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Kacie Kubitza, a secondary education major, laughs and claps during the conclusion of the undergraduate ceremony.

Grant Funds Habitat Projects

Partners for Fish and Wildlife, a conservation collaborative based at Cal U, will restore hundreds of acres of fish and wildlife habitat thanks to a grant from the Richard King Mellon Foundation.

The \$800,000 grant was awarded to the Foundation for California University of Pennsylvania, which receives and manages funds on behalf of the University.

The funds will support a two-year effort to:

- Fence and improve at least 35 miles of stream banks.
- Restore more than 400 acres of upland habitat, primarily young forests and pollinator habitat.
- Restore more than 130 acres of wetlands.
- Improve water flow in more than five miles of stream habitat to allow fish to move freely.

The work will be completed in 11 key geographic areas in western and north-central Pennsylvania. Habitat restoration is designed to support “species of concern,” including the golden-winged warbler, American woodcock and Appalachian cottontail, among others.

Habitat restoration

Based at Cal U since 1999, Partners

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Degrees Awarded at Winter Commencement

Cal U’s 187th Commencement ceremonies began with a milestone — the first students ever to receive doctoral degrees from the University.

The weekend concluded with another unusual event: the guest speaker’s friend being the final graduate to walk on stage to get his diploma.

Four students — Melody Gardner ’12, Kaman Hung ’08, Richard “Rick” Richey ’06 and Rosanne Woods ’05 — each earned degrees in the Doctor of Health Science and Exercise Leadership Program (D.H.Sc.).

Before conferring degrees to more than 1,100 students, University President Geraldine M. Jones addressed the four doctoral candidates at a morning event

where they presented the results of their research.

“You have developed high-level analytical skills and have learned to form solutions to complex, real-life issues,” President Jones said. “Trust in your own abilities and talents, and use them to the fullest.

“You are part of a milestone moment in California’s history and we are very proud of you.”

Alumnus Timothy P. Camus ’84, retired deputy inspector general for investigations with the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration in Washington, D.C., addressed graduates at both ceremonies at the Convocation Center.

The final candidate to receive his degree at the

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Little Learners Help with Rutledge Dedication

A chilly Monday morning concluded in heartwarming fashion on Dec. 10 as children helped to dedicate the Karen and Tom Rutledge Institute for Early Childhood Education preschool in Morgan Hall.

Funded through a generous gift from Karen and Tom Rutledge, the institute brings teachers from The Village, a nationally accredited childhood education center, to campus to provide high-quality preschool education to eligible children ages 3-5.

The institute also offers exceptional learning opportunities and full-tuition scholarships for future teachers enrolled at Cal U as Rutledge Institute Scholars.

Since it opened this fall, the institute’s preschool program has been housed elsewhere in Morgan Hall while Cal U employees completed extensive renovations.

With many of their family members present, the Rutledges, of Greenwich,

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Karen Rutledge, Tom Rutledge and President Geraldine M. Jones join children to dedicate the Rutledge Institute for Early Childhood Education.



Faculty and members of the third class of graduates from Cal U's full-time IUP Police Academy.

Cadets Graduate from Academy

Thirteen cadets graduated from Cal U's full-time IUP Police Academy during a ceremony on Dec. 14 in the Performance Center.

Among the third class of cadets was Tierra Travis, the first African-American female to graduate from the academy and one of three women to graduate from this academy class.

At the ceremony, Travis received a \$6,000 scholarship from the Washington County (Pa.) District Attorney's Office.

"I lost my parents in high school," said Travis, of Pittsburgh, Pa., who is also a senior criminal justice major at Cal U. "I made a promise to my mom and dad that I would be the best that I can, and I've been sticking to my word.

"My experience during the academy was a challenge. It's not easy without my parents being here. As the days went by I've noticed I've gained patience, discipline, time management skills and professional etiquette. I've come a long way in these past six months, and overall, I've noticed that I've become a strong and mature woman.

"I appreciate all the instructors — all their hard work and even their criticism!"

Maurita Bryant, assistant superintendent of the Allegheny County Police and retired assistant chief of Pittsburgh Police, was the guest speaker. Members of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives and members



Dr. Christopher Wydra, police academy coordinator and Cal U criminal justice professor; Tierra Travis, a senior criminal justice major and the academy's first female African-American graduate; and Dr. Julie Warnick, chair of Cal U's Department of Criminal Justice.

of the NAACP Washington County also attended the graduation ceremony.

