



West Virginia University at Parkersburg
Board of Governors Meeting
Media Clips

Oct. 14, 2020 – Jan. 4, 2021



WWU Parkersburg President Dr. Chris Gilmer Receives COVID-19 Vaccination

Read his message at

<https://www.wvup.edu/news/president-dr-chris-gilmer-receives-covid-19-vaccination/>



Dr. Torie Jackson, WVU Parkersburg Vice President of Institutional Advancement and WVU at Parkersburg Foundation CEO Named *West Virginia Executive* Young Gun

Young Guns represent the state's next generation of leaders who are accomplishing great things in their careers and communities.

Read Dr. Jackson's story at

<http://www.wvexecutive.com/torie-jackson/>



WVU Parkersburg Announces Fall 2020 Graduates and President's and Deans Scholars

West Virginia University at Parkersburg recently awarded certificates, associate and bachelor's degrees to December 2020 graduates. The college also announced its President's and Dean's list scholars for the Fall 2020 semester.

View the full list of graduates at

<https://www.wvup.edu/news/fall-2020-wvu-parkersburg-graduates-announced/>

View the full list of President's and Dean's scholars at

<https://www.wvup.edu/news/wvu-parkersburg-announces-fall-2020-presidents-and-deans-scholars/>

WVU Parkersburg Successfully Transitions to Virtual Environment

The Herald Record

Oct. 14, 2020

<https://www.theheraldrecord.com/2020/10/14/wvu-parkersburg-successfully-transitions-to-virtual-environment/>

Parkersburg, W.Va. (October 13, 2020) - Many students at West Virginia University at Parkersburg have made the transition to online courses. While about 25 percent of students visit campus to complete hands-on courses that could not be converted to fully online, all students are using technology-enabled tools to complete the remainder of their coursework. Faculty members started transitioning to online learning in March due to COVID-19.

As Holly Martin, associate professor, explains, "One thing that I love about teaching is the interaction with students in a face-to-face class. Creating that same sense of community in a virtual setting was one thing I mostly focused on when preparing my classes this semester." Martin uses at least three means of communication with students. "Constant communication and timely feedback are critical for a virtual class," she said.

College faculty are teaching in a variety of ways. Many students meet with faculty and classmates on the same day and time in a virtual manner. Synchronous online learning is a new teaching method many faculty are embracing. Synchronous learning means the faculty and students are interacting at the same time.

As WVU Parkersburg Provost Chad Crumbaker explains, "WVUP faculty have taken technology-enabled instruction to the next level by finding various ways to truly engage with learners without being in a traditional classroom setting."

WVU Parkersburg has more than [50 degree](#) programs students can choose from. Five of these programs are [fully online](#), regardless of how instruction is delivered to the other programs.

Assistant Professor Katie Life uses online instruction to allow her students to take more ownership of their learning in her math classes. Using a 'flipped-style classroom,' students watch the lecture as homework before the class, then spend their class time on higher-level development of the concept by completing projects, practicing harder example problems and discussing the concept more in-depth.

"With the virtual environments, it's like the material never grows cold. We're crafting all of these different layers to the learning process week after week after week," Life said. "It's really made me reconsider how I will teach once the pandemic has passed, honestly. I've learned a lot about myself and what my students can do."

Assistant Professor Dr. Billy Stone also takes advantage of recording his lectures. "Student feedback shows they enjoy the ability to refer to the recording to review class discussions," Stone said. "It's especially helpful should the student be absent from a Zoom meeting."

Some faculty do prefer more traditional online teaching methods but take extra precautions to engage students. As Tom Riddle, associate professor, explains, "Online learning is lonely. There is less social interaction, and that makes motivation harder." However, he has found that students enjoy the flexibility in doing their work any time. "I notice many of my students seem to be night owls, and I get many early morning emails."

Although students no longer commute to campus, they can receive [Tutoring Center](#) services and sessions through Zoom. Students can also take advantage of [Brainfuse](#), which offers free tutoring and proofreading services 24/7. Students struggling with online learning may visit the college's [Distance Learning page](#) to seek assistance.

"Online learning is a perfect example of the need for a community college," Adjunct Professor Terry Tamburini said. "Many students were headed to other institutions and

chose WVU Parkersburg to save money.”

Tamburini also found that students are taking advantage of online learning to expand their skill sets. “Some of my students seem older with a desire to use the opportunity for job upgrades.”

Visit wvup.edu/future-students or call 304.424.8310 to view WVU Parkersburg’s majors, cost and aid and other services.

WVUP transitions to online learning

The Parkersburg News and Sentinel

Oct. 15, 2020

<https://www.newsandsentinel.com/news/local-news/2020/10/wvup-transitions-to-online-learning/>

PARKERSBURG — Many students at West Virginia University at Parkersburg have made the transition to online courses.

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“One thing that I love about teaching is the interaction with students in a face-to-face class,” said Holly Martin, associate professor, explains. *“Creating that same sense of community in a virtual setting was one thing I most focused on when preparing my classes this semester.”*

Martin uses at least three means of communication with students.

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College faculty are teaching in a variety of ways. Many students meet with faculty and classmates at the same day and time in a virtual manner. Synchronous online learning is a new teaching method many faculty are embracing. Synchronous learning means the faculty and students are interacting at the same time.

“WVUP faculty have taken technology-enabled instruction to the next level by finding various ways to truly engage with learners without being in a traditional classroom setting,” said WVU Parkersburg Provost Chad Crumbaker.

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“With the virtual environments, it’s like the material never grows cold,” Life said. *“We’re crafting all of these different layers to the learning process week after week after week,”* Life said. *“It’s really made me reconsider how I will teach once the pandemic has passed, honestly. I’ve learned a lot about myself and what my students can do.”*

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“Student feedback shows they enjoy the ability to refer to the recording to review class discussions,” he said. *“It’s especially helpful should the student be absent from a Zoom meeting.”*

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However, he has found that students enjoy the flexibility in doing their work any time.

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Although students no longer commute to campus, they can receive Tutoring Center services and sessions through Zoom. Students can also take advantage of Brainfuse, which offers free tutoring and proofreading services 24/7.

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WVU-P holding pet calendar fundraiser

WTAP-TV

Oct. 15, 2020

<https://www.wtap.com/2020/10/15/wvu-p-holding-pet-calendar-fundraiser/>



PARKERSBURG, [W.Va.](#) (WTAP) - WVU-Parkersburg is holding a fundraiser called Pets of WVU-P, in which members of the school's community are asked to submit photos of their pets to be put in a calendar that will be available for purchase.

The school's alumni relations department and the Ecohawks, a student environmental group, are managing the campaign together, and the funds raised will be divided between the two groups. Those who submit photos are asked to provide a \$5 donation per submission, and the calendar will cost \$10.

In previous years, submissions were limited to photos of dogs only, but this year all pet photos are permitted.

"People can dress their pets up, and we'll let them pretty much choose the month that they want their pet to appear in," said Nancy Harris, executive director of alumni relations and career services.

Those who would like to submit are asked to send their high-resolution photos to Harris at nharris2@wvup.edu or to follow [this link](#). Payments can be made by check or paypal.

For additional questions, interested individuals are asked to call Harris at (304) 424-8395.

WVU-P Board of Governors discusses enrollment, pandemic

The Parkersburg News and Sentinel

Oct. 16, 2020

<https://www.newsandsentinel.com/news/business/2020/10/wvu-p-board-of-governors-discusses-enrollment-pandemic/>

PARKERSBURG — West Virginia University at Parkersburg is continuing to manage the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic with solid enrollment numbers and strong finances, officials said Wednesday.

The university's Board of Governors held its regular meeting for October, via Zoom, where officials talked about student enrollment and the university's financial standing.

President Chris Gilmer talked about the impact the pandemic has had on other schools.

"Some estimate that up to 1,000 colleges and universities nationwide will close due to COVID-19," he said. "Some are laying off employees or reporting record enrollment declines, yet WVU-P is moving solidly and ambitiously ahead, demonstrating to its

internal and external constituents that we will emerge on the other side stronger and even more resolved to student service and student success.”

Other schools are also reporting outbreaks of COVID-19 on their campuses. While Gilmer said they are not immune to the possibility, he credits WVU-P's prevention protocols for having no outbreaks at either the Parkersburg or the Jackson County campuses.

“I thank everyone who is working unselfishly and prudently in the hope we will be able to continue this record, while I also assure you that we have protocols in place should such an outbreak arise,” Gilmer said.

This week the university is beginning state-mandated COVID-19 random surveillance testing of a 10 percent randomized sample of employees and students who are employed or learning face-to-face this semester on WVU-P's campuses.

Those working or learning entirely remotely are excluded from the sample.

“Our pool includes 570 people, so our target sample each week is 57,” Gilmer said. *“This activity will be completed weekly until further notice by state authorities.”*

The saliva-based tests will be self-administered by those selected. Specimens will be sent to an approved lab for testing with any positive results reported to state and local authorities.

Gilmer said every reasonable effort to maintain appropriate confidentiality will be done.

“WVU-P's administration will use this information to promote the health and safety of our community,” he said.

As enrollment remains at the core of the university's mission, Gilmer reported the final new traditional college student enrollment for fall 2020 increased to 116 percent of fall 2019, and that overall enrollment for fall 2020 stands at 99 percent Headcount and 98 percent FTE (full-time equivalent) of fall 2019, *“a statistically insignificant change of 28 students.”*

The only real significant change has been in the Early College high school students, which is down.

“In the middle of the pandemic, despite the Herculean efforts of our Early College team and partnering school leaders, schools and parents simply have found it

challenging to prioritize the importance of Early College amid competing priorities,” Gilmer said. “We expect to build back the small change in this student pool post COVID-19, and the good news is that the new and retained Early College students have statistically increased the number of courses taken per student.

“Full-time Equivalent enrollment, therefore, is minimally affected, and fiscal resources are minimally impacted since Early College courses are offered at a deep discount.”

Early indications seem to have new college applicants for spring 2021 already up 11 percent at this point, Gilmer said.

Gilmer reported the staff of the business office achieved four consecutive unqualified annual audits with no reportable conditions or concerns about internal controls, including the university’s most recently completed audit.

“(It is) a major accomplishment indicating our foundational commitment to fiscal accountability and stability,” Gilmer said.

Executive Vice President Alice Harris commended the business office for its work.

“I am halfway through my 39th year as an accounting professional and the group who works at (WVU-P) in Parkersburg and Jackson County are by far the best group I have had the opportunity to work with,” she said.

Harris said collecting tuition and fees has been more challenging this year because of the pandemic.

“We have been a little more lenient in order to recognize that our students are facing challenges that they haven’t faced in the past,” she said. “I will say that we are doing a really good job on collecting on the payment plans.

“We continue to work with the students who owe us money and we will keep working to get them in safe status. It is just a little slower than it has been in the past.”

The university is about 25 percent through the current fiscal year. Harris said the university is doing good with handling expenses and revenue collections.

“We are doing pretty well, despite all of the challenges we have in addressing things we have never had to address before,” she said. “Through the first quarter we are doing really well and we don’t have any reason to think that won’t continue.”

WVU-P Transitions to Online Classes

The Pleasants County Leader

Oct. 17, 2020

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As WVU-Parkersburg Provost Chad Crumbaker explains, “WVU-P faculty have taken technology-enabled instruction to the next level by finding various ways to truly engage with learners without being WVU-P Transitions To Online Classes in a traditional classroom setting.”

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“Online learning is lonely. There is less social interaction, and that makes motivation harder.” However, he has found that students enjoy the flexibility in doing their work any time. “I notice many of my students seem to be night owls, and I get many early morning emails.”

Although students no longer commute to campus, they can receive tutoring center services and sessions through Zoom.

Students can also take advantage of Brainfuse, which offers free tutoring and proofreading services 24/7.

Students struggling with online learning may visit the college’s distance learning page to seek assistance.

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Tamburini also found that students are taking advantage of online learning to expand their skill sets. “Some of my students seem older with a desire to use the opportunity for job upgrades.”

Award-winning photographer to visit WVU-P

The Parkersburg News and Sentinel

Oct. 17, 2020

<https://www.newsandsentinel.com/news/local-news/2020/10/award-winning-photographer-to-visit-wvu-p/>



John Noltner of Minnesota, an award-winning photographer, will present several exhibits and workshops at the Center for Civic Engagement at West Virginia University at Parkersburg. (Photo Provided)

PARKERSBURG — John Noltner, a Minnesota photographer who has shot for national magazines and Fortune 500 companies, will visit the Center for Civic Engagement at West Virginia University at Parkersburg, sharing photos and stories from his award-winning series *“A Peace of My Mind”* with the Mid-Ohio Valley.

Noltner will transform downtown Parkersburg businesses and organizations into exhibits, featuring portraits and stories from people of diverse backgrounds responding to the question, *“What does peace mean to you?”* Since 2009, he has driven over 40,000 miles across the U.S., meeting individuals and telling their stories.

“I’ve learned that storytelling can help build a community,” Noltner said. *“When we share our stories, we begin to see ourselves and those around us in new ways.”*

The community may view the *“American Stories”* exhibit through a free walking tour until Nov. 6. Participants are asked to follow social distancing and mask-wearing policies when viewing displays and entering local establishments.

Displays will be exhibited at:

- * WVU Parkersburg Center for Civic Engagement, 414 Market St.
- * Parkersburg Art Center, 725 Market St.
- * Actors Guild of Parkersburg, 724 Market St.
- * Wood County Society, 317 Eighth St.
- * Artsbridge, 925 Market St.
- * Edward Jones Office, 617 Market St.

Noltner also invites residents to be a part of his new exhibit, *“Voices of the Mid-Ohio Valley.”* From Tuesday to Friday, Noltner will host an on-site studio at the Center for Civic Engagement. Individuals wishing to have their portrait taken and share their voice and personal stories may make an appointment by calling 304 424-8341.

“I’m looking forward to gathering stories about resilience in the Mid-Ohio Valley,” Noltner said. *“We have all been through a lot over the past several months and storytelling has the ability to remind us how much we are connected, even as we may be apart.”*

“Voices of the Mid-Ohio Valley” will be on display at the Center for Civic Engagement from Nov. 4 to Nov. 14.

WVU Parkersburg will host two master class workshops with the artist for those wanting to learn more about photography, storytelling and writing.

* *Wide-Eyed Rambler: Photographing the surrounding beauty and wisdom* will be held on Nov. 3. During the session, Noltner will share his techniques and processes for photographing people, places and things while crafting storytelling images. He will use examples of his own photography from across the country and world.

* *Soul Sessions: Writing to reveal our personal story* will be held on Nov. 4. Noltner will lead a writing workshop designed to explore your own story and celebrate your mission, vision and values in the world. Participants will complete short writing exercises and open discussions, tapping into themes of vulnerability, courage and connection.

Both sessions will be from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. at the Center for Civic Engagement and are free and open to the public. Limited seats are available to accommodate social distancing. Please email wed@wvup.edu or call 304.424.8606 to register.

Programming is sponsored by the WVU Parkersburg, WVU at Parkersburg Foundation, Ross Foundation, First Energy, Parkersburg Area Community Foundation, Arts Collaborative of the Mid-Ohio Valley and Judy Sjostedt Ritchie.

News and Sentinel receives West Virginia Press Association awards

The Parkersburg News and Sentinel

Oct. 17, 2020

<https://www.newsandsentinel.com/news/business/2020/10/news-and-sentinel-receives-west-virginia-press-association-awards/>



The Parkersburg News and Sentinel won second place in the General Excellence category for advertising in the 2020 West Virginia Press Association awards. Pictured with the plaque are, first row, Lisa Northcraft, advertising manager; second row, from left, Heidi Cowan and Lindsey Thomas, account executives; third row, Stephanie Kesselring, special project coordinator for The Marietta Times and The Parkersburg News and Sentinel; fourth row, Advertising Manager Mary Jo Miller and Dax Mennillo, account executive. (Photo by Jess Mancini)

PARKERSBURG — The advertising and editorial staffs of The Parkersburg News and Sentinel were recognized with more than 20 awards in the annual West Virginia Press Association contest.

The newspaper's advertising department collected 13 prizes, including second place in the General Excellence category for daily publications with circulation of more than 16,000. Nine awards went to the editorial staff for writing, photography and design.

"Congratulations to our team," News and Sentinel Publisher Jim Spanner said. *"It's always exciting and gratifying to win awards that are voted upon by your peers. The News and Sentinel staff can be proud once again this year that all of our hard work and dedication is being recognized."*

"Our readers and advertisers can share in these awards, as we thank them for their continued partnerships and support," he said.

The North Carolina Press Association served as this year's judges.

"It's kind of nice when other newspapers are looking at our newspaper and finding things they like about our advertising," Advertising Director Lisa Northcraft said.

Advertising Manager Mary Jo Miller took first- and third-place honors in the category for Best Recruitment ad, while also notching a second-place award for Best Process Color Ad — Half Page or Less. Miller shared a first-place award with pre-print coordinator Kim Geibel for Best Special Section for *"Buttons,"* in which local advertisers were featured in a snowman's adventures.

The advertising staff recorded two first-place awards — one for its bus schedule presentation in Best Promotion of Public Notice and the other for Best Theme Page(s) — Classified for *"Spring Fix-Up."*

On the editorial side, the copy desk took home first place in Best Newspaper Design for the Jan. 4 and April 7, 2019, editions.

Executive Editor Christina Myer earned first- and second-place honors for Best Editorial, while reporter Michael Kelly received first place in the Service to the Community category for his series on the Marietta City Schools levy.

The General Excellence awards are based on the point totals for awards in each circulation division. The overall winners were the Charleston Gazette-Mail for advertising and editorial in Division I, the Bluefield Daily Telegraph in both categories for Division II, the Hampshire Review of Romney (editorial) and the Times Record & Roane County Reporter of Spencer (advertising) in Division III and the Moorefield Examiner (editorial) and Princeton Times (advertising) in Division IV.

The Bluefield Daily Telegraph was named West Virginia's Newspaper of the Year for 2020.

The awards are announced annually at the West Virginia Press Association convention, which was held virtually this year due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The convention page can be viewed online at wvpress.org.

"It only makes sense the coronavirus, which has changed almost every aspect of life this year, would dramatically impact the West Virginia Press Association annual celebration," said Don Smith, executive director of the association. *"The West Virginia Press Association is extremely honored to recognize these newspapers and their employees. We are thrilled our convention page allows us to share their awards and works with the public."*

The full list of awards for the News and Sentinel follows.

