Portland State Magazine

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Local talent
Passionate alumni are making a difference / 10
LET KNOWLEDGE SERVE OUR YOUTH

SPEECH AND HEARING sciences major Chelsea Oostman (right) helps youngsters with disabilities explore their sense of adventure and empowerment as a counselor at Mt. Hood Kiwanis Camp. At Portland State, we believe knowledge works best when it serves the community.
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ON THE COVER Alumni Michelle and Ben Medler started the Portland Youth Jazz Orchestra 15 years ago. Read about them and other alumni starting on page 10. Photo by Edis Jurcys.
PORTLAND STATE has deep roots in the metro area we serve. We partner with hundreds of businesses, organizations, schools and governments. Nearly 100,000 of our alumni live, work and raise families here.

We are featuring some of those alumni in this issue, along with groundbreaking research by our faculty and the amazing achievements of our students. They are part of PSU’s significant—and rising—local impact, and we’re proud to share their stories.

The University and the region face a formidable challenge, however, as the cost of a college education continues to escalate as state support shrinks. Students we rely on to be our next generation of leaders and innovators are in danger of racking up high levels of debt that could limit their future choices. Many are being priced out of college altogether.

That is why the PSU Board of Trustees unanimously endorsed a resolution to push for college affordability on several fronts. Those include continued efforts in Salem to boost state funding, a comprehensive philanthropic campaign and exploration of a metro-area ballot measure that would ask voters in November to consider a tax paid by businesses. Increased revenue would pay for scholarships and other student support at PSU, such as new advisers and faculty, and would increase the opportunity for low-income and underrepresented students in our area to get a college degree.

THE NEED for greater college affordability is clear: 70 percent of our students receive financial aid—much of it in the form of loans. Total unmet need for undergraduates who qualify for financial aid is an astonishing $150 million. At the same time, Oregon employers are calling on PSU to produce more skilled graduates to grow their businesses and the local economy.

Working together, as a university and a community, we can make it possible for more of our neediest students to get a college degree, launch their career and—who knows?—someday end up in the pages of this magazine.

Wim Wiewel
PRESIDENT, PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY

Making college affordable
New strategic plan focuses on student success.

WRITTEN BY HARRY ESTEVE

PORTLAND STATE’S Board of Trustees has approved a new strategic plan for PSU that “puts students first” and places a greater emphasis on equity and diversity.

The document, more than a year in the making, is meant to guide the University into the next decade by addressing rapid changes in higher education, demographic shifts and new PSU priorities.

“This plan puts us in a position to thrive as an academic and economic leader,” President Wim Wiewel says. “A lot of work went into it, and that work is going to pay off as we move forward.”

The plan was developed by a group of about 30 faculty, staff, students, alumni and other members of the campus community. About 100 more participated in committees that developed language for the goals and initiatives. Hundreds more took part in town halls meetings and social events to give feedback.

“I’ve worked on a lot of strategic plans,” says Stephen Percy, dean of the College of Urban and Public Affairs and chair of the main planning committee. “But I’ve never seen this level of participation by a campus.”

THE DOCUMENT outlines five “strategic goals” for the University to strive for over the next five years: elevate student success, advance excellence in teaching and research, extend PSU’s leadership in community engagement, expand PSU’s commitment to equity, and innovate for long-term financial stability.

Each of the goals is backed by a number of action-oriented initiatives, ranging from creating more “flexible degrees” to developing new, sustainable sources of revenue. Key components of the plan call for improving student support as a way of increasing retention and graduation rates, and for greater diversity among the faculty and staff.

Other initiatives call for building on Portland State’s reputation as a national model for urban universities that work closely with community partners; doing more to recognize outstanding teaching and research; and creating a comprehensive emergency management plan in the case of a natural disaster.

Wiewel says he is pleased by the additional weight given to students and equity.

“The planners recognized our future depends on ensuring an excellent, state-of-the-art education for an increasingly diverse student population,” he says.

The team that developed the plan also redrafted PSU’s vision statement, which now reads: “Portland State University leads the way to an equitable and sustainable future through academic excellence, urban engagement, and expanding opportunity for all.”

Harry Esteve is a staff member in the PSU Office of University Communications.
Shoring up for climate change

INTENSE SNOWFALL, flooding, tornados and other extreme weather events are becoming increasingly common as a result of our changing climate. How can urban areas become more resilient? Portland State is part of a $12 million international research project that will help cities analyze their infrastructures to make them more adaptable in the face of extreme weather. The PSU researchers—urban planning, geography and environmental scientists—will collaborate with Portland officials during the five-year project, which includes eight other cities in North and South America, 25 institutions and 70 collaborators. The National Science Foundation is funding the project. Photo by Don Schwartz.

Better late than never

TWO BOOKS borrowed from the Portland State Library were returned this fall 52 years late. The books were left in a book drop with a rubber band around them and a note saying: "'Borrowed' these books around 1963 for my high school speech class. They have moved with me many times. It is now time for them [to] go back home. Outdated—yes—but I'll let you decide their fate now." Librarian Joan Petit doesn't know who had the books—records don't go back that far—or why they were returned. But, she said, "If it were me, the guilt would have been relieved by returning them."
Where are the voters?

OLDER CITIZENS have more clout in mayoral elections because they actually vote when many young people don’t—a situation that should serve as a loud wake-up call for citizens of all ages, says Phil Keisling, former Oregon Secretary of State and now director of PSU’s Center for Public Service. Keisling and colleague Jason Jurjevich’s study, “Who Votes for America’s Mayors?” found that people 65 and older are 10 to 20 times more likely to cast ballots in mayoral elections than 18- to 34-year-olds. The study was conducted in the cities of Portland; Detroit; Charlotte, N.C.; and St. Paul, Minn. With the turnout for mayoral contests “utterly abysmal” among all ages, says Keisling, “we need to work together to better engage our entire urban communities in the democratic process.”

