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THE WESTERN FRONT

Society of Professional Journalists Award-Winning Newspaper

Volume 171, Issue 10

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FRIDAY, MAY 8

REUSED CLOTHES FIND NEW HOME ON THE RUNWAY



Mother-daughter pair Maia Thomas and Ruby Thomas present their creations at the Ragfinery Up-cycle Challenge on Friday, May 1, at the Ragfinery in downtown Bellingham. More than 20 models displayed outfits created from old wedding dresses to raise awareness about reusing clothing in new and innovative ways. // Photo by Kesia Lee

Islamophobia confronted

Seattle minister discusses religious tolerance during Islam Awareness Week

Hanna Brown
THE WESTERN FRONT

After a few cleansing breaths and a recitation of the first chapter of the Quran, a discussion on how to confront Islamophobia began.

The event "Confronting Islamophobia"

featured Jamal Rahman, a Muslim Sufi minister from Seattle's Interfaith Community Sanctuary, and was organized through a joint effort by Western's Muslim Student Association and the Social Issues Resource Center for the annual Islam

Awareness Week.

This is the first year Rahman has spoken on campus on the topic of Islamophobia.

From Monday, May 4, through Friday, May 8, the Muslim Student Association held four events for their Islam Awareness Week and

will end with a dinner in the Viking Union Multi-Purpose Room on Friday.

The Muslim Student Association reached out to Rahman after watching a video of him with his group, the In

see ISLAM, page 5

Title IX investigation of Western continues

Andrew Wise
THE WESTERN FRONT

A federal investigation about Western's handling of a sexual violence case was announced on Wednesday, April 29, following

a complaint issued by a student against the university through the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights. The original date of that complaint has not been released.

"Western cares deep-

ly about ensuring a safe environment for its students, faculty and staff, and does not and will not tolerate sexual violence, or any form of violence or harassment," said Paul Cocke, Western Office of University

Communications and Marketing director.

The investigation into the Title IX violation was launched Friday, April 17, according to an email from

see TITLE IX, page 4

AS voter turnout still below average

Marilyn Napier
THE WESTERN FRONT

The voter turnout rate for the 2015 Associated Students elections increased slightly this year, after declining for the last few years.

Voter turnout was at 8.2 percent this year, up from approximately 8 percent last year.

However, that percentage is still well below the national average of 16 percent turnout for student government

elections at other universities, AS Communication Director Josie Ellison said.

The Western Front reached out to AS President-elect Belina Seare and AS Elections Coordinator Mayra Guizar but they did not comment in time for publication.

Ellison said low voting rates is an issue, and described a need for actively working toward increasing participation

see VOTING page 5

Mongolia Days returns to Western

Joyce Heberden
THE WESTERN FRONT

After a number of years on hiatus, the Mongolia Days celebration returned to Western to celebrate the university's commitment to multiculturalism and highlight its collection of Mongolian literature, which is the largest in North America.

Dr. Charles Krusekopf, the executive director of the American Center for Mongolian Studies, kicked off the two-day celebration of Mongolia Days at Western with his presentation titled "Natural Resource Development in Mongolia – The Impacts on Culture, Environment, and Government."

see MONGOLIA, page 4



Adilbish Badmaanyambuu and Boldoo Chimedregzen sing together at the Mongolian Days performance on Wednesday, May 6. // Photo by Christina Becker



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GETTING IN GEAR



Outdoor center equipment shop coordinator Spencer Pickell teaches junior Dominic Yoxtheimer how to fix his bike on Thursday, May 7, in the Outdoor Center as a part of Transportation Week. Yoxtheimer and Pickell's friend were the only people to show up. Pickell was a bike technician for two years, but now teaches other people how to fix their bikes. Yoxtheimer said part of the reason he likes biking is because bikes are cheap to fix. Car parts are much more expensive than bike parts, he said. // Photo by Christina Becker

Friday
Saturday

[What's happening?] Events on campus and in the community

Improvised Musical The Dead Parrot's society will improvise an entire musical with the help of pianist Evan Ingalls Dead Parrots Society Tickets are \$4 8 p.m., Old Main Theater		"Little Shop of Horrors" Watch the Bellingham Arts Academy for Youth perform the classic musical Tickets are \$10 at the door or can be purchased at brown-papertickets.com 7 p.m. BAAY Theatre	
Gluten Free Food Fair People can find information and resources about gluten and sample many gluten free foods 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Bellingham Public Market	Love Moves 5k Annual 5K to raise suicide awareness, pre register by emailing twloha.wvu@gmail.com or at 9 a.m. on Saturday Starts 9 a.m. Performing Arts Center Plaza	Sini- GANG and Hip Hop Association Showcase Crews from the Pacific Northwest showcase their dances Tickets are \$5 for students Doors open at 6:30 p.m., Performing Arts Center	

// Compiled by Hanna Brown

Cops Box

City News

Car crash on Douglas Avenue

Officers responded to a car crash in the 2900 block of Douglas Avenue just south of Western on Sunday May 3, Bellingham Police Spokesperson Bob VanderYacht said. A black 2014 Jeep Wrangler driven by a 41-year-old man crashed into a tree.

