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I write to you as we are feverishly executing a series of events, public relations promotions, and social media efforts to commemorate the school’s 150th anniversary. Combined, these activities celebrate our past, highlight the present, and look to the future.

Events include fundraisers, runs, speakers, student opportunities, and more. If you have participated in any of these, thank you. I mentioned public relations. If you were to drive around the IUPUI campus this fall, you would see a celebratory skywalk (pictured above) and street banners dedicated to our school.

We’ve also worked diligently in the Indianapolis community and on campus to share our impact with others. For example, you can follow the celebration every day by going to www.150daysofimpact.com and learning more about our work with students, alumni, donors, and the Indianapolis community. This site helps us to connect with all of our alumni and friends in a meaningful, nontraditional way!
This magazine highlights some of the contemporary work of our students, faculty, and alumni. You will read about two of our new faculty members — Andy Coggan in the Department of Kinesiology and Godwin Charles Ogbeide in the Department of Tourism, Conventions, and Event Management. We were thrilled to be able to attract these two very talented educators from Washington University in St. Louis (Coggan) and the University of Arkansas (Ogbeide).

Our faculty continues to create incredible learning experiences for our students, quite often in collaboration with the community. In this issue, you will read about the neat work of Ashley Jones with NiCole Keith. You will have the opportunity to learn about how each of the following outstanding students has benefited from philanthropy, community relationships, and the school’s military science program. Jake Ehrlich, Corey Davis, Chelsea Wilson, Savannah Lawrence, and Millie Nyhuis all have exciting stories to tell. Beyond this, you’ll learn how faculty member Kelly Naugle’s research can impact public health thanks to a governmental grant. And, you will read about faculty and student work associated with international student experiences and the Sports Innovation Institute.

This issue also spotlights some of our most recent alumni doing interesting work in their chosen careers. I am so proud of the work that Annie Burris, Sarah Buckner, Akilah Sims, and Mitch Sermersheim are doing. Each is having a unique impact on their field. Two of our most recent alumni, Carlos Hernandez and Niral Patel, will tell you how the school prepared them to apply for medical and dental school.

PETM is fortunate to have such a long history, dating back to the inception of the Normal College in 1866. We are proud of the school’s legacy around the teaching and promotion of physical activity, and it continues to be a key thread that permeates throughout the school. This was one of the reasons the school chose to bring internationally regarded researcher John Ratey to Indianapolis as part of our celebration event series to speak to kinesiology students and the greater Indianapolis community about physical activity’s impact on personal performance and achievement.

I have never been more optimistic about our future, and I want to make sure you know how much your continued engagement and investment are integral to our achievement. As an example, several weeks ago, we hosted our annual scholarship reception, where students and donors shared an evening of recognition. Thanks to alumni and friends, we were able to increase the amount of scholarship money awarded again this year. A very high number of our students work to help pay for their education — just as you may have during your time at IUPUI. Scholarship gifts and other contributions to the school helped us provide you, as well as the young alums mentioned in the magazine, with quality education. They help current students like Chelsea and Savannah to focus on their studies. And, they pave the way for future students to immerse fully in the many opportunities provided at IUPUI and our beloved school.

In closing, happy birthday Physical Education and Tourism Management! Thanks to you for playing such a wonderful role in our rich history, our present work, and our future endeavors.

My best,
State Torch Ignites Grad Student’s Career Potential

With ten months of planning for an event that lasts five weeks, a graduate assistantship with the Indiana Bicentennial Torch Relay is an event management experience like no other. Just ask tourism, conventions, and event management (TCEM) graduate student Millie Nyhuis (BS TCEM 2015). One year shy of earning a master’s degree in event tourism, Nyhuis was recruited to join the relay’s organizing committee last November.

“I was immediately interested, not only for the opportunity to travel across Indiana, but to add some event experience to my resume,” says Nyhuis, who transitioned from part time to full time in July to gear up for the relay’s Sept. 9th start in Corydon. “This was an excellent opportunity to use my tourism background and also gain events experience.”

Nyhuis planned logistics for the 3,200-mile relay — coordinating celebration plans and torch handoff details with relay coordinators in all 92 Indiana counties. Traveling through up to five counties per day, the relay ran six days a week and concluded at the Indiana Statehouse in downtown Indianapolis on Oct. 15th.

“Although I feel my tourism classes have prepared me for this type of work, it’s eye opening to see firsthand how event planning works,” says Nyhuis. “I’ve always been so focused on tourism, but I’m starting to realize even six years after starting this major that I like events, too.”

Nyhuis’ assistantship is part of the school’s industry graduate assistantship focus. While working for local businesses and organizations, TCEM master’s degree students gain valuable practical experience. Assistantships include a stipend paid by the sponsoring business, along with a full tuition waiver provided by the school.

Nyhuis hopes her TCEM master’s degree, along with the experience she’s gained through her assistantship and related internships, will help when applying for full-time positions at Walt Disney World — a dream she’s had since she was eight years old. Two years ago, she completed an internship with Disney in Orlando, Florida, which confirmed her aspirations.

“Working at Disney, particularly in Disney marketing, is still something I want to do,” says Nyhuis. “That’s part of the reason I wanted to get a master’s degree — so I could be more marketable and better able to compete for positions.”

—Jill Jansen
ISC and TCEM’s Corey Davis: This Deal’s a Winner!

TCEM grad student Corey Davis is proof that hard work and perseverance pay off. Davis’ efforts this year not only landed him a graduate assistantship with Indiana Sports Corp (ISC), his experience paves the way for future students to benefit from similar opportunities.

“I really wanted an internship with Indiana Sports Corp,” says Davis, who worked alongside ISC staff while interning with the Indianapolis Monumental Marathon in fall 2015. “I’ve always had a love of sports, and working at ISC seemed like a great way to use what I’d learned about sports marketing in tourism, conventions, and event management (TCEM).”

In early 2016, just a few weeks after graduating from IUPUI with a bachelor’s degree in organizational leadership and supervision, Davis, who minored in business and sport marketing, was hired by ISC as a full-time ticket and promotions intern. He spent the next few months planning and executing promotional tables for the NCAA Women’s Final Four at more than 100 college and professional basketball and sporting events throughout central Indiana.

“While the possibility of a graduate assistantship with ISC was in the back of my mind,” admits Davis, “my focus was on the internship, working hard, and proving myself.”

