Welcome to the third edition of Directions, highlighting the Washburn University College of Arts and Sciences. I hope you are finding the publication to be an informative way of staying connected with your alma mater.

As you already know, Washburn is a special place, and Washburn graduates are particularly well prepared to take places of responsibility and to make a difference in the world. Here in the College of Arts and Sciences, we often find ourselves celebrating the remarkable contributions of our students, faculty, and alumni, who have made and are making the most of their Washburn education to accomplish great things.

The feature stories in this issue explore just a handful of the many, many wonderful people past and present who make Washburn unique. The achievements of physicist Brian Thomas and the effect his work has on students exemplify the efforts of a host of faculty members who take seriously the educational mission of the university and do everything they can to help their students flourish. The remarkable story of Art Fletcher, one of Washburn’s most outstanding graduates, reminds us of the vision and legacy of Washburn’s founders at Lincoln College. The story also points out that a solid education in the arts and sciences equals a flexible education that can be applied in a great many ways. Finally, we profile a range of graduates – recent and not-so-recent – who have used their Washburn education to contribute in sometimes surprising ways.

I hope you enjoy these stories and that you will join us in celebrating the transformational power of a Washburn education.

Sincerely,

Gordon McQuere, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences

To learn more about the College, visit www.washburn.edu/cas
“Prolific” is an apt way to describe Brian Thomas, assistant professor of physics and astronomy. He has appeared on the History Channel’s “Mega Disasters” program, spoken at an international science conference, and been widely published and quoted, including by Astrobiology Magazine and NewScientist.com. Now Thomas is the principal investigator of a NASA research grant titled “Astrophysical Ionizing Photon Events and Primary Productivity of Earth’s Oceans.”

The three-year, half-million dollar grant was awarded to Washburn in collaboration with the University of Kansas and the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center last spring. “The project is to study the effects on marine phytoplankton when the Earth receives a blast of radiation from supernovae and gamma-ray bursts,” Thomas said.

Phytoplankton – single-celled plants that form the base of the food chain in the oceans – produce half the world’s oxygen. Previous studies by Thomas and collaborators have shown that such organisms are likely to be hard-hit by ultraviolet light from the Sun after the Earth’s ozone layer gets depleted by radiation from the explosion of massive stars. The NASA project also will help illuminate how current ozone depletion, in places like over Antarctica, impact phytoplankton.

Students share in project’s ‘capital’
Involving students in a major research study seamlessly integrates research and teaching. Since Thomas joined the Washburn faculty in 2005, three students – two majoring in physics and one in biology – have worked with him on research in the relatively new field of astrobiology. “Once students understand the astrophysics of some of the events I study, I can tell them about what effects we’d see on the Earth – that always gets their attention,” Thomas said.

A research/teaching combination also allows students to take part in an endeavor with far-reaching implications. “Our students get to have their hands in a project that NASA sees as important enough to fund and which will produce published work that others will use to increase our knowledge,” Thomas said. “It’s also a way to broaden our students’ interaction with the larger community and make connections that will be valuable in the future.”

“Studying physics at Washburn is a great jumping-off point for any number of possible futures,” Thomas added. “Our students go to graduate school in physics and astronomy, to law school, and to work in engineering and other fields.” (For the unique path of a recent graduate, see box on next page.)

Reaching for the stars
Nadia May is one Washburn student taking advantage of the unique opportunities that Thomas’ research offers. May, who plans to graduate with a bachelor of science degree in physics in 2012, is assisting Thomas on the NASA project – and working toward becoming an astronaut.

“My participation in this research has really given me a sense of what it is like to work in the field of astrobiophysics,” May said. “The general relevance it has to a large variety of NASA missions past and present – and the broadening sense of the interconnectedness of the universe –

Above: Sophomore and aspiring astronaut Nadia May conducts astrobiophysics research with Brian Thomas, assistant professor of physics and astronomy. Thomas is lead investigator of a NASA grant studying the radiation effects of gamma-ray bursts and supernovae on phytoplankton.
are both great thrills for me.” Studying how astrophysical events may affect Earth processes also has inspired May to read as much relevant material as possible and plan her career thoughtfully.

“Dr. Thomas’ enthusiasm for his work and the energy he puts toward broadening others’ knowledge has inspired me to work at a more elevated place,” May added. “When you go to him with a question, you can expect an answer that meets you at your level of understanding, a link to a relevant source such as a book, magazine article, or paper he has just come across, plus a great discussion on the topic that leaves you motivated to learn and explore more.”

Scientific mixers
In addition to attending astrobiophysics seminars at KU with Thomas, May will present the results of her research with Thomas next spring at the Astrobiology Science Conference, a biennial meeting attended by hundreds of scientists, engineers, students, and educators. In February, May will learn about a new generation of space vehicles by going to the Next-Generation Suborbital Researchers Conference in Boulder, Colo. Although May is only a sophomore, she is already being recruited for graduate school, where she plans to pursue a doctoral degree in physics.