A witness indicated that the man had crashed into a tree and then collided with another tree while trying to drive away. Officers contacted the man and noticed he had a strong odor of intoxicants on his breath, and he was placed under arrest for suspicion of Driving Under the Influence of Intoxicants and/or Drugs. He refused a voluntary breath test and was booked into Whatcom County Jail for DUI.

The trees were damaged but are likely to live.

Men chased at party near campus

Two men attending a party in the 500 block of 32nd Street were accused by others at the party of stealing money 1:25 a.m. on Saturday, May 2, Bellingham Police Spokesperson Bob VanderYacht said.

The two men felt they were in danger and fled on foot. They were chased by three or four young adult men. Officers arrived and detained the men who were chasing them.

One of the men, 19, was arrested on two counts of Felony Harassment and for being a Minor in Possession of Alcohol by consumption. During the pursuit of the two men, the suspect displayed a knife and made verbal threats to kill the men.

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Corrections

The Western Front strives for accuracy and will correct errors of fact promptly and courteously. Please notify us of any factual errors at westernfrontonline@gmail.com.

New maritime festival coming this fall

City of Bellingham receives \$75,000 award to launch tourism attraction celebrating waterfront

Jared Rusk
 THE WESTERN FRONT

Seafood and maritime enthusiasts alike have a new but unnamed waterfront and seafood festival to look forward to this fall thanks to a \$75,000 award from the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee.

The festival was one of 18 proposals heard by the Committee, and the decision to select it as Bellingham's new signature event was not an easy one, Lodging Tax Advisory Committee Chair Pink Vargas said.

"Part of the reason the Bellingham waterfront festival was chosen was that it had more of a sense of place," Vargas said. "It really integrated what we were trying to portray as the city of Bellingham."

Activities could include fish filleting and oyster slurping contests, oceanic poetry slams and sea shanty performances at downtown restaurants and bars, head coordinator of the event Debbie Granger said. The festival is inspired by other Northwest events, such as Issaquah Salmon Days and the FisherPoets Gathering in Astoria, Oregon.

Granger imagines the whole city taking part in the festivities, with activities stretching from the Bellingham marina all the way to Fairhaven.

Ideas are currently being tossed



Ships docked and stored in the Whatcom Creek Waterway off West Chestnut Street. // Photo by Kesia Lee

around, Granger said, including an event where fishermen donate their catch to be sold to attendants, where the proceeds would then be donated to charity. The festival is still highly conceptual, Granger said.

The Lodging Tax Advisory Committee is an organization that redistributes tax revenue from hotels and lodgings in Bellingham to promote tourism. The Lodging Tax Advisory

Committee helps support local events every year such as the Bellingham Festival of Music and the Bellingham Bay Marathon.

However, in recent years, councilwoman Vargas said the Committee has had its mind set on something bigger.

"The signature event program was hatched in concept between one and two years ago," said Tara Sun-

din, community and economic development manager for the city. "The tourism commission wanted to fund projects that they felt the community really need."

Controversy has long surrounded the strip of land left by the Georgia Pacific pulp and tissue mill due to mercury contamination from the old chemical plant.

"What we want to do is showcase the whole fishing and maritime industry," said Pete Granger, event co-planner.

"It's much more important economically than people think in Whatcom County and other parts of the state," Granger said.

These facts were not lost on the panel choosing Bellingham's new signature event, and the city's struggle to reclaim its waterfront was a factor in the Committee's decision, Vargas said.

"We've had a historical tie to the Salish Sea for a long time but it's not something we talk about very much," Vargas said. "We feel that this is an element that's missing in our culture. But we are working on our waterfront and we want to people to know that we are on the bay; we are on the waterfront."

The Grangers encourage community input, particularly from Western students. They can be reached at debgranger@comcast.net.

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MONGOLIA: Western houses 12,500 Mongolian books

continued from page 1

Krusekopf spoke in Wilson Library, which houses 12,500 titles about Mongolia, according to the Western Libraries web page dedicated to the collection.

The collection is focused primarily on humanities and the arts and incorporates some material on music, literature, art, religion and medicine, said Mark Greenberg, dean of libraries at Western.

The celebration is a special time to come back and reconnect with those who have contributed and donated to the Mongolian collection at Western, Krusekopf said.

A driving force behind Mongolia Days is a financial contribution the collection received from two sponsors, including retired professor Dr. Henry Schwarz, an expert in the field of East Asian Studies. The donations mark a milestone in the history of Mongolian interest at Western after the Mongolia Days celebration was discontinued due to lack of funds.

One of the goals of the presentation was to spark interest about Mongolia in Western students. Within a crowd of about 40 people, a handful of students showed up to his presentation. These students were Krusekopf's primary interest, he said.

The presentation also focused on Mongolia's usage of

its natural resources such as oil, copper and coal to accelerate its economic growth. Krusekopf mentioned Tavan Tolgoi in the Gobi Desert, the largest coking coal deposit in the world, a substance that is used to make steel and has the potential of being mined for 60 to 100 years at that location.

Krusekopf said shifting to utilizing natural resources is a fascinating process for Mongolia, the fastest growing economy in the world.