ADVERTISING

- * Parkersburg News and Sentinel, 2nd Place, Advertising General Excellence
- * Committee to Reelect Jim Justice, *"A bright future for WV kids,"* 1st Place, Best Political Ad
- * Mary Jo Miller, Primecare, 1st Place, Best Recruitment Ad
- * WVU Medicine, Parkinson's Disease, 1st Place, Best Process Color Ad — Larger than a Half Page
- * Staff, Bus schedules, 1st Place, Best Promotion of Public Notice
- * Kim Geibel, Mary Jo Miller, *"Buttons,"* 1st Place, Best Special Section
- * Downtown PKB, Downtown Throwdown, 1st Place, Best Spot Color Ad — Half Page or Less
- * Staff, *"Spring fix-up,"* 1st Place, Best Theme Page(s) — Classified
- * Mary Jo Miller, DuPont, 2nd Place, Best Process Color Ad — Half Page or Less
- * WVU-P, *"WVU Parkersburg Proud,"* 2nd Place, Best Process Color Ad — Larger than a Half Page
- * Staff, SWC, 3rd Place, Best Ad Campaign — Half Page or Larger
- * Art Smith, *"Get ready to race!"* 3rd Place, Best Newspaper Promotional Campaign

* Mary Jo Miller, Job fair, 3rd Place, Best Recruitment Ad

EDITORIAL

* Christina Myer, *“Plagiarism: DeMoss set poor example for students,”* 1st Place, Best Editorial

* Copy desk, Jan. 4 and April 7, 2019, editions, 1st Place, Best Newspaper Design

* Michael Kelly, Marietta City Schools levy series, 1st Place, Service to the Community

* Paul LaPann, Lifestyles columns, 2nd Place, Best Lifestyle Columnist

* Christina Myer, *“Schools: Consolidations, closures are necessary,”* 2nd Place, Best Editorial

* Michael Erb, Sword toss, 2nd Place, News Photography

* Sports staff, May 19 Sports section, 3rd Place, Best Sports Page(s)

* Madeline Scarborough, Roberts/McCoy murder trial, 3rd Place, Best Legal Affairs Reporting

* Staff, *“Pigskin Preview,”* 3rd Place, Best Sports Special Section

Madeline Scarborough is a WVU Parkersburg alumna.

Across the State

The State Journal

Oct. 19, 2020

https://www.wvnews.com/statejournal/news/top_story/across-the-state/article_57f09024-93c7-5252-8bea-722529807397.html

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Award-winning photographer visits WVU-P, displays exhibits with message of peace

WTAP-TV

Oct. 19, 2020

<https://www.wtap.com/2020/10/19/award-winning-photographer-visits-wvu-p-displays-exhibits-with-message-of-peace/>



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The Wirt County Journal

Oct. 21, 2020

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Traveling artist putting together art project using Mid-Ohio Valley residents [video]

WTAP-TV

Oct. 21, 2020

<https://www.wtap.com/2020/10/21/traveling-artist-putting-together-art-project-using-mid-ohio-valley-residents/>



PARKERSBURG, W.Va. (WTAP) - A traveling artist is in the Mid-Ohio Valley area putting together an art project involving how people have persevered in their darkest times.

John Noltner is the artist working on the multimedia arts project called the “Peace of My Mind Project” for roughly 12 years.

He’s working with West Virginia University of Parkersburg and a few organizations in town on this month-long project to discuss stories of resilience --- asking residents when they’ve found strength in the midst of struggle.

He then takes their statement of 25 works or less as well as a black and white photo of them to use for this project.

“We’ve all been through a unique and in some ways a difficult time over the last half a year as we’re dealing with coronavirus, as we’re figuring out how to socially distance from one another,” says A Peace of My Mind traveling artist, John Noltner. “So, what I’ve heard from a lot of people is a reliance on their family and friends; their support network. A reliance on faith. Just a sheer determination to get through what’s difficult and believe in that something better lies up ahead.”

Noltner has gotten through 60 people for this project already. Once the project is complete, posters of those photographed will be hung up along Market Street and projections of the photographs will be shown on the side of Smoot Theatre.

If you are interested in learning more about this project you can click on this [link](#) to find out more.

WVUP reports 8 COVID cases, halts face-to-face activities

The Parkersburg News and Sentinel

Oct. 26, 2020

<https://www.newsandsentinel.com/news/local-news/2020/10/wwup-reports-8-covid-cases-halts-face-to-face-activities/>

PARKERSBURG — According to an email sent out by West Virginia University at Parkersburg President Chris Gilmer, eight students, staff and/or faculty members have received positive test results for COVID-19 in the last week.

“I am announcing effective immediately that all face-to-face instruction is temporarily suspended on both campuses for a period of two weeks,” said Gilmer.

Face-to-face clinical placements for health care students are suspended for the same period as well.

"We will evaluate a return to the limited face-to-face instruction which we have been doing this semester to begin Monday, Nov. 9, with updates prior to that date and further decisions based on the trajectory of the pandemic," he said.

Gilmer is instructing a reduction in the face-to-face workforce for the same period of time, while maintaining essential academic and support services, especially services directly to students.

"Your vice president or direct supervisor will be in touch by close of business Wednesday with instructions for your division or department," said Gilmer.

Read the full story in Tuesday's edition of the paper.

WVUP suspends in-person classes 2 weeks because of COVID-19 outbreak [video]

WTAP-TV

Oct. 26, 2020

<https://www.wtap.com/2020/10/26/wvup-suspends-in-person-classes-2-weeks-because-of-covid-19-outbreak/>



PARKERSBURG, [W.Va.](#) (WTAP) - West Virginia University Parkersburg announced Monday that in-person classes have been suspended for two weeks because of a COVID-19 outbreak.

In a letter posted on the school's website, President Chris Gilmer said there have been eight confirmed cases among students, faculty and staff during the past week.

"A large residential university might consider this a more expected report, but at a community-based college of our profile where we are very close-knit and familial, this news distresses me greatly as I am sure it will distress you," Gilmer said in the letter.

"There are defining moments in leadership, and I believe this is one of those moments for me. Sometimes we get it right. Sometimes we get it wrong. Often, we don't know the verdict until the passage of time. Always, a leader shares credit for the good and takes responsibility for the bad, and I will model this behavior with this decision."

Gilmer said he made the decision after consulting with the university's board of governors and other members of the school's leadership.

"Face-to-face clinical placements for our healthcare students are suspended for the same period," he said. "We will evaluate a return to the limited face-to-face instruction which we have been doing this semester to begin Monday, November 9, with updates prior to that date and further decisions based on the trajectory of the pandemic."

Instruction at the university will continue, but for at least two weeks, it will be technology-enabled. Further instruction will be provided about registering for spring-semester courses.

"While technology-enabled instruction at the expense of face-to-face instruction is not an optimal longterm situation, we are doing our best in the short term to ensure the quality of the experience and to prepare you to shift back face-to-face as soon as it is safe to do so. Better days will come again, and please do not give up on your education or your dreams," Gilmer said.

During the next two weeks, all facilities will be deeply cleaned and health and safety protocols will be evaluated.

[Click here](#) to read the full letter from President Gilmer. This is a developing story. We will have updates online and during WTAP News.

West Virginia University at Parkersburg reports eight virus cases

The Parkersburg News and Sentinel

Oct. 27, 2020

<https://www.newsandsentinel.com/news/local-news/2020/10/west-virginia-university-at-parkersburg-reports-eight-virus-cases/>

PARKERSBURG — West Virginia University at Parkersburg has eight positive COVID-19 cases as reported by college president Chris Gilmer in an email to students Monday.

In a one-week period, the college saw its largest coronavirus positive cases to date. Gilmer said the eight positive cases are among both students and faculty members.

Those who tested positive are not experiencing severe symptoms, Gilmer said, and they will be in quarantine in their homes.

“A large residential university might consider this a more expected report, but at a community-based college of our profile where we are very close-knit and familial, this news distresses me greatly as I am sure it will distress you,” Gilmer said in the email.

All in-person classes have been suspended on the Parkersburg and Jackson County campuses for at least the next two weeks, at which time, the board of governors, executive team and Gilmer will re-assess the situation.

Gilmer also asked the vice presidents of each department to keep their staff members working remotely, if possible, while still providing all services.

Although in-person classes are temporarily suspended, Gilmer said both campuses will remain open.

“We will just be minimizing access. All of the college services at both campuses and downtown (in Parkersburg) will be going on and fully staffed,” Gilmer said. *“We will be minimizing access for a couple weeks and (will) possibly (be) asking people to make appointments. Nothing has changed. We’re still serving the students and the public, we’re just doing it more remotely.”*

During the two-week period, the campuses will receive additional deep cleaning.

“My foremost concern is for our students, like students across the nation, who have been asked to change almost everything about your college experience. To you, I say this: while technology-enabled instruction at the expense of face-to-face instruction is

not an optimal longterm situation, we are doing our best in the short term to ensure the quality of the experience and to prepare you to shift back face-to-face as soon as it is safe to do so," Gilmer said. "Better days will come again, and please do not give up on your education or your dreams. These are hard times, but hard times build character. We are fully invested in your success, and I ask each of you to remain fully invested in your success."

Calls for more information to the Mid-Ohio Valley Health were not immediately returned.

Academic Achiever of the Week: Autumn McKenna

WTAP-TV

Oct. 27, 2020

<https://www.wtap.com/2020/10/27/academic-achiever-of-the-week-autumn-mckenna/>



WIRT COUNTY, [W.Va.](#) (WTAP) - COVID-19 has expelled students from their usual learning facilities to their bedrooms, kitchens and mom and dad's home offices. There's not much to like about the situation for many students, but for one Wirt County High Schooler, there is at least one upside: she gets to draw more.

One of Autumn McKenna's favorite hobbies is dreaming up new characters, drawing them, and writing up their backstories. She also loves to watch film reviews and discuss art with other artists online. With hobbies like those and coursework that includes theater 101 and art, it's easy to see how she decided she wants to study film at the college level.

"I actually plan to go away for college and major in film. Specifically, screenwriting. That's what I want to do, [that is,] write for movies and maybe even direct. That's more of a long term goal though," said McKenna.

McKenna says she has been drawn to the arts from a young age, mostly by the creators who made her childhood special.

"Cartoons were a big part of my childhood," said McKenna. "Stephen Hillenburg, the creator of Spongebob, he's like a really huge inspiration to me. I used to want to animate for Disney or any type of cartoon but I'm really more just into writing. Animation is a very long process."

While she has a major picked out, she hasn't picked a college yet.

"I don't have my heart set on one place in particular, but as for in-state I was mostly looking at West Virginia State University because I believe they have some sort of film course. Out of state, I was looking at the University of North Carolina's school of arts. Kind of like a really out there thing: California. It's very expensive, but that's where they have all the big film schools," said McKenna.

Wherever she goes, she'll have a head start. The Wirt County High School senior is taking more classes at West Virginia University at Parkersburg this year than she is at WCHS. She's been taking college courses since she was 15 years-old and has maintained a 4.0 throughout her high school career.

"As in all the classes right now" said McKenna.

On top of her academic successes, McKenna uses her skills in the arts to make a little money on the side.

"Actually one of the positives of COVID has been, I've never drawn this much in my entire life," said McKenna. "I've been getting commissions, my first commission was last year in February. Basically, people pay me to draw for them, and I've been making a lot of money doing that."

Like many academic achievers, McKenna is involved in leadership programs, like the Future Business Leaders of America and YLA, Wirt County High School's youth leadership program.

She is also a member of the Homecoming Float Committee at school, which she says everyone should try at least once.

"The float committee is definitely something I recommend. Anyone if you have a chance to work on a float, you should. I've been on the float every year, I believe. It's just a lot of fun," said McKenna.

Several WVU Parkersburg students transition to online courses

The Pennsboro News

Oct. 28, 2020

Many students at West Virginia University at Parkersburg have made the transition to online courses.

While about 25 percent of students visit campus to complete hands-on courses that could not be converted fully to online, all students are using technology-enabled tools to complete the remainder of their coursework.

Faculty members started transitioning to online learning in March due to COVID-19.

As Holly Martin, associate professor, explains, "One thing that I love about teaching is the interaction with students in a face-to-face class. Creating that same sense of community in a virtual setting was one thing I most focused on when preparing my classes this semester. Several WVU Parkersburg students transition to online courses on when preparing my classes this semester."

Martin uses at least three means of communication with students. "Constant communication and timely feedback are critical for a virtual class," she said.

College faculty are teaching in a variety of ways. Many students meet with faculty and classmates at the same day and time in a virtual manner. Synchronous online learning is a new teaching method many faculty are embracing. Synchronous learning means the faculty and students are interacting at the same time.

As WVU-Parkersburg Provost Chad Crumbaker explains, "WVU-P faculty have taken technology-enabled instruction to the next level by finding various ways to truly engage with learners without being in a traditional classroom setting."

WVU Parkersburg has more than 50 degree programs students can choose from. Five of those programs are fully online, regardless of how instruction is delivered to the other programs.

Assistant professor Katie Life uses online instruction to allow her students to take more ownership of their learning in her math classes. Using a 'flipped-style classroom,' students watch the lecture as homework before the class, then spend their class time on higher-level development of the concept by completing projects, practicing harder example problems and discussing the concept more in-depth.

"With the virtual environments, it's like the material never grows cold. We're crafting all of these different layers to the learning process week after week after week," Life said. "It's really made me reconsider how I will teach once the pandemic has passed, honestly. I've learned a lot about myself and what my students can do."

Assistant professor Dr. Billy Stone also takes advantage of recording his lectures.

"Student feedback shows they enjoy the ability to refer to the recording to review class discussions," Stone said. "It's especially helpful should the student be absent from a Zoom meeting."

Some faculty do prefer more traditional online teaching methods but take extra precautions to engage students. As Tom Riddle, associate professor, explains,

"Online learning is lonely. There is less social interaction, and that makes motivation harder." However, he has found that students enjoy the flexibility in doing their work any time. "I notice many of my students seem to be night owls, and I get many early morning emails."

Although students no longer commute to campus, they can receive tutoring center services and sessions through Zoom.

Students can also take advantage of Brainfuse, which offers free tutoring and proofreading services 24/7.

Students struggling with online learning may visit the college's distance learning page to seek assistance.

"Online learning is a perfect example of the need for a community college," adjunct professor Terry Tamburini said. "Many students were headed to other institutions and chose WVU Parkersburg to save money."

Tamburini also found that students are taking advantage of online learning to expand their skill sets. “Some of my students seem older with a desire to use the opportunity for job upgrades.”

WVU-P Plans Online Classes for Spring

The St. Marys Oracle

Nov. 4, 2020

West Virginia University at Parkersburg will continue technology-enhanced learning for the spring 2021 semester, President Chris Gilmer has announced.

“This decision was made after very careful consideration of the most current public health information and future public health predictions and consultation with the leadership of the WVU Parkersburg Board of Governors and Executive Team,” Gilmer explained.

As with the current semester, limited in-person classes will continue for technical programs, labs, clinicals and field placements, evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Regarding the current semester, all classes, including face-to-face instruction, will be online from Nov. 23-Dec. 11.

That means students will not physically return to campus after Thanksgiving break. However, campus facilities will remain open during that time to register, advise and serve students as they prepare for the spring semester.

“Perhaps you might grow tired of hearing it, but I do not grow tired of repeating that I feel my first and most solemn duty is to do everything I can to keep this community safe and healthy. All other considerations, important as they may be, are secondary,” Gilmer said.

“I long for the day when this moment in time is behind us, and I pledge to you that we will emerge from it stronger and even more WVU-P Proud than we have ever been before.”

Spring classes will begin Monday, Jan. 11. Priority registration for current students began Monday, Nov. 2, and open registration will begin Monday, Nov. 9.

For support resources to help students participate in online courses, visit wvup.edu/distance-learning.

WVU-P will continue online classes in spring

The Wirt County Journal

Nov. 4, 2020

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WVU-P officials taking part in annual think tank virtual sessions

The Parkersburg News and Sentinel

Nov. 4, 2020

<https://www.newsandsentinel.com/news/local-news/2020/11/wvu-p-officials-taking-part-in-annual-think-tank-virtual-sessions/>

PARKERSBURG — The annual Think Tank of the National Institutes for Historically-Underserved Students will be held November 5-7, 2020 with officials at West Virginia University at Parkersburg playing a prominent role.

In the past the event was held at the local campus, but due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic this year's event will be held virtually, WVU-P President Chris Gilmer said.

"All events will be online, and as usual, we expect to attract leaders from education, business, and industry, as well as students, from across the nation," he said.

This year's events will include five sessions with over 50 national delegates and will provide conversation and tools to colleges and universities in assessing their readiness to serve historically-underserved students.

The first session, Students Speak – West Virginia Community Colleges Student Conversation, invites students from each of the nine West Virginia community and technical colleges to hold a facilitated dialogue on rebuilding the economy, organizers said.

Co-sponsored by the National Issues Forums and the West Virginia Center for Civic Life, this event promises to be a groundbreaking conversation among students throughout state systems, exploring similarities and regional differences across West Virginia's cultural landscape, they added.

The event will be held 10 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 5, on the university's YouTube channel at wvup.edu/youtube.

Panelists will include Sarah Armstrong Tucker, Chancellor, West Virginia Community & Technical College System; Betty Knighton, President, National Issues Forums Institute; Chris Gilmer, President, WVU-P; Torie Jackson, Vice President of Institutional Advancement, WVU-P; and students and facilitators from all nine West Virginia community and technical colleges.

Students Speak II – National Student Conversation about Racism and Racial Healing is the second panel to feature a student-led dialog. It will be held 3 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 5, on the university's YouTube channel at wvup.edu/youtube.

A group of diverse students invited from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), Tribal College and Appalachian College will engage in facilitated conversation about geographical and cultural differences in the perception of racism and racial healing, organizers said.

Co-sponsored by the National Issues Forums and the West Virginia Center for Civic Life, this event has the potential to explore the often-unheard student voice in one of the conversations most affecting them, uncovering what students have in common across cultures and how their understanding differs, they added.

Panelists will include Betty Knighton, President, National Issues Forums Institute; Chris Gilmer, President, WVU-P; Torie Jackson, Vice President of Institutional Advancement, WVU-P; Steven Smith, Vice President of Enrollment Management, WVU-P; and students from WVU-P, Tougaloo College, Alcorn State University, Adams State University and Sinte Gleska University.

Other events will be held for the delegates to the conference.

On Friday, the Research Alliance on Improving Post-Secondary Student Success in HBCUs will meet at 10 a.m.

The fall meeting led by the Regional Educational Lab Southeast at Florida State University brings together representatives of all HBCUs in the State of Mississippi. The delegates will have the opportunity to join these HBCU leaders in a conversation about the future of one of America's treasures, the HBCU system.