Carving out a tradition

TIEM CLEMENT is sharing his culture in the way he knows best by building a 25-foot outrigger canoe—a proud craft that Marshall Islanders once excelled at sailing on the Pacific Ocean. From September through December, volunteers joined Clement as he carved the canoe from sequoia logs on the west side of campus at 10th and Montgomery. The Outrigger Canoe Project was a partnership between the nonprofit Living Islands and Portland State, and included community events to raise awareness of the almost 7,000 Marshallese and Marshallese descendents living in the Pacific Northwest. The canoe needs a few finishing touches before being put on display on campus sometime this spring. Photo by David A. Anderson.
Former president passes away

GREGORY B. WOLFE, who helped Portland State become a university in 1969 and award its first doctorate in 1972, passed away on Dec. 12 in Florida. He was 93. During his presidency from 1968 to 1974, PSU and the country experienced violent antiwar demonstrations. Wolfe was known as “a tireless (and within the University community, an almost completely successful) advocate of peace and the rational settlement of controversy,” wrote the late history professor Gordon Dodds in *The College That Could Not Die*. Wolfe went on become president of Florida International University, Miami, where he guided its transition from a two-year school to a full four-year university.

Vaping study expands

ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES took a hit last year, when three Portland State researchers linked vaping with high levels of cancer-causing formaldehyde. Their study, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, stirred controversy as it went viral. Chemistry professors James Pankow, David Peyton and Robert Strongin tested a common e-cigarette model and a particular e-liquid. A new $3.5 million grant from the National Institutes of Health will substantially expand their study. “Our goal is to better understand the processes that may create toxic chemicals during vaping and find ways to minimize them,” says Strongin.
Business School transformation

THIS FALL, the School of Business Administration looked more like a parking garage than a place of learning. Outside walls were stripped for a $60 million renovation and expansion that will result in a tripling of the old space, including new classrooms, study rooms and a five-story atrium. The new facility will be a hub for business leaders who visit campus, as well as recruiters looking to hire PSU graduates. The building is also getting a new name, the Karl Miller Center, in remembrance of the grandfather of business alumnus and donor Rick Miller. He and his wife, Erika, donated $9 million to the project, which is scheduled for completion in 2017.

The ultimate in ‘bike friendly’

EASY TO PARK, fast in a traffic jam and requiring no fossil fuels, bicycles are the preferred mode of transportation to campus for about 3,000 students, staff and faculty. And as host, the University couldn’t be more welcoming. Portland State offers bike garages, 11 repair stands, low-cost bike rentals and an all-encompassing Bike Hub facility. The many bicycle amenities and decent ridership numbers have earned PSU a Platinum Level rating from the League of American Bicyclists. Portland State is the only university in Oregon and one of only five in the United States with this designation. The other four platinum winners are Stanford; University of California, Davis; Colorado State University; and University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. ■
Singing a Strauss classic

LUSH COSTUMES and the high-spirited music of 19th-century Vienna are just some of the charms of the Johann Strauss operetta Die Fledermaus, playing in Lincoln Performance Hall April 22 through May 1. The brisk comedy is full of jokes, puns, false personas and boudoir intrigue. Opera students, accompanied by the PSU Symphony Orchestra, will perform an English translation of the opera. Artistic director for Die Fledermaus is Christine Meadows ’83, director of opera at PSU.

Winning a carnatic music competition

THE PERCUSSIONIST called and the singers answered in a winning performance of Indian classical music by Portland State Chamber Choir students and Shiva Bharadwaj, a high school junior from Oregon Episcopal School. They performed at a Hindu temple in Delaware for the North American finals of a global contest sponsored by Sri Sankara TV. The television network was looking for the best young singers and musicians of Indian Carnatic music. PSU choir director Ethan Sperry led the students to victory in the group performance category, singing and drumming two original compositions by Bharadwaj and Sperry. Their music was broadcast worldwide on Sankara TV in December, the first time that an American choir has appeared on Indian TV, according to the show’s producers.
Professor’s life as art

AT PORTLAND STATE, Frank Wesley is best known for his 50-year tenure as a psychology professor, but in a new documentary by Portland filmmaker David Bee, Wesley is shown in a much different light. Frank’s Song tells the story of Wesley’s life from his history as a Holocaust survivor and World War II veteran to his teaching career at PSU and the taking up of jazz saxophone at age 70. Wesley is now 97. He and Bee first bonded over jazz and grew close during the four years they worked together on the documentary, which is now showing locally and is being prepared for film festivals and an as-yet unscheduled showing at PSU in 2016.

Mini art curators

PORTLAND’S newest art museum is a bit different than you’d expect—it’s located in the halls of King School, a public K-8 school in Northeast Portland. The King School Museum of Contemporary Art is a collaborative effort between King and Portland State School of Art + Design students and faculty. Its inaugural exhibit last May, titled “Postcards from America” (pictured here), taught the King students about museum practices and careers as the students curated, installed and promoted the exhibit. The postcards exhibit—photos of American cities by the world-renowned Magnum Photo Agency—remains on display along with three new exhibits that King and PSU students worked on together. The exhibits are open to the public by contacting ksmoca@gmail.com.

New Works

WESTPORT OREGON: HOME OF THE BIG STICKS AND GOLD MEDAL SALMON
By Jim Aalberg ’72, Clatsop County Historical Society, 2015

SUSTAINABLE FINANCIAL INVESTMENTS
By Brian Bolton (business faculty), Palgrave Macmillan, 2015

RYME TIME FOR THE FOOLISH & COOLISH
By Devon Brooke Clasen ’02, 2015

WRITE THEM DOWN
Music CD by George Colligan (jazz faculty), RMI Records, 2015

THE TERRITORY
Music CD by Darrell Grant (jazz faculty), PJCE Records, 2015

BROKEN HOMES & GARDENS
By Rebecca Kelley MA ’03, Blank Slate Press, 2015

BETWEEN HEARTBEATS
By Donelle Knudsen ’71, Booktrope, 2015

PURE ACT: THE UNCOMMON LIFE OF ROBERT LAX
By Michael McGregor (English faculty), Fordham University Press, 2015

WHAT MAKES AN ALWAYS
By Jessica Tyner Mehta ’05, MS ’07, Tayen Lane Publishing, 2015

A CUP WITH RUMI: POETRY
By Flamur Vehapi MA ’13, Al-Albani Publishers, 2015
“We have always hired a diverse workforce,” says Hermann Colas, Jr., ’77. “We do it because that’s how I set the company to be.”