With ISC leaders taking note of Davis’ commitment, it didn’t take long for discussion about a graduate assistantship to begin. “Corey was an excellent candidate for hire because he made the most of his internship. He offered to help not only in ticket sales and promotions, but in other areas of our business,” says Susan Baughman, ISC senior vice president, strategy & operations. “He is hard working, well intentioned, and produces great results.”

Dean Jay Gladden, IU School of Physical Education and Tourism Management (PETM), says graduate assistantships offer career-building, real-world experiences that can’t be replicated in other settings.

“Instead of working inside our school or at IUPUI, students like Corey are challenged to put what they learn in graduate classes to work for local companies,” Gladden says. “Because of this experience, Corey and other students completing graduate assistantships are more workforce-ready when they graduate.”

After years of collaboration with PETM, Baughman said ISC was ready to take this next step. “We were willing to consider a graduate assistantship because it’s a great opportunity for both the student and our organization,” Baughman explains. “The term for an assistantship is longer, allowing the student more time to become invested in projects, contribute more insight, and take on increasing responsibility.”

With several graduate assistantships now in place for PETM students, Gladden says community partners are in a position to gain real benefits.

“Sponsoring a graduate assistantship creates an affordable talent-development strategy for the industry partner,” says Gladden. “Not only does the student work part time for the organization, the organization is in a position, should the opportunity arise, to hire a student who is already trained. The business also has access to the expertise of our faculty, which can be a tremendous asset for new or developing projects.”

—Jill Jansen
1889 School moves to Indianapolis for two years.
Cadet Jake Ehrlich
A typical day for Jake Ehrlich is anything but typical, at least when it’s compared to the everyday college student’s schedule. He attends classes, intending to graduate in May of 2017 from IUPUI with a kinesiology degree and a minor in leadership and military science. When he’s not in class, instead of lounging in his dorm room or hitting up the food court, he’s serving as an ROTC cadet, participating in physical training and taking additional military science courses.

“Being an ROTC cadet and a full-time student is a very unique experience. The ROTC program preps cadets to become future officers in the United States Army, a privilege that not many people have an opportunity to do,” says Ehrlich.

Each semester, Ehrlich is required to take a three credit-hour military science course on top of his regular kinesiology course load, bringing his credits to an average of 19 hours per semester.

“I was looking for an opportunity to affect the lives of the people around me while getting to serve the country that has given me so much,” he says.

Ehrlich has direct experience with the physical demands of the military, which goes hand-in-hand with his exercise science studies. “I decided to choose a kinesiology major because I enjoy working out, and the human body fascinates me. Like becoming an officer, being in this program allows me to work with people and help get them healthy or prevent them from getting hurt.”

Ehrlich has had the opportunity to help clients directly during his career at IUPUI, working as a personal trainer and wellness coach through his coursework.

“IUPUI is one of the best schools in the nation for getting experiential learning. There are always opportunities for us students to get hands-on training,” he says.

Ehrlich is grateful for the National Guard Supplemental Grant he received, which pays for his full tuition. He has also been awarded an ROTC scholarship that pays for his housing, which allows him to “focus more on school instead of having to work full time.”

And focusing on school certainly has paid off.

Ehrlich is a Dean’s List honorable mention, something that makes him feel “very accomplished.” To add to his achievements, after Ehrlich completed cadet summer training, he learned he finished in the top 25 percent of the cadets in the country.

Although Ehrlich “doesn’t quite know exactly” what he wants to do yet, he has aspirations of serving in the Army National Guard as a helicopter pilot — specifically, he has dreams of flying the UH-60, more commonly known as the “Blackhawk.” He also says that he would enjoy working as a strength and conditioning coach for a high school.

“My career goals are to be a positive influence on the people around me, whether I am in the exercise science field or a pilot for the National Guard.”

It sounds like Ehrlich is well on his way.

—Shelby Deering
First Jim Bennett Scholar Shares Grand Plans
Savannah Lawrence has plans. She earned an associate’s degree in hospitality administration from Ivy Tech — but she’s thinking ahead with a focus on the “next step,” which is a bachelor’s degree from IUPUI.

To help with these goals, she applied for and received the tourism, conventions, and event management department’s (TCEM) Jim Bennett Memorial Scholarship — the first student from Ivy Tech to receive the new scholarship, established as a memorial to a beloved teacher and student mentor for over 20 years.

For Lawrence, this award was vital in helping her bridge an important financial gap. With the scholarship funds, she was able to pay for books and remaining tuition that would’ve otherwise been too much. “This is the first year I’m paying for myself,” says Lawrence. “The scholarship was a crucial gap filler for me.”

“We wanted to create a proper and lasting legacy to Jim Bennett,” notes TCEM chair Amanda Cecil. “He genuinely cared about students.”

Bennett took the skills he personally acquired in the food industry and applied them across a gamut of career paths, both for students at IUPUI and Ivy Tech, where he taught, as well.

Lawrence never got to meet Jim Bennett, but learned about his scholarship through her Ivy Tech advisor. The criteria for the award included:
- Financial need
- Grades
- How well the advisor thinks the money would aid with continuing a student’s education

She composed an essay on her intent, which includes not only a TCEM degree with a psychology minor, but also a business certificate from Kelley School of Business and eventually a master’s degree. She doesn’t just want to manage a restaurant; she wants to own one. Lawrence realizes she still has much to learn.

Having worked in the industry, however, she knows there’s room for improvement. Restaurants often run on slim profit margins and experience high employee turnover rates.

“Employee turnover is the elephant in the room, and that’s where I hope my psychology training will be helpful,” she says. “If you can limit the expense of high turnover and control those costs, it allows you to focus on growing your business.”

She’s also observed that many managers who come up through the ranks of service may understand one aspect of the industry very well, but not how to juggle all the balls in the air successfully.

“A good restauranteur has to be an expert in operations, business, and human resources,” she says. “That’s why education is vital.”

The Bennett scholarship’s specific criteria was established to help someone starting at Ivy Tech to finish at IUPUI.

“We want to attract top talent from Ivy Tech into our program,” says Cecil, “and we want to grow our partnership with Ivy Tech.”

Training students like Lawrence who want to make a positive difference in their industries is the ultimate goal of scholarships like this one.

“I’d love to see more options available for students who are ambitious and don’t have the resources,” Lawrence says. “Many are forced to stop after that two-year degree because they don’t have the funds. I’m thankful I didn’t have to stop.”

To help students like Savannah by contributing to the Jim Bennett scholarship, visit give.petm.iupui.edu.