Derrick Johnson, Esquire, national President of the NAACP, will welcome the group of HBCUs on Friday morning.

Major funding for the National Institutes comes from a donation from The Erickson Foundation, although costs will be especially low this year due to the virtual nature of the events.

"As in the past, no state or student tuition dollars are being expended on the National Institutes which is funded entirely from private donations secured by the Office of the President. Particularly of note to this group will be a statewide facilitated conversation among students from all nine member institutions of the West Virginia Community and

Technical Colleges system (WVCTCS),” Gilmer said. “Students will discuss rebuilding the economy locally, statewide, and nationally.

“This session is being offered in partnership with the National Issues Forums (NIF) and the West Virginia Center for Civic Life and is thought to be the first time the NIF has facilitated a discussion with students from an entire statewide community college system.”

Professor Andrew Rochus agreed to serve to be the local facilitator for this event.

The closing ceremony for this year’s event will include a presentation from acclaimed photographer and oral documentarian John Noltner who will be culminating a month-long residency in the Mid-Ohio Valley and will showcase his local conversations on resilience, Gilmer said. Noltner’s residency was sponsored by the Parkersburg Area Community Foundation, The Arts Collaborative of the Mid-Ohio Valley, FirstEnergy, Judy Sjostedt-Ritchie, and The Ross Foundation.

The closing ceremony, which will be 11 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 7, will be available on the college’s Facebook and YouTube channels.

The 2020 Generations Award will also be presented.

Information will also be presented about the planned face-to-face Think Tank scheduled for November 2021 in Mississippi.

Peace of My Mind Project finished and on display on Market Street [video]

WTAP-TV

Nov. 4, 2020

<https://www.wtap.com/2020/11/04/peace-of-my-mind-project-finished-and-on-display-on-market-street/>



PARKERSBURG, W.Va. (WTAP) - Over the last few weeks a traveling artist has been working on a special project in the Mid-Ohio Valley. That project is now done.

The "Peace of My Mind Project" done by John Noltner was a way to showcase how residents in the area overcome adversity.

All of these displays of different people can be seen on Market Street from today until November 14.

Those that worked on this project say that everything that has been going on with the pandemic makes this display timely.

"One of the main components and what makes this such an exceptional exhibit is that we are living in such dire times right now. And a lot of people are not very hopeful," says National Institute for Historically Underserved Students Creative Director, David Creel. "And so this gives our community a lot of hope and positive mindset to just embrace your inner strength. And so to see all of the faces of our wonderful

community and see them all come together as one collective voice for the MOV that is just key to keeping that positive mindset.”

There will be projections of the 100 pieces of art that will be shown on the side of Smoot Theatre on Thursday and Friday of this week.

There will be a closing ceremony Saturday for the “National Institute for Historically Underserved Students” featuring Noltner and other speakers.

WVU-P receives grant for diversity projects

The Parkersburg News and Sentinel

Nov. 5, 2020

<https://www.newsandsentinel.com/news/local-news/2020/11/wvu-p-receives-grant-for-diversity-projects/>

PARKERSBURG — West Virginia University at Parkersburg has received funding for diversity initiatives.

The school is among 17 higher education institutions in the state awarded grants from the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission and Community and Technical College System to support strengthened diversity efforts.

The Diversity for Equity Grants support campus-led initiatives to make higher education more accessible to people of all ages, races, genders and backgrounds. Each institution received between \$2,000 and \$5,000 for individual projects.

WVU Parkersburg received \$5,000 for the Opening Pathways to Equity Now, Peer Facilitation Initiative, dubbed O.P.E.N.

“The Peer Facilitation Initiative is a program in development to identify and train students in coaching, conflict resolution, mediation, identifying the signs of stress, anxiety and depression and knowing when and how to make referrals to mental health professionals,” said Kurt Klettner, WVU Parkersburg O.P.E.N. logistics coordinator and campus counselor. *“The goal of the initiative is to have self-identified peers trained and available for fellow students to talk with in an effort to provide informal support in a compassionate and caring manner.”*

The task force is a group of self-selected individuals who strive for equity and inclusion at WVU Parkersburg. The goal of the group is to make campus more equitable for all students.

“Communication, open and without fear, is the most essential foundation stone of a successful equity and inclusion program,” college President Chris Gilmer said. “Our focus this year will be building and sustaining the skill sets needed for effective, non-prejudicial, inclusive conversation.”

National Convening Focuses on Historically-Underserved Students

Diverse Issues in Higher Education

Nov. 6, 2020

<https://diverseeducation.com/article/195742/>

More than 50 delegates from across the nation gathered virtually this week to strategize and brainstorm ways that colleges and universities can better serve historically-underserved students.

Privileging the voices of students, this year’s [National Institutes for Historically-Underserved Students](#) focused on a variety of topics that impact college-going students, including systemic racism, the economy and, of course, COVID-19.

The National Institutes — which is funded from private donations secured by the Office of the President at West Virginia University at Parkersburg — convened its first gathering after the 2016 election and was conceived as a civil rights movement of educational leaders from across the nation. Since then, the Institutes has convened face to face three times and this year virtually because of COVID-19.



“We grew from a network of old friends and colleagues committed to equity and inclusion into a national network with delegates from more than 20 states and the District of Columbia, and what is unique about our organization is that we put students at the center of everything we do,” said Dr. Chris Gilmer, founder of the National Institutes for Historically-Underserved Students and president of West Virginia University at Parkersburg. “The greatest arrogance of higher education is that it so often does not include the student voice, the voice most central to its purpose, and we will not be guilty of perpetuating that grave oversight.”

Each year, Gilmer invites dozens of prominent educational leaders to spend two days addressing critical issues. Dr. E. Gordon Gee, president of West Virginia University; Derrick Johnson, NAACP president; and Dr. Jamal Watson, communications professor at Trinity Washington University and former executive editor at *Diverse*, were among this year’s delegates

“This gathering was so deeply informative and left me energized for the work that must be done as we focus our attention on the issues that impact historically-underserved students,” said Watson. “Dialogue is important. But this was much more than just dialogue. There was a commitment for progressive action.”

This year, the focus, Gilmer said, was on student voices, convening a panel of historically-underserved students to discuss the timely topic of racism and racial healing.

“We included students from Sinte Gleska University, Adams State University, Alcorn State University, Tougaloo College and West Virginia University at Parkersburg. The students talked to each other. The current generation of educational leaders listened, and the resulting conversation was transformational,” Watson said.

Bringing two HBCUs, one HSI, one Tribal college and one Appalachian university together, in partnership with the National Issues Forums, is perhaps the most intentionally diverse convening of student voices on this topic, by race and by geography, ever undertaken, he added.

“What sets the National Institutes apart is our mission,” he said, adding that there are many other organizations already serving individual populations of historically-underserved students by race, sex, sexual orientation, gender, veterans or first-generation status. “We are seeking to fill a major hole. We are addressing what

underserved students have in common across multiple populations, and we are unaware of any other group taking this direction as its major focus.

“How are Latinx and African American students similarly underserved because of race? How are students at tribal colleges and first-generation students at other colleges, regardless of race, similarly underserved?”

Later this winter, Gilmer said that the Institutes will pilot a toolkit developed in consultation with a researcher at Florida State University with the purpose of helping colleges and universities nationwide honestly self-assess their readiness to serve underserved students. He said that while liberty and justice have been a noble promise, they have not been fully realized.

“Until a college has a deliberate and frank internal conversation about its status quo and admits its limitations, it cannot hope to break down these barriers,” he said. “Until all of higher education engages in this conversation and then acts on it, we cannot reasonably expect to improve educational attainment for underserved students and thereby increase economic equality for all people.”

WVU-P associate registrar receives Anderson-Milam Award

The Parkersburg News and Sentinel

Nov. 7, 2020

<https://www.newsandsentinel.com/news/local-news/2020/11/wvu-p-associate-registrar-receives-anderson-milam-award/>

PARKERSBURG — An associate registrar at West Virginia University at Parkersburg has received an award from the West Virginia Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers.

Associate Registrar Sandi Smith has received the Anderson-Milam Award.

The award honors distinguished young professionals in admissions, records or enrollment management who have made a significant contribution to association and have been involved with the organization for a minimum of five years.

“Receiving the Anderson-Milam award is one of the most significant events of my professional career,” Smith said. “To be selected out of so many deserving individuals is truly an honor. I feel blessed to be a member of such an amazing organization.”

Smith assists the university’s registrar’s office with the operations of the records office.

Serving about 12 years with the association, Smith is the Constitution Committee chair and previously served on the executive committee for five years as the treasurer and president of the organization. She began working in the WVU Parkersburg records office in 1995 as a records assistant and promoted to transfer analyst before receiving an associate registrar title in 2008.

Smith received her associate's degree from Fairmont State University and her bachelor's from WVU Parkersburg. She has been the recipient of the West Virginia Community College Association Outstanding Contributions Award, Staff Member of the Year by WVU Parkersburg and is the four-time recipient of WVU Parkersburg's Employee of the Month.

The Anderson-Milam Award was established in 1976 to commemorate the services of Douglas Anderson, former West Virginia State College registrar, and Otis Milam, former Fairmont State College registrar. The individual who receives the award has made a significant contribution to the association and is presented it as a distinguished service award.

Veterans Day events scheduled in the Mid-Ohio Valley

WTAP-TV

Nov. 9, 2020

<https://www.wtap.com/2020/11/09/veterans-day-events-scheduled-in-the-mid-ohio-valley/>

PARKERSBURG, [W.Va.](#) (WTAP) - With the COVID-19 pandemic continuing, holding traditional Veterans Day parades poses challenges. However, many cities are planning safe ways to recognize area veterans. Find details of upcoming events in the Mid-Ohio Valley below. WTAP will continue to provide updates about additional events as more information becomes available.

Marietta: There will be a drive-by reverse parade, starting at between Papa Johns and Phillips Elementary on Wayne St., make a loop in front of elementary, go back down Elmwood Ave, and back onto Pike St. Veterans will be driving, students and others who wish to honor the veterans will be standing.

In addition, Marietta Morning Rotary will be hosting a Veterans Day flag dedication on November 11 at 2 P.M., at the Discovery Gardens. The flag pole will be dedicated in honor of the club's first president and Air Force veteran, Charlie Schob.

Parkersburg: A ceremony will be held on Wednesday, November 11 at 10 A.M. at City Park. It will include speakers, performances of the national anthem and the anthems for each branch of the military, and more.

Ripley: On Wednesday, Nov. 11 with a 10 A.M., there will be a parade followed by a ceremony. The parade will begin near Ripley High School and proceeds to the Veterans Memorial on the lawn of the Jackson County Courthouse. A number of veterans, special guests, and guest speakers will participate, and Ripley High School's 2020 homecoming court will be honoring their own military connections.

St Mary's: There will be a Veteran's Day ceremony on November 11 at 11 A.M., at Veterans Park next to the St. Mary's city building. There will be a number of featured speakers.

Vienna: Wednesday, November 11 at 12 P.M. at Spencer's Landing's Cold Star Memorial, at the intersection of 28th St. and River Rd. The ceremony will include statements from Mayor Randy Rapp, Jerry Smith of the Wood County Detachment 1087 Marine Corp League, and others. It will also include live music from Nicole Stewart, the National Anthem, and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Williamstown: There will be no public ceremony due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but there will be a small luncheon for area veterans held at the American Legion.

WVUP: West Virginia University at Parkersburg will host a virtual Veteran's Day Celebration on Wednesday, November 11, at 12:15 P.M., on Facebook Live and YouTube. The presentation, given by Veterans Advocate Darren Shearlock, will honor veterans with a period of thanks, discussion of the history and meaning of Veterans Day and how WVU Parkersburg serves its veteran community.

National Convening Focuses on Historically-Underserved Students

Equal Opportunity Today

Nov. 9, 2020

<https://equalopportunitytoday.com/2020/11/09/national-convening-focuses-on-historically-underserved-students/>

More than 50 delegates from across the nation gathered virtually this week to strategize and brainstorm ways that colleges and universities can better serve historically-underserved students.

Privileging the voices of students, this year's [National Institutes for Historically-Underserved Students](#) focused on a variety of topics that impact college-going students, including systemic racism, the economy and, of course, COVID-19.

The National Institutes — which is funded from private donations secured by the Office of the President at West Virginia University at Parkersburg — convened its first gathering after the 2016 election and was conceived as a civil rights movement of educational leaders from across the nation. Since then, the Institutes has convened face to face three times and this year virtually because of COVID-19.

“We grew from a network of old friends and colleagues committed to equity and inclusion into a national network with delegates from more than 20 states and the District of Columbia, and what is unique about our organization is that we put students at the center of everything we do,” said Dr. Chris Gilmer, founder of the National Institutes for Historically-Underserved Students and president of West Virginia University at Parkersburg. “The greatest arrogance of higher education is that it so often does not include the student voice, the voice most central to its purpose, and we will not be guilty of perpetuating that grave oversight.”

Each year, Gilmer invites dozens of prominent educational leaders to spend two days addressing critical issues. Dr. E. Gordon Gee, president of West Virginia University; Derrick Johnson, NAACP president; and Dr. Jamal Watson, communications professor at Trinity Washington University and former executive editor at *Diverse*, were among this year's delegates

“This gathering was so deeply informative and left me energized for the work that must be done as we focus our attention on the issues that impact historically-underserved students,” said Watson. “Dialogue is important. But this was much more than just dialogue. There was a commitment for progressive action.”

This year, the focus, Gilmer said, was on student voices, convening a panel of historically-underserved students to discuss the timely topic of racism and racial healing.

“We included students from Sinte Gleska University, Adams State University, Alcorn State University, Tougaloo College and West Virginia University at Parkersburg. The students talked to each other. The current generation of educational leaders listened, and the resulting conversation was transformational,” Watson said.

Bringing two HBCUs, one HSI, one Tribal college and one Appalachian university together, in partnership with the National Issues Forums, is perhaps the most intentionally diverse convening of student voices on this topic, by race and by geography, ever undertaken, he added.

“What sets the National Institutes apart is our mission,” he said, adding that there are many other organizations already serving individual populations of historically-underserved students by race, sex, sexual orientation, gender, veterans or first-generation status. “We are seeking to fill a major hole. We are addressing what underserved students have in common across multiple populations, and we are unaware of any other group taking this direction as its major focus.

“How are Latinx and African American students similarly underserved because of race? How are students at tribal colleges and first-generation students at other colleges, regardless of race, similarly underserved?”

Later this winter, Gilmer said that the Institutes will pilot a toolkit developed in consultation with a researcher at Florida State University with the purpose of helping colleges and universities nationwide honestly self-assess their readiness to serve underserved students. He said that while liberty and justice have been a noble promise, they have not been fully realized.

“Until a college has a deliberate and frank internal conversation about its status quo and admits its limitations, it cannot hope to break down these barriers,” he said. “Until all of higher education engages in this conversation and then acts on it, we cannot reasonably expect to improve educational attainment for underserved students and thereby increase economic equality for all people.”

This content was originally published [here](#).

Broadway Advocacy Coalition Announces Broadway VS

Broadway Direct

Nov. 10, 2020

<https://broadwaydirect.com/broadway-advocacy-coalition-announces-broadway-vs/>

Inspired by the cultural phenomenon Verzuz, the [Broadway Advocacy Coalition](#) (BAC) has announced *Broadway VS*, the musical event you’ve been waiting for.

Hosted by Amber Iman, the *Broadway VS* will be live-streamed from Shubert Studios at New World Stages on Tuesday, November 17 at 7:00 PM ET. To register or donate, please click [here](#).

Celebrating the legendary careers of Tony Award winners André De Shields and Lillias White, BAC will honor the legacies of these Broadway icons while raising funds to support the next generation of BIPOC leadership within the theatre industry through the Cody Renard Richard Scholarship Program, as well as BAC's other initiatives to support and empower artist activists.

The evening will feature song selections from their extensive careers on Broadway and on film including music from *The Wiz*, *Dreamgirls*, *Hercules*, *The Life*, *Full Monty*, and more as well as conversations between the two iconic Broadway stars.

...

Lillias White has appeared on Broadway in starring or featured roles since 1981. These roles include Joice Heth in *Barnum*, Grizzabella in *Cats*, Effie in *Dreamgirls*, Mama Morton in *Chicago*, Jonesy in *How To Succeed in Business...* and Asaka in *Once On This Island*. She was nominated for a Tony Award for her portrayal of Funmilayo Anikulapo Kuti in *Fela!* and received The Outer Critics Circle, Drama Desk and Tony Award for her featured role in *The Life*. Other memorable performances include Hennie in *Romance in Hard Times* at the Public (Obie Award), *Crowns* at Second Stage (Audelco Award), *Texas in Paris* at The York Theatre (Lucille Lortel nomination), and *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* at the Mark Taper Forum (N.A.A.C.P. AWARD). Concert work includes appearances at The Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center, Vitellos, The Purple Room, 54 Below (Bistro Award) and the Green Room 42. On TV Miss White can be seen on "Law & Order," "Law & Order SVU," "Person of Interest," and on Netflix as Fat Annie in *The Get Down*. Lillias is the voice of The Lead Muse in Disney's animated film *Hercules*. Lillias White holds Honorary Doctorates from the City University of New York and **University of West Virginia-Parkersburg**.

Coplin Health Systems and WVU Parkersburg announce new clinic for campus and community

WTAP-TV

Nov. 10, 2020

<https://www.wtap.com/2020/11/10/coplin-health-systems-and-wvu-parkersburg-announce-new-clinic-for-campus-and-community/>



PARKERSBURG, W.Va. (WTAP) - Students at WVU Parkersburg will soon have access to a new community-based health clinic scheduled to open on campus in the year 2021-2022. Coplin Health Systems and WVU Parkersburg have formed a partnership to establish a clinic to serve the needs of the college and Mid-Ohio Valley for greater access to health care.

"I believe the greatest service we can give our students, faculty, staff, their families and the community at large is high quality, free or reduced-cost healthcare available to them right on our Parkersburg campus," said Dr. Chris Gilmer, WVU Parkersburg president. "Coplin will be a wonderful partner because of our shared commitment to serve those who are currently underserved."

Coplin Health Systems, established in 1978 as the Wirt County Health Services Association, currently services Wirt, Jackson and Wood counties in [W.Va.](#) and Meigs county in Ohio with nine different facilities, including three school clinics.

Services offered will include primary and acute (walk-in) care for all ages. The clinic will also have behavioral health and on-site laboratory services.