The company is Colas Construction, which Hermann Colas founded in 1997. His company’s commitment to diversity doesn’t stop with hiring practices. Colas Construction also looks to the future of its industry by participating in service programs in the community. One such program is at Roosevelt High School in north Portland, where students get to visit active construction projects. The students see a diverse workforce excelling in careers that the students may not have considered.

“At times the students are inspired by the stories of my company and its mission in our community.”

Colas, who grew up in Haiti, remembers when he arrived in Portland to attend PSU in the mid-’70s, and the campus was brimming with international students. He loved the mix of cultures in downtown Portland.

“The international community—it was so important to me. And being at PSU, I was able to do what I needed to develop myself as a person. It helped me understand how the world was changing.”

Colas has seen an immense amount of change since his college days. He went to work for Pacific Northwest Bell straight out of PSU, eventually holding various positions with US WEST. However, having been raised in an entrepreneurial family—it owned the second largest rum distillery in Haiti, Rum Marie Colas—he was always looking for an opportunity to start his own firm. A stint as general contractor for the building of his own home showed him a new direction.

Today Colas Construction concentrates on commercial construction, including renovations, tenant improvements, mixed-use buildings and higher education. All three of his children work for the company, and he feels gratified that it is now being managed by a second generation. His legacy is assured.
Keeping Hillsboro’s small town flavor while absorbing growth is a goal that Colin Cooper Murp ’99 takes seriously.

Cooper is director of planning for Hillsboro, a city that has seen its population increase by more than 6 percent in the past five years compared to the state’s growth of 4.6 percent in the same time period.

Most of the expansion is due to the influx of employees from the surrounding high-tech companies. Projects such as the proposed AmberGlen Community, led by Cooper, will answer these new citizens’ call for big town amenities in a hometown atmosphere. The plan reimagines a typical suburban business park into a vibrant neighborhood with office, retail and housing surrounding a large central park.

AmberGlen is a good example of the kind of private-public partnerships that Cooper facilitates. He contributed to the final phase of the similar Orenco Station development and led a team of land-use and transportation planners as they crafted a finance plan for South Hillsboro, a 1,400-acre area that may include 8,000 housing units.

“As an urban planning student, you’re all about utopian visions,” Cooper says, remembering his days at PSU. “But one of my professors, Sy Adler, said something that totally changed my thinking: As an urban planner, you’re part of the whole development scheme.

“That one comment made me open up and decide to learn everything I could about the private sector. Being able to see and balance both sides—public and private concerns—has been a huge part of my success.”

Michelle Medler ’01 was the Lisa Simpson of her day. In her heart she was—and is today—a jazz saxophonist. But with no band until she reached fifth grade, she first took up the violin in her school orchestra. She picked up the saxophone a year later and has never put it down.

Now Medler and her husband, Ben ’01, are all about providing opportunities for budding jazz musicians. Fifteen years ago they founded the Portland Youth Jazz Orchestra (PYJO). Today it includes 80 young musicians from the Portland metro area who rehearse, study and perform jazz in six PYJO bands. The youngest musicians are 11 years old.

As if running a music program were not enough, the Medlers together and separately perform with the Shanghai Woolies, The Quadraphonnes, Trombone 8, the Medler Septet, the Chris Baum Project and ever-changing trios, quartets and quintets.

Teaching seems to come naturally for the couple, who have always taught as they performed and perfected their own music. From 1994 to 2001, they built an award-winning band program at Wilson High School while attending Portland State.

During their own education, Michelle remembers being encouraged by PSU faculty to go to clubs, listen to live music and network in Portland. “By the time we graduated, we were completely integrated into the Portland music scene.”
**Peg Sandeen**

DEATH WITH DIGNITY ADVOCATE

Nearly one in six Americans now lives in a state where assisted death is possible for qualified individuals.

Peg Sandeen MSW ‘01, PhD ‘13 knows this fact better than most. She is director of the Portland-based Death with Dignity National Center. Her work with the center and as adjunct faculty in PSU’s School of Social Work has had a profound effect on how our nation looks at end-of-life choices.

Sandeen assists state legislators around the nation, helping them to craft, promote and pass laws that allow terminally ill patients to end their lives. California’s death with dignity law, which passed in October, is based on Oregon’s 1997 law. Vermont passed its law in 2013 and a death with dignity act was passed in Washington in 2008. Courts in Montana have been safeguarding physician-assisted death since 2009.

“At the core of social work are autonomy and self-determination, dignity and the worth of the person. I believe that death with dignity represents all those things,” she says.

Sandeen, 49, acknowledges the opposition some people have to her work and points out that safeguards are built into each state's law. “We make sure that doctors, pharmacists, and caregivers know they have an opt-out clause. No one has to participate if they object.”

The Oregon Sports Lottery Graduate Scholarship helped support Sandeen during her time at PSU. “I was a working mom. My daughter was in sixth grade when I came here. Having the scholarship support was incredibly important.

“I’m so privileged to be in my position,” says Sandeen. “I go to work every day and support my family doing the thing I’m most passionate about. I’m a policy-focused social worker at the core, and there aren’t that many jobs for people like me.”

**Vera Sell**

VOLUNTEER

Portland State felt like home for German native Vera Sell MIM ’06 soon after she enrolled in the master’s program in international management. She chose the program after moving to Portland with her husband, a new Intel hire.

“There was lots of diversity in age and work experience, and a lot of international students. And I loved the whirlwind of the program—one year, full-time,” remembers Sell.

She credits PSU with giving her the confidence to move forward in her career.

“PSU does a really good job of connecting students to the community. I used to think I couldn’t work in high tech because I’m not an engineer. By exposing me to careers in high tech, PSU took those fears away.”
For six months Tymon Emch MEd ’13 taught in Peru, where he observed a disconnect between his school’s curriculum and the lives of the children it served. That is, until he helped create hands-on classes based on a love for art, music, archeology and writing, which inspired the children, particularly the teenagers.