—Lynnell Nixon
TCEM Student Seizes Cannes Festival Opportunity
For a film buff who aspires to plan high-profile events, the result of Chelsea Wilson’s online research is too good to be true. Wilson, a senior TCEM major, began scouring the web early this year looking for internship opportunities with film festivals. On May 11th, she arrived in Cannes, France, to begin a two-week, once-in-a-lifetime internship with the American Pavilion at the Cannes Film Festival.

“I’m a huge movie fan and have attended film festivals in Indy and have always enjoyed them,” says Wilson, who transferred to IUPUI from IU Bloomington to enroll in the TCEM program. “I wanted to see what working for a film festival would be like, so I started looking online for options.”

After completing an application and phone interviews, Wilson was selected as one of about 200 interns for the American Pavilion, which is the headquarters for U.S. films at Cannes. During the festival, she assisted with set-up and logistics for panel discussions. The work not only offered practical, hands-on experience, it afforded some lucky celebrity sightings as well. In addition to shaking George Clooney’s hand, Wilson caught glimpses of Julia Roberts, Jodie Foster, Ryan Gosling, Donald Sutherland, Elle Fanning, and Mel Gibson.

“Because I want to be involved in large-scale events, this experience really prepared me for how to work in events without buckling under pressure,” Wilson says. “I’ve also never studied abroad before, so this was a great experience to add to my resume.”

A study abroad scholarship from the Efroymson Family Fund, a CICF Fund, helped Wilson pay for travel, lodging, and expenses associated with the internship. She used savings and earnings from her part-time job in the ticket office at Bankers Life Fieldhouse to fund the rest.

And the films? Wilson viewed many of the award-winning movies at the festival, including her favorite, “Captain Fantastic,” starring Viggo Mortensen. Pavilion interns were given tickets to the movies as part of a lottery system. Wilson often signed up to attend showings in the early morning before her work shift so she could see as many of the festival’s features as possible. In all, she viewed 17 movies during her time in Cannes.

― Jill Jansen
TCEM Alumna Ashley Leavelle Fleener understands the value of global experiences.
Bringing the world closer has implications — both personally and professionally — for today’s college students. As international experience becomes a clear differentiator in the job market, the IU School of Physical Education and Tourism Management (PETM) continues to expand its portfolio of international opportunities.

“With so many multinational businesses today, we’re seeing students with meaningful international experiences placing very well,” says Amanda Cecil, chair, tourism, conventions, and event management department (TCEM). “Employers value their [students’] ability to work in diverse environments and with different types of people.”

Abby Ackerman, a senior TCEM major from Loogootee, Indiana, got a firsthand look at international tourism and a different culture during a two-week camp in Thailand this summer. Ackerman accompanied Cecil on the trip, hosted by the National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), a public university in Bangkok, Thailand, and a new IU strategic partner.

“Being paired with students from all over the world, it just opened my eyes to a new cultural experience and different points of view,” says Ackerman, who took a beginning Thai language course and attended lectures in sustainable tourism while in Bangkok. “It was really helpful to reinforce that we need to look at other cultures and not just the American way of doing things.”

Fostering international awareness also occurs on campus. Using live video conferencing technology, students in the 400-level Global Tourism Seminar course attend class with peers at the University of Primorska in Slovenia.

“Not every student has the time or budget to travel abroad, so it’s important that we try and offer international experiences here at home for everyone,” says Yao-Yi Fu, TCEM assistant professor and course instructor. “Last year, the University of Primorska had European students from seven different countries attending our shared class, so it’s quite amazing to have students from so many countries get together to share ideas and experiences.”

Last summer, Fu visited Slovenia through an Erasmus faculty exchange program funded by the European Union. In addition to meeting the partner school’s faculty and dean, she gave lectures and toured the tiny country, which is just one-quarter the size of Indiana.

“I’ve learned so much about Slovenia through teaching the class, but this was an opportunity to see the country for myself so I can share my observations with my students,” says Fu.

Fu and the TCEM department will host a faculty member from the University of Primorska this fall as part of the same exchange program.

“After taking this class, many students become more interested in international issues and learning about different cultures,” adds Fu. “For students who have ambitions to work in international settings and with international travelers, it’s very important for them to have the skills and knowledge to work with different people.”

TCEM graduate Ashley Leavelle Fleener (BS TCEM 2010) agrees. Although she didn’t study abroad during her years at IUPUI, today as a meeting planner for the global nursing honor society, Sigma Theta Tau International, she knows the value of international experience. She just returned from an event in Cape Town, South Africa, and has planned conferences in both Prague and Hong Kong in the past two years.

“One of the first interview questions I was asked was, ‘do you have a valid passport?’,” Leavelle Fleener says. “Whether in communication or understanding the different ways that countries do business, any international experience a person can bring to this industry is huge.”

— Jill Jansen
In our spring 2016 issue, we announced the launch of a new initiative here at IUPUI — the Sports Innovation Institute, helmed by Dean Jay Gladden. It officially began operations in fall 2015, and since then, it has made an impression on the Indianapolis sports scene and on campus, working as a think tank of sorts for sports organizations.

“What we’re trying to do is create more activity around innovation. In the first case, we are formalizing relationships within the industry, and in the second case, we’re formalizing relationships and creating more activity on campus. Those would be the two biggest accomplishments over the past year,” says Gladden.

The institute, created partly with the intention of solidifying Indianapolis as a global sports destination, has worked with a number of sports associations this year. In March and April, the institute worked with the NCAA around the Swimming & Diving Championship and the Women’s Final Four, utilizing eleven PETM master’s students and Herron School of Art and Design students to collect quantitative and qualitative data to better understand the fan experience related to merchandise purchasing. The students recommended potential improvements to the sales process.

The institute also called upon a number of students to work on a project with the Indianapolis Motor Speedway focusing on the Indianapolis 500 and the Brickyard event, under the direction of lecturer Erica Shonkwiler.

It is also working on a project with the United States Motorsports Association to quantify the economic impact of motor sports nationwide.

And this fall, the institute is completing a research project for the Indianapolis Colts. Needless to say, the institute has been keeping busy.

“[The institute] gives the industry one more resource they can lean on,” says Gladden. “I think that the Indianapolis community is fantastic, and they want to work with IUPUI on a variety of topics.”

In addition, the institute has been offering a unique opportunity to entrepreneurs who have ideas for projects around sports innovation. These individuals can submit proposals for projects that center on talent development, sports product innovation, grassroots sports advancement, and fan experience innovation. These proposals are assessed by faculty who work together on behalf of the program. The faculty share whether they think the idea is viable and the changes they would make.