“WVU Parkersburg and Coplin Health have large goals for the campus and community,” said Rob Dudley, Coplin Health Systems chief executive officer. “It is our priority to offer quality, yet affordable, healthcare and advocate for children and families. We have wonderfully skilled providers and would like to grow our services with the needs of our community.”

Coplin Health Systems is a Federally Qualified Health Center. As such, providers will care for individuals and families with full, partial or no insurance coverage. The organization also offers a sliding scale payment model to make care affordable regardless of a person’s income.

“Our employees have health insurance they can use, and WVU Parkersburg plans to work through its Foundation to develop a fund to cover the cost for students who might not be able to afford healthcare so the WVU Parkersburg community is fully served,” Gilmer said. “Students and employees from our Jackson County Center will also be welcome at Coplin’s Jackson county clinics.”

Jackson County Center students, faculty and staff will be able to receive the same services at the Ripley Family Care, Jackson County School Wellness Center or River Valley Family Care in Ravenswood. Beyond medical services, the clinic hopes to serve as a learning environment for WVU Parkersburg nursing and health sciences students. Coplin Health Systems offers practicums to aspiring medical students and will discuss arrangements with the college to provide clinical experiences for those pursuing their certificate or associate degree in a qualifying program.

“Our two Boards have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding which will hopefully culminate in the opening of this new facility,” said Gilmer. “We still have to work out the details, but we are very excited and optimistic about this partnership for our college family.”

Dudley is also hopeful about the opening of the clinic. “We are excited to fulfill the vision for a university-based clinic,” Dudley said. “There is still much work to do, but we are excited to know Coplin Health and WVU Parkersburg will offer quality health and wellness services to the campus and surrounding community.”

Coplin Health Systems and WVU Parkersburg Announce new clinic for campus and community

Clutch MOV

Nov. 11, 2020

<https://clutchmov.com/coplin-health-systems-and-wvu-parkersburg-announce-new-clinic/>

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WVU-P marks Veterans Day with virtual program

The Parkersburg News and Sentinel

Nov. 12, 2020

<https://www.newsandsentinel.com/news/community-news/2020/11/wvu-p-marks-veterans-day-with-virtual-program/>

PARKERSBURG — “I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic.”

Millions of men and women around the country have spoken those words and pledged their lives to the county. Those men and women were recognized during West Virginia University at Parkersburg’s virtual Veterans Day program.

The ceremony was presented by Veterans Advocate Darren Shearlock, a retired Army Master Sergeant.

He began by explaining the definition of a veteran. He said people often misinterpret the word “veteran” and think they are people who are currently serving or people who have died in combat.

However, he said veterans are “anyone who served in the active military or air service and were discharged for reasons other than dishonorable.”

Shearlock said Veterans Day serves to honor all past, present and to pay tribute to future members of the military.

To commemorate the day, WVU-P’s art club placed flags on the tombstones of the veterans in the Poorhouse Cemetery.

He recognized them by name and stated which war they served in; a majority of them served in World War II.

Shearlock then talked about the oath and mentioned that it extends not only while they’re in the service but for life.

“Our nation knows we can count on our veterans who will stand up and defend us. It puts the nation in a position where we don’t always have to fight,” he said. “Others will try not to test us because they know the strength of our veterans. They know how many we have that have taken that oath and will continue to take that oath.”

WVU-P helps veterans prepare for their future and offers multiple services.

“We honor veterans every day here, not just on the Memorial, Veterans Day or Armed Forces Day. I’m so proud to work for a university that is ranked eighth in the nation for student veterans,” Shearlock said. “It enables them to reach their education, professional and career goals.”

He ended the ceremony by asking people to thank a veteran.

“You are our protectors who protected us against all enemies foreign and domestic (...) you protect our way of life,” he said.

WVU Parkersburg Hosts the National Institute for Historically-Underserved Students Virtual Think Tank

Clutch MOV

Nov. 13, 2020

<https://clutchmov.com/wvu-parkersburg-hosts-the-national-institute-for-historically-underserved-students-virtual-think-tank/>

“If this nation is ever to reach its full potential, it must invest in young people,” NAACP President and CEO Derrick Johnson reminded those convening for a Research Alliance of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

WVU Parkersburg hosted The National Institute for Historically-Underserved Students Virtual Think Tank from Nov. 5 – Nov. 7, 2020. The event fostered conversation surrounding community colleges in West Virginia, racism and racial healing and the improvement of post-secondary student success nationwide. A diverse student panel consisting of students from HBCUs, Hispanic-Serving Institutions and an Appalachian College brought student perspectives, while the Think Tank is composed of more than 50 delegates from colleges across the nation who are experts in the fields of uplifting underserved students in today’s society.



Derrick Johnson, president and CEO of the NAACP

“Maybe you’ve heard the saying that you should never put off until tomorrow what you can accomplish today. Therefore, today is the time to start creating opportunities for our students. In colleges like our Appalachian institutions where students come from varied backgrounds, we have to strive to provide equity,” said Dr. Torie Jackson, vice president of Institutional Advancement. “We also know that students can use their critical thinking skills and their ideas for innovation to help us solve inequalities that exist. I have found time and time again that the greatest resources are often already within our institutions and they deserve a voice in helping us solve any issues we confront.”

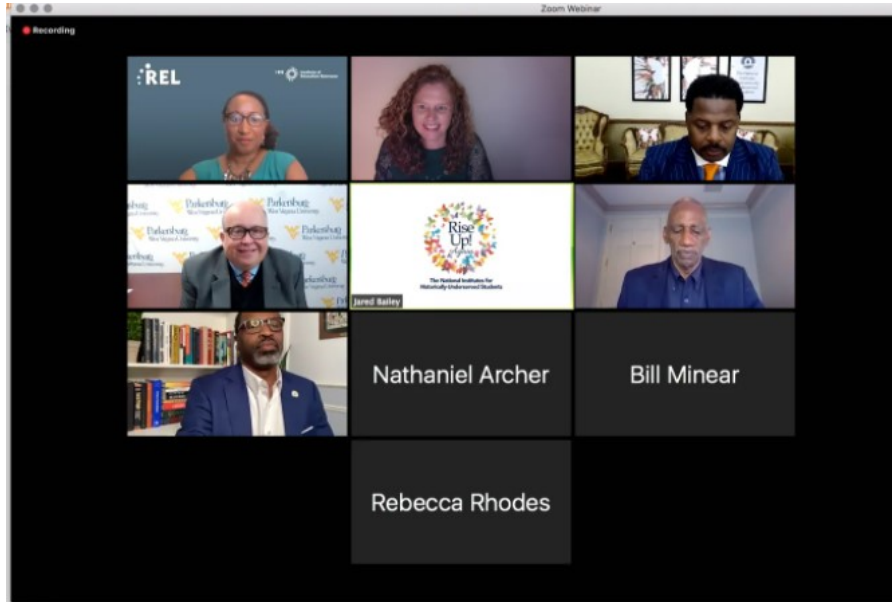
As always, the think tank sessions focus on the underserved student experience.

“The greatest arrogance of higher education is that it so often does not include the student voice, the voice most central to its purpose, and we will not be guilty of perpetuating that grave oversight,” said Dr. Chris Gilmer, founder of the National Institutes for Historically-Underserved Students and president of WVU Parkersburg.

This year, two sessions focused exclusively on the student voice: Students Speak – West Virginia Community Colleges and Student Conversation and Students Speak II – National Student Conversation about Racism and Racial Healing. The West Virginia Center for Civic Life co-sponsored each session. The first session explored similarities and differences across West Virginia’s cultural landscape and the second session explored conversations about racism and racial healing and how it affects them, their culture, and their understanding of different cultures.

“We listened to each other, we accepted one another, and together we were able to use our voices to bring awareness to issues that many can’t even speak civilly about,” said Sarah Weeks, WVU Parkersburg student panelist. “Our cultures are so different coast to coast, but that’s what makes it so beautiful. Our differences make our conversations that much more powerful, and because we were able to speak about our different cultures we were also able to educate others on how we can embrace the difference to create change.”

After the students expressed their voices, the Regional Educational Lab Southeast at Florida State University hosted the Research Alliance on Improving Postsecondary Student Success in HBCUs. Co-sponsored by the National Institutes for Historically-Underserved Students, the delegates joined representatives from all HBCUs in Mississippi about the HBCU system. Among those representatives was Derrick Johnson, president and CEO of the NAACP.



Regional Educational Lab Southeast at Florida State University hosted the Research Alliance on Improving Postsecondary Student Success in HBCUs

Panel moderator and WVU Parkersburg Vice President for Enrollment Management Dr. Steven Smith describes Johnson as “a leader of men and women and children” through his work with the NAACP and other organizations throughout his life. Johnson represents one profile of an underserved student.

“I grew up in Detroit and it’s so important for institutions to serve students who were born in certain zip codes outside of their control – outside of their ability to choose the level of quality of education they were received K through 12, to choose the environment that they are growing up in or to choose any of life’s indicators. And, because of institutions like Tougaloo, my alma mater, or Jackson State or many other campuses across the country that are built to serve students with a profile as I had – whether urban communities or rural communities where their families that are broken up or families that are put together of circumstances that result of economic conditions; there needs to be a pathway for students with my profile,” Johnson said. “Now with that said, I cannot think of a better avenue for someone like me than HBCUs. Also, understand that there are many other institutions that serve underserved children, both in West Virginia and Kentucky, and across this station. If this nation is ever to reach its full potential, it must invest in young people.”

Johnson remarked that the greatest migration on the planet was Black people moving from the South to the North, but the second-largest migration was working poor

whites who chose to migrate from the mountains of West Virginia and Kentucky to pursue a better quality of life. They were neglected in terms of educational opportunities and often exploited for cheap labor and never invested in by their communities.



Students sharing their perspective during a session focused on the student voice

“It is important for us to begin to talk across communities and to continue to talk across campus. It is important for us to identify and leverage best practices so that the many, many students who have the potential to do well can have the benefit of their talents added to society to make their communities and this nation a stronger nation. Thank you for your efforts to assure young people who are like me, that we have an opportunity,” Johnson said.

Looking to the future, the delegates are working to create an entire toolkit of resources that universities can utilize to help students.

“For future collegiates, these efforts signify hope and acceptance. Yes, we know not all students come from the same backgrounds, but we do believe that all students deserve rich opportunities,” Jackson said.

Coplin Health Systems and WVU Parkersburg announce new clinic for campus and community

Jackson Newspapers

Nov. 13, 2020

<https://www.jacksonnewspapers.com/news/20201113/coplin-health-systems-and-wvu-parkersburg-announce-new-clinic-for-campus-and-community>

Students at WVU Parkersburg will soon have access to a new community-based health clinic scheduled to open on campus in the year 2021-2022.

Coplin Health Systems and WVU Parkersburg have formed a partnership to establish a clinic to serve the needs of the college and Mid-Ohio Valley for greater access to health care.

“I believe the greatest service we can give our students, faculty, staff, their families and the community at large is high quality, free or reduced-cost healthcare available to them right on our Parkersburg campus,” said WVU Parkersburg president Dr. Chris Gilmer said. “Coplin will be a wonderful partner because of our shared commitment to serve those who are currently underserved.”

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"Our two Boards have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding which will hopefully culminate in the opening of this new facility," Gilmer said. "We still have to work out the details, but we are very excited and optimistic about this partnership for our college family."

Dudley is also hopeful about the opening of the clinic. "We are excited to fulfill the vision for a university-based clinic," Dudley said. "There is still much work to do, but we are excited to know Coplin Health and WVU Parkersburg will offer quality health and wellness services to the campus and surrounding community."

Coplin Health Systems, WVU-P announce new clinic

The Parkersburg News and Sentinel

Nov. 14, 2020

<https://www.newsandsentinel.com/news/business/2020/11/coplin-health-systems-wvu-p-announce-clinic/>

PARKERSBURG — Coplin Health Systems and WVU Parkersburg have formed a partnership to establish a clinic to serve the needs of the college and Mid-Ohio Valley for greater access to health care.

"I believe the greatest service we can give our students, faculty, staff, their families and the community at large is high quality, free or reduced-cost healthcare available to them right on our Parkersburg campus," said Chris Gilmer, president of WVU Parkersburg. *"Coplin will be a wonderful partner because of our shared commitment to serve those who are currently underserved."*

Coplin Health Systems, established in 1978 as the Wirt County Health Services Association, services Wirt, Jackson, Meigs and Wood counties in West Virginia and Ohio with nine facilities, including three school clinics.

The community-based health clinic is scheduled to open on campus in the year 2021-2022. Services offered will include primary and acute (walk-in) care for all ages, behavioral health and on-site laboratory services.

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Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down

The Parkersburg News and Sentinel

Nov. 16, 2020

<https://www.newsandsentinel.com/opinion/editorials/2020/11/thumbs-up-thumbs-down-207/>

UP: To the number of organizations that last week found a way to observe Veterans Day without the usual parades and large gatherings. *“(Veterans) are our protectors who protected us against all enemies foreign and domestic ... you protect our way of life,”* said Veterans Advocate Darren Shearlock, during West Virginia University at Parkersburg’s virtual ceremony. Thank you, to all who found a way to make this important day special.

UP: To the number of local organizations who have also found a different way to carry out their special holiday project this year. For example, the Arc of the Mid-Ohio Valley, which has reworked its annual Secret Christmas program. *“It is more important than ever to make the holidays a little more special for people who don’t have the resources to do it on their own,”* said Liz Ford, executive director of the Arc. They are not the only ones of course. From the Salvation Army to the United Way, there are plenty of groups who make the holidays a little brighter every year, and aren’t going to let COVID-19 stop them this year.

DOWN: To vandalism that has reached the point in one local park that Parkersburg officials feel reluctant to spend money on improvements to the facilities, for fear any new structures would simply be covered in graffiti or otherwise damaged. Though some of our neighborhoods are struggling, it is essential that we work to rebuild the pride in our communities that would lead to some respect of their amenities.

WVU-P offering Thanksgiving meals to students and staff

WTAP-TV

Nov. 17, 2020

<https://www.wtap.com/2020/11/17/wvu-p-offering-thanksgiving-meals-to-students-and-staff/>

PARKERSBURG, [W.Va.](#) (WTAP) - WVU-Parkersburg's Riverhawk Food Pantry is distributing Thanksgiving meals to students, faculty, and staff in need.

Those who would like a meal have until Wednesday, November 17 to contact the food pantry, and meals will be available for drive-through pickup on Thursday, November 18.

Meals will include mashed potatoes, stuffing, vegetables, and a turkey and the number of meals available is not limited. So far, there have been approximately 21 meals prepared.

According to Health and Wellness Coordinator Pamela Santer, who is spearheading the meal distribution, the pantry has seen more of a need this year, possibly due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

"Our numbers have increased some. But we do an Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas meal, and we usually see more students taking advantage of that than the food pantry," Santer said.

Some of the ingredients for the meals are donated, and the university's foundation has a fund that is used to purchase the turkeys.

Those who would like to request a meal can do so by emailing Santer at pamela.santer@wvup.edu or calling 304-424-8205 by November 17.

Coplin Health Systems and WVU Parkersburg Announce New Clinic for Campus and Community

West Virginia Executive

Nov. 17, 2020

<http://www.wvexecutive.com/coplin-health-systems-and-wvu-parkersburg-announce-new-clinic-for-campus-and-community/>

Students at WVU Parkersburg will soon have access to a new community-based health clinic scheduled to open on campus in the year 2021-2022. The new clinic is the latest example of the college's commitment to providing students the resources necessary to achieve academically and personally.

Coplin Health Systems and WVU Parkersburg have formed a partnership to establish a clinic to serve the needs of the college and Mid-Ohio Valley for greater access to health care. The clinic's opening will mark an important milestone in WVU Parkersburg's student services and Coplin Health's community outreach.

"I believe the greatest service we can give our students, faculty, staff, their families and the community at large is high quality, free or reduced-cost healthcare available to them right on our Parkersburg campus," said Dr. Chris Gilmer, WVU Parkersburg president. "Coplin will be a wonderful partner because of our shared commitment to serve those who are currently underserved."

Coplin Health Systems, established in 1978 as the Wirt County Health Services Association, currently services Wirt, Jackson and Wood counties in W.Va. and Meigs county in Ohio with nine different facilities, including three school clinics.

Now, more than ever, it is important to support the medical needs of the community. A new survey from the National Association of Free and Charitable Clinics show an increase in patients seeking no/low-cost medical care. The survey shows the ongoing needs of at-risk patients during the pandemic.

Services offered will include primary and acute (walk-in) care for all ages. The clinic will also have behavioral health and on-site laboratory services.

"WVU Parkersburg and Coplin Health have large goals for the campus and community," said Rob Dudley, Coplin Health Systems chief executive officer. "It is our priority to offer quality, yet affordable, healthcare and advocate for children and

families. We have wonderfully skilled providers and would like to grow our services with the needs of our community.”

Coplin Health Systems is a Federally Qualified Health Center. As such, providers will care for individuals and families with full, partial or no insurance coverage. The organization also offers a sliding scale payment model to make care affordable regardless of a person’s income.

“Our employees have health insurance they can use, and WVU Parkersburg plans to work through its Foundation to develop a fund to cover the cost for students who might not be able to afford healthcare so the WVU Parkersburg community is fully served,” Gilmer said. “Students and employees from our Jackson County Center will also be welcome at Coplin’s Jackson county clinics.”

Jackson County Center students, faculty and staff will be able to receive the same services at the Ripley Family Care, Jackson County School Wellness Center or River Valley Family Care in Ravenswood.

“I am very excited for an on-campus health care facility,” said Sarah Weeks, WVU Parkersburg student. “WVU Parkersburg excels at putting its students first. Not only will the clinic provide care for the campus and community but it also has the potential to be a place of learning for our nursing, patient care technician and other health sciences students.”

Beyond medical services, the clinic hopes to serve as a learning environment for [WVU Parkersburg nursing and health sciences](#) students. Coplin Health Systems offers practicums to aspiring medical students and will discuss arrangements with the college to provide clinical experiences for those pursuing their certificate or associate degree in a qualifying program.

“Our two Boards have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding which will hopefully culminate in the opening of this new facility,” said Gilmer. “We still have to work out the details, but we are very excited and optimistic about this partnership for our college family.”

Dudley is also hopeful about the opening of the clinic. “We are excited to fulfill the vision for a university-based clinic,” Dudley said. “There is still much work to do, but we are excited to know Coplin Health and WVU Parkersburg will offer quality health and wellness services to the campus and surrounding community.”