“As far as career prospects, Dr. Thomas has linked me to some really cool opportunities, such as the Ames Research Center [in California’s Silicon Valley], an internship for undergraduates and graduates wanting to gain work experience at NASA,” May said.

Pride and other payoffs
Brian Thomas has established an impressive career since graduating with a bachelor of science degree in physics from the University of the Pacific in Stockton, Calif., in 1999. Besides graduating summa cum laude, he was named that year’s outstanding physics graduate. Since then, Thomas has worked with the Institute for Particle Physics at the University of California at Santa Cruz. In 2005, Thomas received a Ph.D. in physics from KU.

Despite such accomplishments, Thomas said he is most proud of his record of getting students involved in interesting, real-world projects: “Seeing students learn, grow, and stretch beyond what they thought they could do is one of the most exciting parts of my work.”

Read more about Brian Thomas at www.washburn.edu/faculty/bthomas

Physics + Law = Passionate Combination
Not many physicists go on to law school. However, for Jake Peterson, BA Physics ’09, the unusual combination unites his two passions: the natural sciences and social sciences. Now the Washburn graduate is pursuing a law degree at Washington University in St. Louis and considering a career in intellectual property law, legal academia, or health law.

“The Washburn science faculty provided me with the technical know-how and conceptual understanding crucial to any scientifically oriented profession,” Peterson said. “And the incredible extracurricular activities I pursued at Washburn, including working as an intern at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment and the U.K. Parliament, certainly provided a unique perspective regarding the broader legal profession.”

Peterson’s science experience included assisting Brian Thomas with astrobiological research (see main story) – from acquiring financial backing to presenting research results in a professional academic setting. “Working with Dr. Thomas was a wonderful experience,” Peterson said. “He intellectually challenges without being overwhelming, his passion for his field is contagious, and he truly cares about the success of his students.”

Peterson also worked with Karen Camarda, associate professor of physics and astronomy, to establish the Washburn Physics and Engineering Club as an official student organization and served as a tutor for the physics department. “I was a ‘catch-all’ tutor, so I needed to be knowledgeable about a wide smattering of subject matter,” he said. “There were few activities I enjoyed more than helping an enthusiastic student grasp a new scientific concept.”

From Peterson’s point of view, very few academic institutions can offer students the access to career-shaping opportunities that Washburn provides. “I loved the time I spent at Washburn,” he added. “It opened career avenues I wouldn’t have thought possible and has truly prepared me to succeed in the professional world.”
Honoring 40th Anniversary of Affirmative Action and Its ‘Father’: Art Fletcher

Washburn recognizes 1950 graduate who got his political start on one of the few campuses that would accommodate a person of color with a growing family.

Arthur Fletcher, BA Political Science ’50, BA Sociology ’50, helped craft the phrase “A mind is a terrible thing to waste” at the United Negro College Fund. Another saying reflected Fletcher’s commitment to economic equality for minorities: “Social justice is nice, but I’ve got something in my pocket that can buy all the social justice I need.”

Mark Peterson, associate professor and department chair of political science, knows all about Fletcher’s illustrious career as a sports hero, community organizer, politician, and advisor to four presidents. Peterson, along with Bruce Mactavish, assistant professor of history, and Bob Beatty, associate professor of political science, recorded 11 hours of dialogue with Fletcher before his death in 2005. Now Peterson is writing a book about the man known as the “father of affirmative action” and who called attending Washburn “the best decision of my life.”

“Washburn, in its history, has always welcomed diversity and practiced the motivating ideals of affirmative action,” Peterson said. “Although the charter of Lincoln College – reflecting the abolitionist motivations of the Congregational Church – has long since lapsed, one likes to think that more than lip service continues to be paid to its ideals.”

Washburn’s open door
Fletcher was born in Phoenix in 1924, the son of a nurse and career military man. The family had settled at Fort Riley when Fletcher started high school, and the young man became the state’s first black All-State high school football player. After high school, Fletcher served in World War II until he was wounded in 1945. He was awarded the Purple Heart and went home to recuperate and pursue college under the G.I. Bill. However, in 1946, Fletcher was barred because of his color from playing college football in what was known as the Big Six Conference.

“After Fletcher discovered that – although he had a University of Indiana scholarship – no suitable housing would be available for his family on that campus, he found his way to Washburn,” Peterson said. At Washburn Fletcher became a standout football player and earned two degrees. “It was at Washburn that Fletcher discovered politics and formally became active in the Republican Party – the party of Lincoln.”