Mongolia Days invited special guests from Mongolia and experts from a series of programs to Western's libraries to highlight the university's collection.

Greenberg was heavily involved in the planning of the celebration, and saw the two-day celebration as a way of showcasing Western's appreciation for Mongolian culture as well as the two financial gifts to the program.

The celebration is a way of recognizing the two donors and thanking them as well, and celebrating the fact that the study of Mongolia is on firmer financial footing, Greenberg said.

The financial donation from the Mongolian collection community at Western will allow the Mongolia program to be reintegrated with other linguistically, historically and culturally-focused courses.

For this reason, he expects to see many students in business, environmental



A traditional Mongolian song opens the performance on Wednesday, May 6 as part of Mongolia Days. // Photo by Christina Becker

and cultural studies to become interested in Mongolia.

"We offer a summer language program in Mongolia," Krusekopf said. "We really want to see Western students apply to the fellowships and come to Mongolia."

Sophomore Olivia Hill found out about the fellowship through her leadership studies class in winter quarter 2015.

It was something she was immediately interested in, as she had worked with international programs before and

was particularly interested in service learning and working with the community, Hill said.

As the executive director of the American Center for Mongolian Studies, Krusekopf was interested to restart a collaboration with Western he had in the past.

"We're trying to rekindle that relationship to collaborate on projects of mutual interest," Greenberg said.

A project of mutual interest was organizing a series of fellowships, which include trips to Mongolia, at Western.

The fellowships are the beginning of this rekindling and allow students to see samples of Mongolia over a short period of time.

"I see this trip as an opportunity to be an ambassador for Western and establish those roots for potential projects, and get Western involved," Hill said.

The presentation ended with a donation of several books from Mongolian guests at the event. The books will join the other thousands in Western's broad Mongolian collection.

ISLAM: Muslim Student Association hosts week of events

continued from page 1

terfaith Amigos. The group has written books, been featured in a TEDx talk and in The New York Times.

Rahman has been collaborating with Interfaith Amigos members Rabbi Ted Falcon and Pastor Don Mackenzie from the Seattle area since 9/11 to help set up guidelines to conduct interfaith dialogue.

According to Rahman's personal website, the group's work "comprises a dialogue of the mind, the heart, and the hands, encouraging greater understanding, compassion, and social action in the world."

Fareeha Nasir, a senior at Western and a Muslim, was interested to see what kind of opinions the speaker would bring and said it is important for schools to host these kind of events.

Nasir said the Muslim Student Association has been putting on events all week.

"This particular day is about Islamophobia and I receive a lot of that from the media and from life in general."

Nasir believes the atmo-



Jamal Rahman, a Muslim Sufi minister from Seattle's Interfaith Community Sanctuary, addresses a crowd of about 20 students on increasing positive interfaith discussion during as part of Islam Awareness Week, Wednesday, May 6 at Western. // Photo by Kesia Lee

sphere on campus is a work in progress. She said there have been a lot of surface-level progress where other religiously or culturally affiliated clubs are holding similar events, she said.

The focus of Rahman's discussion on Wednesday, May 6, was on Islamophobia and ways to overcome differences. Islamophobia is a

term that has been floating around for the last few years, Rahman said.

Israel Rios, the outreach coordinator for the Social Issues Resource Center, said Islamophobia is an issue that is highly ingrained in American culture, especially since the events of 9/11.

"It's something that we don't really talk about," Rios said. "It's something that a

lot of people think about, but we don't have these kind of events where people can come out and learn about each other and the issues."

Rahman gave insight on Mahatma Gandhi's idea that one of the first steps to overcoming polarization is that there has to be an appreciative understanding of another person's religion.

"For me as a Muslim, this is a majority Christian country, it is my duty to have an appreciative understanding of Christianity," he said. "It is not enough to say that I am open-minded or not prejudiced."

The key way to overcome polarization is to come to know each other, he said. This means, he said, that people must begin to connect on a human level by getting to know others without letting prejudice get in the way. It then becomes difficult to demonize and dehumanize the other, Rahman said.

During the event, Rahman had audience members split into groups where one person at a time would answer a question designed to help them connect to one another. One of the questions that the

audience had to reflect on was whether there have been conflicts between family members or friends over religious or cultural beliefs.

This group activity was modeled after Amazing Faiths, a program designed to get people of different religious beliefs talking and listening to each other.

The event was engaging, Rios said.

"The interactivity was a good thing because sometimes you need something to wake you up while listening, but it also just engages you further into the conversation," Rios said.

A member of the audience asked Rahman for advice on how to talk to those who aren't open to discussing difficult topics.

"Always say yes," he responded. "We aren't trying to change them but are trying to connect with them."

As the event came to a close, Rahman asked for audience participation one last time. He explained that in his culture, they like to end most meetings or events with this certain phrase. He then had members join him in reciting "om shanti om, I am a peaceful soul."

VOTING: 8.2 percent of students voted

continued from page 1

in the future.

"Voter turnout on this campus is definitely pretty low and I think it is reflective of a much bigger problem that the AS is going to have to work on a lot next year," Ellison said.

Ellison said members of the AS will be working on making sure they are actually representing students and increasing awareness of what the organi-

zation does, as well as the opportunities students have to get involved.