Young Guns

West Virginia Executive

Nov. 18, 2020

<http://www.wvexecutive.com/young-guns/>

In West Virginia, we pride ourselves on many things, and three of them are the natural beauty of the landscape, the passion of our people and the young professionals who continue to drive our state forward.

At its inception, *West Virginia Executive* magazine established an honors program to recognize those who drive the success of the Mountain State. Since then, we have inducted 18 classes of West Virginia professionals into the ranks of *West Virginia Executive's* Young Guns.

Our Young Guns represent West Virginia's next generation of leaders who are already accomplishing great things through their careers both in the business world and in their communities.

Torie Jackson, Vice President of Institutional Advancement, WVU Parkersburg, and President & CEO, WVU at Parkersburg Foundation



Tracy A. Toler photography.

Growing up, Torie Jackson kept charts of constellations above her bed and dreamed of becoming an astronomer. As it turns out, another career path for her seems to have been written in the stars. Jackson, vice president of institutional advancement at West Virginia University (WVU) Parkersburg and president and CEO of the WVU at Parkersburg Foundation, has worked in the world of mass communications in some capacity for most of her career.

During her second semester of college, Jackson walked into *The Parkersburg News & Sentinel* office to ask for a job, and the editor gave her a chance. She set a goal to be a newspaper editor by the time she was 25, but by that time, she was already a newspaper owner. She later began teaching journalism at WVU Parkersburg and created the curriculum for bachelor's degree options in communication and media studies, a program in which she still teaches as an associate professor.

In her current role, Jackson works every day in the areas of marketing, communication, alumni relations, career services, public relations, experiential learning, scholarships and donor cultivation and stewardship. She also works with 11 high schools in the region on an early college program.

"I am blessed to participate in so many activities, and I find each day is different and never routine," she says. "In all my tasks, I am able to provide opportunities for people to either begin or continue their educational journey. I can think of no greater job."

No matter what job she holds or where she may be, Jackson never stops trying to better herself and the world around her, which is what inspires her to give back.

"I became involved in community service activities years ago because I felt that if I wanted to see a change or see a service provided, I needed to do my part to make it happen," she says.

Jackson is a board member for the Children of Promise in Action sports association, which offers soccer and basketball leagues to youth in Ritchie County, and she serves as a board member for the TLC Pregnancy Center of Ritchie County, an organization that offers classes and career assistance to young mothers-to-be.

Just as she finds fulfillment in helping others, Jackson is passionate about opportunities for educational advancement, as she believes involvement is necessary to help improve the state's education system. She is in her fifth year on the Ritchie County Board of Education, and she serves as the co-director of Region V for the West

Virginia School Board Association. She is also a member of the Content Standards Training Committee for the West Virginia State Board of Education.

Perhaps the service most near and dear to Jackson is her involvement with the Ritchie County Youth Camp, which she and her husband, Todd, founded more than 10 years ago. Each year, Jackson writes a grant to host the camp at no cost to the campers.

“Knowing the expense of a youth camp, my husband and I decided it was time to lead the way and provide an inexpensive option for youth in our community,” says Jackson. “We have up to 130 students attend annually.”

She also finds time to volunteer as general manager and cohost at WPKM 96.3 FM, the college radio station she was instrumental in creating at WVU Parkersburg.

“In essence, all my community service activities are about providing a voice for others, whether that is through making decisions on a county school board or allowing local radio to air,” she says.

Jackson is proud to live and work in the Mountain State—and rural Ritchie County, in particular.

“I spent years working in media and interviewing outsiders who would come to West Virginia,” she says. “They always found a bit of Southern charm in West Virginia: a place where people know their neighbors, where communities band together to help one another and where a good work ethic is still found. I love that I can make a difference here. As a friend once told me, ‘Why be a small fish in a big pond when you can be a shark in a koi pond?’”

Coplin Health to open clinic at WVU-P in 2021

The Wirt County Journal

Nov. 18, 2020

Students at WVU Parkersburg will have access to a new community-based health clinic scheduled to open on campus during the 2021-22 school year.

Coplin Health Systems and WVU Parkersburg have formed a partnership to establish a clinic to serve the needs of the college and Mid-Ohio Valley for greater access to health care.

“I believe the greatest service we can give our students, faculty, staff, their families and the community at large is high quality, free or reduced-cost healthcare available to them right on our Parkersburg campus,” said Dr. Chris Gilmer, WVU Parkersburg president.

“Coplin will be a wonderful partner because of our shared commitment to serve those who are currently underserved.”

Coplin Health Systems, established in 1978 as the Wirt County Health Services Association, currently services Wirt, Jackson and Wood counties in West Virginia and Meigs county in Ohio with nine facilities, including three school clinics.

Services offered will include primary and acute (walk-in) care for all ages. The clinic will also have behavioral health and on-site laboratory services.

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“There is still much work to do, but we are excited to know Coplin Health and WVU Parkersburg will offer quality health and wellness services to the campus and surrounding community.”

Student teaching process adapts to pandemic

The Parkersburg News and Sentinel

Nov. 18, 2020

<https://www.newsandsentinel.com/news/local-news/2020/11/student-teaching-process-adapts-to-pandemic/>



West Virginia University at Parkersburg' student teacher Cameron Gault during a remote instruction lesson at Blennerhassett Elementary school. (Photo Provided)

PARKERSBURG — Entering her final semester in the education program at West Virginia University at Parkersburg, student-teacher Cameron Gault has been learning on the fly during one of the most uncertain school years in memory.

With rules changing almost every day due to COVID-19, Gault's cooperating teacher has been Blennerhassett Elementary School first-grade teacher Breanna Shahan.

"You go to college for four years, and they prepare you for student teaching. Then when we get here, it's a completely different setup. Just kind of throwing us in here and I'm doing pretty good, I think," Gault said on student teaching with Shahan. *"It's been great. I wrote an evaluation on her the other day actually, and my exact words were 'I couldn't handpick a better person to put me with.'. Because our personalities mesh well together, we work well together. It's just been a really great experience."*

Under normal circumstances when teaching a classroom, Gault and Shahan would split the class into two groups and individually teach their group. But with a different group of students every other day and smaller classroom sizes, Gault has been handling the in-person teaching duties while Shahan works with students on remote learning. According to Shahan, that has been a big help during this chaotic school year.

"Having her really has allowed me to focus more on the online work, which she has also been a part of. But if she wouldn't have been here, I don't know how I could have gotten it all done, to be honest," Shahan said. *"Because it's literally one job to do the classroom work, and it's a separate job online."*



Blennerhassett Elementary 1st grade teacher Breanna Shahan during a remote instruction lesson at Blennerhassett Elementary school. (Photo Provided)

Gault said she enjoys seeing two different groups every other day and going over the same lessons.

"In a lot of ways, I feel like it's similar, just because we were doing the blended learning, it's like having two classrooms. So it was kind of cool to have one group one day and then another group the next day," she said. "I felt like the days were kind of usually the same, except for when we would still plan on Schoology online. So we were making lesson plans for in-class as well as online."

Starting at the beginning of the school year instead of later on like other student teachers, Gault was able to work closely with Shahan before school started to get everything ready for whatever the school year would bring.

Teaching since 2002, Shahan has typically kept student teachers working within the school day hours. But due to COVID, Gault has been helping Shahan at all hours of the day. From delivering items to student's houses or checking for updates on the School Alert System map.

Shahan said that student-teaching during this unusual time will be beneficial for Gault and others.

"This year, the name of the game is flexibility. I think if you can make it through this, you can make it through about anything in teaching. So I think it's been really good for them because they've got to see the crazy side and how you have to be so adaptable," Shahan said. "I think if she can handle this, she'll be OK. She's done a great job. She's been very flexible."

Gault, who grew up in Wood County and graduated from Parkersburg High School, plans to be a substitute teacher in Wood County while searching for a full-time job when she graduates in December.

WVU Parkersburg honors veterans

Jackson Newspapers

Nov. 18, 2020

<https://www.jacksonnewspapers.com/news/20201118/wvu-parkersburg-honors-veterans>

WVU Parkersburg honored veterans, past and present, on Nov. 11 with a virtual Veterans Day celebration and placing 13 flags in the college's poorhouse cemetery.

Members of the WVU Parkersburg Veterans Corps and Art Club placed American flags on soldiers' graves who fought from the Second World War to the Korean War. They also placed two flags at the cemetery entrance for unknown veterans.

The Wood County Poorhouse, which once stood on WVU Parkersburg's property, served as a working farm and residence for the area's needy. A fire in the poorhouse's infirmary is believed to have destroyed many residents' records from 1910 to 1920.

"I come from a military family," said Traci Mills, WVU Parkersburg student, and Art Club member. "By placing flags on these graves, it is my way of saying 'thank you.' The ones buried here were once people too, and it is our job to make sure they are not forgotten."

Veterans honored at the poorhouse cemetery include Robert Edward Baker, PFC, US Army, WWII; Samuel Butcher, Patriot; Carl M. Caveney, PVT, US Army, WWII; Roy G. Dingler, PVT US Army, WWII; John A. Goudy Jr., PFC, US Army, Korea; Pearl Richard Harkin, US Army, WWII; Daniel Willard Leisure, SR, US Navy; Olin Rexroad, US Army, WWII; Olin T. Sayre, PVT, US Army, WWII; Renley Smith, PVT, US Army, WWII; Donald W. Watson, US Navy; Edward W. Waybright, PVT, US Army, WWII; and Wesley Henry Waybright, PFC, US Army, WWII.

Veterans Advocate Darren Shearlock also shared the college's thanks to veterans for their service and dedication during a virtual Veterans Day celebration. Shearlock gave a history of Veterans Day, the difference between the national holiday and Memorial Day, and how the college serves its veteran students.

WVU Parkersburg is ranked eighth in the nation by Military Times as one of the best career and technical colleges for veterans. This is due to the support and resources offered to enable veterans to reach their educational, professional, and career goals, including providing students assistance when applying for Veterans Assistance benefits, giving college credit for military experience, helping transition from military to civilian life, and offering additional veteran-based scholarships.

"I chose WVU Parkersburg because it is best for vets," student veteran Sedonie Beckford said. "I am proud to honor those who served and made it possible for those to follow behind them."

To watch WVU Parkersburg's Veterans Day Celebration, visit wvup.edu/live or [youtube.com/wvuparkersburg](https://www.youtube.com/wvuparkersburg). For more information on the college's Veterans Resource Center, contact Veterans Advocate Darren Shearlock at darren.shearlock@wvup.edu or 304-424-8000 ext. 337.

WVU Parkersburg honors veterans

Mineral Daily News-Tribune

Nov. 18, 2020

<https://www.newstribune.info/news/20201118/wvu-parkersburg-honors-veterans>

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Shopping small, helping big in downtown Parkersburg

The Parkersburg News and Sentinel

Nov. 21, 2020

<https://www.newsandsentinel.com/opinion/local-columns/2020/11/shopping-small-helping-big-in-downtown/>

Downtown PKB along with several other downtown businesses have put together an exciting line-up of activities and shopping for Shop Small (previously Small Business Saturday) on Friday, Nov. 27 and Saturday, Nov. 28. Shop and eat in downtown Parkersburg and kick off your holiday season by spending time in our unique shops and restaurants. Grab a bite to eat and pick up a gift certificate at one of our downtown restaurants, then find a one-of-a-kind gift for someone on your shopping list at one of the artists markets. There will be activities for the kids, so the whole family can join in on the fun. Our planned activities include:

* Artsbridge — 925 Market St.

Free take-and-make craft kits for kids on Friday & Saturday.

Artist market on Friday and Saturday.

* Downtown PKB — Parking lot at 317 Eighth St.

Holiday Photo Shoot. By appointment only, Nov. 27 & 28. Photos on Nov. 27 taken by Steve Spencer of Spencer Imageworks. Photos on Nov. 28 taken by Olivia Reeder with the West Virginia University at Parkersburg Foundation.

* Julia-Ann Square Historic District

A self-guided tour. A rack card to assist you with the tour can be picked up in the brochure box, located at Ninth and Juliana Streets.

* Maka Mia Pizza — 327 Juliana St.

\$1 slice on Saturday.

Photo opportunity in Christmas cutout.

* Parkersburg Art Center — 725 Market St.

Free admission on Friday & Saturday.

Refreshments.

Holiday Artist Market.

Annual Artist Tree Display.

Free take-and-make craft kits for kids on Friday & Saturday.

* The Blennerhassett Hotel — 320 Market St.

Historic tours on Friday & Saturday starting at 4:30 p.m.

Buy a beautiful arrangement at the flower cart.

\$1 coffee on Friday & Saturday.

Christmas Tree Display.

Breakfast with Santa on Saturday. By reservations only.

* United Way — Parking lot at 317 Eighth St.

Distributing 2-1-1 materials.

* Wood County Society — 317 Eighth St.

Open Friday & Saturday.

Will have promotions on both days.

Artisan specials.

Artists on-site.

Free take-and-make craft kits on Friday & Saturday.

Small businesses are the backbone of our community. They need our support always, but especially during this unfamiliar time. Spending local helps your friends and community and the local economy. Remember when visiting these businesses they will be following guidelines to prevent the spread of Covid-19. Please wear your mask and practice social distancing.

Thank you to Maka Mia Pizza, Parkersburg Art Center, The Blennerhassett Hotel, United Way Alliance of the Mid-Ohio Valley, Wood County Society, and Chapman Printing for collaborating with us and helping us to plan this event.

These animals lost their limbs. Tech put them back on their feet

Nov. 25, 2020

CNET

<https://www.cnet.com/news/these-animals-lost-limbs-tech-put-them-back-on-their-feet/>



While Keating has a very dashing pirate peg leg, he also has a more modern 3D printed front leg. Photo provided by Nancy Miller.

Pegs and Printers

Not all pet owners are willing or financially able to take on the challenge of finding a vet and a prosthetist to work with their furry pal over the long term.

Luckily for Keating, an almost 6-year-old greyhound-boxer mix, his humans are up for the job. In fact, it is their job.

Mark and Nancy Miller own Miller Prosthetics and Orthotics in Belpre, Ohio. In 2014, they received an email from a listserv they were on asking if anyone would be willing to adopt a puppy who was born without part of his right front paw.

The Millers drove down to the shelter in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and brought Keating home.

Over the years, Keating -- who Nancy describes as happy and "obviously well-fed" -- has had a few prosthetics, including a hand-turned peg leg that helped win him a costume contest held at a fundraiser for a local animal shelter (he was a pirate).



Keating shows off his 3D printed leg. Photo provided by Nancy Miller.

As solid as that pirate leg was, though, the Millers had been interested in getting into 3D printing. They decided maybe Keating's leg could be their first project.

There were challenges along the way. While it seemed like using a 3D scanner might be an easier way to get a scan of Keating's leg, it turned out the scanner couldn't really interpret dog hair. Other scanners took longer, meaning the Millers would have to get a sedative from the vet so that Keating would hold still during the scan.

With the help of a prosthetics instructor in Tulsa, Oklahoma, named Rick Sevier and the maker space at West Virginia University of Parkersburg, in July 2019 Nancy was able to print a blue and black leg that says "Keating" on it, based on her husband's design.

"As long as it fits, he'll use it and he'll run with it," Nancy says. "He doesn't think about it. He just wants to go," She and Keating even did a 3-mile turkey trot race in November on his 3D printed leg.

Keating, now a certified therapy dog, has become something of a greeter and ambassador at the Millers' clinic. He might be their laziest employee, Nancy says, but he's a comfort for folks in the office. And, in classic dog fashion, he's able to get the newspaper every morning.

WVUP's Dr. Torie Jackson honored by West Virginia Executive Magazine

WTAP-TV

Dec. 1, 2020

<https://www.wtap.com/2020/12/01/wvups-dr-torie-jackson-honord-by-west-virginia-executive-magazine/>

PARKERSBURG, [W.Va.](#) (WTAP) - Dr. Torie Jackson, WVU-Parkersburg's (WVUP) vice president of institutional advancement and WVUP Foundation president and CEO, has been named to the Young Guns class of 2021 by West Virginia Executive Magazine.

The award is presented annually to 10 accomplished professionals in the state whom the publication believes to be among West Virginia's next generation of leaders.

Jackson said she was pleasantly surprised when she was notified of the honor by the magazine.

"I was of course very excited. It's nice to represent the Parkersburg area and, of course, WVU-Parkersburg throughout the state, I always enjoy that opportunity," Jackson said. "It gave me the opportunity to be able to share the stories of some of our students with a larger audience," she added.

Jackson was presented the award at a socially-distanced ceremony hosted by the magazine where masks were required. She gave a speech in which she discussed the work being done by WVUP students who see enticing reasons to stay in the Mid-Ohio Valley as their careers progress and to contribute to the local economy.

In choosing award recipients, the magazine often focuses on community service, Jackson explained. To that end, the magazine was particularly interested in the Ritchie County summer camp for children that Jackson and her husband founded over a decade ago. The camp offers character building and more to between 135 and 150 students every year.

The magazine's full profile of Jackson can be read [here](#).

Salvation Army puts new spin on Red Kettle fundraiser

WTAP-TV

Dec. 1, 2020

<https://www.wtap.com/2020/12/02/salvation-army-puts-new-spin-on-red-kettle-fundraiser/>

PARKERSBURG, W.Va. (WTAP) - With the pandemic affecting the Salvation Army's ability to raise funds with their traditional red kettles during the holiday season, the organization has found a new way to take in donations.

The non-profit is doing this with its "Season of Hope" campaign at the Grand Central Mall.

The mall is getting involved with this collaboration alongside the Watering Can Art Studio and West Virginia University-Parkersburg.

Each of the kettles features a design of a Parkersburg-based business that is helping in the effort.

You can donate money at any of the many kettles, or you can use the QR codes next to them.

"Not only can you donate here physically with your cash or your check but you can donate online for these kettles," says Salvation Army commanding officer, Patrick Richmond. "You can go to redkettlenow.com and click on the Parkersburg kettle and

then when you make your donation there's a comment line that you can add which kettle you're voting for with your donation."

The display is at the Canvas Project across from the food court.

They are available from today until this Saturday from when the mall opens to when it closes.

WVU-P education division recognized by CAEP

The Parkersburg News and Sentinel

Dec. 2, 2020

<https://www.mariettatimes.com/news/local-news/2020/12/wvu-p-education-division-recognized-by-caep/>

PARKERSBURG — The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) recognized the WVU Parkersburg Elementary Education program as one of nine providers recognized for their leadership and commitment to continuous improvement.

The Frank Murray Leadership Recognition for Continuous Improvement is named after the founding President of Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) Frank Murray. He served as chairman of the TEAC Board and one of the initial CAEP Board of Directors members.

