

Student Excellence

WWU students win national acclaim

Western Washington University is known as a place where students reach their full academic potential to begin prestigious professional and academic careers. It's a great beginning for the students, but all of us benefit from the lifetimes of innovation and community service that begin at here WWU.

Fairhaven students earn 'Adventure Learning Grants'

Three students from Fairhaven College of Interdisciplinary Studies traveled abroad with the help of Adventure Learning Grants. The grants are funded through the WWU Foundation and are given to three Fairhaven students each year for an independent learning project that will take them for a foreign country for at least 10 months. This year's recipients are:

- Anna vanDe Grift, studying microfinance in Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia.
- Rebecca Alhadeff, observing the Kurdish conflict in Turkey.
- Elise Burnett, researching art as a political medium in Guatemala.

Adventure Learning Grants are inspired by the Watson Grants, which are available to students at 28 liberal arts colleges. The fact that Fairhaven has its own grants of this type, exclusively available to Fairhaven students, has attracted a lot of interest to the college and resulted in an increase in out-of-state applications.

WWU is a top Peace Corps source

Western ranked sixth among the top medium-sized colleges and universities with alumni serving as Peace Corps volunteers in 2008. Since its inception in 1960, 750 alumni have served in the Peace Corps, including 40 in 2009. A large number of Peace Corps volunteers from Western are graduates of Woodring College of Education and Huxley College of the Environment, as well as students studying English as a second language and foreign languages. In the rankings for medium-sized schools, George Washington University tops the list. Western has more alumni serving than a number of notable schools, including Boston College, Georgetown University, University of Notre Dame, Brown University, University of Pennsylvania and Yale University.

WWU's debate team ranked second in nation

Western's debate team ranked second overall in the 2008-2009 national debate season sponsored by the National Parliamentary Debate Association. At the conclusion of the season on March 30, WWU's debate team was awarded second place based on the association's National Season Sweepstakes Award. The placement in the sweepstakes is determined by the number of points each school earns throughout the season. Point Loma Nazarene University in San Diego took first place in the sweepstakes.



Ra'Jeanna Fox, right, waves to the crowd at spring Commencement after being recognized by WWU President Bruce Shepard as a 2008-2009 Presidential Scholar. Fox, a graduate of Woodring College of Education, earned a Bachelor of Arts in Special Education.

Photo by Andy Bronson



Photo by Mark Malijan

The Society of Professional Journalists named Mark Malijan's "Out of the hazard," the best sports photo by students in the northwest region, covering Washington, Oregon, Alaska, Idaho and Montana.

Model U. N. team earns top honors
 WWU's Model United Nations team earned the highest distinction at the National Model U. N. conference in New York City for their representation of Ecuador. More than 300 other teams from schools around the world participated in the conference, which simulates real-world international situations similar to those encountered by the United Nations. Western was named an "Outstanding Delegation," receiving the highest distinction among any other university in Washington. WWU also outranked the London School of Economics and Political Science, one of the most prestigious universities in England. The conference – which was attended by more than 4,000 delegates from five continents – is the culmination of yearlong preparation with meetings, research, writing and fundraising.

Hollings scholarship funds environmental studies, internship

Western student Wesley Dyer received the prestigious National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Ernest F. Hollings scholarship, which will provide Dyer, majoring in Environmental Science and Economics, with up to \$8,000 per year for his last two years at WWU and a paid internship at NOAA next summer. The Hollings scholarship is designed to train undergraduate students in oceanic and atmospheric science, research, technology and education, as well as create a greater understanding and support for stewardship of the ocean and atmosphere.

WWU student journalists shine

Journalism students and student publications recently received six Regional Mark of Excellence Awards from the Society of Professional Journalists. WWU's Klipsun Magazine and The Planet were honored

as the region's first-and second-place student magazines, respectively, in a region covering Washington, Oregon, Alaska, Idaho and Montana. Meanwhile, the work of students Gabrielle Nomura, Mark Malijan, Sidonie DeCassis and Cody Gillin was recognized as some of the region's best in student journalism. Nomura won third place for in-depth reporting for her article "Bellingham's push to end 'paper or plastic'" in the Bellingham Business Journal. Malijan won first place in sports photography for a photo "Out of the hazard." DeCassis's article, "Great Pacific garbage patch," won second place for best magazine non-fiction article and Gillin's article, "Kangaroo: It's what's for dinner," won third place in the same category.

Huxley students tackle 'clean coal' in real-world competition

Students from Huxley College of the Environment won a national award at the Air and Waste Management Association's Annual Conference and Exhibition in Portland, Ore. in November. Western students Mackenzie Dolstad, Melody Feden, Jason Boyd and Eleanor Hines won the Environmental Challenge International, a competition that requires students to prepare and present a solution to a "real world" environmental problem. This year, the teams decided whether the installation of a clean coal plant in the Pacific Northwest would be a step forward for the area and the environment.