Junior Steven Ouzts said he did not vote and does not really care about AS elections.

"I know that [the AS] has to be doing something important that's been affecting me, but I literally do not know what they have been doing," Ouzts said. "If I got to know what they actually did, then I would care a lot more about the elections and I

would probably vote."

Students Brian Maine and Kyla Sumpter also said they did not vote in the elections.

"I wasn't informed enough," Sumpter said. Maine added he wasn't even sure how to vote.

At Western, voter turnout has dropped dramatically in recent years. Eight years ago, voting participation was at about 30 percent, Ellison said. Voter turnout was at 22 percent in 2012 and 16 percent in 2013,

according to a previous Western Front article.

When it comes to voter engagement, Ellison said access to candidate information and information about the AS as a whole determines rates of participation, and apathy on the part of the students is not necessarily responsible for such low rates.

"I don't think it is students not wanting to vote," Ellison said. "I just think we aren't giv-

ing them the knowledge they need on why they should vote."

Ellison said the decrease in voter turnout has been a recent trend across college campuses in Washington State.

A study done by the Eastern Education Journal found that voter turnout for student government elections has been sizably lower than turnout in national elections, and the lowest rates were among public universities.

TITLE IX: Western one of 119 cases under investigation

continued from page 1

the OCR. As of April 29, 119 sexual violence cases were under investigation at 109 institutions, including Western. Title IX was signed into law in 1972 and prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any federally funded education program or activity. A letter published by the OCR in 2011 established the agency's focus on addressing sexual violence as a part of upholding Title IX.

At Western, the Equal Opportunity Office recently aimed to increase awareness on campus through the

EverFi Haven online course on sexual violence. The course was distributed online through student emails during winter quarter.

No timeline has been set for the OCR investigation at Western, Cocke said.

The investigation comes in the wake of legislation passed by the Washington State Senate requiring Washington public universities to report sexual assault cases to the governor and legislators for review.

A federal crackdown on sexual violence at universities has taken place over

the course of the last year. In January 2014, President Obama established the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault. The OCR's original list of 55 institutions under investigation was made public May 1, 2014, as a continuation of the goals set by the task force.

Washington State University was on that original list, and has since been joined by Whitman College and Western as the only Washington universities under investigation.

Most investigations remain open, but the OCR has

published letters describing agreements and resolutions reached at several universities, according to the OCR website.

St. Mary's College in Maryland incurred four separate investigations, more than any other school, according to the list published by the OCR.

At Tufts University, The OCR found that "the University failed to provide a prompt and equitable response to complaints of sexual harassment/violence," and contributed to a hostile environment for a student, according to a letter sent to Tufts by the

OCR dated April 28, 2015.

Following its investigation, Tufts signed an agreement with the OCR to implement new policies around sexual violence and continue to report to the OCR regarding the handling of those cases.

Services for individuals affected by sexual assault can be accessed through Consultation and Sexual Assault Support in the Equal Opportunity Office at 360-650-3700. A discrimination complaint can be filed with the Office for Civil Rights through their website, or by phone at 1-800-421-3481.

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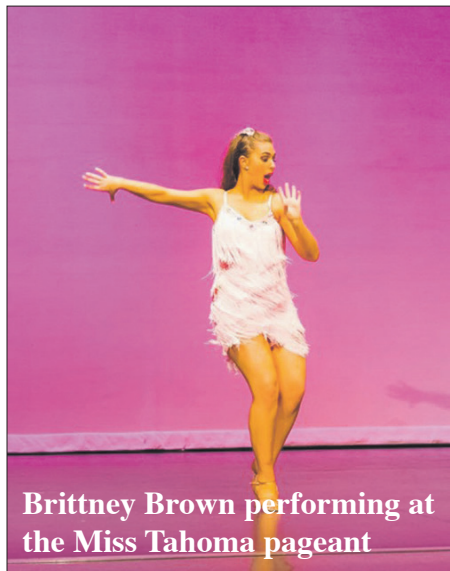
She stood on the stage, attempting for the third time this year to take the crown. She saw herself surrounded by beautiful women and became doubtful. This March, Brittney Brown's name was finally called and she walked off stage donning the crown, sash and title of "Miss Tahoma."



Kara Spencer
THE WESTERN FRONT



Brittney Brown being crowned Miss Tahoma.



Brittney Brown performing at the Miss Tahoma pageant

Brown said when she looks back at that moment, it is still hard to believe she was the one the judges picked.

"The crown and sash are just a cherry on top," Brown said. "Having the title and opportunities I have now are life changing, it's a once in a lifetime experience" Brown said.

She values the program most for giving her the ability to stand up and speak for those with disabilities.

The title of "Miss Tahoma" placed the Western sophomore in the running for the Miss Washington competition happening on Thursday, July 2.

Brown is a biology major focusing on pre-dentistry, and is trying to balance her pageant responsibilities with studying for midterms, volunteering with her platform at Western's Sharing Interests Forming Friendships club and working 17 hour weeks at the Young Men's Christian Association.

With a big smile, Brown talks about her hopes to follow her mom's footsteps and become a dentist. Brown said a smile is the first thing peo-

ple see, and she is hopeful that one day she might have her own practice.