An early call to action
Through his research, Peterson learned that Fletcher experienced his first epiphany as a seventh grader, hearing civil rights pioneer Mary McLeod Bethune speak to schoolchildren of color in 1937. “Bethune spoke of the need for diligence, dignity, and dedication for young people as they advanced their own prospects and the prospects of the race of African-Americans,” Peterson said. “Fletcher felt that this was a calling.”

Fletcher got his introduction to party politics from Washburn student Price Woodard, who would become Wichita’s first black mayor. After graduating from Washburn, Fletcher played defensive end for the Los Angeles Rams and became the first African-American to play for the Baltimore Colts. Fletcher returned to Kansas and, in 1954, mobilized minority voters for Fred Hall’s gubernatorial campaign. Hall won the election and gave Fletcher a high-visibility job with the state highway department, where Fletcher learned about how government contracts were awarded.

Clockwise from top left: Art Fletcher (center) receives a Washburn Distinguished Service Award in 1970, along with Charles Barr and John W. Ripley. Fletcher’s senior picture in Washburn’s 1950 yearbook. Fletcher as a small college all-conference standout football player.
When Hall lost the primary for governor in 1956, Fletcher moved his family to California. He earned a teaching certificate, became an entrepreneur, and went to work for the Nixon/Lodge ticket in 1960. Five years later, Washington state officials recruited him to direct a community development effort in East Pasco. Fletcher’s success in the state led him to run for lieutenant governor of Washington in 1968.

“When Fletcher beat a widely known sports celebrity in the Republican primary to be the party’s nominee, the incumbent governor, Dan Evans, eagerly embraced him as a running mate, and the Nixon presidential election machine took notice,” Peterson said. Fletcher went on to lose the general election by a hair, but Gov. Evans hired him as a special assistant.

‘Father of affirmative action’

After Nixon won the 1968 election, Fletcher was offered the position of assistant secretary of Labor. “Fletcher countered that he would take the job if there was the potential to create economic opportunities for African-Americans,” Peterson said. “[Labor Secretary George Schultz and Fletcher] decided to move the Office of Federal Contract Compliance under the assistant secretary’s jurisdiction, and Fletcher had the job that launched his national prominence as ‘father of affirmative action.’ ” He now controlled the labor force composition in all construction contracts involving federal money of $500,000 or more.

In 1969, Fletcher received White House approval to revise what had been called the “Philadelphia Plan” in the Johnson administration. The plan required federal construction workers in Philadelphia to set goals for hiring minorities and to make a “good faith effort” to meet the goals or face sanctions. The plan became a model for affirmative action programs; it was later amended to include women. Although Nixon praised the plan in public, he worried that it alienated conservatives and, in 1971, asked Fletcher to resign. Fletcher would go on to become executive director of the United Negro College Fund in 1972.

“Fletcher would be in and out of government throughout the subsequent Ford, Reagan, and George H.W. Bush administrations, culminating in his tenure as chair and then commissioner of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights,” Peterson said. “Throughout those years, Fletcher served as a vigorous and voluble advocate of affirmative action, always prepared to defend it as a means to African-American economic advancement and social empowerment.” Fletcher died in Washington, D.C., on July 12, 2005, at the age of 80.

For a timeline of Washburn’s progressive history, see page 12

Assessing the Impact of Affirmative Action – and Art Fletcher’s Take on It

In September, constitutional law experts, historians, public policy scholars, and students gathered at Washburn for the conference “Affirmative Action: Requiem or Renaissance?” The event marked the 40th anniversary of the Philadelphia Plan, the first federal affirmative action employment program with quantifiable, enforceable goals.

In a lecture titled “Arthur Fletcher: What Would the ‘Father of Affirmative Action’ Think of His Child Today?” Mark Peterson, associate professor and department chair of political science, said he thought Fletcher – the man most visibly associated with affirmative action – would be “distressed” by the current realities of affirmative action. Peterson is writing a biography of the Washburn alumnus, who died in 2005. (For more on Fletcher, see main story.)

Although affirmative action has become the norm in corporate and public employment, in higher education and collegiate athletics, Peterson said, “there remains a disproportionate distribution of wealth and power in this country.” To make his case, Peterson pointed to the most recent U.S. census, which indicated that the median household income was $42,000 in 2000: “Non-Hispanic white households earned 108 percent of the national median, Latino families earned 80 percent, and African-American households, 70 percent.”

“While much has been made of a rising African-American middle class... among whites over 25 years of age, 27 percent had baccalaureate degrees or more education, while African-Americans saw only 14.3 percent of their adult population with baccalaureates or more advanced education,” Peterson said. Compared to non-Hispanic whites, he added, the rate of infant mortality among minorities is higher and longevity is lower. “And the current recession has clearly demonstrated that persons of color continue to disproportionately occupy the lowest-paying rungs of the socio-economic ladder, where ‘last hired, first fired’ remains the Darwinian rule.”