“We are increasingly meeting with people who have ideas or even start-up businesses in the sports space, and we are helping them make connections,” says Gladden.

Nine schools are involved with the institute, ranging from Robert H. McKinney School of Law to the School of Liberal Arts to PETM. “Students have been very engaged,” says Gladden.

He adds, “[The institute] provides an example of how people across campus come together for sports, community, and economic development. That’s one reason why we’re unique: we are breaking down traditional silos and bringing faculty and students together from different disciplines.”

So, what’s next for the Sports Innovation Institute? According to Gladden, for the coming year, it’ll be all about “identifying, securing, and naming founding partners to invest in the institute’s mission and vision.”

To learn more about the Sports Innovation Institute or to support the institute’s efforts, go to petm.iupui.edu/community/sports-innovation.

—Shelby Deering
Making an Impact on Campus and in the Indianapolis Sports Community

Photo: Dave Pierce

Bankers Life Fieldhouse

NCAA Offices
After many years of dealing with aging equipment in the kinesiology department, chair Mark Urtel expressed genuine excitement about renovations to both the classroom space adjoining the human performance lab, and exceptional new equipment for the strength and conditioning lab.

“The updates clarify the meeting space between the human performance lab and the classroom, and provide a cutting-edge, state-of-the-art facility for our students,” assessed Urtel. “And the new strength-and-muscle-conditioning lab allows our students to participate in top-level forms of conditioning.”

When the spaces were renovated, there was a switch in physical space for the classroom/human performance space and the strength-and-muscle-conditioning lab. The new lab provides multi-
functional stations in a 2,400-square-foot facility. It has evolved from a student fitness center into a top-notch muscle conditioning center, complete with free weights, selectorized barbells, dumbbells, resistance bands, plyometrics, lifting chains, and TRX bodyweight systems.

The new facilities were the inspiration and brainchild of recently retired Alan Mikesky, kinesiology professor emeritus.

“Alan Mikesky’s vision drove the development of these spaces to their current level,” shared Urtel. “These new facilities provide our students a better opportunity to see the best equipment before they enter the field.”

A quarter-million-dollar renovation, Urtel believes alumni of PETM will be truly impressed. “Despite its size, our muscle conditioning lab equals what any Big Ten school has.”

—John Purcell
Donor Honor Roll

2016 Donors

Contributions allow the school to provide resources and exceptional learning opportunities to students, as well as create a mechanism to research and innovate in our respective fields. Thank you to all our donors for contributions given between January 1 and October 24, 2016. Your gifts make such a difference for students and the school.

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IUPUI Senior Academy

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Sue, Tom, and Sara Vessely, as well as their late family member, professor emeritus Jeff Vessely, were recognized by Dean Gladden and Chancellor Paydar as the school’s 2016 Spirit of Philanthropy recipients during IUPUI’s annual luncheon. Because of their family’s philanthropy, kinesiology students have an emergency scholarship fund set aside to help students stay in school during periods of financial crisis. Incoming kinesiology freshmen also can apply for funds thanks to the family’s endowed scholarship.
allow students to take time away from work, focus on academics, and prepare for leadership in their professions through experiences such as your charitable gifts to the School of Physical Education and Tourism Management where students attend a one-week, intensive, leadership development program focused on personal leadership styles and teamwork outside the urban-institution setting.

Kinesiology student experiences at Camp Brosius

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which enhance learning through

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because unmet financial need for PETM students is approximately $5,600 per year and 69 percent of our students graduate with loans that average $33,000

so your kind support helps students reduce work hours now so they focus on studies, graduate with less debt, and are set up to become successful future PETM alumni.
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Angela Stergiopoulos hosts guests during a fundraising benefit for Jim Bennett’s memorial scholarship at Greek Islands Restaurant, owned by Angela’s family. See page 12 to read about Savannah Lawrence, the first Bennett scholar.

Dean Gladden presents philanthropist Jeremy Efroymson with a gift and words of gratitude during the celebration of Efroymson Hall at Camp Brosius.

**In Honor/Memoriam**

Several gifts were received in memory of:

- Jim Bennett
- Cynthia Dale
- Jeff Vessely
- Ethel Zimmerman

Gifts also were received in honor of the following individuals:

- Nick Kellum
- Laura Klaum
- Larken Marra
- Alan Mikesky
- Karen & Larry Ward

Thanks to those of you who celebrated your family and friends in such a special way. Family members and friends were notified of your gifts as appropriate.
As you may know, the school just completed renovations. What’s missing is your name on the new walls!

When you contribute to Physical Education and Tourism Management (PETM) during IU’s For All Bicentennial Campaign (give.petm.iupui.edu), you have a one-time opportunity to place your name permanently in the new PETM Dean’s office space. Not only will you see your name permanently on a new school wall and receive potential tax deductions or credits, but you also will truly make a difference for students and programs.

To be included, join one of these gift societies and receive exclusive recognition:

**$1,000 Director’s Society**
- Invitation to dean’s winter donor reception
- Invitations to exclusive school events
- Your name listed in the school alumni magazine and annual report
- Your name listed annually on a donor plaque hung on the donor wall in our new PETM offices
- PETM folio pad

**$500 Faculty Club** (just $41.66 per month—less than your cell phone bill or a nice dinner, and you may receive federal or state tax benefits)
- Invitation to dean’s winter donor reception
- Invitations to exclusive school events
- Your name listed in the school alumni magazine and annual report
- Your name listed annually on a donor plaque hung on the donor wall in our new PETM offices

**$150 Club** (exclusively for donors who have graduated from the school within the past five years—$12.50 per month, just trade a few Starbucks cups for helping a struggling student with tuition or providing unique learning opportunities)
- Invitations to exclusive school events
- Your name listed in the school alumni magazine and annual report
- Your name recognized on the 150 donor wall plaque

**Dean’s Cabinet**
If you want to achieve more significant recognition in our new space, contribute $10,000 within five years to help students, the school, Camp Brosius, or a program that is special to you.

You can give $2,000 per year, donate appreciated stock, utilize IRA rollover options, or structure your gift in another way that maximizes tax benefits for you.

To express our thanks, we’ll showcase your name in a special way! Dean’s Cabinet members also:
- Attend an annual dinner meeting and hear a school update from the dean, plus have an opportunity to interact with the dean personally
- Receive invitations to exclusive school events
- See your name listed in the school alumni magazine and annual report

**Legacy Society**
If you inform the school of a future gift in your will, or contribute via a future trust gift or life-insurance policy, your name will be displayed alongside Dean’s Cabinet contributors. Just inform us of your planned gift intent, and we’ll include you!

