterm elections in 2014.

At that time, each of the panelists predicted that Clinton would be the Democratic presidential nominee, but Trump was not among the four Republican candidates the group named.

Presenting the 2016 Election Analysis Forum were 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.

Students Look at Energy

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substances can be combined to produce a chemical reaction with a gas as a byproduct.

Students also learned how to use litmus paper strips to test the pH levels of everyday substances such as lemon juice, distilled water and milk.

In the farmhouse, McClurkin-Moore talked to students about types of renewable energy. The eighth-graders were asked to complete an energy audit as they calculated the impact of leaving smart phones and tablets charging all day, for example.

"A day like this is very cool if you're already interested in science, and maybe it will spark an interest if you aren't," said Cal U senior Shale Brown, who will graduate in December.

"A lot of the students didn't know what to expect," said Matt Dumbroski, who teaches English at Obama 6-12.

"They didn't realize all the different types of scientific study that you could do on a farm, and that you could go to college to figure it out. (They didn't know) that this is something you could go to school to do."



Andrew Valentine (left) and Jose Plata prepare for the manufacturing contest during the Technology and Engineering Education Collegiate Association Eastern Regional Conference in Virginia Beach, Va.

TEAC Heading to Texas

Nearly 20 students from the Technology Education Association of California University (TEAC) will compete at the 79th annual International Technology Education and Engineering Educators Association Conference, March 16-18 in Dallas, Texas.

The Cal U team enters the national competition after a strong showing at last month's Technology and Engineering Education Collegiate Association (TEECA) Eastern Regional Conference in Virginia Beach, Va., where six student groups came away with top-three finishes.

More than 200 students competed at the conference. Cal U teams finished in second place in the poster session contest and the instructional module event. They had third-place finishes in the communications, manufacturing, problem solving, and teaching lesson events.

"The team members worked diligently for months and weeks ahead of time to create solutions to various challenges," said faculty adviser Dr. Laura Hummel.

"They were creative, thoughtful, inspiring and dedicated."

Two Cal U students have leadership roles at the upcoming conference. Alex Peterson is TEECA's national president, and Juliana Lapek is the immediate past president.

Hummel serves on the TECCA Management Board and ITEEA Board of Directors. She also coordinates and judges several of the regional conferences.



Senior Amber Shepherd and Cal U President Geraldine M. Jones help stuff a Vulcan Flyer bus with toys for the 96.1 KISS Stuff-A-Bus program.

Cool Toys, Warm Hearts

Senior Amber Shepherd could barely contain her excitement as she loaded a Vulcan Flyer bus with brightly colored games, stuffed animals and other toys, all destined for needy children.

"To give something back to people less fortunate, especially children, just warms my heart," said Shepherd, a marketing major and chair of Cal U's Toys for Tots Committee.

"I love kids, and I love doing things like this. I'm grateful to all of my fellow students who helped."

This marked the sixth year that Student Government has led a toy collection effort in conjunction with the 96.1 KISS Stuff-A-Bus program, which benefits Toys for Tots. Cal U has supported Toys for Tots annually since the 2007 holiday season. Nearly \$3,000 worth of toys were delivered Dec. 1 to the Stuff-A-Bus collection point in Robinson Township, Pa. Further donations were accepted through Dec. 9 and distributed to Toys for Tots of Washington County.

GG&C Bus Co., of Washington, Pa., stood in for Santa's sleigh and delivered the toys to the collection point.

Letters about the toy drive were sent to California-area businesses, said Student Government

President Shaina Hilty, and students spread the word a club meetings and through social media. Drop boxes placed downtown at Bee Graphix, and in the Natall Student Center lobby and the Student Government office, soon began filling with toys.

In addition to the bus company, donations and/or volunteers came from Cal U's Student Activities Board, Student Association Inc., InterResidence Hall Council and hockey program, as well as Penatronics, Bee Graphix and Primanti's. Cal U students from many clubs and organizations also chipped in.

The hockey teams solicited funds for the campaign at their home games.

"We had a great response from Cal U students and the community," Hilty said. "Really, it was awesome."

In keeping with tradition, University President Geraldine M. Jones helped to carry the last of the toys onto the bus parked in front of the student center.

"I look forward to this every year, because this is one of many, many activities our students take part in that show how much they understand the importance of helping others," said President Jones. "They are amazing."

Mark Your (Academic) Calendar

Students, faculty and staff are reminded of these important dates on the academic calendar:

- Dec. 16: Residence halls close at 8 p.m.
- Dec. 19: Winter College classes begin. Online classes end Jan. 20.
- Dec. 26-29: Holiday break (University closed).
- Jan. 16: All University offices close in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.
- Jan. 22: Residence halls reopen at 2 p.m.
- Jan. 23: First day of classes for the 2017 spring semester.
- March 13-18: Spring break for faculty and students.
- May 8-12: Exam Week.
- May 12-13: Commencement ceremonies.