Today it is difficult for her to figure out what to focus more attention on. Her passion for pageants, her studies or her platform.

"Balancing is definitely the hardest thing," Brown said. "School, getting scholarship money and the Miss America system are so important to me so it's hard to put one in each hand."

Brown wishes she could spend all of her time promoting her platform, a topic each contestant works to fundraise and promote.

She found her platform for the pageant through a club called Sharing Interests Forming Friendships. Through its mentorship program, Brown was paired with Sydney Watson, 22, and they are now best friends.

Watson inspired Brown to take on her platform to spread knowledge for disability awareness and inclusion.

"[Sydney] has Down syndrome and people have a hard time seeing why someone without a disability could actually be best friends with someone with Down syndrome," Brown said. "She is my best friend, not because of what she is capable of or what she looks like, but because of who she is as a person."

Pia Watson, Sydney Watson's mom, said she saw their friendship take off when they first hung out outside of club events. She has seen many changes in her daughter and Brown, she said.

"They both inspire each other," Watson said. "I can see subtle changes in Sydney, she's more confident."

Brown often goes to Watson's house to have sleepovers and home-cooked dinners. Brown said the Watsons are a second family, and offer a great deal of support to her, especially when she is in Bellingham.

"It is hard for me to do many things," Sydney Watson said. "It is hard for me to speak up and advocate for myself, she encourages me to do different and new things, and our friendship is very important to me."

Sydney Watson went to see Brown perform in the Miss Whatcom pageant earlier this year and expressed excitement toward her plans to see Brown perform in the Miss Washington competition in July.

With some contestants receiving their spot in the Miss Washington pageant as early as November, Brown said she is more pressed for time to prepare for the competition. Getting her wardrobe, filling out envelopes of paperwork and fighting Western's quarter system is making it difficult. Brown is squeezing in the time to fit it all in, she said.

The competition will include an on-stage interview, a private interview, a ballroom gown walk, a swimsuit portion and talent performance. Her talent, ballroom dancing, is a reflection of her passion for dance and she has chosen to perform it for her 90-second stage talent.

Brown performed pointe dance her first year and jazz dance her second. For Brown's third year, she performed a solo ballroom dance. She said the challenge is making the partner routine work as a one-person act.

Brown does not have the best luck when picking questions for her on-stage interview, she said.

"When I just won the title three weeks ago, I picked my question out of the fishbowl and I was asked what I thought about the Boston Marathon bomber and if I thought he should be considered for the death penalty," she said.

Learning from past experiences, Brown plans to dig into the fishbowl for the piece of paper with the least amount of words. The on-stage interview question can be anything, and she often seems to get stuck with more controversial questions, Brown said.

Her smile fades a little when discussing the portion that is most new to her.

The swimsuit portion is different, she said. Although Brown understands it is part of the pageant's history, she said she can't completely agree with it.

"They try to say 20 seconds or less on stage, but it always feels much longer than that," Brown said.

"There is a lot more that goes into someone's health than what their body looks like and it is really hard for me because I know a lot of people that could benefit from participating in this program and it's the swimsuit portion that keeps them from participating," she said.

The Miss America Organization emphasizes the scholarship opportunities they offer to contestants. Brown said because she comes from a low income family, scholarships are very important to her education.

"Being able to get a scholarship for doing things that are helping me grow into a better person and make me feel good? It's really cool to have a program like that," Brown said.

Interview skills, being a part of the community and even dressing up are all things she values about the program, she said.

Cat fighting and drama can be how some pageant girls are on TV, but pageantry is not like that at all, Brown said.

"It is so the opposite," Brown said. "I find myself so enthralled by the other girls, instead of being jealous of them or catty toward them, I look at them and think 'they are an incredible person, look how much they've accomplished,'" she said.

Brown went on to join the Miss West Sound program in Kitsap County where she was the outstanding teen Miss West Sound for three years.

As she plans for the Miss Washington pageant,

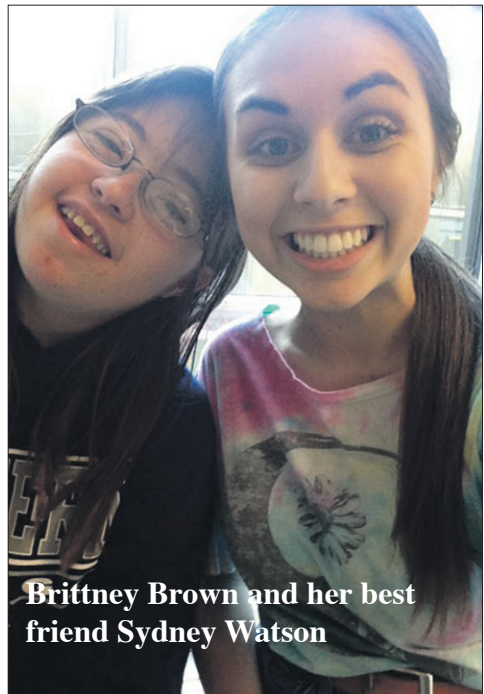
Brown laughs at her initial plans coming into college. She was adamant about giving up pageants once she came to Western.