The recipients of the Frank Murray Leadership Recognition for Continuous Improvement award showed accreditation where there was no area for improvement.

Dr. David Lancaster, WVU Parkersburg Education division chairperson and professor, has worked to revise the Elementary Education program to address the new CAEP Elementary standards and meet the West Virginia Department of Education requirements for yearlong residency.

"The award validates what we have been working on for the past seven years as we restructured our program to meet the rigor of the CAEP standards," Dr. Lancaster said. "It is evidence supporting what we already knew about our program; it is excellent."

Recipients are selected by the Educator Preparation Providers (EPP). The EPP evaluates providers' performance regarding their readiness for the challenges that

arise in America's classrooms, showing equity and excellence in their preparation of teacher candidates.

"This award is directly connected to the hard work of the Elementary Education team at WVU Parkersburg," Dr. Lancaster said.

"The collaboration between my WVU Parkersburg team and our partnerships have taken us beyond my expectations."

This is the first accreditation from the CAEP given to the WVU Parkersburg Education Department; however, the department previously received accreditation by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education.

Receiving accreditation ensures teacher candidates meet rigorous standards prior to graduation. Teacher candidates with an Elementary Education degree from WVU Parkersburg have the option of securing a teaching certificate for any state in the United States.

For more information on the WVU Parkersburg Education Department, contact Lancaster at dlancas1@wvup.edu.

WVU-P plans virtual STEM experience for teens

The Parkersburg News and Sentinel

Dec. 3, 2020

<https://www.newsandsentinel.com/news/local-news/2020/12/wvu-p-plans-virtual-stem-experience-for-teens/>

PARKERSBURG — West Virginia University at Parkersburg will make going virtual fun for Mid Ohio Valley's youth.

From Dec. 28-31, the WVU-P Workforce and Economic Division will host a Virtual Teen 3D Printing Academy, an educational STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) experience.

"What we do is build students' knowledge of technology and processes used from the foundation up; we do this through a guided build of a 3D printer, with explanations about each component along the way," said Logan Mace, WVU-P program coordinator.

Usually, the event would be in-person, but with the COVID-19 pandemic numbers rising, WVU-P will deliver the classes via Zoom, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Students will be provided with a 3D printer to keep. The academy will also provide students with a spool of filament, enrollment in the Maker Club with the first month's dues paid and a swag bag.

Instructional content will include: introduction to 3D printing, building a 3D printer, learning the components and functions of a 3D printer, the 3D printing process, exploring the 3D printing slicer Cura and settings for common materials, 3D printing troubleshooting and using 3D printing in various professional fields.

"My hope is each student will be engaged because it's a subject they are choosing to learn," Mace said. "I love having students who are genuinely interested and apply the knowledge learned to their lives, and I predict it will be as engaging and fun as in-person, just a little different."

The class is \$150 per person, and registration must be received by Dec. 14. The 3D printer must be picked up on Dec. 17 or 18 before 4 p.m. Please email wed@wvup.edu or call 304-420-8606 for more information and to make arrangements to pick up supplies. Visit wvup.edu/3d-printing to download an application. Limited seats are available, so call ahead to make sure open spots remain.

WTAP News @ 6 – Student of the Week: Breckin Hoff

WTAP-TV [video]

Dec. 3, 2020

<https://www.wtap.com/video/2020/12/04/wtap-news-student-week-breckin-hoff/?fbclid=IwAR0f2NGthI5w16JQXCbbGQ-V6D374NYyGMOac97mJX0KUP4BHZHHcFVUmYk>

NEW MATAMORAS, Ohio (WTAP) - This week's Student Athlete of the Week is Frontier's Breckin Hoff.

Hoff is a key contributor and leader for both the basketball and football teams at Frontier.

He was a wide receiver on the Cougars football team that won their first playoff game in school history this season.



Hoff likes football the most, but is serious about basketball as well.

His team last year won the OVAC Championship and is looking to do the same this year, despite being a young team, but Hoff is a senior leader that can take control of the game on both ends of the court.

Frontier basketball coach Roger Kirkpatrick says Hoff has been a fierce defender for him, and this year he hopes that he can take on more of a role on the offensive side.

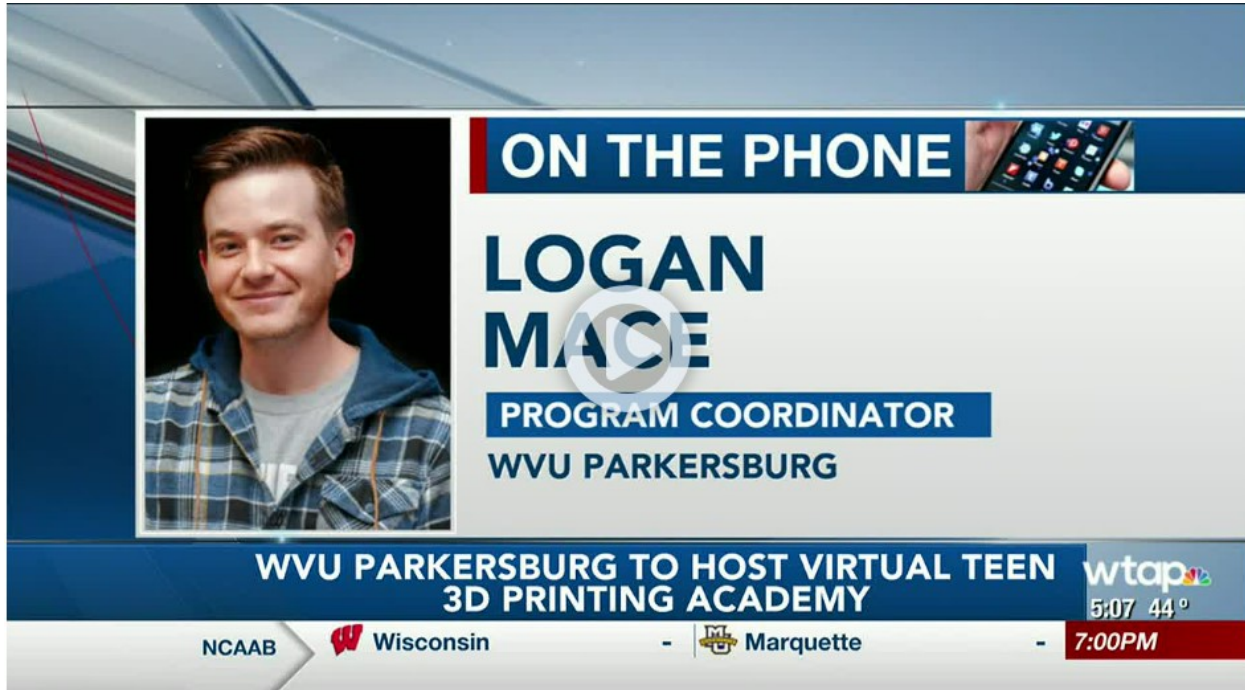
Breckin Hoff is a future Riverhawk planning to attend WVU Parkersburg's Chemical and Polymer Operator Technology program.

WVU Parkersburg to host virtual teen 3D printing academy

WTAP-TV [video]

Dec. 4, 2020

<https://www.wtap.com/2020/12/04/wvu-parkersburg-to-host-virtual-teen-3d-printing-academy/>



PARKERSBURG, [W.Va.](#) (WTAP) - WVU Parkersburg will be hosting a virtual teen 3D printing academy December 28- 31st from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The educational STEM experience will help students increase their knowledge of technology through the guided process of building a 3D printer. Each student will be provided with a 3D printer to keep.

In the academy, students will learn the different aspects of a 3D printer, including the components and functions, the 3D printing process, exploring the 3D printing slicer Cura and settings for common materials, 3D printing troubleshooting and using 3D printing in various professional fields.

“When we start to reach the people who have a really invested interest in this, they can start to spread that knowledge within their communities and their circles,” said Logan Mace, program coordinator. “That’s what I enjoy about it, being one of the

people who are helping you know spread the STEM knowlegde to those who really enjoy it.”

ADVERTISEMENT

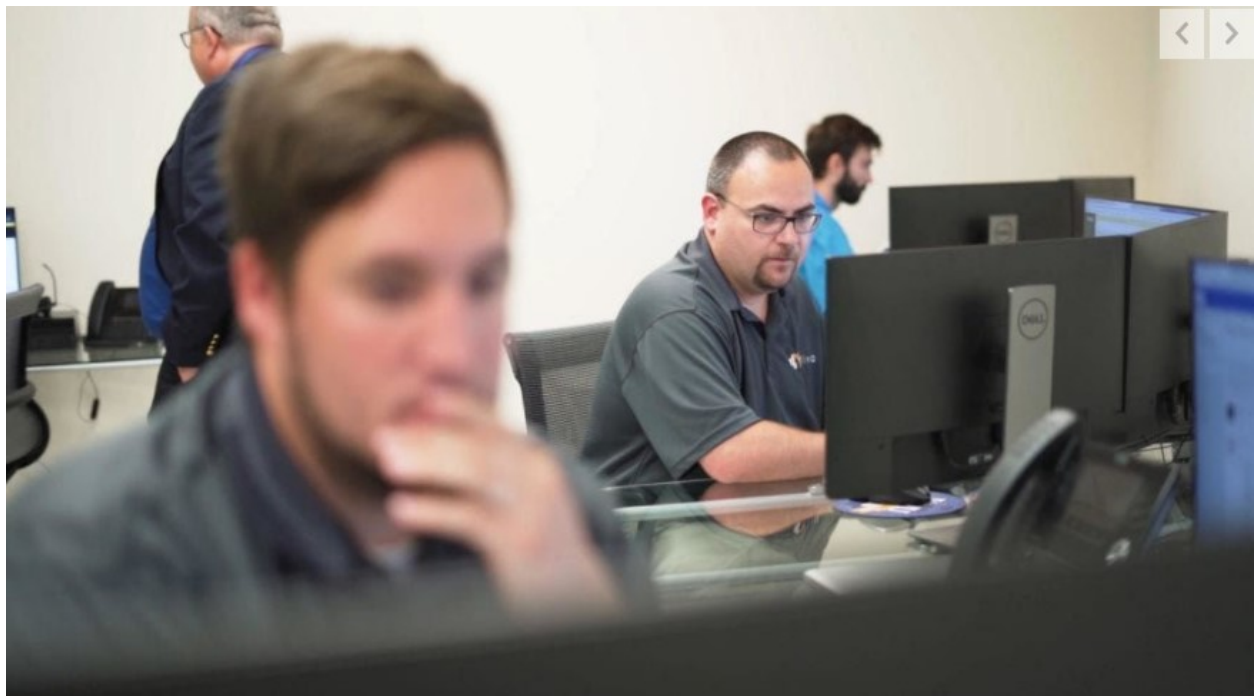
The class is \$150 per person, and registration must be received by Dec. 14. The 3D printer must be picked up on Dec. 17 or 18 before 4 p.m. Please email wed@wvup.edu or call 304-420-8606 for more information and to make arrangements to pick up supplies. Visit wvup.edu/3d-printing to download an application.

Virginia based IT company committed to remote working in West Virginia

WV News

Dec. 6, 2020

https://www.wvnews.com/news/wvnews/virginia-based-it-company-committed-to-remote-working-in-west-virginia/article_9483d6d4-e3dc-51b6-bfa1-f314777315f7.html



Corey Orr, Chris Anderson and Brandon Roberts – all full-time Ntiva employees – work inside the company’s service desk academy inside West Virginia University at Parkersburg

CHARLESTON — Ntiva, an IT company based out of Virginia, has been promoting the idea of remote working for longer than a decade, and has remained committed to hiring West Virginia natives.

Ben Martin, the director of remote operations for Ntiva, said that, while the COVID-19 pandemic has opened many businesses to the idea of remote working, it's something his company has been practicing for almost 15 years, with many of the hires being made out of — and staying in — West Virginia despite many of the company's clients being in areas such as Washington, D.C., Chicago and New York City.

"We actively are going all in on building a remote workforce in West Virginia, because we love the workforce," Martin said. "We're getting amazing IT talent and great cultural fit. ... We were all in before COVID. We're adopting a model now where we're going to roll out more flexible work arrangements for workers all over the place."

Martin said that while remote working is helpful in 2020 to help slow the spread of the pandemic, there are myriad other benefits to take into consideration, as well.

"There are so many advantages to the company, the team members and the community as a whole," Martin said. "For the team members, you get a better quality of life. If you're not in one of these cities, you don't have to spend an hour and a half commuting each way. You don't spend a ton of money in gas or commute. As a team member, you have so much more salary in your pocket, and you don't have the danger and frustration of a crazy commute."

He added that remote working reduces one's carbon footprint, creating a boon for the environment, as well.

Martin said that another important goal of the company is to get college students interested in working on IT with Ntiva, which led to the "Ntiva Service Desk Academy."

Last year, Ntiva partnered with West Virginia University at Parkersburg to create the service desk, a concept that set out to give students real world experience through internships at the company, all while never having to leave the school's campus.

"It's a fully functional IT service desk team and department where students can take their classes and then, in the same building, work hand in hand with their colleagues, and they're getting real world experience working with our live clients on live issues," Martin said. "It's not a theoretical thing. They're literally applying day-to-day what they're learning in class and learning from our full-time team members. ...

"When they graduate, not only do they have their degree, but they can also put on their resumes that they worked for a year as a service desk technician with one of the

leading MSPs in the country. I think that gives them such a huge leg up, not only in West Virginia, but across the country.”

Josh Strahler, Ntiva’s senior service desk manager, was one of the first students at WVU Parkersburg to take advantage of Ntiva’s partnership with his schools in 2010. He’s been with the company since graduation, and helped establish the service desk at the school.

“Just in the first year, out students came back to us and were blown away with being able to tangibly associate things that they were learning in class with an issue they were working on that same day,” Strahler said. “The marrying of those two things have been instrumental.”

Martin said Ntiva works with these students well after graduation, as well.

“Once those students graduate, we offer them a full-time job, and then we help them plan a career path ... up through the service desk,” Martin said. “The idea is picking your career path, and we’ll help you get there.”

Strahler said one of his goals is to reach out to other institutions in the state to implement similar service desks, expanding Ntiva’s “talent engine” to encompass all of West Virginia.

“We really want to expand this and go beyond WVU Parkersburg,” Strahler said. “They’ve been a great partner, but they’re just one part of West Virginia. We’d like to eventually go throughout the rest of the state and find other community colleges to tap into and really replicate the program across the state.”

Currently, Ntiva has about 25 team members working throughout the state, and while currently there are only four interns in the WVU Parkersburg service desk at a time, Martin hopes to boost that number up to eight, and then 12, in the near future.

While not many of Ntiva’s clients are in West Virginia, Martin said the company is committed to keeping its remote workers there, and he hopes that, with the pandemic now forcing other companies to see the benefits of remote working, the concept will remain popular long after the pandemic ends.

He also wants to accentuate the strength of West Virginia’s workforce, and hopes Ntiva can be a driving force in promoting technology careers throughout the state.

“We want to create a model where employers like Ntiva can engage students while they’re still in high school and help them put together an education and career path that’s sort of like what we wish somebody would have done for us,” Martin said.

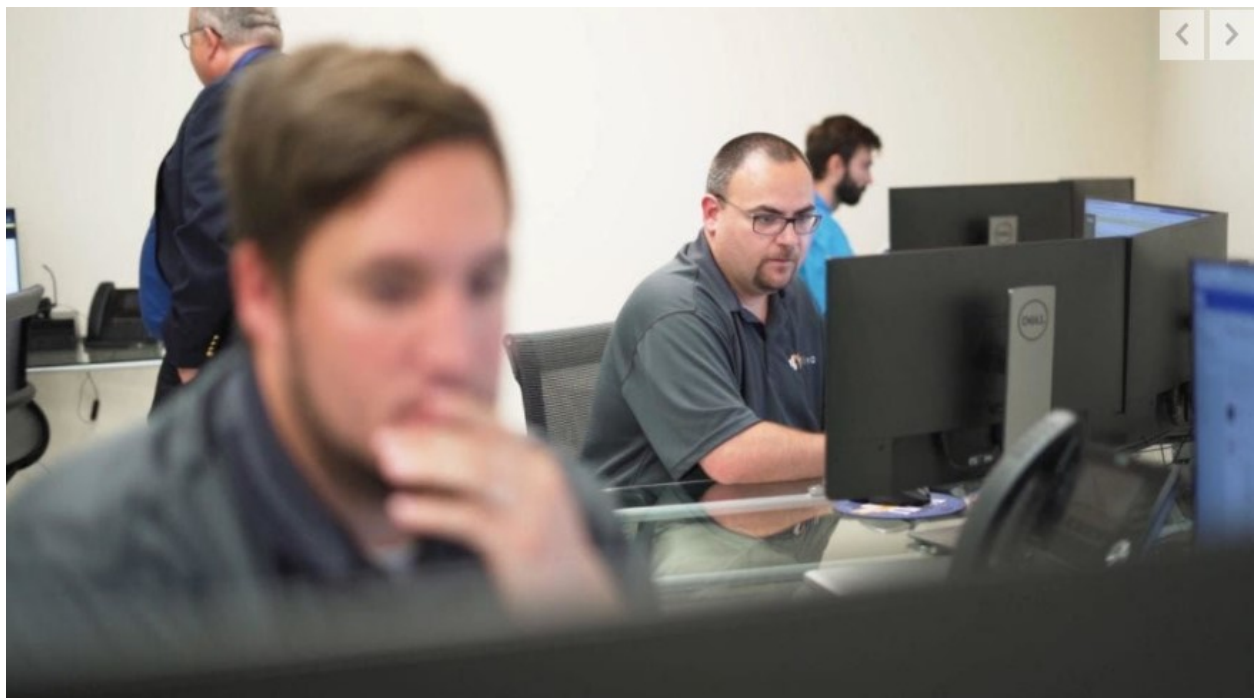
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State Journal News

Dec. 6, 2020

https://www.wvnews.com/statejournal/news/virginia-based-it-company-committed-to-remote-working-in-west-virginia/article_3e65dbfd-6e48-59bf-9eb4-733b2d1bd319.html



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Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down

The Parkersburg News and Sentinel

Dec. 7, 2020

<https://www.newsandsentinel.com/opinion/editorials/2020/12/thumbs-up-thumbs-down-210/>

UP: To West Virginia University-Parkersburg's development of a Virtual Teen 3D Printing Academy during the last week of the year, to enhance the science, technology, engineering and mathematics experiences available to local young people. *"What we do is build students' knowledge of technology and processes used from the foundation up; we do this through a guided build of a 3D printer, with explanations about each component along the way,"* said Logan Mace, WVU-P program coordinator. While there is some cost to the program, it is well worth it, both for the experience and because students will receive a 3-D printer they can keep. What a wonderful opportunity provided for eager young minds.