Speaker to Focus on Alumni

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California for more than 25 years. His tenure at UC included serving as assistant vice president for alumni relations and protocol for the UC System; advising the 10 UC campus alumni associations, which represent more than 1.4 million alumni; and overseeing protocol for the UC Office of the President. He also created systemwide alumni chapters in London, Paris, Mexico City, New Delhi and Shanghai, and hosted alumni events in Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

Stofan received his bachelor's degree in education from Cal U in 1971. Upon graduation he received Cal U Student Government's Distinguished Service Award for his volunteer work with various student activities.

He also holds a master's degree in College Student Personnel from Central Connecticut State University and attended the Protocol School of Washington. He sits on the board of directors for the Donald A. Strauss Public Service Scholarship Foundation, which encourages young leaders from 15 pre-selected California colleges and universities to undertake a high-impact project in public service or social change before graduation.

Both graduation ceremonies can be viewed live online at www.calu.edu. For more information, visit www.calu.edu/events/commencement.



James Stofan

Students Talk with Russian Counterparts Via Video

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politics and leisure activities.

Moderating the discussion from Perm was Dr. Taryana Permyakova, a professor in the National Research University's School of Foreign Languages. Madden's faculty collaborator during his 2012 experience as a Fulbright Specialist in Russia, she has continued to work with Madden to make connections between the National Research University and Cal U. Faculty guests in Keystone Hall included Dr. Michael Slaven, chair of the Department of History, Politics and Society; Elizabeth "Bessy" Bennelick, director of International Programming at Cal U; and James Krebs, a professor at Community College of Allegheny County.

"Cold" and "hockey" were among the words that came to mind when

Cal U students were asked about Russia. Their counterparts said America conjured images of "baseball," "cheerleaders" and "fast food."

Both groups of students are frequently online, and both said they use Facebook. But differences soon became apparent.

A second-year student from Russia explained that he and his classmates are expected to learn a second language, which is usually English. Students focusing on history need to speak three languages, he said.

Although student clubs are common on both campuses, the students in Perm inquired about fraternities and sororities, which do not exist at Russian universities. Sophomore Ellis Atkins, an international studies major, explained that fraternities and sororities at Cal U collaborate on community service, as well as social activities.

Soccer, skiing and inline skating are popular in Russia, one student said, but the Perm group was amused by the American Pokemon Go craze and curious about the widespread passion for spectator sports.

When the talk turned to politics, both groups agreed that Donald Trump's election was surprising in light of the pre-election news coverage. And they laughed as they discussed the sometimes-questionable validity of information that appears online.

"We were all nervous at first, trying to get into the flow of things, but then things opened up," said sophomore Victoria McGough, an international studies major with a focus in political science and global issues and a minor in French.

She noted that the Russian students returned to their campus at 6 p.m. for the video-call, which was held at 8 a.m.

Eastern Standard Time.

"It's always worth coming here early for something that is going to be a huge point in your college experience," McGough said. "This was something completely different."

The wide-ranging discussion eventually touched on American student loan debt, Russian economic policy, anti-doping efforts by international sports authorities and even gay rights.

Both groups of students will be sharing written comments about the experience with their counterparts overseas.

"I did enjoy this," said Atkins, of New York City. "It definitely gave me a different perspective, because I had never really communicated with anyone outside this country before."

"This definitely opened my mind. It was cool to see how similar they really are to us in a lot of ways."

Lineman Named PSAC Champion Scholar

Offensive lineman Taylor Nikithser is the first Cal U football player to earn the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference (PSAC) Champion Scholar Award.

Initiated during the 2011-2012 academic year, the award is presented at each of the PSAC's 23 team championship finals. It honors the student at each contest with the highest cumulative grade-point average.

The selection criteria for the Champion Scholar Award is identical to that of the NCAA Elite 89 awards, which honor the student-athlete with the top GPA at each of the NCAA championship finals sites across divisions I, II and III.

Nikithser, a junior, maintains a 3.76 cumulative GPA while majoring in sport management with a minor in business. He is also a two-time PSAC Scholar Athlete and a D2ADA Academic Award recipient.

Over the past two years, Nikithser has started all of Cal U's football games. The North Allegheny High School graduate has anchored an offensive line that paved the way for the Vulcans to finish the regular season averaging 52.1 points and 468 total yards per game.

"We are obviously very proud of

Taylor, who is most deserving of this significant award," said Gary Dunn '95, '97, Cal U's first-year head football coach.