"Our police academy at Cal U is training police cadets not only in proper police techniques but also emphasizing public safety while upholding civil rights," said Dr. Christopher Wydra, academy coordinator and an assistant professor of criminal justice at Cal U.

"Our cadets are also trained in procedural justice and professional communication to make police-citizen encounters more positive."

Each of the cadets completed more than 950 hours of training to earn Act 120 Municipal Police Officer certification, which is required for employment as a police officer in Pennsylvania.

In addition to their Act 120 certification, police academy graduates are awarded 15 college credits at Cal U. Those who enter the academy without a degree can apply those credits to the B.S. in Criminal Justice or the associate degree in applied policing and technology.

Both the bachelor's and associate degree programs are available on campus or online.

Cal U also offers an M.A. in Criminal Justice Studies with an applied criminology concentration and a Doctor of Criminal Justice.

For more information about Cal U's full-time IUP Police Academy, contact Dr. Christopher Wydra at wydra@calu.edu or 724-938-4294.

Children Help with Dedication

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Conn., reminisced about their days as a young married couple raising their first child in an off-campus rental while Tom, who graduated from Cal U in 1977 with a degree in economics, worked as cable technician.

He is now the chairman and CEO of Charter Communications.

"California had a real impact on us, a lot of good things happened to us, so this is really a continuation of a longtime relationship of supporting education here," Tom Rutledge said. "We are very proud of what's been built and of the scholars. Giving something like this is a tremendous gift to ourselves too."

"There's no one happier than me here today, and this has been a joint effort," Karen Rutledge said. "We expect the Rutledge Institute to be a model of excellence for preschool education, and you are all going to do just great."

Fittingly, the preschool children played a significant role in the

dedication ceremony, which began with 6-year-old Leila introducing Geraldine M. Jones in what Cal U's president called "her best introduction ever."

"This is just the beginning of a long-term initiative designed to enhance student learning and build a strong corps of future teachers," President Jones said. "We believe the Rutledge Institute can have a positive impact on the future of childhood education — and it all starts right here.

"We can't thank Tom and Karen Rutledge enough for their commitment to our University, our community, our students and the future of the teaching profession."

Cherie Sears, president of The Village, director of the Rutledge Institute Preschool Program and a Cal U alumna, described how far-reaching the Institute can be.

"With the Rutledge gift and the institute now, we are working on a model that lifts the whole profession of early childhood and enhances the quality education for young children," she said.

"It's an exciting time, and we are honored to be part of it."

Dr. Rebecca Maddas, of the Department of Childhood Education, introduced the Rutledge Scholars.

Currently, 11 children attend the institute preschool program, and seven Rutledge Institute Scholars are enrolled in first-year classes.

Elijah Gilbert spoke on their behalf.

"We thank you for this opportunity that will open so many doors for our futures, gives us a chance to further our knowledge, become leaders in the field and touch the lives of kids such as these adorable ones here," he said.

"We all come from different backgrounds, but now coming together in this setting, we all have the same purpose and goals: to educate children."

Rutledge Scholar Aamaria Hall emphasized the invaluable immediate impact the Rutledge Institute provides.

"We've just started, but this gives you an experience to work with the kids so much earlier, which is an exceptional opportunity," she said. "It's such an important early start for our careers."

Certifications Enhance Student Experiences

It's now possible for Cal U students to be certified as student users by the Afghanistan Spatial Data Center, a site that houses spatial data about the country's districts and provinces.

Spatial data is geographic information — data on roads, rivers, hospitals, cell phone coverage, etc. It's often used for research purposes and is a tool in making disaster-management decisions.

"When there's an earthquake or a flood in a particular region, spatial data can help determine how to get people to safety or how to get aid to a particular area," said Dr. Thomas Mueller, who teaches in the geography and the geographic information systems and emergency programs.

He recently became a National Geographic Certified Educator, a distinction that recognizes leaders who use a multi-disciplinary approach to teach geography.

Twenty-three students in Mueller's Introduction to Geography class this fall passed the free certification ASDC test, which determines the ability to understand what spatial data is and how it can be used.

A student certification is a good resume-builder, Mueller said.