UP: To the River Cities Symphony Orchestra for getting creative in adapting its fall season to allow for virtual performances, including Sunday's performance by award-winning concert pianist Yuliya Gorenman. *"In a difficult year, in which traditional live Christmas performances won't be possible, the RCSO is thrilled to be able to provide a safe and comforting alternative,"* orchestra board President Mac Lichterman said. Bravo, folks!

UP: To Artsbridge's continued effort to also provide virtual experiences that bring the arts to local students. In December, the Artists-on-Tour program will bring musician/songwriter Zak Morgan to local fourth through sixth graders. Thank you to them, and to all the organizations working to bring wonderful cultural and education experiences to the Mid-Ohio Valley, pandemic or not.

Local history professor remembers Chuck Yeager

WTAP-TV [video]

Dec. 8, 2020

<https://www.wtap.com/2020/12/09/local-history-professor-remembers-chuck-yeager/>



PARKERSBURG, [W.Va.](#) (WTAP) - Chuck Yeager once said that, when he first tried to fly, he became ill.

That alone makes it incredible Yeager pulled off a feat no one had ever done before—one that no one thought anyone would ever accomplish.

Aaron Crites, a history professor at West Virginia University at Parkersburg, says the Lincoln County, West Virginia native indeed came a long way.

“He came from a small town, a small county, an unincorporated community,” Crites says, “and he rose all the way to national prominence.”

But Yeager had to overcome more than airsickness. He was a World War II fighter pilot who shot down 13 German planes. But he also was shot down over German-held France and escaped with the help of French partisans.

And breaking the sound barrier-the feat that, in part, led to the development of the U.S. space program-almost didn't happen, thanks to an injury Yeager suffered but didn't tell anyone about.

"Before his great flight to break the sound barrier, he actually fell off a horse and broke a few ribs," Crites recalls. "He didn't want to postpone the flight, so he didn't tell anybody. He had a civilian surgeon tape up his ribs so he could continue with the flight."

It was the 1983 movie "The Right Stuff", which chronicled the early days of the space program, that made Yeager a national celebrity in the 1980's. Most of it was centered around the first seven U.S. astronauts, including Ohio native John Glenn, the first American to orbit the earth. But it begins with Yeager flying faster than the speed of sound years earlier.

And, at the age of 89, in 2012, he recreated that famous flight, undoubtedly the last time he took to the skies.

Says Aaron Crites: "He was definitely in there with The Right Stuff."

Jackson named 'Young Gun' by WV Executive Magazine

The Pennsboro News

Dec. 9, 2020



Dr. Torie Jackson (Photo by Tracy A. Toler photography)

Dr. Torie Jackson, vice president of institutional advancement at West Virginia University (WVU) Parkersburg and president and CEO of the WVU at Parkersburg Foundation, has been named a member of the Young Guns Class of 2021 by West Virginia Executive (WVE) magazine.

Dr. Jackson is a Ritchie County resident and also served as president of the local board of education.

WVE's annual Young Guns honors program recognizes 10 outstanding West Virginians age 43 or younger who have accomplished great things in both their careers and communities. Honorees must have lived in the state and been in their West Virginia-based position for at least two years and must actively participate in community service.

"Though this year has been challenging, West Virginians are always resilient and committed to bettering the world around them," Kensie Hamilton Fauber, publisher and owner of WVE, said. "We know the Mountain State prospers because of people like the members of the Young Guns Class of 2021. Their dedication to business, family and community inspires us."

The Young Guns Class of 2021 was honored Nov. 17 during a reception at the Clay Center for the Arts & Sciences. The sponsors for the event were the Clay Center for the Arts & Sciences, Mylan, Simpson Dental and Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate Central.

The other inductees of the 2021 class include: Zack Arnold, president and CEO of Infinity Natural Resources, LLC; Nate Burton, athletic director at West Virginia State University; Lee Ann Campbell Haley, chief of staff for laboratory operations at the U.S. Department of Energy; Dominick Claudio, CEO of the Claudio Corporation; Brennan Comfort, vice president and director of analytics for WesBanco Bank, Inc.; Eriks Janelins, president and CEO Jackson named 'Young Gun' by WV Executive magazine of the Oglebay Foundation; Tiffany Lawrence, senior account executive at Orion Strategies; Ben Queen, owner of Ben Queen Photography and member of the West Virginia House of Delegates; and Kimberly Zwier, banking relationship manager for Fifth Third Bank.

West Virginia Executive, the state's premier business publication, was founded in 1998. The quarterly publication strives to provide quality, in-depth business news coverage and highlight growth and development within the Mountain State.

By Amanda Larch WV Executive magazine

Growing up, Torie Jackson kept charts of constellations above her bed and dreamed of becoming an astronomer. As it turns out, another career path for her seems to have been written in the stars. Jackson, vice president of institutional advancement at West Virginia University (WVU) Parkersburg and president and CEO of the WVU at Parkersburg Foundation, has worked in the world of mass communications in some capacity for most of her career.

During her second semester of college, Jackson walked into a Parkersburg newspaper office to ask for a job, and the editor gave her a chance. She set a goal to be a newspaper editor by the time she was 25, but by that time, she was already a newspaper owner. She later began teaching journalism at WVU Parkersburg and created the curriculum for bachelor's degree options in communication and media studies, a program in which she still teaches as an associate professor.

In her current role, Jackson works every day in the areas of marketing, communication, alumni relations, career services, public relations, experiential learning, scholarships and donor cultivation and stewardship. She also works with 11 high schools in the region on an early college program.

"I am blessed to participate in so many activities, and I find each day is different and never routine," she said. "In all my tasks, I am able to provide opportunities for people to either begin or continue their educational journey. I can think of no greater job."

No matter what job she holds or where she may be, Jackson never stops trying to better herself and the world around her, which is what inspires her to give back.

"I became involved in community service activities years ago because I felt that if I wanted to see a change or see a service provided, I needed to do my part to make it happen," she said.

Jackson is a board member for the Children of Promise in Action sports association, which offers soccer and basketball leagues to youth in Ritchie County, and she serves as a board member for the TLC Pregnancy Center of Ritchie County, an organization that offers classes and career assistance to young mothers-to-be.

Just as she finds fulfillment in helping others, Jackson is passionate about opportunities for educational advancement, as she believes involvement is necessary to help improve the state's education system. She is in her fifth year on the Ritchie

County Board of Education, and she serves as the co-director of Region V for the West Virginia School Board Association. She is also a member of the Content Standards Training Committee for the West Virginia State Board of Education.

Perhaps the service most near and dear to Jackson is her involvement with the Ritchie County Youth Camp, which she and her husband, Todd, founded more than 10 years ago. Each year, Jackson writes a grant to host the camp at no cost to the campers.

“Knowing the expense of a youth camp, my husband and I decided it was time to lead the way and provide an inexpensive option for youth in our community,” Jackson said. “We have up to 130 students attend annually.”

She also finds time to volunteer as general manager and cohost at WPKM 96.3 FM, the college radio station she was instrumental in creating at WVU Parkersburg.

“In essence, all my community service activities are about providing a voice for others, whether that is through making decisions on a county school board or allowing local radio to air,” she says.

Jackson is proud to live and work in the Mountain State—and rural Ritchie County, in particular.

“I spent years working in media and interviewing outsiders who would come to West Virginia,” she said. “They always found a bit of Southern charm in West Virginia: a place where people know their neighbors, where communities band together to help one another and where a good work ethic is still found. I love that I can make a difference here. As a friend once told me, ‘Why be a small fish in a big pond when you can be a shark in a koi pond?’”

WVUP's Ascend program provides support to students

WTAP-TV

Dec. 11, 2020

<https://www.wtap.com/2020/12/11/wvups-ascend-program-provides-support-to-students/>

PARKERSBURG, W.Va. (WTAP) - The upcoming term will mark WVUP's second semester of Ascend, a program designed to research the impact of academic and financial support for students.

The program was launched in May, and the fall term was its first pilot semester. The school received a grant from Arnold Ventures to provide numerous forms of academic and financial support to Ascend students pursuing an Associates Degree. Data is being gathered on a number of variables to measure the students' success as compared to a control group of students who are not enrolled in the Ascend program. If the research indicates that the program helps students to excel, the program could potentially expand at the school and around the state, said Jennifer Forster, director of the Ascend program.

Blue Ridge Community and Technical College was also given a grant to launch a similar program. Both schools' programs are informed by a similar one at the City

University of New York which, according to data that was gathered, significantly helped participating students to succeed.

Benchmarks of success will include rates of retention among students from semester to semester and on-time graduation rates. As Ascend students move into the workforce, their salaries and rates of employment will be tracked, as well. If students perform better in these areas than their counterparts not taking part in Ascend, the program will be considered a success.

The academic support that Ascend students receive includes increased contact with academic advisors and regular check-ins with advisors. The financial benefits include funds for textbooks, monthly Kroger gift cards for qualifying students and, for those students who qualify for partial tuition coverage through Pell grants, the remainder of their tuition will be paid for.

According to Forster, students participating in the program during the fall semester have performed well and most are registered to return in the spring semester, though the ongoing COVID-19 number has posed challenges.

Forster said the response from the college has been very positive.

“The college has been incredibly supportive of the program and I think we’re all pretty excited to see how it goes with the results so we can form our practices, surrounding the data that we get,” Forster said.

WVU-P supports students through Ascend program

The Marietta Times

Dec. 14, 2020

<https://www.mariettatimes.com/news/2020/12/wvu-p-supports-students-through-ascend-program/>



Attending classes, meeting new people, registering for next semester's courses, preparing for a career – college is an exciting and sometimes daunting time for first-year and returning students.

Throw in a global pandemic, and those feelings heighten. However, WVU Parkersburg launched its Ascend program just in time to serve its students and offer more resources than ever before.

"Who wouldn't apply to Ascend? The program benefits are unbelievable," said student Noah Richardson. "As an Ascend student, you get a lot of things paid for, a Kroger gift card every month and academic assistance, which is especially helpful in my first year out of high school and starting college."

Richardson is a WVU Parkersburg freshman pursuing an Associate of Applied Science in Computer Information Technology, which will lead him into the Bachelor's of Applied Technology program with a concentration in Cybersecurity and Network Administration.

The Ascend program is for students just like Noah who want to earn their certificates and associate degrees within three years, receive personal advising, career counseling, tutoring, waivers for tuition and more. Launched in May 2020 with Arnold Ventures and CUNY colleges' help, Ascend's goal is to double graduation rates and help place graduates into the workplace.

"Ascend has introduced me to college resources, which all play a big role. Getting tutoring and help from your program faculty make your transition from high school to college very smooth and make you comfortable with the atmosphere," said Richardson.

"As a college student, you may also need financial resources, so being able to buy groceries every month is super helpful and gives an incentive to stop eating out to save the money you do get. Not to mention, having priority registration as an Ascend student secures you the classes you want and need for your degree."

WVU Parkersburg Ascend staff also help students manage their time, as well as their schedules, so they may take classes with other Ascend students to build friendships and a peer support system.

"If I have any advice for new students, it's to not talk yourself into thinking the work you get is too overbearing. That's how you start to fall behind and think you don't have the energy to do 'all that work,'" said Richardson. *"In reality, it's not a lot of work, and if you take advantage of the resources and time management tools you have, you can do it."*

Learn more about WVU Parkersburg's Ascend program and how it ensures student success by visiting wvup.edu/ascend.

Contact ascend@wvup.edu or 304-424-8353 for an application and eligibility requirements.

WVU-Parkersburg honors graduates, presents emeritus status to faculty and staff

The Parkersburg News and Sentinel

Dec. 15, 2020

<https://www.newsandsentinel.com/news/local-news/2020/12/wvu-parkersburg-honors-graduates-presents-emeritus-status-to-faculty-and-staff/>



Graduate Tylar McGhee celebrates earning a bachelor's of applied science in child development with her daughter. (Photo Provided)

PARKERSBURG — Fall graduation exercises at West Virginia University at Parkersburg were held in a virtual commencement ceremony with participating students available on the university's Facebook page and YouTube channel.

The college awarded 247 certificates and associate and bachelor's degrees to 225 students this semester, pending final grades.

The college also conferred emeritus statuses to past faculty and staff. Emeritus status is an honor bestowed by the university for a person's service and distinguished career.

WVU Parkersburg presented the following titles:

- * Posthumous Emeritus: Debbie Baker, professor of Business
- * Emeritus: Janice McCue, Tutoring and Testing Center program coordinator
- * Posthumous Emeritus: Sy Sarkarat, professor of Business

Greetings at the commencement were presented by Donna Smith, chair of the WVU Parkersburg Board of Governors, and Elaina Segsworth, Student Government Association president.

School President Chris Gilmer gave introductions and opening remarks. Gilmer spoke of his admiration for students as they overcame new academic and personal challenges this year.

"I would remind the students what I remind every graduating class, no one comes to a moment like this alone," Gilmer said. "For generations, before you were even born, people you never even knew were already dreaming this dream and this moment for you."

Jeff Sapp, professor of education at California State University Dominguez Hills, was the commencement speaker.

A Parkersburg native, Sapp has been an educator, writer and activist for the last 40 years. His awards for writing and publishing include his children's book, *"Rhinos & Raspberries: Tolerance Tales for the Early Grades,"* which won the Golden Lamp Award and the Association of Education's top honor.

"It's been a long journey to get to graduation, to this day. And, I bet there were some people who said you couldn't, but you showed them, didn't you?" he said. "You may have to dig deep for things, but today tells you, you are more than capable of brilliance, of success and of claiming any goal you set for yourselves. You did it today, and you're going to do it again."

Three new Parkersburg police officers sworn in

WTAP-TV

Dec. 15, 2020

<https://www.wtap.com/2020/12/15/three-new-parkersburg-police-officers-sworn-in/>



PARKERSBURG, [W.Va.](#) (WTAP) - The Parkersburg Police Department has sworn in three new officers. On December 14, a ceremony was held at the Municipal Building to swear during which Mayor Tom Joyce and Chief Joe Martin swore in Ryan Black, Davind Janssen, and Evan Schoolcraft as patrol officers.

Black is a graduate of Parkersburg High School and West Virginia University with approximately four years of law enforcement experience. He has most recently worked for the Arlington County, Virginia Police Department and is now assigned to the Field Training Officer program.

Janssen has been a member of the West Virginia Army National Guard since 2008. He has completed two overseas deployments.

Schoolcraft is a graduate of Parkersburg Christian School and West Virginia University at Parkersburg.

WVU-P to join Wreaths Across America

The Parkersburg News and Sentinel

Dec. 17, 2020

<https://www.newsandsentinel.com/news/community-news/2020/12/wvu-p-to-join-wreaths-across-america/>



Someone adorns the grave of a local veteran on Veterans Day 2020. West Virginia University at Parkersburg will take part in Wreaths Across America Day on Saturday at the university. The event's mission is to solemnly lay wreaths of evergreens on the gravesites of those who gave it all. The WVU-P Veteran Corps will team up with the Wood County Marine Corps League to lay the wreaths. (Photo Provided)

PARKERSBURG — West Virginia University at Parkersburg will take part in Wreaths Across America Day on Saturday, a national mission to solemnly lay wreaths of evergreens on the gravesites of those who gave it all, symbolizing the beauty and brevity of life.

The WVU-P Veteran Corps will team up with the Wood County Marine Corps League to take part in Wreaths Across America at the university.

"A fellow veteran, Wayne Starcher, approached me and asked if the WVU Parkersburg Veteran Corps would like to partner with his Marine Corps League Detachment and participate in Wreaths Across America Day," said Darren Shearlock, Retired Master Sergeant of the U.S. Army and WVU-P Veterans advocate.

Each year, on Dec. 19, Wreaths Across America coordinates wreath-laying ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery and other locations across the U.S., at sea and abroad

to remember and honor veterans as well as teach future generations about service members' sacrifices. Throughout the year, Wreaths Across America works to ensure that no veteran or their families are forgotten and strives to teach the next generation to honor veterans the same way.

On Wreaths Across America Day, a volunteer places a wreath on top of a veteran's grave and is encouraged to speak that veteran's name, tell their story and thank them for their service.

"Both the WVU Parkersburg Veteran Corps and the Marine Corps League Detachment want everyone to know we understand the true cost of freedom and thank God every day for the men and women who paid the price for us," Shearlock said.

"It is a way to remember our fallen U.S. veterans, honor those who serve and teach the value of freedom," said Wayne Starcher of the Marine Corps League Wood County Detachment 1087.

The ceremony will be led by the Marine Corps League and held at the WVU-P poorhouse cemetery on Saturday, Dec. 19, at 1 p.m.

Students and community members are welcome to attend and participate in the ceremony to complete the Wreaths Across America mission.

Visit wreathscrossamerica.org or contact Veterans Advocate Darren Shearlock at darren.shearlock@wvup.edu for more information.

Students Gather in National Forum on Racial Justice

National Issues Forums

Dec. 18, 2020

<https://www.nifi.org/en/students-gather-national-forum-racial-justice>

"We included students from Sinte Gleska University, Adams State University, Alcorn State University, Tougaloo College and West Virginia University at Parkersburg. The students talked to each other. The current generation of educational leaders listened, and the resulting conversation was transformational."

In November, students from colleges with diverse populations across the country came together in an online forum to discuss racial justice. The purpose of the forum was to consider what might be done to increase racial justice in their communities and on their campuses, informed by an exchange of views about what they might have in

common across cultures and how their understanding differs. The forum included students from two Historically Black Colleges and Universities in Mississippi, a Hispanic-Serving Institution in Colorado, a Tribal College in South Dakota, and an Appalachian community and technical college in West Virginia.

The *Students Speak* forum was part of a 2020 gathering of the National Institutes for Historically-Underserved Students (NIHUS), in partnership with the [National Issues Forums Institute](#) and hosted by West Virginia University Parkersburg. The purpose of NIHUS is to identify common barriers to educational equity and to research paths that lead to success and graduation for historically-underserved students, including first generation college students, racial and ethnic minority groups, adult learners, socially-economically disadvantaged students, historically disenfranchised gender minorities, and veterans.



Dr. Chris Gilmer
Founder, National Institutes of Historically-Underserved Students
President, West Virginia University Parkersburg

According to Dr. Chris Gilmer, Founder of the National Institutes for Historically-Underserved Students and President of WVU Parkersburg, “What sets the National Institutes apart is our mission We are seeking to fill a major hole. We are addressing what underserved students have in common across multiple populations, and we are unaware of any other group taking this direction as its major focus. How

are Latinx and African American students similarly underserved because of race? How are students at tribal colleges and first-generation students at other colleges, regardless of race, similarly underserved?”