"The thing with pageants is, I don't do it for the gowns and how everyone sees it from the outside--all glitzy, glamour, high maintenance, really not like that."

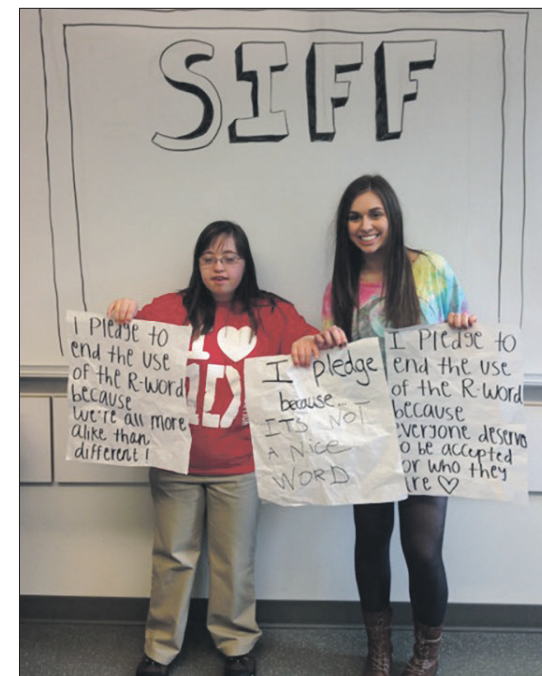
Brown said getting out of the pageant world is not as easy as it seems. She received multiple messages encouraging her to continue competing, though she initially made excuses, she couldn't stay away for long, she said.

The program has given her confidence and allowed her to be more vocal, she said.

"The program just amplifies your ability to grow, and it never stops, you can never stop improving and that is something this program helps you do," she said. "It kind of forces you to get out there in your community so with the title, I'm held responsible to raise money and bring awareness to my platform. I don't want to waste this opportunity I've worked so hard for."



Brittney Brown and her best friend Sydney Watson



All photos courtesy of Brittney Brown

Let's talk about us

Student-run literary journal aims to provoke thought through free expression

Connor Hanna
THE WESTERN FRONT

As a platform for student expression, Labyrinth's reach has been getting progressively wider since its inception.

Beginning at Western in the 1970s, Labyrinth started as an annual student-run publication displaying artwork focused on gender identities and marginalized experiences, said editor-in-chief Johanna Gurgel. However, not everyone could submit to the magazine. Labyrinth's focus was on women writers and artists.

Over time, Labyrinth has evolved into a publication that accepts work from anyone, regardless of gender, Gurgel said. The publication features writing, paintings and drawings with videos featured in the online edition. The producers of Labyrinth also encourage non-Western students to submit their work for a chance to be featured, Gurgel said.

This year Labyrinth's theme is "Examining the Internals and External of Identity Marginalization." Instead of sticking with the same theme, Labyrinth changes the focus of the art every year. The theme of each issue is chosen by the editor-in-chief and must deal with a social justice ideology.

Johanna Gurgel, senior and English major, is the Women's Center Associate Coordinator for Creative Programming and the editor-in-chief for Labyrinth. She has been working with the publication since June 2014.

"In this edition, there's a wide variety of things that have to do with identity portrayals and assumptions in terms of gender," Gurgel said.

Since all of Labyrinth allows artists to freely express themselves, some of the content contained in the publication may not be suitable for viewing in certain environments.

"A lot of the artwork has been provocative in terms of nudity and sexual content," Gurgel said. "The stories needed to be in there, the stories needed to be heard. They're consequently quite graphic in their content."

Junior Hannah Streetman, an English major, submitted her poem "A Woman of Worth" right before Labyrinth's submission deadline. Street-



Jesse Ulmer presents her written work "Drawing Wolves" at the Labyrinth release party on Thursday, May 7, in the Viking Union Gallery. // Photo by Kesia Lee

MORE ONLINE

Read the full story online at westernfrontonline.com

man didn't expect to be chosen to be featured in Labyrinth because of the last-minute submission. Despite her doubts, the piece was selected as one of the featured submissions for Labyrinth.

Streetman wrote the short poem for a class when she realized it fit in Labyrinth's theme of internal and external identity. The poem observes roles women are expected to fulfill in life and the difficulty of satisfying them. The poem aims to expose the ridiculous nature of these expectations, Streetman said.

Women are expected to be attractive but not vain, and to be assertive but not demanding, she said. To Streetman, there are conflicting beliefs about the meaning of being a woman and Labyrinth gave her a platform to express this freely.

"[In] some other publications you have to worry about how incredible your writing is, and the form of your writing" Streetman said. "With Labyrinth, it's really more about the message rather than the way you're giving it."

This year, Labyrinth advertised on

Facebook and other pages, focusing on non-Western related art and writing pages in an effort to attract a diverse number of submissions.

"We got some submitters who don't know about Western or are not affiliated with Western," Gurgel said. "They submitted anyway because of the presence we made online."

Bringing all these submissions together is the Labyrinth designer, senior Enkhbayar Munkh-Erdene. As a designer for the Associated Students Publicity Center, Erdene was assigned by the center to organize Labyrinth's layout and to design their posters after the publication requested help in advertising their newest issue. Though she has had experience as the lead designer for The Planet Magazine, Erdene said she found the theme of Labyrinth to be a challenge when coming up with a design for the publication.