"We look for young men who want to win in every aspect of life, and Taylor is the type of individual who gives his best in everything he does."

Nikithser received the Champion Scholar Award Nov. 12 on the field at Adamson Stadium, before the Vulcans defeated Kutztown 49-7 to win the PSAC championship.

The victory secured the Cal U football program's fourth undefeated regular season — its first since 2007.

Cal U now counts 11 Champion Scholar Award recipients among its past and current student-athletes. Earlier this semester, senior Rachel Lim became the first Cal U women's golfer to receive the award.

Three Cal U alumni received the award more than once. Erin Kling '13, a standout in women's indoor track and field, is a three-time winner. Women's volleyball letter Abbey Freund '14 received the award twice, and Morgan Huegel '16 was honored for cross country and indoor track and field.



Cal U junior center Taylor Nikithser receives the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference Champion Scholar Award from PSAC Commissioner Steve Murray.

Two Sports, All-Conference

It's literally a win-win situation for junior Seaira Barrett, the first Vulcan student-athlete chosen for all-conference teams in two separate sports when voting by the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference's head coaches determines the honor.

A middle hitter on the women's volleyball team, Barrett was named a first-team all-conference selection this fall, along with senior teammates Megan Litoborski and Danielle Hayes.

Also a standout on the basketball court, Barrett was selected for the all-conference women's basketball team in 2015-2016.

"What Seaira has already accomplished speaks volumes about what an outstanding athlete she is," said Matthew Kifer, Cal U's sports information director.

"Along with her obvious athletic versatility, she has clearly shown an admirable ability to prioritize her time. It will be very interesting to see what she does during the rest of her athletic and academic careers here at Cal U."

Barrett is a business administration major with a concentration in accounting and a minor in Spanish. Despite a rigorous training schedule, she has made the Athletic Director's Honor Roll, reserved for those student-athletes who earn a grade-point average of at least 3.0 for the semester.

She also puts points on the board at the Convocation Center.

Heading into the volleyball team's NCAA Division II post-season, Barrett ranks second among all PSAC players



Seaira Barrett's versatility has made her an all-conference selection in both women's volleyball and basketball.

with a .322 hitting percentage. She is second on the team with 2.99 kills per set. Barrett leads the Vulcans with 75 total blocks and has posted 345 points this season.

In conference play, the Central Valley High School graduate averaged 3.79 kills per set, with a .350 hitting percentage. She has chalked up double-digit kills in her last 12 matches.

With Barrett's help, the women's volleyball team compiled a 22-9 overall record through November. Cal U won the

PSAC-Southwest division with a 13-5 conference record and made the program's 15th NCAA Division II post-season appearance.

Barrett also shines on the basketball court, where the 6-foot forward is the first member of the Cal U women's team to be named PSAC-West Defensive Athlete of the Year.

She started strong as a Cal U student-athlete, earning the PSAC-West Women's Basketball Freshman of the Year title when Cal U won the NCAA Division II National Championship in 2014-2015.

In the 2015-2016 season she was the team's top rebounder and second-leading scorer, averaging 10 rebounds and 14 points per game. She also produced 52 steals, 28 blocks, and 64 assists.

Aided by Barrett, the women's basketball team won its second straight PSAC championship last year, finishing 25-6 overall while advancing to the second round of the NCAA Division II Tournament.

Through the first seven games of the current basketball season, Barrett is leading the fifth-ranked Vulcans in scoring and rebounding, averaging 20.7 points and 6.7 rebounds per game.

Switching between sports is apparently no problem for the talented athlete. In late November, Barrett competed in the PSAC volleyball semifinals at Gannon University. The very next day, she helped the women's basketball team win 74-52 at Kutztown.

"Balancing both sports with classes can get difficult, so I have to manage my time very well," Barrett said.

Apply Now for Land Management Stipend

Thanks to a grant from The Community Foundation of Fayette County — The Chevron Community Fund, five students who enroll in Cal U's Land Management Certificate program will receive a stipend of \$2,000 each.

Recipients must live in Fayette or Greene County, have at least a high school diploma and be accepted into the certificate program.

Cal U's Land Management Certificate program is an accelerated program for students who have at least a high school diploma and who are seeking education, experience and credentials in order to advance within the land management industry. No previous college credit is required.

The 30-credit certificate program is delivered 100 percent online. It gives students the additional education, experience and credentials required in order to advance within the land management industry.

Coursework emphasizes legal topics, oil- and gas-related land management, surface and sub-surface geology, and geographic information systems (GIS).

For details, visit www.calu.edu/land-management or contact the Cal U Global Online office at 866-595-6348 or caluglo@calu.edu.

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