“I thought sincere, passionate learning opportunities could help combat teenage apathy,” says Emch, who had studied biology, chemistry and Spanish as an undergrad. “At the time I felt that providing an alternative to public education was the answer.”

When he returned to Bend, Oregon, Emch organized after-school classes not taught by educators, but by artists and other members of the Bend community. The classes included screen printing, stencil graffiti, hip-hop, slam poetry and stand-up comedy, and some were taught in Spanish.

Today, the program he founded in 2009, Cada Casa, has served about 450 students in after-school high school programs in Central Oregon and the Portland metro area, and more than 1,500 students through classroom programs.

“We started with after-school programs, but found that pushing into the classroom was more effective. So we focused on pairing with teachers, writing grants, and entering the schools that way.”

When Emch decided to attend PSU’s Graduate School of Education, the Michael and Marjorie Fiasca Scholarship helped offset his tuition. The scholarship is awarded to graduate students who plan to teach physical or natural sciences in Oregon schools. A native English speaker with a passion for Spanish, Emch was also part of the Bilingual Teacher Pathway, a scholarship program that supports bilingual teachers.

Emch, 31, now teaches dual-language physics and chemistry at Beaverton High School and is educational director for Cada Casa. He plans to continue teaching while expanding Cada Casa’s reach in the Portland area. “It’s an opportunity for me to combine a lot of my passions.”

Now a Tektronix product marketing manager and the mother of two young children, Sell, age 33, remains active at PSU. She mentored two students last year from the MIM and MBA programs, and will mentor two more in 2016. In addition, she sponsored a PSU student capstone project with Tektronix focused on a new product manufacturing decision that grew into two projects.

“The VP was impressed with the work and sponsored a follow-up project,” says Sell. “Although I changed jobs from operations to product line marketing, I stayed on as the primary contact for the PSU team. The final presentation was in December and the students rocked it.”

In addition to her one-on-one work with students, Sell is a member of the School of Business Administration’s Graduate Alumni Ambassador Council and is involved with TiE Oregon, the local chapter of a global nonprofit that fosters the next generation of entrepreneurs through mentoring, education and angel funding.

“I really do believe in giving back. You can never repay the people who helped you, so it’s all about paying it forward.”

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“You can never repay the people who helped you, so it’s all about paying it forward.”
Concepts in Community Living, a senior housing management and consulting company, was founded by Keren Brown Wilson PhD ’83 and Michael DeShane MA ’71, PhD ’77 and employs 360 people in Oregon.

LinkedIn includes 51,232 Portland State alumni and students living and working in Oregon as of January II, 2016.

Travis Knight ’98 is president and CEO of Laika animation studio in Hillsboro, which has 425 employees and is celebrating its 10th anniversary.
The social networking site, LinkedIn, lists where Portland State alumni and students work. We looked up Oregon and this is what we found.

### TOP EMPLOYERS OF ALUMNI AND STUDENTS IN OREGON

- Intel Corporation ................................... 1,078
- OHSU ....................................................... 776
- Nike ......................................................... 663
- Portland Community College ................. 413
- Providence Health & Services ................ 382
- Portland Public Schools .......................... 374
- State of Oregon ........................................ 318
- Multnomah County ................................ 260
- Kaiser Permanente .................................. 252
- City of Portland ....................................... 214
- Legacy Health ......................................... 170
- Daimler Trucks North America ............... 154
- The Standard ............................................ 151
- Wells Fargo............................................... 143
- Beaverton School District ....................... 143
- Bonneville Power Administration ........... 137
- Portland General Electric ......................... 125
- U.S. Bank ............................................... 118
- Oregon State University ......................... 116
- Fred Meyer ............................................... 106
- Mt. Hood Community College ............... 106
- Starbucks .................................................. 92
- Clackamas County .................................... 92
- Columbia Sportswear ................................ 88
- Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare .............. 86

LinkedIn as of January 11, 2016

Portland State students contribute 970,000 service hours each year in the community at a value of $20.7 million.

siblings and second generation winegrowers Alison ‘00 and Alex ‘97, MBA ‘03 Sokol Blosser are co-presidents of the family’s winery in Dundee. They oversee 37 employees.

LinkedIn showed 49 alumni and students of Portland State working for PeaceHealth in Oregon as of January 11, 2016.
Looking at the link between urban trees and health

WRITTEN BY JOHN KIRKLAND

AMERICAN JOURNALIST William Vaughan once called suburbia the place where the developer bulldozes the trees, then names the streets after them.

The same is true for cities. After all, how many pine trees do you see on Portland’s Pine Street? How many oaks on Oak Street? Answer: few, if any.

Doing away with trees is unhealthy. According to Vivek Shandas, PSU urban studies and planning professor, there is a direct relationship between a lack of trees in urban areas and stressors such as air pollution and elevated heat, called “urban heat islands.” Both are hazardous to human health, especially for the elderly and the very young. And as Shandas discovered, they tend to occur more in lower-income neighborhoods.

To show this, Shandas and his colleagues developed a free computer mapping tool (map.treesandhealth.org) that displays Portland neighborhoods in terms of their tree coverage, traffic-related air pollution, heat index, level of poverty and relative age of their residents. Once you’ve pinpointed neighborhoods that could use the greatest improvement, the app will tell you how many trees need to be planted to boost their overall livability.

Shandas rolled out the Trees and Health app in summer 2015. It includes maps of the Portland metro area and 12 other U.S. cities with populations of 400,000 to 700,000. These are cities that are big enough to have a voter base to push for more trees but small enough that planting efforts would make a difference. His goal is to include all cities in the United States with populations of 100,000 or more.

“This is a tool that allows us to predict the highest health benefits from planting trees,” he says. “I want to generate a conversation about how we can think more deeply about social and environmental health and encourage a pragmatic approach to planting trees.”

TREES PROVIDE numerous well-documented health benefits. They absorb carbon dioxide and produce oxygen, and they also scrub pollutants out of the air.

“A single tree can absorb 10 pounds of air pollutants a year and produce nearly 260 pounds of oxygen—enough to support two people,” the American Forests conservation group states on its website.