“While the new presidential administration speaks volumes about the distance a more diverse and integrated America has come,” Peterson said, “there can be little doubt that the disparities in opportunity and accomplishment that remain in American society bespeak the problems that affirmative action was meant to address. The persistent resistance to its full and successful implementation that is manifest in the ongoing controversy over AA also speaks to the deep cultural and racial biases that are stimulated when self-interested objectives are under threat.”
Exceptional Graduates, Extraordinary Journeys

Washburn University’s College of Arts and Sciences takes pride in preparing students for a lifetime of learning – and for the unexpected directions that life can take.

Some students come to Washburn knowing exactly what they want to do with their lives. Others find themselves pursuing unexpected paths and achieving in ways they never thought possible. Here, three graduates share their unique stories of finding fulfillment.

From Chem Lab…to New York Times…and Back to College
(Pamela G. Hollie)

Pamela G. Hollie, BA English ’70, has known many “firsts”: She was her parents’ first child, one of the first African-Americans to attend an all-white Topeka elementary school after the 1954 Brown v. Board decision, and the first black female foreign correspondent for the New York Times.

“I’ve had a very unusual career track,” Hollie said. “When I was in journalism, there were few women focusing on Asia or writing financial news. What I hope is true – and what is sometimes validated – is that I can demonstrate to students with similar aspirations that there is a viable and interesting path to success.”

Originally, Hollie set out to be a doctor. “When I was a child, I looked around at the women I knew and realized there were few options: a teacher or a nurse,” she said. “I didn’t want those careers, so I thought, ‘What would be a cool thing to do?’” In 1966, just months after Topeka’s devastating tornado, Hollie began taking science courses at Washburn.

“I did lousy in chemistry,” Hollie said. “I fell into journalism, because one day my mother said I was becoming boring – I spent all of my time in the lab and had holes in my clothes from the acid. So I took a journalism course and found that I really liked asking questions.” She decided to switch her major to English.

‘Pretty good’ journalist lands big one
Hollie enjoyed campus life as a Washburn Belle, a member of AKA sorority, and serving as president of Washburn’s student council. Her passion for journalism eventually propelled her to become editor-in-chief of The Washburn Review.

“I was a junior at Washburn when Dorothy Greer [faculty advisor to The Review] said, ‘You’re pretty good at this’ and encouraged me to apply for a fellowship with the [Dow Jones] Newspaper Fund,” Hollie said. She won a fellowship and spent the summer after her junior year with the Wall Street Journal in Boston. The following summer the Journal offered Hollie another internship, this time in Los Angeles.

In 1971, the one-time Washburn homecoming queen candidate earned a master’s degree at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism in New York. Hollie then went to work at the Wall Street Journal in Philadelphia, transferring to the New York City office later on. “By the time I was about 25,” she said, “I had worked at four bureaus of the Wall Street Journal.”

A career transformation
After several years at the Journal, Hollie won a Gannett Journalism Fellowship, which allowed her to study Asian history, politics, and language for a year at the University of Hawaii. After her fellowship, she joined the New York Times as a financial writer and was quickly named a national correspondent in Los Angeles.

In 1980, Hollie became a foreign correspondent in Asia, reporting on the economic and political development in 42 countries. Reporting on issues of social turmoil and economic inequality and mismanagement prompted

Clockwise from top right: 1970 alumna Pamela G. Hollie is now senior philanthropic advisor at Kenyon College. Jeff Sanders, an M.D./Ph.D., studies the brain and helps patients in San Diego. Alumnus Kelly White (left) and his wife volunteer in San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua, last summer.
Hollie to change careers when she was 40 years old, from journalism to nonprofit work. “I saw many of the things that were wrong in the world, and I wanted to have a hand in improving conditions,” she said. In the 1990s, Hollie decided to spend the rest of her career focusing on doing good.

Hollie found one of her most fulfilling jobs at The Asia Foundation in the Philippines. Later, for The Nature Conservancy, she helped to promote environmental projects in Asia. During this time, Hollie also served on the United Nation’s Economic and Social Council. Then in 2003, Hollie was awarded a Fulbright to teach nonprofit management at Charles University in Prague, the Czech Republic.

On campus again
Today, Hollie is senior philanthropic advisor at Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio. “Being on a college campus is invigorating,” she said. Hollie travels about half the year, talking with Kenyon’s alumni and friends about “investing” in education, adding, “Philanthropy is an intellectual exercise that requires vision and planning.”

Hollie practices what she preaches. In the 1980s, one of her first large investments was in Washburn. She endowed the Pamela G. Hollie Scholarship for Journalism Excellence. (For details, see the box on page 9.) She also has served on the board of the Washburn Alumni Association and is a Washburn Endowment Association trustee.

What’s more, Hollie returned to Washburn for a semester as a visiting professor in 2003. With support from The Kiplinger Foundation in Washington, D.C., Hollie taught a course on civil society and the nonprofit world.