In addition to seeing your name on the PETM wall of fame, you will receive other special benefits for your gifts at these levels.
- Attend an annual dinner meeting and hear a school update from the dean, plus have an opportunity to interact with the dean personally
- Receive invitations to exclusive school events
- See your name listed in the school alumni magazine and annual report

Questions? Contact Laura Klaum, lklaum@iupui.edu or 317/274-1484.
give.petm.iupui.edu
Brain Injury & Headache Study Launched

Whether through the news media or the recent Will Smith movie “Concussion,” people are becoming increasingly aware of concussions and their potential life-altering effect. Kinesiology assistant professor Kelly Naugle presses on the cutting edge of this research, investing the link between what are known as traumatic brain injuries (or TBIs) and chronic post-traumatic headaches.

Coming to the school from the Pain Research and Intervention Center of Excellence at the University of Florida in 2014, Naugle has continued her research in pain modulation. Headaches are the most common neurological disorder seen in general medical practice, and over three percent of the general population suffers from chronic headaches. Naugle’s work, therefore, has profound implications.

She recently received a grant from the Indiana Spinal Cord and Brain Injury Fund to seek answers in the realm of TBIs.

“Chronic headaches actually develop in more than half the patients who get mild TBI within the next year,” Naugle said. “Unfortunately, we don’t know why this happens. One of the focuses of this study is to try to predict who gets the headaches and who doesn’t.”

Naugle shared that the key to control exists in limiting the inflammatory response from TBIs, a response that causes the central nervous system to become sensitized. This sensitization causes the pain to become amplified and prolonged, leading to a risk of chronic pain development.

Although not part of the original grant, Naugle is collaborating with Dr. Fletcher White of IUPUI’s Stark Neurosciences Research Institute to add blood tests to the research, while doing quantitative sensory testing of the descending inhibitory system. Naugle’s research uses patient surveys from Methodist, Eskenazi, and Riley Hospitals taken over a period of time. Much of the research focuses on the descending inhibitory system and the way it influences how individuals feel pain and how that system can dampen the experience of pain.

Naugle believes this system can become damaged. “This is the first study I am doing with mild TBI,” she said, “so it is a new patient population. As far as looking at central sensitization and pain inhibitory capacity, it’s been a very common theme in my work.”

In addition, Naugle points to an interesting side note related to headaches following a mild TBI.

“Headaches are more common after a mild TBI versus a moderate or severe TBI. It’s going to affect student schoolwork — how they can perform in school. TBIs also are very common in the military population. It’s one of the biggest things that keeps them away from training and impacts how they perform on the field.”

Naugle hopes to add brain imaging in future studies, and wants to look beyond to possible involvement with the Department of Defense. She is excited that her current research is not just cross-sectional but more longitudinal in nature, meaning its results are measured over time.

She is confident that the study can provide valuable information to inform future research. “If you know what causes something, you can focus on treatment.”

—John Purcell

The Dr. Carl B. Sputh Sr. Memorial Scholarship was established, which remains the school’s largest scholarship endowment.
Robust Researcher Brings Creativity, Experience to Kinesiology
While many young people and adults change their life ambition several times during their formative years, incoming associate professor Andy Coggan has known for a long time where his interests and passion are.

“You cut me, and I bleed exercise physiology.” Andy Coggan joked.

A competitive runner and cyclist since the age of 15, Coggan’s interests were first inspired by an exercise physiology textbook received from a fellow cycling club mate in high school. This led to a bachelor and master’s degree from Ball State University. He credits the late physiologist and fellow cycling enthusiast Ed Burke with encouraging him to pursue a biology and chemistry major while continuing his education at the University of Texas at Austin, where he received his PhD.

Later, his studies progressed to post-doctoral work at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, where he conducted research on aging and exercise, and its impact on health. His connection to their medical center provided an opportunity to work with congenital heart disease and to studies conducted in 2011 related to nutrition and heart health. Specifically, the research focused on beet root juice and its ability to allow the body to do the same tasks with less oxygen. Coggan immediately saw the application. “My mind goes to heart failure patients,” Coggan noted. “If there is any population out there who can benefit, it’s heart failure patients.” And, following release of his academic paper, interest in the subject exploded. “The wave became a tsunami,” as he put it.

But beet juice does have a drawback in the power drink market. “It tastes like sweet dirt,” he added. But its benefits are hard to argue with — a six percent improvement in performance for athletes, with close to a 13 percent increase in the elderly.

Coggan immediately saw the potential. “The rough rule of thumb is that after some point, your function goes down about one percent a year. You’re telling me that I can drink beet root juice and, in a couple of hours, I can be ten years younger?”

Another fascinating example of his creative research was his use of the ergometer on a bicycle, the power meter, which led to his collaborative work with famed cyclist Hunter Allen in their book “Training and Racing with a Power Meter.” Coggan will use his research on exercise for both healthy and patient populations to support an upcoming IUPUI workshop, "Innovations in Training with Power for Endurance Sports."

In future work, Coggan looks forward to working with his new kinesiology associates. “Many of my colleagues are me, fifteen or twenty years younger. They are perfectly positioned because they are here at IUPUI. The medical school is right here, too, so I am hoping to foster collaboration.”

Interest in athletics seems to run in the family. His wife is an accomplished competitive cyclist, and his twelve-year-old daughter a budding gymnast. At the moment, his son is an avid video game enthusiast.

—John Purcell
Godwin Charles Ogbeide Broadens TCEM’s Hospitality Reach

Upon meeting Godwin Charles Ogbeide (pronounced obey-he-day), you are immediately struck by his smile and warmth, quickly feeling at ease in his presence. So, it comes as no surprise that in the field of tourism management, his first emphasis is on hospitality.

“My emphasis in hospitality is to make you happy,” Ogbeide says. “To provide you with some level of kindness, gentleness, happiness. To make you smile.”

An award-winning public speaker, Ogbeide comes to the tourism, conventions, and event management department from the University of Arkansas, where he taught in the human nutrition and hospitality innovation department. Prior to that, he served as a tutor and mentor at the University of Missouri-Columbia, where he received his master’s degree, MBA, and PhD.

His industry experience has focused on strategic management and leadership development, with a keen eye always on developing the role of hospitality for all businesses, not just those typically employed with food and lodging. He believes it gives any business a strategic advantage over its competitors.