Shandas found that trees do an even better job of removing air pollution than was previously thought. In developing the app, he and his research team set up sensors throughout Portland that measured nitrogen oxide, a common air pollutant. While it was commonly thought that trees could reduce nitrogen oxide by 7 percent, Shandas’ sensor research found the figure to be nearly double that.

Trees have social benefits as well. Shandas says they slow traffic because drivers are less inclined to speed in areas where trees fill their peripheral vision. He even cites a U.S. Forest Service study in which women had higher birthweight babies in neighborhoods with more mature trees. The thought is that trees are associated with a sense of calmness and wellbeing that affects pregnancy in a healthy way.

There’s also a troubling social correlation: wealthier neighborhoods tend to have more tree canopy than poorer neighborhoods. A 2010 study by researchers at Auburn University and the University of Southern California found that trees were viewed as more of a luxury than a necessity—a luxury that was demanded more by people living in affluent neighborhoods. They found that for every 1 percent rise in income, the demand for forest cover increased by 1.76 percent.

USERS OF the Trees and Health app can see the stark differences in Portland’s neighborhoods with just a few clicks of a mouse. On one end of the spectrum is the Gateway neighborhood in Northeast Portland—an area at the high-traffic confluence of I-84 and I-205. It
shows a tree canopy cover of only 7 percent, compared with a citywide average of 21 percent. Traffic-related air quality is twice as bad as the city average, the urban heat island index is significantly higher and 64 percent of residents live below the poverty line compared with 14 percent for the city as a whole.

Sweep the mouse over to the Dunthorpe neighborhood in Southwest Portland and the app shows conditions change dramatically. The air is sweeter, the traffic-related air pollution is about half the city average, the urban heat island index is near zero and only one percent of its residents live in poverty. And it has more than three times the tree cover as the Portland average. On the map Dunthorpe shows up as a bright green island.

So what would it take to make the Gateway neighborhood as green as Dunthorpe? Planting more than 4,800 medium-sized trees, according to the app.

“That’s a small forest,” says Shandas, adding that if Gateway residents wanted to take a less daunting approach, they can inventory the area’s available public spaces and look for ways to reach some portion of the tree canopy target, even if it’s as low as 10 to 20 percent. Then they could do the same for private spaces. Once there’s a target in place, he says there is a wealth of organizations—including East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District, Metro’s Nature in Neighborhoods, Portland’s Community Watershed Stewardship Program—to help provide the money, technical guidance and labor to make it happen.

“Based on the specifics of the neighborhood, the targets can be reached with sustained and committed effort, which is usually the way anything good happens,” Shandas says.

John Kirkland is a staff member in the PSU Office of University Communications.
Brook Thompson was seven years old when 34,000 salmon died on the Klamath River. She remembers walking down the beach among rows and rows of rotting fish as far as she could see. Drought and low water flow from a dam had contributed to the die-off on the Yurok Reservation in Northern California, where she spent summers with her dad.

“It had a bad omen feeling,” she says. “That was really hard for me, because fish are everything in the tribe pretty much.” That summer there wasn’t enough fish to eat, smoke and sell, so the whole tribe felt the economic and cultural hit all year long.

Thompson, now 20 and a sophomore at Portland State, draws on this early experience to explain why she works so hard in school: She wants to improve the environmental, economic and social conditions for her tribe and others. Her determination has paid off with a full-ride Gates scholarship, acceptance to PSU’s Urban Honors College, a spot on the Dean’s List each term in her freshman year, and a chance to study abroad in New Zealand.

She credits PSU with giving her all the support she needs to succeed. “Even though it is stressful, it is a lot better because of the great resources PSU has,” she says. “I haven’t had a bad teacher yet. I’m not just taking the classes; I’m really learning the content.”

Thompson witnessed the effects of poverty and environmental damage from an early age. She developed a strong connection to her tribe and its land by participating in traditional dances, interning in her tribe’s education office, and learning the Yurok language from her grandfather, one of the last native speakers. She’s had a commercial fishing license since age 12.

“Anytime you pick a plant, you say ‘thank you’ to it, and you pray every time you kill a living thing,” she says. “You think about the generations ahead of you.”

When she was five, Thompson moved to Portland with her mother and visited her dad on the reservation during school breaks. In the city, she doesn’t see the same ties between the people and the land. She hopes to ease the impact of cities on the environment by studying civil engineering at PSU and someday designing green buildings with zero net energy consumption.
Thompson earned a 3.8 at Franklin High and was named a Gates Millennium Scholar, a program funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The scholarship covers undergraduate tuition and living expenses—plus graduate school in certain subjects—for black, Latino, Native American and Asian-Pacific Islander American students with significant financial need.

Gates Scholars can use the awards at any college they choose. Thompson picked PSU over the University of California, Berkeley for its Honors College, strong engineering program and focus on sustainability. She also received PSU’s Eubanks Memorial Trust Scholarship and Rose E. Tucker Charitable Trust Honors Scholarship.

Knowing her education and living expenses are fully covered has given Thompson the freedom to live on campus, take a heavy course load and join seven student clubs, including the American Indian Science and Engineering Society and the Society of Women Engineers.

But her first year was tough. Several close relatives have died in the past few years: her grandfather who helped raise her and taught her the Yurok language, an aunt who was missing for two years before her body was found, and a favorite elder she visited often. She also has dyslexia, which makes college-level writing more difficult.

Yet Olyssa Starry, an Urban Honors professor, says Thompson let none of her circumstances get in the way of her academic work. She was a standout student with a “let’s get to work” attitude and a passion for sustainable urban design, Starry says.

“It is very clear to me that Brook has a very strong connection to her cultural heritage,” she says. “I would imagine reconciling this with life outside of the reservation must be challenging. That’s why one of the things that impresses me about Brook is the grace and enthusiasm with which she explores and addresses challenges.”

For one assignment, Starry asked students in her year-long freshman course on The Global City to design a backyard habitat in an open space behind the Honors building. Thompson included a digital sketch of the garden and even specified where to buy recycled materials, which native plants to include, and how to attract butterflies and birds but not mosquitoes.

“Brook was able to incorporate a lot of ideas from the texts we read in class into her design,” Starry says. “You could also really tell from the details that Brook was ready to implement it.”