When asked about Washburn’s influence on her life, Hollie credits the university for “selecting” her career path: “That one course in journalism, one day a week, led to a career of intellectual engagement with the world and a passionate drive to be part of positive change.”

“Washburn had an enormous impact on my future career plan,” Sanders said. “I had outstanding teachers and an incredible amount of support from them, especially Ron Ash in biology, Janice Barton in chemistry, and Laura Stephenson in psychology.”

Sanders went on to the joint M.D./Ph.D. program at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) in Omaha. He received a Ph.D. in pharmacology in 2003; his dissertation focused on the role of norepinephrine [a neurotransmitter] in brain development. Two years later, Sanders received his M.D. at UNMC and began a psychiatry research residency at the University of California at San Diego. He is in his fourth year and is a chief resident. He is currently studying memory formation using transgenic mice at The Scripps Research Institute.

Today, Sanders has the “very serious responsibility” of treating psychiatric patients but in the context of his own continuing education training. He spends one day a week at the VA in La Jolla, Calif., providing one-on-one medication management to patients with bipolar disorder, post traumatic stress disorder, and schizophrenia.

The rest of the time Sanders employs what are known as doxycycline-
regulated transgenic systems to map and manipulate neural networks subserving memory formation. These sophisticated genetic systems allow researchers to map brain cells with fluorescent proteins.

“In my graduate studies I became interested in the role of norepinephrine on brain development – there are important implications for treating developing minds with psychotropic drugs,” Sanders said. Last year he won an American Psychiatric Association/Lilly Outstanding Resident Research Award for a paper titled “Neonatal Norepinephrine Effects on Immediate Early Gene Expression in Developing and Adult Brain.”

New art – and beach living
Through years of rigorous coursework and training, Sanders has found solace in art. “I painted all through medical and graduate school,” he said, adding that he continues to paint but has a new love: multimedia art inspired by his work with psychiatric patients.

“As a psychiatry resident, I got interested in art as a means to express emotional suffering,” Sanders said. He creates multimedia compositions that transcend the traditional (like the example on page 7): “This is part of a large mural titled ‘Missing You.’ It consists of a crucifix that has been meticulously made from several triangles cut out of a transparent curtain. The crucifix shrouds an underlying painting of Mary, and you can see her praying from within. This image is meant to explore the pain of loss, such as Mary experienced with the death of Jesus.”

Surfing is another pursuit that keeps Sanders balanced. “I’d like to stay in southern California and advance in surfing,” he said. Sanders added that in another 10 years he’d be happy to still be seeing patients and studying how the brain stores memory: “I’m living on the beach and pondering the mysteries of human consciousness – it’s a dream come true.”

“I’m living on the beach and pondering the mysteries of human consciousness – it’s a dream come true.”
-Jeff Sanders

Today, this world traveler is content to stay home (most of the year) and teach high school Spanish for the North Jackson school district near Holton and provide ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) instruction. White also takes great pride in helping to start the Centro Comunitario Latino de Holton (Latino Community Center of Holton) – an endeavor that blends his love of Latino culture and his passion for cultural understanding.

Drawn to help, drawn to drums
After graduating from Hesston High School in 1990, White went to Hesston College and Hutchinson Community College to complete a paramedic program. For two years, he worked for Wichita/Sedgwick County Emergency Medical Services before returning to his first love – music. “In 1994 I moved to Topeka, accepted the Payless ShoeSource jazz scholarship, and began work on my music degree at Washburn,” he said.

Before graduation, however, wanderlust compelled White to leave Washburn to play drums with Royal Caribbean International cruise lines and work as a freelance drummer and private music instructor in Kansas City. “During my time as a professional musician, I continued taking classes part-time at K-State and Penn Valley Community College,” White said. In 1999, he decided to return to Washburn to finish his music degree and begin pursuing a degree in education.

Once White got back into the swing of things at Washburn, he finished two degrees quickly: a music degree in 2001 and an education degree in 2002. “I then taught second grade in Monterrey, Mexico, for a year,” he said.

The next two years, White taught sixth grade in the Seaman district, followed by two years teaching for the South Central Kansas Education Service Center’s adult diploma completion program and online elementary school programs. “During this time, I returned to Washburn part-time and finished my Spanish degree this past June,” he said.

A common cultural theme
Despite a diverse work history, White has been interested in Spanish and the Latino culture since his high school Spanish classes. “My interest was sparked while working on cruise ships and meeting many Spanish-speakers,” he added. “And I completely fell in love with the culture while
living and working in Mexico during the 2002-2003 school year.” Two years ago, White completed a study abroad program in Puebla, Mexico, through Washburn’s modern languages department.