“It’s not just for a restaurant or a sports organization. Hospitality is very innate to every organization in the world,” Ogbeide shared. “That’s why we are hoping to help businesses do better, so they can have a competitive edge over others. Hospitality is not limited to the restaurant and lodging industry. It is actually relevant to any organization. That’s why I love it, and why I chose this field.”

Ogbeide considers himself balanced perfectly between being a researcher and an instructor.

“I love to do research as well as teach,” he indicated. “But what I love to do most is educate people and expand knowledge. Whatever I find in my research, I teach. Both of them go hand in hand.”

Ogbeide values service, as well, and sees his role in Indianapolis touching both the city and IUPUI communities.

“I’m a community guy,” he shared. “When I was at the University of Arkansas, I received a city award for planning a community event, for bringing people out to celebrate, to have fun, and for making our city a better place.”

Throughout his career, he has received numerous awards. His passion still centers around making sure students understand his message about customers receiving hospitality, or as he succinctly puts it, “making customers feel welcome, comfortable, and happy.”

Married for twenty years, Ogbeide met his wife in Columbia, Missouri, while he was a student. Together, they have two sons and two daughters, one of which is attending Harvard University.

In his free time, he participates in marathons and plays soccer. (He assures me “yes, even at my age.”) He also enjoys traveling on road trips with his family.

Summarizing his true source of fun and purpose, he shared: “I am someone who enjoys making people feel happy. My job is all about fun. It’s a beautiful world. We just need to find a way to make it better for one another.”

— John Purcell
Akilah Sims has wanted to be a pediatrician since she was a pediatric patient herself at about seven years old. With that in mind, she was told there are many routes to medical school, and was first encouraged to start with nursing.

The only trouble was, she didn’t love it.

So she did something about it. She talked to a college counselor and came up with something she loved a lot more — a kinesiology major with a personal training certificate from the School of Physical Education and Tourism Management (PETM) at IUPUI.

“With exercise science, I basically took a lot of the same science courses (as nursing) but could branch off into a lot of different directions, including sports management,” she says. Although she still plans to go into pre-med, her more immediate goal is to earn a master’s degree in kinesiology as another step in that direction.

Turns out, the field of exercise science suits her love for both sports and science. Sims played four years on the IUPUI women’s basketball team, garnering a full scholarship and cultivating a regimented time-management style that served her well when long practice hours competed with the need to study for intense course work, which was heavy in biology, anatomy, and physiology.

She excelled at both, graduating with a kinesiology degree (BS 2016) and excelling at her sport. She is currently negotiating a contract through her agent to play basketball in a professional European league.

Sims plans to keep her brain fit along with her body by studying for her master’s degree online. “There’s one team that actually has a master’s program they do for athletes,” says Sims. “It’s almost like studying abroad, and a lot like playing college basketball.”

She’s willing to buckle down because she knows there’s a relatively short window of time for playing basketball professionally. “As long as I’m healthy and have a love for the game, I’m going to keep playing,” she says.

Still, it won’t deter her from her ultimate goal to be a pediatrician, that goal she’s had since she was seven. “I just have a pure love for children,” says Sims. “In my job right now, I train kids to play basketball, and I work at the day care at my church. I have just always loved kids.”

If there was a detour, it would be to work with people with disabilities, something she developed an affinity for at IUPUI. In one class, she learned to play sports with a disability.

“They would tie up an arm or leg, put you in a wheelchair, maybe blindfold you — and then we’d play a team sport like basketball or kickball,” says Sims. “Then we’d describe the game played under those circumstances, and explain how we made modifications to the game.”

Her experiences with PETM’s Live Laugh Dance program also profoundly affected her. “During the first half of the program, we learned about different disabilities, and during the second half, we had a dance partner with Down syndrome,” says Sims. “We learned different dances, and at the end of the semester, we had a recital. It was amazing.”

Experiences like this have given her a unique combination of qualifications: “I know the disabilities, and I know the sports,” says Sims. “And along the way, I found a love I didn’t know I had!”

She has no shortage of good experiences to relay, and she has nothing but kudos for the school that prepared her to choose from several fulfilling career options.

“I believe kinesiology is one of the best majors IUPUI has to offer,” says Sims. “All the experiences we had, plus the teachers are amazing! They really care. It’s like a family — they give us the help we need to make ourselves better.”

— Lynnell Nixon
Alum Champions Kids

The Department of Restaurant, Hotel, Institution, and Tourism Management (RHIT) and the Military Science Program (ROTC) become part of the School of Physical Education.
Big-hearted Alum Pumped Up for OT School

Mitch Sermersheim is a big guy with a big heart. He makes an equally big impression on those who’ve worked with him — both in school and in the work force.

After graduation (BS KINES 2014), he turned his sights to a graduate degree in Occupational Therapy from the University of Indianapolis because he wants nothing more than to help people.

Mitch was the first member of his family to attend college. “I got accepted at IU and IUPUI, and a lot of my friends were going to IU, but I was paying my own way,” recalls Mitch. “My dad sat me down and said, you can pay this or this for a good education.”

Once in school, Mitch knew he wanted to do something in the medical field, but didn’t know what. “I started out in medical imaging technology, but I’m not a tech guy,” says Mitch. “I knew that wasn’t for me.”

During his sophomore year, two camp experiences set his course. One was Bradford Woods, which uncovered his passion for individuals with disabilities, autism in particular. The other was Camp Brosius, where the interaction with his professors had a big impact.

“They pointed me to exercise science,” says Mitch. “I didn’t know yet what I wanted to do as a career, but I knew I was on the right path.”

Kinesiology lecturer Allison Plopper was one of the Camp Brosius faculty, and she also knew Mitch from overseeing his adaptive clinic participation when she was a grad student.

“We always want to engage our students as much as we can,” says Plopper. “I teach a freshman seminar and advise them to get to know their professors. Then, when we have opportunities to pass along to students, we know who to promote.”

One of those opportunities was the Sam H. Jones Scholarship, an opportunity for community service-minded students.

“The scholarship provides a way for students to focus on their community engagement work,” she says. “They’re already engaged, but the extra money means they don’t have to get another job and spread themselves too thin.”

The idea is to provide an opportunity to really delve into what the student loves, so they can keep regular hours and develop relationships with their clients.

The scholarship made a big difference for Mitch, helping with tuition expenses and allowing him to rent close to campus, which was beneficial to him study wise. He believes without that help, his finances would’ve made school a lot more of a struggle.

As a result, Mitch had time to develop his own customized internship project: a workout program for three autistic brothers, ages 32, 26, and 20, who manifested vastly different parts of the spectrum. Through service work, he’d been working out with them for about six months prior to the project.