Thompson says small Honors class sizes of 25 students, one-on-one writing tutors, the disability and Native American centers and friends in her student groups helped her excel in her first year. PSU’s Roads2Success program, a two-week introduction to study skills and campus life, made her feel confident from the start.

Last summer and fall, she studied at the University of Auckland in New Zealand, and shared a flat with three other students. Her classes included one on the indigenous Maori people, who were colonized at about the same time as the Yurok and struggle with some of the same problems. Thompson wants to take some of the Maori strategies for continuing to speak their native language back to her own tribe.

“I’m not just going to college for myself,” Thompson says. “I’m trying to improve other people’s lives just as much.”

Suzanne Pardington is a staff member in the PSU Office of University Communications.
Malaria has been a deadly enemy of mankind throughout history, but a research team at Portland State may have found one of the most effective defenses yet in fighting it. It’s a compound that can be put in pill form and has the potential to cure malaria in a single dose.

The discovery, announced in October, was years in the making and has years to go before it can be used. But if clinical trials are successful, it will be a game-changer in the world of malaria treatment. The one-dose oral cure would stand in stark contrast to current injectable medicines, which must be refrigerated and administered by a medical professional. They’re not one-dose treatments, and the malaria parasite can become resistant to them.

“The advantage of a one-pill solution is that it’s one pill,” says PSU chemistry professor and lead researcher Kevin Reynolds. “If you have to take a medicine twice a day, every day for a week like an antibiotic, you have the danger—through forgetfulness, apathy or just thinking you’re all better—of quitting the treatment before it’s complete. Plus, a one-pill knockout will reduce the chances that the parasite in your system will mutate and become harder to kill.”

The compound is based on a natural red pigment that comes from a soil bacterium. Reynolds says the catalyst for his research was an old paper from the 1970s that hinted at the pigment’s potential in treating malaria, but for one reason or another—inadequate technology or the variety of malarial cures already in existence—nobody had given it much thought until Reynolds rediscovered it about five years ago.

Over those five years, Reynolds and his research team—including Jane Kelly and Papireddy Kancharla—created hundreds of variants of the compound and tested them on mice and on human blood infected by malaria. This summer they struck gold with one variant that killed the malaria parasite over 28 days with a single low dose.

One challenge for the researchers was to develop a way to take the compound orally. The compound doesn’t naturally dissolve in water, which means it can’t be taken in pill form. Reynolds and his team mixed it with oil, which solves the problem and opens the potential for turning it into a pill.

Reynolds says several more years of research will be needed before the medicine reaches people in need. Among other things, the team will be looking for side effects and toxicity, which means they will be performing autopsies on mice used in the experiments. Eventually, the drug will be tested on humans. In the meantime, he’s applied for a patent.

Here’s a glimpse at the enemy. Malaria is a mosquito-borne parasite that has plagued humanity for as long as recorded history. It was linked to the decline of ancient Greek city-states hundreds of years BCE. A malarial epidemic in the fifth century may have contributed to the fall of the Roman Empire. One man out of every 100 who worked on the construction of the Panama Canal in the early 1900s died of malaria until an all-out effort was made to control it.

Even today, with effective treatments for the disease and advancements in medical science, malaria kills about half a million people per year. Most of the deaths occur in sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia. Most of the victims are children under the age of five.

Mosquitoes carry the parasite in their salivary glands. Once introduced in a human host, the parasite travels to the liver and replicates. It can go dormant in the liver cells for a year or two, or it can spread immediately through the bloodstream, infecting red blood cells. It feeds off the hemoglobin in the red blood cells, producing anemia, low blood pressure, fever, chills and sweating. It can spread to the lungs, causing acute respiratory distress. It can spread to the brain, which is fatal.
In pregnant women, it can infect the placenta, which is fatal to the baby.

It can even spread to other mosquitoes. Uninfected mosquitoes feeding on a person with malaria can get infected by the parasite, further spreading the disease in a never-ending cycle.

Many strains of malaria have become resistant to common antimalarial drugs to the point where the disease has become virtually untreatable in some parts of the world, including the border between Cambodia and Thailand.

Drug resistance is one of the most daunting problems in fighting the disease. In a project unrelated to Reynolds’ research, PSU chemistry professor David Peyton is working to develop hybrid versions of chloroquine, which for many years was considered a miracle drug in treating malaria until the disease developed a resistance to it. His work led to the founding of DesignMedix, a company that specializes in rapid and low-cost approaches to fighting drug-resistant diseases, such as malaria, that have decimated impoverished populations worldwide. The company is housed in the Portland State Business Accelerator.

One of the beauties of Reynolds’ discovery is that it works against drug-resistant malaria, he says. That in itself could be a major advancement in worldwide malaria treatment. Equally important, Reynolds says, is the possibility of efficiently and economically bringing the medication to poor countries where it’s needed most.

“In the Third World, having doctors to provide injections, having needles, having refrigerators to hold medicines stable and cold is highly problematic. So having a single pill that you could take that would be curative would be transformative,” he says.
IT’S SATURDAY NIGHT, and inside the packed Kingston Bar and Grill in Southwest Portland bedlam is in full swing.

The Portland State Vikings football team has just won another game. Fans, decked out in green PSU gear, jostle beers, slap high-fives and celebrate loudly—a frenzied display not seen in more than a decade. What was once a losing team, potentially headed for extinction, is suddenly the talk of the town.

The person responsible for this unlikely turnaround hasn’t arrived yet. He’s down in the lower reaches of the Vikings’ home field, Providence Park, watching a live-feed of his son’s high school football game. The game ends. PSU football Coach Bruce Barnum shuffles across the street to the bar, where he’s promised to buy everyone the first round. Inside, he gets a hero’s welcome.

“Barn-y ball! Barn-y ball!” some chant. Barnum grins.

“He’s, like, the people’s champ,” Kingston manager Brian Mason shouts over the hubbub. “And the people love him for that.”
A LITTLE MORE than a year ago, PSU’s once-vaunted football program was in a tailspin. After a 3-9 season, five-year coach Nigel Burton was let go. The athletic director had left as well. Barnum, one of Burton’s assistants, was given a hurried appointment as interim head coach and told he had a year to prove himself.

