A Message from the Dean

Woodring College of Education alumni are caring individuals who change lives – their own and those of their future students and clients. They are constantly learning and growing as professionals long after they complete their degrees and certificates. They are committed professionals to a more equitable society. In this issue of Woodring alumni news, we feature alumni, donors, faculty and students who exemplify these ideals. We hope you enjoy a few of their stories and fun features. I always look forward to meeting or hearing from alumni. I hope you keep in touch.

Sincerely,

Horacio Walker
Dean
Ra’Jeanna Conerly dreamed of being a teacher ever since she was inspired by her fifth grade teacher's ability to bring joy to learning.

She followed that dream with passion and dedication, choosing to attend Western Washington University and double major in elementary education and special education. She was an outstanding student in Woodring College of Education, becoming a Presidential Scholar in 2007 and presenting at multiple national conferences. After four years of hard work and determination, with nine quarters on the honor roll as well as college and national honors, Ra’Jeanna achieved her double majors and was ready to become a teacher.

She has worked tirelessly throughout her career to address the special needs of students who come from groups traditionally left behind in the education system. After a brief stint at Kilo Middle School in Federal Way School District, she was encouraged to enter the Danforth Program at the University of Washington where she earned a master’s degree and administrative credentials. This eventually led to her current position as principal of Lakeland Elementary in Federal Way, where she continues to champion the needs of underrepresented students as she lives her lifelong dream.
Deviney Wynecoop (left above) grew up without valuable knowledge of her cultural heritage. It was not taught in her school - just 20 miles from her home on the Spokane reservation. She has since learned that she was Niimiipuu (Nez Perce) before she was Spokane. She is now learning her ancestral language and realizing that listening to the elders is critical to the survival of their culture. Dev aspires to become a strong representative of her cultural heritage so she can convey it to younger native students.

She was chosen as the first recipient of the Raven Spirit Award, established by Dr. Catherine Collier (right above), who dedicated her working life to the education and training of educators in the Native American, indigenous, and Latino communities in Alaska and Colorado. She has focused on bilingual preschool, elementary, and special education for Native American and indigenous students. She served as director of the national professional development Curriculum Integration for Responsive, Cross-cultural, Language Education (CIRCLE) project at Western.

The Raven Spirit Award supports Native American or indigenous students applying to, or enrolled in, the Woodring College of Education. The ideal award recipient would be not only of the indigenous community, but also wishing to give back to their community upon receiving a degree, certificate, or license in their field, particularly contributing to cultural and language preservation.
A math trail is an activity where students go to different locations around the school to complete math related activities. A math trail for ALL students combines the special education classroom and the general education classroom in inclusive groups for the activity.
Taylor Arbuckle (left above), a student intern at Cordata Elementary, Bellingham, is pictured with fifth grade teacher, Kate Larocque (right). Taylor collaborated with Janet Mock of the WWU Math Department, students of Woodring’s Special Education Program, Kate Larocque’s fifth grade students, Alyssa Bowhay’s fifth grade students who received special education services, and paraprofessionals at Cordata Elementary. The goal of the “Math Walk” according to Taylor was to provide “the opportunity for students of varying abilities to learn, collaborate, and build relationships.” According to Taylor, the activity resulted in several positive outcomes: behavior problems that students exhibited in the special education classroom did not occur during this math activity, all students practiced prosocial skills with each other, and all students were able to learn about math skills from each other. This activity was a success according to all participants. One student (talking about having students from life skills in their groups) reported, “I did not feel like I was very helpful. I was just treating them how I treat my classmates.” According to a participating student with special needs, “I was ready to work with my group without the help from adults.” According to Alyssa Bowhay, (Taylor’s special education cooperating teacher), “My students were never left out or made to feel less capable. While the math activities were great and a neutral way to involve the students with each other, the social acceptance, interactions, and partnering were amazing. I am very grateful to Taylor for bringing this activity to Cordata and hope to continue it in future years.”
Catharine is one of seven Stimpson siblings to attend the Campus School (Woodring College of Education's predecessor). She credits the Campus School for her and her siblings' professional success. "It is my wish for every child to have the experience we had: small classes, a beautiful setting—we were surrounded by natural beauty—and astonishing teachers with advanced degrees who were mindful of their profession."

Her experience at the Campus School inspired Stimpson to pursue academia. A pioneer in the study of women and gender, she founded Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society in 1974 and remained editor until 1980. She was also the first director of the Women's Center at Barnard College, the director of the MacArthur Foundation in Chicago from 1994 to 1997, chaired the New York State Council for the Humanities, the National Council for Research on Women, and served as president of the Modern Language Association. In 1990, she served as a board member for PBS. Over the course of her career, she has published eight books and more than 150 monographs, essays, and stories.

Stimpson currently chairs the board of Scholars at Risk, which provides assistance to threatened scholars worldwide and teaches at NYU Abu Dhabi. Though she travels the world and resides in New York, Stimpson still celebrates her roots at the old Campus School in Bellingham.
As an instructor for Western's Extended Education program, Anne Blanchard generally sees students who have more complicated situations than those on campus—single mothers, formerly incarcerated students, veterans, refugees, immigrants, and underserved populations. "The Western Extended Ed program is more of a community college culture," says Blanchard. "The communication and outreach with students is critical, as they are facing competing challenges in their personal lives." Time and time again, she has shown that her dedication and compassion for these students is profound.

Blanchard demonstrates her commitment to these students by investing time and energy into their futures. "I stay in touch with many graduates of the program. I write letters of recommendation, take calls to provide professional references, and talk with current and former students about grad school."

Anne is also stellar colleague. When her friend and coworker Morgan Livingston died from liver cancer, Blanchard drove the support for a scholarship in her name.

Blanchard distinguishes Human Services from other professional programs. "Too many professionals are blind to the lived experiences of the people they work with. A good number of Human Services Program students at the Everett extension have experienced adversity themselves, so they come with compassion and understanding." Anne exemplifies that same compassion and understanding in all of her work.
Woodring's Got Talent!

"Broadway Park" by Lauren McClanahan

Congratulations to Secondary Education Professor Lauren McClanahan, who won first place in the 13th annual "Essence of Bellingham" Photo Competition! Winning entries were selected based on the quality of the photograph and how well they captured the essence of Bellingham.

Winning entries, along with 103 best of class and honorable mention photographs, were displayed in the City Hall lobby during a public ceremony and reception and featured in the Downtown Art Walk.

Have comments for us or good news to feature in the next newsletter? Send information and photos to Woodring@wwu.edu