“As a non-traditional student, I never felt out of place at Washburn and was always accepted and encouraged,” White said. “I especially appreciated the advice and encouragement of Dr. González-Abellás in the modern languages department, and I greatly appreciated the opportunity to study abroad. I developed a much deeper understanding of not only the Spanish language but of the history and culture of Spanish-speaking peoples around the world.”

**Latino culture in rural Kansas**

White puts that cultural understanding to good use in his current profession as a teacher, ESOL instructor, and community outreach coordinator in Holton. In addition to serving on Jackson Heights’ Student Improvement Team and leading a Spanish Club, White spends 15 to 20 hours a week at the Centro Comunitario Latino de Holton, working with the center’s sponsor – Evangel United Methodist Church – to coordinate services that support the town’s growing Latino population. The center, which opened in 2008, hosts family movie nights and language exchanges and houses a food pantry and used children’s clothing exchange.

“I really love the work I do at both Jackson Heights and the Centro Comunitario Latino,” White said, adding that he enjoys being around students, who keep him excited about learning. “In both jobs, I love that in addition to teaching language, I can encourage cultural awareness, acceptance of diversity, and general open-mindedness within a typically rural, homogenous setting. For the sake of my community and my sons’, I hope that I’m not only teaching language but also promoting a positive and accepting world view in northeast Kansas.”

Another perk of this paramedic-turned-traveling-musician-turned-Spanish-teacher: White has some free time during the summer to travel and volunteer. For example, last summer White and his family spent five weeks in San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua, teaching English and working for a mobile library program.

“My proudest accomplishment has been helping to develop the Centro Comunitario Latino de Holton,” White said. “The project has allowed me to pursue a lot of personal interests and directly affect people who are sometimes ‘invisible’ and a bit neglected in rural communities.”

*For more on the Centro Comunitario Latino de Holton, visit www.holtonks.net/centrolatino*

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**Journalist Considers Advocacy Role**

In high school, ReAnne Utemark, *BA History ’09*, thought she’d be a novelist first and a journalist second. Now this Parsons, Kan., native – who graduated summa cum laude and with university honors last spring – plans to make journalism a principal part of her career.

“I’d like to work as an advocate for journalists, specifically student journalists, on issues of libel, access, and dealing with [college] administration,” said Utemark, now a Washburn law student. When student journalists run into issues of free expression, she added, “Sometimes a big question for students is, ‘OK, we’ve messed up, now what do we do?’ I’d like to help them understand what to do so they don’t make those mistakes in the first place. It’s so important that student journalists are encouraged and cultivated so that they have the desire to go on.”

As a staff member of *The Washburn Review*, Utemark’s enthusiasm for journalism flourished. When she became editor-in-chief of the newspaper as a junior, Utemark was awarded the Pamela G. Hollie Scholarship for Journalism Excellence. Hollie, a 1970 graduate, created the endowed fund to send promising journalists to college journalism conferences.

“I’m really excited that [Hollie] supports journalism, especially college journalism,” Utemark said. “I think it’s one of the more important forms of journalism, because it’s not tainted by the business model.”

(For more on Hollie, see page 6.)

The journalism conferences enabled Utemark to meet other student journalists and advisors and connect with organizations that help student journalists. “It was fun to interact with other ‘journalism nerds’ who want [college journalism] to succeed and to learn everything from the latest trends in online journalism to student media law,” she said. “I came from a single-parent household, so scholarships have been absolutely vital to me.”

Although Utemark doesn’t yet know if she’ll become an attorney, journalism advocate, or both, she does know that her education at Washburn shaped her career path. “I never really understood the purpose of journalism until I went to Washburn and studied media theory, the history of journalism, and the first amendment as a whole,” said Utemark, who blended a degree in history with a minor in mass media. “My history and mass media professors helped to foster that understanding, and I learned that journalists need other advocates.”

“I haven’t decided if I’m going to be a professor, or a lobbyist, or work for an organization that advocates for student free-press rights,” Utemark said. “Either way, I want to continue studying, learning, and speaking out for journalists and the vital role that the ‘fourth estate’ can play.”
The Art Department teamed up with the Theatre Department to send students to London for 12 days as part of “Art and Theatre in London.” Eighteen graduating fine arts majors presented their senior exhibitions in 2009. The Washburn Art Students Association represented the university at the Aaron Douglas Art Fair in September. Catron Professor of Art Stephanie Lanter wrote an article about artist Lorna Meaden, which recently was published by Ceramics Monthly magazine.

Associate professor John Mullican is the new chair of the Biology Department. Professor Lee Boyd spent her yearlong sabbatical writing, performing research, and publishing several manuscripts. Clint Gates, a pre-med student in the department, spent part of his summer at Washington State University researching wheat genetics with assistant professor Matt Arterburn. Recent biology and biochemistry graduate Tyler Goetz is in his first year at Harvard Medical School.