“I talked to [kinesiology associate professor] Katie Stanton about doing a special research project, then ran it by Jay Bradley [kinesiology internship coordinator], who approved it,” says Mitch. “I did all the research, met with Katie Stanton and Rachel Swinford [clinical assistant professor], and nailed down all the behind-the-scenes stuff like the IRB [Institutional Review Board] approval.”

This non-traditional internship project was a big success and made Mitch more determined than ever to continue his training to be an occupational therapist.

Mitch is currently studying for his master’s degree, and works as a personal trainer at a private gym in Zionsville, which suits his relational, intuitive style. “If you pay attention to tone of voice, body language, just what’s
going on, you can feel where people are,” he says. “You can see the max effort they have to give that day.”

He calls IUPUI a ‘huge blessing’ for the classes, the location (being so close to Indianapolis with many outside opportunities for jobs or volunteering), and especially the professors.

“PETM is a close-knit school community where faculty members take a personal interest in their students,” says Mitch. “They kind of took me under their wing. I didn’t realize it at the time, but they were definitely mentoring me.”

—Lynnell Nixon
PETM CELEBRATING 150 YEARS

NiCole Keith & Ashley Jones (pictured right)
InMOTION 39  WINTER 2016-17

Grad Impacts
IU-HCOP Program

Kinesiology alumna Ashley Jones (BS KINES 2011) embraced the significant role of IU-HCOP site coordinator in November 2015. Her hard work has driven the program forward.

HCOP, or the Health Careers Opportunity Program, is a grant-funded program designed to increase healthcare workforce diversity by recruiting students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. It reaches out to nontraditional, disadvantaged students through other avenues, and its main outreach is to city and township schools surrounding campus.

Recruited by kinesiology professor and HCOP co-director NiCole Keith, Jones previously served as a physical education teacher and coach of the Pike High School girls’ basketball team in Indianapolis. Keith was impressed by her talent.

“I knew she would be so good at the job because she goes into high schools, earns the trust of the teachers and administrators, gains the trust of the students, and recruits those students to participate in the program,” shares Keith. “She is the face of the program to those students, adults, and teachers.”

As site coordinator, Jones prepares students for the SAT, helps them focus on math and algebra through visits to IUPUI’s Math Assistance Center, and collaborates with the Bepko Learning Center regarding the program’s science components. She also involves other campus partners such as kinesiology faculty and financial aid staff.

Jones attributes her success in this role to skills she learned during her undergraduate experiences, such as those she learned during Camp Brosius coursework. She also knows her work at HCOP has helped her grow. “I am the type of person who likes to take the back seat,” she says, “but having to actually take charge gave me more confidence.”

One of her greatest challenges is finding and encouraging male students to participate. She also now understands that students have an unrealistic view of what is involved to be successful in a healthcare field.

“A lot of students say ‘Oh, I want to be a doctor,’” she notes. “They think they can go to school for four years and become a doctor, so they are not very knowledgeable about the path they have to take or what it takes for them to actually get where they want to go.”

In contrast, both Jones and Keith are thrilled with the students’ enthusiasm and engagement.

“HCOP students are coming from rather difficult environments,” notes Keith, “but they are all incredibly smart. It is wonderful that this program exists for students to see what their intelligence can get them.”

—John Purcell

The Adapted Physical Activity Clinics established their first clinic, Motor Activity Clinic, to provide people with disabilities individualized physical activity.

1996
iral Patel is one of those exceptional students who has taken full advantage of the college experience. A recent 2016 kinesiology graduate, Patel had a carpe diem approach to every opportunity that came his way during his time in the School of Physical Education and Tourism Management (PETM).

“I worked hard in my academics, involved myself in on- and off-campus community service and extracurricular activities that I was passionate about, while staying true to who I am and my personal beliefs,” says Patel.

Originally from the west side of Indianapolis, Patel says that he chose IUPUI because he wanted to stay close to his BAPS Hindu temple, as well as to his family.

The choice turned out to be a wise one. Patel made the most of his years at IUPUI, taking on several internships that prepared him for his studies at the IU School of Medicine in the Department of Family Medicine; the PETM INShape program in which Patel conducted health and fitness assessments; and a Cardiac and Pulmonary Rehabilitation internship with IU Health, where he performed diagnostics and prescribed rehabilitation plans to patients.

He says, “The experiences I had throughout my undergraduate career played a vital role in my development as a student, as well as an overall individual. Due to the internships I completed, I was able to obtain a holistic education that will not only be of aid for a career, but in all aspects of life.”

Although Patel is grateful for the real-world experience he received through his internships, he is also thankful for the classroom time he had with associate professor Tony Kaleth, whom he credits for teaching him to conduct research, and associate professor Jake Streepey, who coached him through anything he needed help with while in PETM.

Patel feels that he has landed on the right career, saying, “I chose medicine due to my curiosity for the sciences and humans today, a career which I will constantly be learning and growing as an individual. Having an individual’s physical, emotional, and mental health in your hands is a rare, unique, and delicate opportunity.”

He will always remain appreciative of the learning opportunities he had during his undergraduate years.

“My studies in kinesiology emphasized holistic caregiving through physiological, biomechanical, and psychological mechanisms of the human body. I was fortunate to apply the healthcare knowledge and patient interaction skills gained on special populations through service-learning opportunities. Being a pre-medical exercise science major motivated me to achieve academic excellence as I strived to gain a thorough understanding of classroom concepts that I could apply as a physician.” —Shelby Deering
Right Place at the Right Time: Experiences Ignite Philanthropic Passion for Darrell Pirtle

College has a funny way of changing a person’s plans. Students may enter their undergraduate years intending to pursue one career path, but through taking particular classes, meeting inspiring professors, and participating in extracurricular activities, that path may shift dramatically.

That’s exactly what happened to Darrell Pirtle Jr., who graduated from IUPUI in May 2016 with a degree in kinesiology and personal training certificate. Although Pirtle learned a great deal through the PETM program, it was his dedication to philanthropy that truly impacted his life, leading him to serve as a development intern with the Indiana University Foundation and to take on his current position as the student-alumni programs assistant at the IUPUI Office of Alumni Relations.

“I entered college wanting to be an athletic trainer, but by putting myself out there, I’ve discovered a wealth of other things that I’d be thrilled to do for the rest of my life,” says Pirtle.

As a sophomore, Pirtle got involved with Jagathon, IUPUI’s dance marathon that raises money for children’s hospitals under the umbrella of the Children’s Miracle Network. Thanks to the passion of Pirtle’s themed learning community mentor Nikki Blair, he was inspired to volunteer.