"The theme of Labyrinth this issue is very broad," Erdene said. "It deals with people's identity and no one's identity is the same."

Erdene had complete creative control over the design of Labyrinth. During her time designing the publication, Erdene felt an impact with the submissions.

"I was reading all of the submissions and some of them really hit me," Erdene said. "I was really blown away by everything."

GET TO KNOW WESTERN

Nanette Jackson
THE WESTERN FRONT



With each entry of *Get to Know, Western The Western Front* will interview students and staff for a new insight on campus life. This week, we interviewed Western's Change Leader, Danica Kilander.

Q: Why did you pick Western?
A: Because it's an incredible place.

Q: What is your favorite thing about Western?

A: I love the people here. There are a lot of good challenging conversations done in a really respectful manner.

Q: What has been your favorite class to teach or what has been your favorite thing about teaching?

A: Hands down I love the entrepreneurship and innovation classes. They are so much fun and I love hearing from students when it makes a difference for them.

Q: What do you like to do in Bellingham?

A: What don't I like to do in Bellingham?

Q: What is your best piece of advice for students?

A: Hang in there.

FRONTLINE

Opinions of the Editorial Board

Adventure beyond campus

Western is atop a beautiful hill surrounded by trees and shrubbery that would make a Knight of Ni go mad. Students have access to eateries and markets while traversing between classes, and if they live on campus, they don't really have any reason to ever leave.

But is this in the best interest of the student?

A majority of students take advantage of the beautiful landscapes and terrain that Bellingham offers, but there's so much more to this city that no one ever sees. There are many opportunities that Bellingham has outside of Exit 252 that Western students are not taking advantage of. We live in a little bubble between Samish Way and Cornwall Street and most people never leave the safety of Sehome, campus and downtown.

While it is paramount that a student takes full advantage of the resources on campus that they pay for, surprises and opportunities await those who decide to branch out into the greater Bellingham community.

For students interested in manufacturing and supply chain management, Woodstone Corporation, a local hearth fire oven manufacturer, hires interns annually. For business students interested in investments, they'd be well-suited in visiting Saturna Capital, which manages the second largest public equity mutual fund in the world. Public relations and journalism students - volunteer with the Downtown Bellingham Partnership. They connect with just about every local Bellingham company and could provide excellent internship resources.

For entertainment, students aren't limited to the Underground Coffeehouse. The Pickford Film Center downtown shows a variety of up-and-coming independent films, and the SPARK Museum of Electrical Invention is constantly spouting unique exhibits. Going outside of the downtown sector, the north end of Bellingham has all sorts of adventures to embark upon, including a bowling alley, trampoline gym and even a camel farm.

These suggestions are purely for student benefit. Some students are incredibly involved with the community outside of Western and we salute them. Environmental studies students trek down to Anacortes to be a part of the Shannon Point Marine Center. Students in the education programs get involved in Compass 2 Campus, and as part of the program are integrated into the local school system.

So the moral of the story? We go to an incredible school with exemplary student services and resources - but we shouldn't allow these comforts to discourage us from exploring the rest of the territory. Our time here is short as students and if you want to get the most out of your college experience and the beautiful place we live in, we advise you hop in your car, get on the bus, take a bike ride or even walk to some of the great amenities Bellingham has to offer.

The editorial board is composed of Anna Jentoft, Dylan Green, Brandon Stone and Stephanie Villiers.

Viking Voices

Would you utilize an off-campus collaborative-think space designed to integrate students with the community?



Madison Churchill
freshman, studio art

"Yes, probably. That sounds cool."



Mario Gonzalez
freshman, undeclared

"Well, yeah, I would. I guess I'd do like group work or something or for a project."