The Chemistry Department welcomes assistant professor and biochemist Lisa Sharpe Elles. Professor emeritus Janice Barton remains at Washburn, coordinating the biomedical research grant, KINBRE, and pursuing research with students. Washburn’s new Stoffer Science Hall hosted the 141st Annual Meeting of the Kansas Academy of Science last spring. Washburn science students received four of the six awards presented for undergraduate research in Kansas universities. Senior biochemistry major Scott Ashley (below, second from right) was awarded a $10,000 scholarship for his biomedical research.

The Communication Department thanked Meredith Moore, professor and now professor emeritus, for more than 30 years of service to Washburn. Laura Stephenson, associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, was named interim chair of the department; assistant professor Tracy Routsong has been named associate chair. Washburn’s nationally ranked debate team experienced another remarkable year. Leslie Reynard, assistant professor, received a grant to study civil war documents in Savannah, Ga.

The Computer Information Sciences Department is now integrating several robotics labs in the introductory programming course and a special topics course on robotics. First-year computer science students will be introduced to a programmable tabletop robotics device, a delivery platform developed by the Institute for Personal Robots in Education.

The Education Department hired lecturer Denise Salsbury as its field placement coordinator. She is also teaching an introductory education course and the student-teaching seminar. The department, in collaboration with KTWU-TV and the Curriculum Resources Center at Washburn University, hosted a Watch and Talk Party using the KTWU broadcast of “Reading, Writing and a Worthwhile Education for Kansas Kids.”


In May, the Health, Physical Education and Exercise Science Department traveled to Europe with 24 students for a course called “Sports Traditions and Cultural History of Europe.” Assistant professor Ross Friesen and associate professor Roy Wohl taught the class with associate professor of history Alan Bearman. Students studied the people, geography, and culture of sports in England and France with visits to such sites as the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club at Wimbledon, Lord’s Cricket Ground, and Roland Garros Tennis Stadium – site of the French Open tournament.
Phil Alpha Theta, the History Department’s honor society, has continued its tradition of presenting numerous academic presentations. In October, Brandeis University’s Paula Doress-Worters presented on the life and letters of Ernestine Rose, a pioneer of the 19th century women’s rights movement. Students in instructor Tony Silvestri’s “Medieval European Civilization” class worked with authentic historic materials to create illuminated letters, decorative images used to enhance the pages of manuscripts.

Kathy Menzie has been granted tenure, promoted to associate professor, and named interim chair of the Mass Media Department. Professor Frank Chorba was recognized for his 25 years of service to Washburn. Last spring, 10 mass media students traveled to Germany to study social media and public relations at Zeppelin University.

The Mathematics and Statistics Department announces the retirement of three longtime faculty members: former department chair Larry Blumberg, 42 years; Richard Driver, 38 years; and Ken Ohm, 50 years. Ohm will release his first novel following two successful autobiographies about his growing-up years on Flint Hills farms.

Miguel González-Abellás, chair of the Modern Languages Department, was promoted to professor. Lecturer Georgina Tenny will take students to Peru during winter break and assistant professors Sophie Delahaye and Karen Díaz Reátegui are planning summer trips with students to Paris and Spain, respectively.

In February, music director/conductor Norman Gamboa of the Music Department directed the Washburn University Orchestra as it accompanied the rock group Kansas during the band’s 35th anniversary concert. Gamboa conducted Leyla Zamora, bassoonist with San Diego Symphony, at the Washburn Symphony Orchestra concert in November. Steven Elisha, cello/bass, and Larisa Elisha, violin, received a Grammy award nomination for their CD “Elaris Duo.” Associate professor of voice Lee Snook wrote, produced, and performed in “Opera in a Trunk.” James Rivers, professor of piano and Artist in Residence, received the 2009 Governor’s Arts Award in the Artist category.

The Philosophy and Religious Studies Department welcomed the Rev. Peter J. Gomes as the Thomas L. King Lecture in Religious Studies. Gomes is Plummer Professor of Christian Morals at Harvard Divinity School and Pusey Minister in the Memorial Church at Harvard.

The Physics and Astronomy Department welcomes Tambra Eifert, geology lecturer, and Mark Smith, astronomy lecturer. Smith, a Washburn alumnus, also is coordinator of the observatory and planetarium. A finalist for the Sibberson Award, physics major Jacob Peterson is now a law student at Washington University.

The Political Science Department helped place its sixth student in an internship with the British Parliament. Associate professor Bob Beatty continues to place several students into Clyde Hill Legislative Intern Scholarships each semester. Past interns have gone on to a variety of careers, including serving as senior aides for U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, as assistant city managers, and in executive-branch positions within the state.