"It's a little extra opportunity that we can provide for our students, and a way to show a potential employer that they went above and beyond. It's also proof that you understand spatial data from another world region."

"The class project this fall was to assess the flood hazard for a particular district in Afghanistan," Mueller said. "Students looked at how much of the district is in the flood zone, how many people would be impacted, the locations of hospitals, the transportation networks, everything."

"It's my third semester using the ASDC for this type of project, so this summer, I talked with them and said, 'You know, it would be great if students had the option to take and pass a certification exam.'"

Senior Andrew Rowan called the free certification "beyond cool."

"As a business major, I find this type of class important because learning about other places and getting to understand other people and cultures has opened me up to the possibility of one day working and living abroad.

"Even though it's not my concentration, I think being certified for spatial data analysis will be an advantage when job hunting."

For first-year criminal justice major Cassandra Casela, certifications are an important way to build credibility.

"I want a 'NCIS'-type career" in investigations, she said, "so this type of certification will help me. If I have to travel, what types of language would I need to know more about?"

The student certification is another step in the partnership between Cal U and the Afghanistan Spatial Data Center.

The University became a partner with the center in summer 2018.

"Cal U has become the most prolific Educational ASDC user," the center said. "We hope to use Cal U as an example for local universities of how to integrate parts of the ASDC in their training material."

The website also includes an emergency management tabletop training exercise created in spring 2018 by Mueller and four Cal U students.

Degrees Awarded at Commencement

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undergraduate ceremony was Larry Wallach, who earned an associate degree in industrial technology. He and Camus were Alpha Kappa Lambda fraternity brothers in the 1980s.

Wallach, who worked as a warehouse receiver for a coal mining equipment manufacturer that closed two years ago, came back to school on the Trade Adjustment Assistance program.

“How many times, if ever, is the commencement speaker a personal friend of one of the graduates?” asked Wallach, who will pursue a bachelor’s degree at Cal U. “It was a challenging semester. It was special to have Tim as the speaker and to see how far he’s come.”

Camus served in the U.S. Department of the Treasury for 32 years and was named deputy inspector general for investigations in 2011. In that role, Camus was responsible for leading and supervising all aspects of the agency’s law enforcement mission.

Camus began both his addresses by showing gratitude to his alma mater.

“The class size, the campus size and the fact that I was held accountable by my professors prepared me for my successful career that I guarantee would not have happened without Cal U.

“Cal U was just right for me.”

Camus offered three tips to the Class of 2018 — never underestimate the power of an opportunity, pay attention to detail and have balance in your life.

“Your education is a foundation for your future and your professional lives,” he said. “You achieved this goal today through your determination and hard work.

“You have the keys to control your future — now go out and be the stars of Cal U.”

During the undergraduate ceremony, senior class envoy Blair Madison presented President Jones with a check for more than \$15,000 contributed by graduating seniors and their families.

The following Monday, he returned to work as a human resources assistant with UPMC Corporate Services, where he began as an intern while earning his degree in business administration.

“My different experiences at Cal U help me interact with the customers we deal with,” said Madison, who was an



Cal U’s first doctoral graduates: Rick Richey (left), Kaman Hung, Rosanne Woods, and Melody Gardner proudly show their degrees at the graduate Commencement ceremony.

alumni ambassador. “Being on stage and then walking across to shake hands and get my degree from President Jones was so exciting, it was almost surreal.”

Aryn Hess earned bachelor of science degrees in biology and in science and technology multidisciplinary studies. She also received associate degrees in technical studies and liberal studies.

“My professors were remarkable, this has been an amazing journey for me, and I’m proud to be a mother of three graduating *cum laude*,” she said.

Many students who completed their studies online attended the ceremonies on campus, including Samir Jamal Glenn-Roundtree who earned his master’s in social science, with a concentration in applied criminology.

He is a member of the U.S. Marine Corps and plans to transition to a job with the Department of the Navy’s Naval Criminal Investigative Service.

“I thought it would be tough being a military officer and a full-time online student,” Glenn-Roundtree said, “but the faculty and staff in the program were all extremely accommodating.”

Danielle Ruzzi earned her degree in communication studies with a concentration in radio and television.