The November discussions are featured in [Diverse Issues in Higher Education](#), which highlights the insights of Dr. Jamal Watson, communications professor at Trinity Washington University: “We included students from Sinte Gleska University, Adams State University, Alcorn State University, Tougaloo College and West Virginia University at Parkersburg. The students talked to each other. The current generation of educational leaders listened, and the resulting conversation was transformational,” Watson said.

The National Institute for Historically-Underserved Students is a partner in [With the People](#), a national initiative that encourages public deliberation on campuses and in communities, co-sponsored by the National Issues Forums Institute and a growing network of national, state, and local organizations. Dr. Gilmer looks forward to continued connections through this partnership, with the November discussion on racial justice being the first of many sustained deliberations on racial justice and other issues led by students across the nation.

Across the State

WV News

Dec. 20, 2020

https://www.wvnews.com/across-the-state/article_600e0f93-a386-54a0-ab18-d6d6c1485bcd.html

Fall graduation exercises at West Virginia University at Parkersburg were held in a virtual commencement ceremony with participating students available on the university’s Facebook page and YouTube channel.

The college awarded 247 certificates and associate and bachelor’s degrees to 225 students this semester, pending final grades.

The college also conferred emeritus statuses to past faculty and staff. Emeritus status is an honor bestowed by the university for a person’s service and distinguished career.

WVU Parkersburg presented the following titles:

Posthumous Emeritus: Debbie Baker, professor of Business

Emeritus: Janice McCue, Tutoring and Testing Center program coordinator

Posthumous Emeritus: Sy Sarkarat, professor of Business

Greetings at the commencement were presented by Donna Smith, chair of the WVU Parkersburg Board of Governors, and Elaina Segsworth, Student Government Association president.

School President Chris Gilmer gave introductions and opening remarks. Gilmer spoke of his admiration for students as they overcame new academic and personal challenges this year.

Wreaths Across America

The Parkersburg News and Sentinel

Dec. 21, 2020

<https://www.newsandsentinel.com/news/community-news/2020/12/wreaths-across-america/>



Darren Shearlock, Retired Master Sergeant of the U.S. Army and West Virginia University at Parkersburg Veterans advocate, and Wayne Starcher, Wood County Marine Corp League Detachment, during Wreaths Across America Day on Saturday morning at WVU-P's main campus. Wreaths Across America Day a national mission to solemnly lay wreaths of evergreens on the gravesites of those who gave it all, symbolizing the beauty and brevity of life. (Photo by Tyler Bennett)



Members of the Wood County Marine Corp League Detachment, during Wreaths Across America Day on Saturday morning at West Virginia University at Parkersburg's main campus. Wreaths Across America Day on Saturday, a national mission to solemnly lay wreaths of evergreens on the gravesites of those who gave it all, symbolizing the beauty and brevity of life. (Photo by Tyler Bennett)

Wreaths Across America

The Marietta Times

Dec. 21, 2020

<https://www.mariettatimes.com/news/2020/12/wreaths-across-america-day/>



Darren Shearlock, Retired Master Sergeant of the U.S. Army and West Virginia University at Parkersburg Veterans advocate, and Wayne Starcher, Wood County Marine Corp League Detachment, during Wreaths Across America Day on Saturday morning at WVU-P's main campus. Wreaths Across America Day a national mission to solemnly lay wreaths of evergreens on the gravesites of those who gave it all, symbolizing the beauty and brevity of life. (Photo by Tyler Bennett)



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WVU-P honors grads

The Marietta Times

Dec. 24, 2020

<https://www.mariettatimes.com/news/2020/12/wvu-p-honors-grads/>

West Virginia University at Parkersburg recognized Fall 2020 graduates with a virtual commencement ceremony available for streaming on the university's Facebook page and YouTube channel. The college plans to award 247 certificates, and associate and bachelor's degrees to 225 students this semester, pending final grades.

Greetings were presented by Donna Smith, WVU Parkersburg Board of Governors chairperson, and Elaina Segsworth, Student Government Association president.

WVU Parkersburg President Dr. Chris Gilmer gave introductions and opening remarks. In his message to graduates, he expressed his admiration for students as they overcame new academic and personal challenges this year.

"I would remind the students what I remind every graduating class – no one comes to a moment like this alone," said Gilmer. "For generations, before you were even born, people you never even knew were already dreaming this dream and this moment for you."

Dr. Jeff Sapp, professor of Education at California State University Dominguez Hills, served as commencement speaker. A Parkersburg native, Sapp has been an educator, writer and activist the last 40 years. Among his many awards for writing and publishing, his children's book – *"Rhinos & Raspberries: Tolerance Tales for the Early Grades"* – won the Golden Lamp Award and the Association of Education's top honor. His co-authored book, *"Rethinking Sexism, Gender, and Sexuality,"* won The American Library Association's Stonewall Honor Award. Not to mention, Jeff contributes to The Southern Poverty Law Center, Teaching Tolerance Magazine, The Simon Wiesenthal Center, The Civil Rights Memorial Center, The Museum of Tolerance and the Go For Broke Foundation.

Sapp shared his personal stories of adversity and success and encouraged graduates to look within themselves and those who supported them for the strength to achieve.

Sapp shared, *"It's been a long journey to get to graduation, to this day. And, I bet there were some people who said you couldn't, but you showed them, didn't you?"* He continued, *"You may have to dig deep for things, but today tells you, you are more than capable of brilliance, of success and of claiming any goal you set for yourselves. You did it today, and you're going to do it again."*

The college also conferred emeritus statuses to past faculty and staff. Emeritus status is an honor bestowed by the university for a person's service and distinguished career. WVU Parkersburg presented the following titles:

Posthumous Emeritus: Debbie Baker, professor of Business.

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Local college to start offering special education specialization

The Pennsboro News

Dec. 29, 2020

West Virginia University at Parkersburg will begin offering a special education specialization to student and alumni of the elementary education program in the summer of 2021.

With a special education specialization, students will sit for a certification exam for elementary, middle and high school multi-categorical special education (grades K-12), making WVU-Parkesburg the only college in the state able to offer that opportunity.

Bobbi Marshall, assistant professor of education, explained that children with exceptionalities often spend the majority of their day in general education classrooms.

WVU-P graduates who earn their special education specialization will have the extra skillsets to serve all students, she said.

“We visited with our superintendents, principals from 22 partnership schools, alumni and current students, and one thing was very evident: we have a major shortage for teachers, but more specifically, a shortage of special education teachers,” said Marshall. “That’s why we focused our efforts on meeting that need.”

The special education specialization includes five courses that offer a foundation in education law, using adaptive equipment for the non-traditional learner, teacher collaboration, field-experience and more.

The first special education class, SPED 210: Linking Policy and Practice, will be offered in the summer of 2021.

Students completing the Bachelors of Arts degree in elementary education program receive a degree that is recognized in all 50 states.

To ensure graduates meet high-quality standards, WVU-P is one of the few teacher preparation programs to require teaching candidates to take licensing exams prior to student teaching.

“We can service and prepare our teacher candidates to be elementary and special education teachers so they can serve students in public schools,” said Dr. David Lancaster, education division chairman and professor. “It’s like one service begets another. It is a win-win for everyone.”

Questions about the new special education specialization may be directed to Bobbi Marshall at rmarsha7@wvup.edu or 304.424.8000 ext. 442.

To discuss a future in the elementary education program, contact Dr. David Lancaster at dlancas1@wvup.edu.

WVU-P Will Start New Special Education Program

The St. Marys Oracle

Dec. 30, 2020

West Virginia University at Parkersburg will begin offering a special education specialization to students and alumni of the elementary education program in the summer of 2021.

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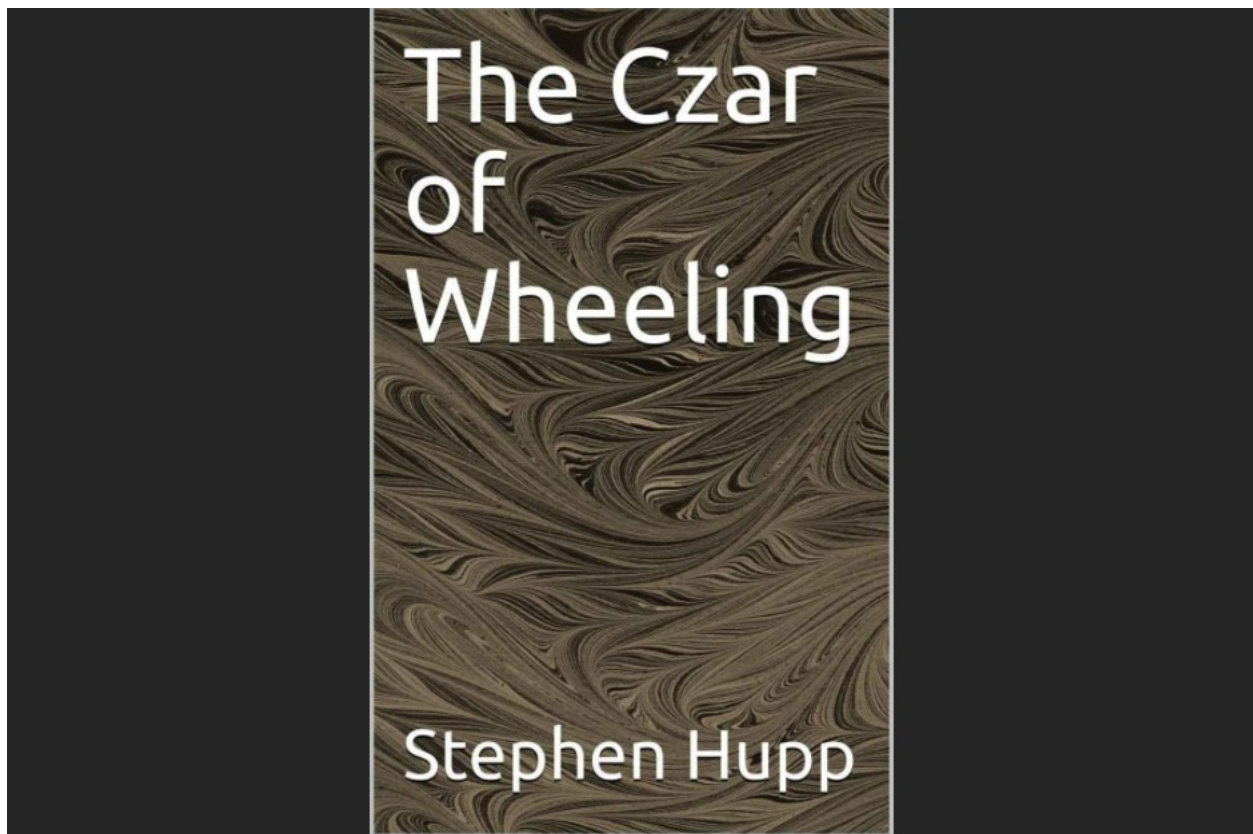
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Parkersburg writer pens books about Wheeling crime lord

The Journal

Dec. 30, 2020

https://www.journal-news.net/journal-news/parkersburg-writer-pens-book-about-wheeling-crime-lord/article_1d3c7bf5-0b73-5893-aca8-de2cfe416dab.html



"The Czar of Wheeling" by author Stephen Hupp of Parkersburg is available on amazon.com.

WHEELING — A Parkersburg man has written a crime story based on a true-life character from Wheeling.

“The Czar of Wheeling” is based on Big Bill Lias, who controlled vice in the Wheeling area in the early and mid 20th century, said author Stephen Hupp. The inspiration for the book, Hupp’s sixth, was based on a story about Lias aired by West Virginia Public Broadcasting in June 2019, “This Week in West Virginia History.” covering daily what happened in the past.

“Lias controlled vice in the Wheeling area during the early and middle 20th century, when the steel mills were in full operation along with riverboat traffic carrying goods,” Hupp said. “Lots of men with lots of money to spend on booze during Prohibition, gambling and sex.”

Hupp is director of libraries at West Virginia University at Parkersburg.

His previous books have dealt with the world of automobile racing and NASCAR, including the “On a Sunday in May,” published earlier this year.

Hupp began research for a “The Czar of Wheeling” in the summer of 2019 while he was putting the finishing touches on “On a Sunday in May.”

“The actual writing began in March 2020, just when the pandemic began,” Hupp said.

The two lead characters in the story are Leo Ganas, the fictional crime boss, and Dr. Eugene Sanborn, his reluctant biographer who teaches history at a college in Wheeling, Hupp said. Sanborn and Ganas engage in a series of interviews where the crime lord reveals the details of his life.

Hupp describes the book as a crime novel with a confessional.

“Ganas is dying and, inspired by the success of Mario Puzo’s “The Godfather,” wants to the world to know his story,” Hupp said.

People interested in crime stories and West Virginia history would be attracted to the book, Hupp said.

“Towns along the Ohio River have a colorful history over the last century,” he said. “Wheeling was called ‘wide-open Wheeling.’ Steubenville, Ohio, ‘Little Chicago.’ Parkersburg, ‘the wickedest town on the Ohio.’”

Lias was born July 14, 1900, and died in 1970. He quit school in the sixth grade to become a bootlegger.

Besides gambling, booze, slots, the numbers racket and other forms of entertainment, he purchased Wheeling Downs at a bankruptcy sale in 1945 for \$262,500. Another \$500,000 was invested in the track and it started turning a profit.

“The Czar of Wheeling” is 335 pages and costs \$19.99 for the paperback and \$2.99 for the ebook. The book and others by Hupp are available on Amazon.

In addition to “The Czar of Wheeling” and “On a Sunday in May,” he has written “Born to the Breed,” “Daughter of the Valley,” “Wings in the Night” and “Of Gods and Spirits.”

His next endeavor will be a novel about the events of 2020 and what will occur in 2021.

“Response to the pandemic, divisive politics in an election year, call for reforms in policing and racial social justice,” Hupp said. “There is a lot to talk about and I have things to say.”

WVU-Parkersburg President Chris Gilmer receives COVID-19 vaccine

WTAP-TV [video]

Dec. 31, 2020

<https://www.wtap.com/2020/12/31/wvu-parkersburg-president-chris-gilmer-receives-covid-19-vaccine/>



PARKERSBURG, W.Va. (WTAP) - Governor Jim Justice is allowing the COVID-19 vaccine to be given to those in higher education.

West Virginia University of Parkersburg's president got his vaccine.

Doctor Chris Gilmer was one of the first volunteers in this phase of vaccinations to receive the shot.

He says that it is important for those in his position of colleges and universities to take part in this and lead the way for others.

And although WVU-P already is transitioning to remote learning for the spring semester, Dr. Gilmer wants those in the Parkersburg community to have that extra feeling of safety.

"I really want to demonstrate to the public that while I believe in the right to self-determination and to individual choices that I know that some people are fearful about the vaccine," says WVU-P president, Dr. Gilmer. "I believe that it is safe. I believe that it is healthy and that it is the public health and socially responsible thing to do."

Dr. Gilmer says that he wants other college presidents and those in high ranks in education to get vaccinated.

The commuter college has 80 other staff that say they will get vaccinated.

They should get the shots within three to four weeks.

WVU-P program to offer special ed specialization

The Marietta Times

Jan. 1, 2021

<https://www.mariettatimes.com/news/2021/01/wvu-p-program-to-offer-special-ed-specialization/>

In Summer 2021, West Virginia University at Parkersburg will begin offering a special education specialization to students and alumni of the Elementary Education program. With a special education specialization, students will sit for a certification exam for elementary, middle and high school multi-categorical special education (grades K-12), making WVU Parkersburg the only college in the state able to offer this opportunity.

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Open educational resources saved WVU-P students \$140k

The Parkersburg News and Sentinel

Jan. 2, 2021

<https://www.newsandsentinel.com/news/business/2021/01/open-educational-resources-saved-wvu-p-students-140k/>

PARKERSBURG — Students at West Virginia University at Parkersburg have saved more than \$140,000 through the use of no-cost and open educational resources in 38 courses, the school said.

Open educational resources are teaching and learning materials freely accessible or released under an open license for free-access use. Online education materials are important, especially to community colleges, to decrease the cost of traditional textbooks.

“The benefit of creating and providing OER courses are shared among students, faculty, the college, parents and so many more,” said Dave Thompson, a professor and chairman of the WVU Parkersburg Humanities, Fine Arts and Social Sciences. “Easy access, low costs, diverse instruction methods and user-friendliness are a few of the most valuable features.”

Students have saved \$140,860 during the 2019 to 2020 academic year, the school said.

Thompson uses text, videos, articles, PowerPoint presentations, discussion blogs and interactive apps into his open educational resource courses. Using various media and teaching methods gives students of all learning styles materials that align with their interests and promote learning.

Using sources including OpenStax and Lumen, instructors can borrow entire textbooks, student evaluation rubrics, digital media links and class discussion topics.

Thompson also follows Quality Matters guidelines. Quality Matters is a nationally-recognized program offering educator training, assessment techniques and course peer review to ensure assignments created by instructors are purposeful, engaging and assess students’ skills and competencies.

“User friendliness and reduced frustration should also be achieved by making a course easy to understand and navigate,” said Thompson. “This means having no access codes to be purchased or accounts created so course content is available on the first day of class.”

WVU Parkersburg will continue investing in open educational resources for students to be not only more beneficial in adapting to learning styles, but to reduce the cost of attending college with less textbook purchases.

“Investing in our own faculty’s development of OER means WVU Parkersburg will continue to be more affordable for students,” said Provost Chad Crumbaker.

“Textbook costs should not be a barrier to a student’s education and success, and we commend the efforts of our faculty to eliminate these cost barriers through OER wherever possible.”

Parkersburg Writer Draws Inspiration from Wheeling Crime Boss for Book

The Intelligencer

Jan. 4, 2021

<https://www.theintelligencer.net/news/community/2021/01/parkersburg-writer-draws-inspiration-from-wheeling-crime-boss-for-book/>



PARKERSBURG – A Parkersburg man has written a crime novel based on a true-life character from Wheeling.

In “The Czar of Wheeling,” one of the lead characters, crime boss Leo Ganas is based on “Big” Bill Lias. Lias controlled vice in the Wheeling area in the early and mid-20th century, said author Stephen Hupp. The inspiration for the book, Hupp’s sixth, was based on a story about Lias aired by West Virginia Public Broadcasting in June 2019 on “This Week in West Virginia History,” covering daily what happened in the past.

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