The Psychology Department reports that associate professor Mike Russell took two students to the Auditory Perception, Cognition, and Action Meeting in Boston in November. Eight undergraduate students presented research projects at the Great Plains Student Psychology Conference in Kearney, Neb. Associate professor Michael McGuire has been appointed Dean of University Honors Program at Washburn. Under the direction of associate professor Cindy Turk, Melissa Linquist and Katie Zogelman presented their undergraduate honors thesis projects at the Southwestern Psychological Association annual conference. Linquist’s project – “The Effect of Clay or a Rubik’s Cube on Anxiety” – won first place in the undergraduate research paper competition.

The Sociology and Anthropology Department continues to develop its archaeology studies, under the direction of Margaret Wood, associate professor of anthropology. Currently, the thriving department boasts 110 majors and has added biological anthropologist Mary Sundal.

In September, the Theatre Department performed “Rabbit Hole” by David Lindsay-Abaire, a play about a family trying to find peace after the death of their 4-year-old son. Senior Shanna Carlson (on right in adjacent photo) played the role of Becca, the grieving mother, and junior Heather Prescott played Izzy, her sister. The father, Howie, was played by senior Jason Bivens. Penny Weiner, assistant professor, directed the play.
1865
Lincoln College founded by Congregational Church, which favors abolition of slavery.

1865-1866
Lincoln College employs first female faculty member: Minnie V. Otis, teacher of French, music, drawing, and painting.

1866
Classes begin and first black student attends classes at Lincoln College. Numbers of male and female students are about equal.

1868
First student graduates with college degree. Lincoln College renamed Washburn College.

1882
First women from Washburn: Cora Kirby (above) and Mary Sherrill.

1900
Lumina C. Riddle teaches botany and math for one year at Washburn and then again in 1903-1904.

1903
Walter W. Caldwell, a star halfback and student at Washburn’s medical school, helps Washburn football squad become Missouri Valley Champions.

1904
Washburn’s women’s basketball team defeats Haskell Institute to win Kansas women’s championship.**

1903
Washburn Law School opens and admits three women on the first day.*

1902-1903
Kansas Medical College in downtown Topeka merges with Washburn and admits women and people of color.

1905
Mamie L. Williams graduates from Washburn, receives departmental honors in mathematics. Washburn presented her with the Distinguished Service Award in 1975, the Monroe Award in 1979, and an honorary doctorate in 1982.

1903-1904
Star athlete Arthur W. Hardy, who plays baseball and football for Washburn, pitches for the all-black Topeka Giants baseball team to finance college.

1906
Elisha Scott, who as a black attorney would go on to argue many civil rights cases, graduates from Washburn Law School. His sons, John and Charles – also Washburn Law School graduates – would later serve as co-counsel in the Brown v. Topeka Board of Education case.

1910-1914
Georgia Neese Gray receives bachelor's degree; becomes first woman U.S. Treasurer (1949-1953) and first woman to chair Washburn Board of Regents.

1921
Lucy Dougherty graduates from Washburn; teaches mathematics, 1896-1902, and was a librarian and registrar.

*By comparison, Columbia Law School in New York – founded in 1858 – didn’t admit women until 1927. ** The Washburn team played intercollegiately for a few years but was then forbidden by faculty to play at other schools. Intercollegiate women’s sports didn’t appear again until the late 1960s.
To commemorate the 40th anniversary of affirmative action, the College of Arts and Sciences reviews the welcoming heritage of Lincoln College/Washburn University with this timeline of notable “firsts.”

1941
Topeka citizens vote to establish Washburn as a municipal university.

1943
Carl T. Rowan is assigned to Washburn as one of first 15 black men in Navy history to be admitted to the V-12 officer-training program.

1941
Arthur Fletcher, who would become known as “father of affirmative action,” graduates from Washburn. (See story on page 4.)

1950
Brown v. Board of Education case decided by U.S. Supreme Court. Original case in Topeka was argued by Elisha Scott, his sons John and Charles, and Charles Bledsoe, all Washburn graduates.

1954
Billie Moore graduates from Washburn; becomes coach for 1977 Silver Medal Women’s Olympic Basketball Team, the first U.S. women’s team qualified to be in the Olympics.

1966
Pamela G. Hollie graduates from Washburn and goes on to report for the Wall Street Journal and New York Times, then later works for The Asia Foundation in the Philippines. (See story on page 6.)

1970
Joan Finney graduates from Washburn; becomes Kansas’ first woman governor, 1991-1995.

1982
Washburn creates Minority Affairs Office on campus. In 1989, the name changes to Multicultural Affairs Office.

1981
Washburn launches the Diversity Matters Seminars and the Diversity Initiative to foster a culture that promotes and celebrates diversity.

1999

2009
Washburn relaunches Ally/Safe Zone program to provide a safe haven and support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered people.

Washburn University: Progressive Since 1865

Timeline credit: Martha Imparato, Mabee Library Archives.