“Cal U has helped me prepare for the real world in many ways and helped



Larry Wallach receives his associate degree in industrial technology from President Geraldine M. Jones while Commencement speaker Timothy P. Camus, his longtime friend, looks on.

me get hands-on experience in my field,” Ruzzi said. “I couldn’t be happier to say I finally did it!”

President Jones offered the graduates some heartfelt advice.

“Although you’ll receive your

degree today, please recognize that your education is not done,” she said. “Every day brings new opportunities for learning, and I have always believed in the power of lifelong learning to enrich our lives.”

Surprise Reunion at Graduate Commencement

Hey, don’t I know you? That was Tahaney Al-Balawi’s reaction when she spotted Sean Green from across the room.

Al-Balawi and Green, both online master’s degree students, were on campus on Dec. 14 to receive their degrees. Al-Balawi’s is a Master of Arts in Social Science: Arabic Language and Linguistics; Green majored in exercise science, with a concentration in sport psychology.

They met two years ago, before enrolling at Cal U, at the U.S. Navy support base in Bahrain, where she was an interpreter and translator for the military and Department of Defense and he was serving in the U.S. Army.

Neither knew the other was a student at Cal U until they met by chance prior to the Winter Commencement ceremony in the Convocation Center on Dec. 14.

“I was over by the mirror adjusting my cap when I saw Sean,” Al-Balawi said. “I said, ‘Don’t we know each other?’”

With beaming smiles following the surprise reunion, the two talked about life after graduation.

Green, who lives in South Carolina, plans to retire from active duty as a sergeant first class to pursue a career helping to rehabilitate wounded soldiers for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Al-Balawi is headed to Japan, where she will teach English as a second language, in May.



After first meeting in Bahrain, Sean Green and Tahaney Al-Balawi enjoy a surprise reunion at Cal U Winter Commencement on Dec. 14.

New Member, Good Audit for Trustees

At its final meeting of 2018, Cal U's Council of Trustees greeted a new member and received welcome news from auditors.

Chairwoman Annette Ganassi introduced Stephen M. DeFrank '92, who was nominated by Gov. Tom Wolf and approved by the state Senate.

DeFrank, who earned a degree in political science at Cal U, is a senior adviser on government relations and public policy for the Harrisburg office of Buchanan Ingersol and Rooney PC. The former state Senate staffer will serve a six-year term.

Trustees also heard a report by CPA Jared Clark, an auditor with the CliftonLarsonAllen accounting firm. The auditors annually examine the University's budgeting process and financial controls, scrutinizing the way revenue and expenses are handled and recorded.

"We found no material weaknesses in your internal controls," Clark said. "You have a really good finance and accounting team, and we appreciate all their hard work."

This is the sixth time that CliftonLarsonAllen, one of the nation's top 10 accounting firms, has conducted the University's annual financial audit.

In her report to the trustees, University President Geraldine M. Jones described the campus-wide response to the attack at Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh. Heeding her call to stand together as a caring and inclusive community, faculty and staff organized a vigil and other activities. More than 150 people attending, including many students.

"Standing together helped our campus family support and console one another, and it has sparked



conversation about future events designed to counter hatred and affirm our common humanity," she said. "In these challenging times, this is a topic we cannot ignore."

President Jones also reported on Winter Commencement, State System Chancellor Dan Greenstein's visit, Vulcan Fest Homecoming Weekend, and the upcoming dedication of the Rutledge Institute preschool facility.

In addition, she reported that from July 1 to Nov. 19, Cal U employees collectively received \$1.1 million dollars from 18 grant awards to fund service projects, conduct research and support instruction.

In other business:

- Dr. Bruce Barnhart, provost and senior vice president for Academic Affairs, reported on the growing popularity of Cal U's five-week Winter College. As of the Dec. 6 meeting date, 1,263 students had enrolled. The University offered 35 undergraduate and 43 graduate courses, entirely online, during the five-week session that concluded Jan. 18.

The provost also congratuated the Department of Business and Economics, where 15 undergraduate and graduate programs received initial

accreditation from the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP).

- After a quarterly update that once again projected a balanced budget for the 2018-2019 fiscal year, Robert Thorn, vice president for Administration and Finance, reported on the University's capital projects.

He praised Cal U workers for completing renovations at Morgan Hall, where the Rutledge Institute preschool is housed. The Coover Hall renovation and expansion project is 83 percent complete, he said, and the building should be ready for Fall 2019 classes.