One of the first things he did was put almost his entire $25,000 pay raise toward the pay of some of his assistant coaches. He kept $1,000 so he could tell his wife he got a raise.

For Barnum, becoming head coach was like being handed the keys to a pickup that was leaking oil, had four flat tires and a cracked windshield. He wasn’t sure what to expect when he walked into his first team meeting. But he knew what he wanted.

“I wanted to change the culture and expectations of this team,” Barnum says. “I started preaching blue-collar, tough, fundamental football.”

Then he gave the players his set of demands: Pick a family member, someone who loves you, and call them once a week. Excel in your classes. And be great on the football field.

“Those three things. Nothing else,” he says he told the team. “They gave me a standing ovation.”

Senior defensive back Patrick Onwuasor, one of three finalists for National Defensive Player of the Year, credits Barnum for his inclusive coaching style. “He’s a player’s coach,” says Onwuasor. “He gets to know his players, and he’s got us on board.”

Barnum’s blunt, cards-on-the-table style not only charmed his players, but also local sportswriters and commentators who have written fawning stories about the upstart coach and team. Add PSU administrators to the fan list, who have watched the wins pile up, ticket sales soar and a program regain long-lost esteem.

They particularly like Barnum’s focus on academics. When a player breaks a team rule, Barnum doesn’t yell at him, doesn’t make him run stairs—he requires the player to spend the weekend in the school athletics office, studying.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE
“Coach Barnum gets it,” says PSU Provost Sona Andrews, who closely follows college sports. “He recognizes our student athletes are here first and foremost to get a degree.”

SMALLER FOOTBALL programs like PSU’s get a hefty chunk of their budgets by agreeing to play early-season games against big programs. In essence, the teams agree to be fodder for a televised game in return for a big payday.

When PSU lined up against the Pac-12’s Washington State on Sept. 5, Vegas odds-makers had them as 27-point underdogs. Barnum calculated his chances differently. He had a versatile and savvy quarterback, junior Alex Kuresa. His defense had shown strong promise in practice. When he told his team in the locker room that they could beat the Cougars, he believed it.

Down 10-0 at halftime, he still believed it. When the Vikings staged an improbable come-from-behind win, Barnum didn’t dance on the sidelines. Not his style. He strolled off the field, a look of satisfaction on his face.

“I walk into the locker room and the coaches are all sitting there,” Barnum recalls in an aw-shucks drawl, like he’s telling the tale over coffee and eggs at a local diner. “They’re smiling like Cheshire cats. I look at ‘em and say, ‘That was a big win, wasn’t it?’ They burst out laughing.”

The victory against WSU—Portland State’s first ever against a Pac-12 team—has gone down as one of the most significant in Viks history. It thrust Barnum and PSU into the national sports limelight and helped propel the team into its first national playoffs in 15 years. Barnum was chosen Football Championship Subdivision National Coach of the Year as well as Big Sky Conference Coach of the Year.

Sports Illustrated and ESPN wrote stories about Barnum and the Vikings. Even the PSU student paper, The Vanguard, ran a front-page article calling out “a new spirit of athletics.”

“PSU is on the radar,” Barnum says. And that helps the entire school with recruitment, philanthropy and an overall sense that things are on the upswing, he says. “I’m not bragging, just sayin’ is all.”

BARNUM DESCRIBES his upbringing as “mobile.” The son of a serviceman, he was born at Andrews Air Force Base in Washington, D.C. and moved around the country. His father was stationed at the Capitol when John F. Kennedy was assassinated and was among the president’s pallbearers.

That incident sparked an interest in history with Barnum, who got his bachelor’s degree at Eastern Washington University, where he also played football, and a master’s in education at Western Washington.

He coached high school football immediately after college, and then landed assistant jobs at Idaho State and Cornell universities, where he met his wife, Shawna, who was the assistant basketball coach. They have two teenage children.

When Barnum was hired as an assistant at PSU six years ago, he was disappointed by how isolated the football program was from the rest of the campus. After he got the interim head coach job, he began making the rounds, dropping off Viking T-shirts and other gear with administrators, faculty, custodians—anyone he could think of. He also encouraged his team members to take part in campus activities.

Then came the win against Washington State and a drubbing against North Texas, both Football Bowl Subdivision-level teams. The Vikings were on a roll. A much-circulated YouTube video captured the moment newly appointed athletics director Mark Rountree told the team Barnum had been given a five-year contract. First, wild cheering, then the chant: “Barn-y Ball! Barn-y Ball!”

Barnum’s assistant coaches may not have received public shout-outs, but they were never far from his thoughts. He had written into his new contract that $15,000 of his performance bonuses go to them, and that’s just what they received after coaching the Viks to a 9-3 record.

The change in the football program had resulted in full and noisy student sections at home games, and the players got noticed on campus. Murmurs about possibly ending football have ceased.

“This is a hard job,” Barnum says. “It’s always, ‘what have you done for me lately?’ But you take a team like this, add some wins to it, and all of a sudden it’s magic.”

Football coach Bruce Barnum talks to players during practice on Stott Field, which is diagonal from Montgomery Court.
IN 1948, when Evelyn Crowell was 12 years old, her father died. Her uncle, Albert Crowell, Jr., stepped forward to become her guardian and nurtured her into adulthood. Albert Crowell made substantial sacrifices so that Evelyn could attend Portland State College at a time when there were few African American students on campus. He also urged her to save money.

His message resonated and for three decades Evelyn has been a generous supporter of PSU, where she worked as an associate professor and in the library from 1972 until her retirement in 2002.

“Some people aren’t givers,” she says, “but what are they waiting for?”

Crowell has included PSU in her estate to fund scholarships in the College of the Arts. The Evelyn I. Crowell Endowed Opera Scholarship and the Evelyn I. Crowell Endowed Theater & Film Scholarship support two of her greatest passions. She has been a fixture at PSU’s opera and theater productions for many years.

She has also created the Albert Crowell, Jr., Memorial Scholarship to honor the man who took her in nearly 70 years ago. The scholarship is awarded to students with a deep understanding and appreciation of African American culture and experience.