Internships help new graduates in tough job markets

The approximately 3,400 students who earned their degrees from WWU in 2007-2008 face one of the most challenging job markets in years, according to an annual survey of recent graduates. Only 73 percent of bachelor's degree recipients reported they had a job three to six months after graduation, the low-

est rate since 1991. There were bright spots, though. Graduates with internship experience found jobs faster, were more likely to be in a field-related position and reported higher starting salaries. Employment for teachers held steady at 94.6 percent. The employment rate for master's degree holders was 86.8 percent, almost unchanged from the previous year. And 15.5 percent reported they were continuing their education the highest rate ever recorded in the survey. WWU students were going on to prestigious programs at Boston University, Cleveland Institute of Music, Northwestern University, Pepperdine University, University of California, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of Buffalo, University of Washington and Washington State University.

Student presents research on macaw monitoring at national conference

Huxley College of the Environment student Derek Schruhl presented his senior thesis research on Costa Rica's scarlet macaw population at the annual National Conference of Science, Policy and the Environment in Washington D.C. in December. Schruhl was part of a team that included Huxley professors Troy Abel and Michael Medler and graduate student Tana Beus. The team conducted rainforest canopy research in Costa Rica's Carara National Park. Their presentation, titled "Macaw Cam: Participatory Science and Biodiversity Conservation," explores new, low-cost camera trap techniques to monitor scarlet macaws in one of their last two self-sustaining habitats in Costa Rica.

Student heads to India on a Fulbright Scholarship

Western student Alice Bremner received a Fulbright Scholarship to teach English in Dehli, India. The scholarship will cover the entire cost of her trip, including room, board and transportation. The teach-

ing assistantship is only a half-time job, so Bremner will also volunteer at a local community health care clinic. Bremner, a native of Mercer Island, graduated from WWU's Fairhaven College of Interdisciplinary Studies with a major in Medicine and Social Justice. After her trip, Bremner plans to attend medical school to study global health and infectious diseases. The Fulbright Program is a prestigious international exchange sponsored by the U.S. government.

Northwest Science journal highlights WWU students' work on Elwha dam

A special issue of the journal Northwest Science featured the research work of several Western students studying the ecological effects of the removal of the Elwha River dam on the Olympic Peninsula. The students, enrolled in the Huxley College on the Peninsula's joint program with Peninsula College in Port Angeles, worked with scientists, governmental and tribal agencies, and other students to research ecosystem restoration in the Elwha watershed and nearshore environments in the aftermath of the expected removal of the Elwha dam. In 1992, Congress directed the Secretary of the Interior to fully restore the Elwha River ecosystem and native fisheries. Both Western and Peninsula College are members of the Elwha Research Consortium, a group formed to research the effects of the dams' removal. Both institutions received more than \$500,000 in grants from the National Science Foundation to study the project, a restoration of such size and scope that it is only eclipsed in size by the project to restore Florida's Everglades.

Waterskiing club sends members to national championships

Western's tournament ski club sent Western seniors Kelly Thees, Mike Eisele, Aly Howisey, Brian Zuleger, and junior Kaylin

Bettinger, to compete in the National Collegiate Water Ski Association's All-Stars Championship on May 16 and 17 in Ahsokie, N.C. This was the first time the club has sent skiers to the championship since the club was established in 1992. Thees, Eisele, and Bettinger qualified for the all-star team, a team made up of 30 athletes from the western region.

Award-winning BEEP tells kids when computer time is up

Western junior Justin Lund won a Gold Award at the 2009 Northwest Design Invitational for BEEP, a timer designed to help children make successful transitions to and from the computer. Lund, an Industrial Design major from Waterloo, Iowa, said the genesis of the idea behind BEEP came from both his own experiences at home with his 6-year-old daughter, Vega, and through his class's work with Bellingham-based computer-products firm Allsop to help design a new line of products promoting a healthier digital lifestyle. BEEP plugs into one of the laptop's open USB ports and perches on the back of the laptop's screen. After 25 minutes, BEEP's eyes become lidded and almost closed, signaling the session is nearly complete. Finally, after 30 minutes, BEEP's eyes close and it falls asleep - and through the USB connection, BEEP also puts the laptop in sleep mode.

Math Modeling teams earn honors

Teams from Western's Mathematics Department received accolades in the 2009 Mathematical Contest in Modeling in February. The 1675 teams of undergraduates from 14 countries, primarily in the United States and China, were challenged analyze a real-life problem. Two of Western's teams were rated Meritorious, finishing in the top 18 percent. The other team earned the rating of Honorable Mention, finishing in the next 18 percent. Professor Tjalling