However, incessant rains have delayed work at Lilley Field, home of Cal U softball. Renovations there may be completed by late April.

Thorn added that the final revision of the Campus Master Plan will be revealed during the spring semester. Planners anticipate reducing the overall footprint of campus buildings by about 120,000 square feet and converting nearly a dozen buildings to more efficient heating systems.

- Larry Sebek, associate vice president for Student Affairs, teamed up with Melissa Dunn, director of Student Activities, Programming and Leadership, to report on students' community relations and outreach efforts.

One popular event was the fourth annual Holly Day, which brought between 400 and 500 people to campus on Dec. 2. Holly Day is organized by the California Recreation Authority; the University provides space in the Natali Student Center, and students perform for the families and assist with holiday-themed activities.

"We continue to work very hard to integrate our students with the

California community, and vice versa," Dunn said.

- Christine Kindl, vice president for Communications and Marketing, showed the trustees two 30-second television spots that are airing now as part of the Build You marketing campaign.

Featuring Cal U students and faculty, the ads have appeared in the Pittsburgh region on NBC shows such as "Sunday Night Football" and "This Is Us," and on cable networks popular with prospective students and their families. After a holiday hiatus, they will return to the airwaves in January and February.

"These spots are focused on recruitment," Kindl said. "We want to show the broad range of academic programs available at Cal U, as well as the energy and excitement of student life."

The Build You campaign also will be visible at area malls during the busy shopping season, with placements at the Mall at Robinson, Westmoreland Mall, South Hills Village and Ross Park Mall.

- Tony Mauro, vice president for University Development and Alumni Relations, reported that since September the University has received more than \$200,000 for student scholarships from various foundations, corporations, gifts and estates.

The inaugural Cal U Athletics Day of Giving raised more than \$16,000 for athletic scholarships, he said.

Mauro also reviewed recent alumni events and informed the trustees of upcoming activities, notably a "signature" fundraising gala set for June 29 at the Convocation Center.

California's Council of Trustees is scheduled to meet again March 6.

Black History Month Celebration Begins

Cal U's "Black History Through the Decades" celebration of Black History Month and Martin Luther King Jr. will begin with a kickoff event at 11 a.m. Jan. 29 in the Performance Center.

Joe Webb, a motivational speaker, trainer, coach, entrepreneur and mentor, will deliver a presentation, "Walking Both Sides of the Street: The Road to Academic Success."

Webb grew up in group homes and foster care and will discuss the value of higher education. He holds a bachelor's and master's degree and is pursuing a doctoral degree in higher education administration.

For the second year, the Dream Legacy Challenge will be part of Cal U's Black History Month celebration. Students, faculty and staff are encouraged to participate in the challenge by registering through Orgsync as a team, with their student clubs and organizations or with their office or department. Points will be awarded for each hour volunteered, attendance at a Black History Month event and for each item donated at the Cal U Cupboard.

The student organization and office that compiles the most points and donations will each receive a free pizza party provided by challenge sponsors the Center for Volunteer Programs and Service Learning and the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Diversity Education.

For more information as Black History Month approaches please visit www.calu.edu/news.

Mellon Foundation Grant Funds Habitat Projects

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for Fish and Wildlife is a cooperative effort among many agencies. In addition to improving habitat for mammals, birds, fish and insects, it works collaboratively with landowners to restore habitat for wildlife on agricultural property and other lands. The program also provides internships and applied learning opportunities for Cal U students.

The Richard King Mellon Foundation has been a longtime supporter of Partners for Fish and Wildlife. Recent projects include stream restoration and habitat improvements along Pike Run in Washington County; wetlands restoration in Washington and Greene

counties; and bird and wildlife habitat improvements at Forbes State Forest, Westmoreland County.

Upcoming projects will continue efforts to restore Chestnut Ridge streams that harbor eastern brook trout, and to improve habitat for monarch butterflies, which breed in southwestern Pennsylvania as they pass through on their annual migration.

"Our projects target species that are declining in Pennsylvania and throughout the eastern United States," explains Jose Taracido, supervisor for Partners for Fish and Wildlife's Farmland Habitat Program.

"Our goals align with those of the Richard King Mellon Foundation, and we truly appreciate the foundation's ongoing support."

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