“My life was changed the night of the event. I saw the impact that could be made when a committee of dedicated students come together to educate a campus about the ways they can help a cause,” says Pirtle.

From then on, Pirtle was hooked. He eventually became the campus president of Jagathon, leading the charge to gather donations at events in the city, connecting national and local businesses to the marathon to provide sponsorship dollars, and organizing event logistics including food, games, and special ceremonies.

Jagathon is supported by the IU Foundation, so it was a natural fit when Pirtle started his internship after graduation, gaining experience to pursue a career in philanthropy or the nonprofit sector. Now as the student-alumni programs assistant, Pirtle is responsible for collaborating with students and office staff to help with programming and to advance the mission of their organizations.

“I rely on my experience in leadership with Jagathon to bring new perspectives to well-established groups.” Pirtle is considering grad school, more than likely aiming for the nonprofit management program at IUPUI. He wishes to continue his education at IUPUI because it “has been a rising campus in recent years.” He adds, “The quality of people that are attracted to this university, be it faculty, staff, or students, is something to behold.”

Wherever Pirtle’s path is leading him, it’s safe to say that the destination will certainly involve helping others.

“I am proud to see my development as a student and person is linked with the opportunities that I was supported enough to pursue. I’m thankful for the people that I’ve met at IUPUI. I’m not 100 percent sure what the future holds, but I don’t stop for a second to think that I’m not in the right place right now to figure it out.”

—Shelby Deering
Carlos Hernandez Has a Lot to Smile About

Carlos Hernandez simply wants to make a positive impact on the lives of others. As an IUPUI student, he was a resident assistant (RA), looking out for the safety and security of over 300 students. He served as the president of Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity, and was named the “Outstanding Fraternity Man of the Year” in 2014. And, he volunteered regularly at the Boys & Girls Club of Indianapolis.

Now he’s setting out to change the world, one mouth at a time.

Hernandez has aspirations of being a dentist, rooted in ideas about oral health that were instilled in him from childhood. “I’ve found that [dentistry] is a profession where you are able to help others and make a difference,” says Hernandez. “Growing up, my family and I didn’t think about how important oral health is to the overall health of your body. Since my family is from Mexico, the perspective of oral health is that people with high incomes are the only ones who are able to have beautiful smiles. Thinking about all of this made me realize how much of a need we have to educate those in the oral health field.”

Since earning his kinesiology degree (BS 2016), Hernandez is currently pursuing additional education at IUPUI in the field of biology, focusing specifically on immunology. He is planning to apply to the IU School of Dentistry next summer.

“I took a trip to Haiti and met with dentists who took time out of their lives to go help third-world countries have better oral hygiene and educate them on how essential it is to have good oral hygiene. Seeing it firsthand solidified that I wanted to be that difference someday, especially since many people see dental work as a costly procedure.”

Many other experiences at IUPUI shaped Hernandez’s desired path to dentistry. He is thankful for his internships at AmeriCorps, the Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP), and Grin Dentistry.

Several faculty members aided Hernandez in his journey, as well. “Steve Fallowfield [lecturer] was one of the most influential professors that I had throughout my college career, due to him pushing his students to not only be successful, but to encourage one another.”

Hernandez says that clinical assistant professors Rachel Swinford and Jay Bradley further inspired his intention to be a dentist. They both helped him locate an internship at Grin Dentistry, where Hernandez was “able to understand the everyday business of operating a private dental office.”

Along the way, Hernandez has gained insight into his future career as a dentist, and has advice for those hoping to pursue dentistry.

He says, “Persevere through the hard times in school. There will be someone who is better and smarter than you, but remember that you are unique and that your story makes you special. Get involved — dental schools love to see that you are able to handle a workload of classes, but also want to see you develop essential life skills throughout your collegiate career. Have a purpose and passion for what you are doing.”

—Shelby Deering

PETM celebrates its 150th anniversary.

2016 PETM celebrates its 150th anniversary.

150 YEARS OF INNOVATION - EDUCATION - ENGAGEMENT
Annie Burris and Sarah Buckner graduated nearly a decade apart from the tourism, conventions, and event management program at IUPUI — Burris in 2015 and Buckner in 2004 — but they share the common goal of singing the praises of charming Hamilton County, Indiana.

Burris, who works as the Sales Coordinator for Hamilton County Tourism says, “There are so many fun things to do in Hamilton County. Prior to working here, I wasn’t too familiar with the area. Getting to know all of the venues and attractions has been really eye-opening for me.”

Buckner, the Tourism Gives Coordinator, grew up in Hamilton County, and says, “I’ve always thought it was a wonderful place.”

Burris and Buckner credit their positive experiences in the TCEM program to the success of their current careers. Buckner is particularly indebted to her professors.

“Every single professor within TCEM helped me grow and learn. They helped me grow my confidence, supported me, and led me along the right path. Amanda Cecil [TCEM chair] is a wonderful example of someone that shaped me to who I am today. I loved all of my professors,” she says.
Burris says, “Amy Vaughan [clinical assistant professor] was the first teacher I ever had on campus for my freshman orientation class. I had her for many semesters after that, and I always felt like I gained something when walking away from a class. She even gave me a recommendation for the job I have now.”

In her position, Burris is very involved with the local bridal market and regularly attends bridal shows. She says, “Monica Richard was my instructor for a wedding-related class I had. I learned so much in that one semester, and it was beneficial to learn from someone with so much experience in the industry.”

Buckner and Burris’ time in the TCEM program contributed to their abilities to accomplish daily responsibilities. Buckner as she works “within community development,” especially “local businesses with technical assistance,” and Burris as she helps “the sales manager with servicing the booked meetings and conferences being held in Hamilton County.”

Even though both alums have a love for Hamilton County, they also deeply enjoy traveling. Burris says that Ponce, Puerto Rico, is one of her favorite travel destinations. She adds, “I’m going to the Bahamas in a few weeks, so maybe that will be a new favorite.” Buckner and Burris both list Amelia Island, Florida, as a mutually-beloved spot. Buckner says, “My children are still little, so I feel like our options are limited. But we found a little island in northeast Florida — Amelia Island — and we try to get there every year.”

Although Burris and Buckner always seem to be on the move, their alma mater holds a special place in their hearts. Burris says, “The campus, professors, and friends I made during my time there made my college experience really great.”

Buckner echoes the sentiment. “I loved the family feel of the TCEM department. I felt very much at home.”

—Shelby Deering
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