The scholarships have provided thousands of dollars to PSU students who may otherwise be unable to afford a college degree.

“This scholarship is the saving grace to my education,” says Kanda Mbenda-Ngoma, who received the Albert Crowell, Jr. Memorial Scholarship for the 2014-2015 school year. “Without it, I would not be able to attend PSU.”

CROWELL WAS BORN in Saginaw, Michigan, and moved to Portland in 1942. She went to Boise Elementary and Girls Polytechnic High School before enrolling at Portland State College in 1954. She earned her undergraduate degree in 1959 with the help of a four-year scholarship from the Women's Christian Service of the Methodist Church.

She earned a master's degree in library science from the University of Washington and worked at Linfield College and Fisk University before starting her career at PSU.

Crowell has also been a generous supporter of Portland Community College, and served on the Portland School Board and the Oregon State Library Board of Trustees.

For many years, she took her uncle’s financial advice to heart. But she also traveled the world and raised two kids. Her support for PSU is a reflection of her own financial philosophy.

“If you don’t do something with money,” she says, “it just gets away from you.”

Written by Steve Beaven, development writer in the PSU Foundation.
CAROLYN DAVIDSON’S life has had a strong element of chance. She first enrolled at Willamette University, but switched to Portland State to be close to home. She started as a journalism major, but took a design course to “fill an empty elective.”

It all led to a fateful hallway meeting in 1971, when she and another student were working on a drawing assignment. She had just told her classmate she couldn’t take an oil painting class because the fees were too high. A few minutes later, Davidson ’71 recalls, “a tall man in a suit walked up and said, ‘Are you the one who can’t afford to take oil painting?’”

The well-dressed man was Nike co-founder Phil Knight, who at the time was a little-known start-up entrepreneur teaching a PSU accounting course to help make ends meet. Knight was also working with a Japanese footwear company and he needed someone to produce some nice-looking charts and graphs to show some executives who were coming from Japan. He gave Davidson the job. That led to more work with Knight and his fledgling company, Blue Ribbon Sports.

Pleased with the results, Knight summoned Davidson to a meeting. He had been working with University of Oregon track coach Bill Bowerman to develop a new running shoe—and a new company.

“Then every designer’s dream job came in,” Davidson says. “He said, ‘Would you like to design a shoe stripe?’ I didn’t hesitate and as luck would have it, I didn’t have any competition.”

KNIGHT, Davidson said, really liked the three-band logo of Adidas and she knew the stripe had to look entirely different. It would be a tough sell. He gave her only one specification: “He just wanted it to look like speed.”

It was no easy task. Davidson started drawing some possibilities, which she sketched on tissue paper and put up against a shoe to see how each looked. Time was running out; boxes were going to be printed. She had several designs, which she delivered to Knight. He had convened a group to discuss the choices, but he would
make the final decision. His response was disappointing: “Well, I don't love it, but maybe it will grow on me.”

It was, of course, the curved, swooping mark that came to be called the Nike “swoosh” and is now one of the most identifiable commercial logos in the world. Davidson hadn't taken any classes in the business side of graphics. She billed Knight $35 for her work.

Davidson worked with Nike for about six years—they were getting so large, they needed full-scale advertising agencies. A few years after she left, Davidson was invited to meet at Nike and go out to lunch. When she arrived, she was treated to a surprise reception and given an undisclosed amount of Nike stock.

Nearly 45 years later, the Nike swoosh lives on exactly the way Davidson drew it. When asked how she feels about being the one who created a logo that appears on millions of shoes, T-shirts, NFL and college football jerseys, ad campaigns and storefronts, she answers with typical understatement: “Amazing, isn’t it?”

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**ALUMNI IN THE NEWS**

**Gina Michel ’73** has retired from the motion picture business, where she was script supervisor on *CSI Las Vegas*. She is now a professional fused glass artist, and the Colburn School of Music in Los Angeles has acquired one of her sculptures for its permanent collection.

**Dave Erickson ’74** is director of credit for NW Natural in Portland.

**Ramon Torrecilha ’84, MA ’86** is set to become the president of Westfield State University, Westfield, Massachusetts, in January. He received the PSU Alumni Achievement Award in 2014.

**Lisa Massena ’89** was named executive director of the state’s new Oregon Retirement Savings Plan in September. She has worked in financial and investment analysis for more than 20 years.

**James Floyd MPA ’90** was elected chief of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation in Oklahoma in November.

**Kimberly Larsen ’95** is executive director of Families for Community, a Medford, Oregon, nonprofit that supports families and children who experience disability.

**Todd Schweitzer ’04** is high school principal for Oregon Virtual Academy based in North Bend. His wife, **Katie (Winning) Schweitzer ’02, MEd ’04**, is principal of Kelso Elementary School in Boring.

**Betty L. Chan ’11** is a community account manager with United Way of the Columbia-Willamette. She lives in Portland.

**Ashley Newman ’15** is working in the talent acquisition department at Nike in Beaverton.

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Becoming a member of the PSU Alumni Association is the easiest way to maintain a connection to Portland State University and our community of over 150,000 alumni worldwide. Membership is free! Just sign up online at pdx.edu/alumni/about-us to unlock a host of benefits and services.
Looking Back

*Groovin’ to the beat*

**FIFTY YEARS AGO,** dances were a big part of student life. Photos from the 1966 Viking Yearbook feature students in the height of ’60s fashion doing the jerk, the pony and groovin’ to the music of Herman’s Hermits, the Righteous Brothers and the Rolling Stones, to name a few. The year kicked off with a Halloween dance thrown in an open-air parking garage, following by pajama, Mardi Gras, and Parisian sewer-themed dances—the last one featuring “drains and drunkards, saucy girls in leotards, and bearded gentilshommes,” according to the yearbook.

**DO YOU KNOW** who’s in the photos? Or do you have something to say about this issue of *Portland State Magazine.* Email your comments to psumag@pdx.edu or send them to Portland State Magazine, Office of University Communications, PO Box 751, Portland OR 97207-0751. We reserve the right to edit letters-to-the-editor for space and clarity.
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