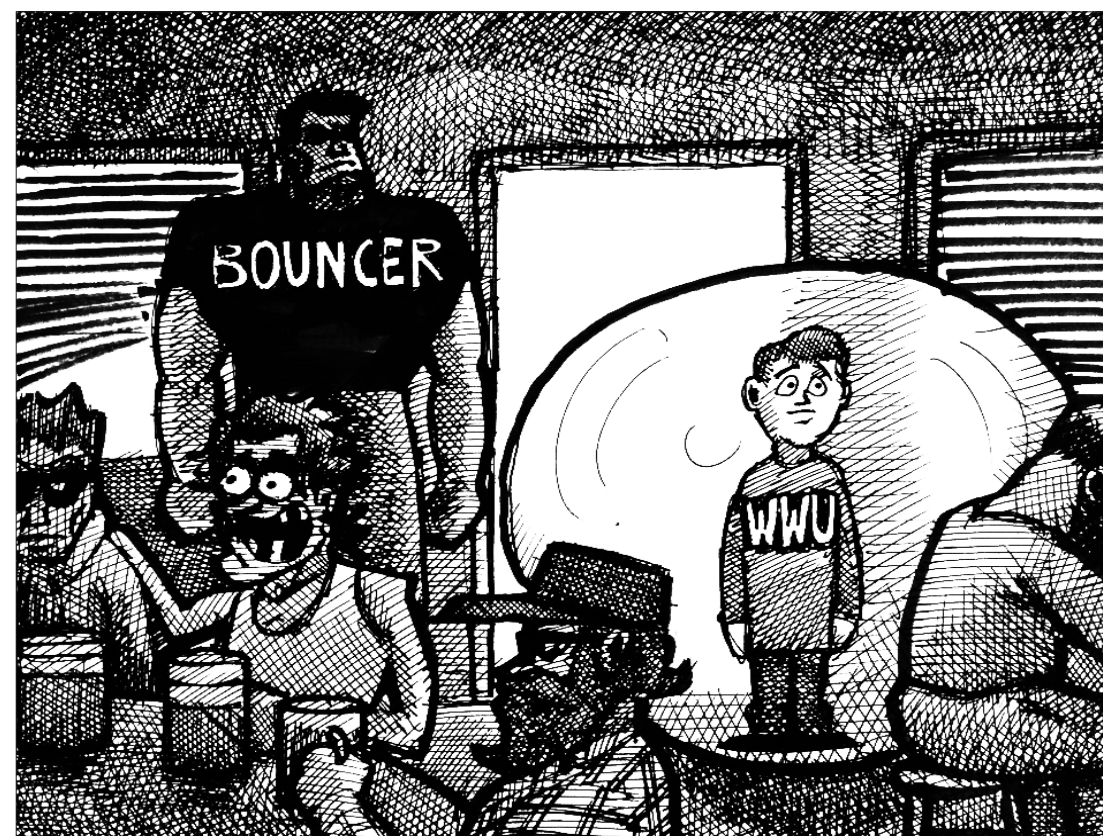


Adam Hoch
senior, plastics and composites engineering

"We have a lot of really excellent tools on campus, but our on-campus labs are only open when we have lab techs available so having an evening place where we could do projects would be awesome."

// Compiled by Miracle Casteel

Front Funnies



// Illustration by Max Singler

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Submission Policy

The Western Front publishes submitted opinion items on a space-available basis.

Submit letters to the editor and guest columns, along with your name, title (such as "Western sophomore") and major to westernfront.opinion@gmail.com. Anonymous letters or those containing hate speech will not be published.

The Western Front reserves the right to edit for length, spelling, style and grammar.

Word count limits
Letters to the editor: 400 words
Guest columns: 400 words

Recovering from a devastating injury

Chelsea Mason
THE WESTERN FRONT

Connor Aamot popped a few watermelon Sour Patch candies into his mouth, took a deep breath and stared down the runway.

He's ready.

At the age of 19, he has already achieved a great deal. With a 2014 state championship pole vaulting title, Aamot is a freshman at Western with high aspirations to improve his craft.

Aamot's pole vaulting career began when he was in middle school, but he didn't become serious about the sport until his freshman year at Meridian High School. For Aamot, pole vaulting began as a family rivalry but turned into much more.

"My brother did it when he was in high school," Aamot said. "He won state, got the school record and because we always had competition, I had to beat him."

Aamot did in fact beat his brother, but it took all four years of high school to do so.

During his freshman year, Aamot was jumping around 8 feet. He was trained by a long-distance coach, which made learning how to improve harder at times.

By his sophomore year, Aamot had a personal record of 11 feet 6 inches. By his junior year he was jumping at 13 feet 1 inch. He was on the road to state, post-season had just begun and Aamot was preparing to take the state title.

While practicing at the Sportsplex in Bellingham, Aamot faced the day no pole-vaulter wants to ever go through. Mid-jump, he knew he wasn't going to make it over. There was no going back as he tried to grab his pole but couldn't. Aamot fell straight down into the metal box that normally catches the pole.

"Everyone heard the crack," Aamot said. The crack they heard had come from Aamot's leg, which he had just broken.

It ended his junior year season as a pole-vaulter and Aamot faced the tough realization that while he watched everyone else continue on to state, he would not be going with them.

His mother, Brenda Aamot, recalls the day he broke his leg.

"I'm OK!" she remembers Aamot saying as he laid on the couch unable to move. Like all concerned mothers, she knew he wasn't OK, so she took her son to the hos-



Connor Aamot, a member of Western's track and field team, competes in the pole vault. In high school, he broke school records and won state. // Photo courtesy of Connor Aamot

pital only to find out Aamot had broken his leg.

"I pushed myself beyond what I was ready for that day," Aamot said in reference to his faulty jump.

Aamot didn't let this setback keep him from achieving the goals he had set before himself, though. While he could no longer jump, he continued to work out to the point of exhaustion. His personal training left him not even having the energy to use his crutches afterwards.

"I came back into the next year stronger than ever, but

"I came back into the next year even stronger than ever, but even into my senior year, I had a mental boundary. I would freak out every time I went to jump."

Connor Aamot
Western track and field pole vaulter

even into my senior year, I had a mental boundary, I would freak out every time I went to jump," Aamot said.

"Up until districts I wasn't doing very well because of that mental block, but by districts, I finally got over it and I immediately started improving, and after just two meets I [beat my personal record] by 1 foot."

Aamot had broken the school record and won state.

As Aamot's name was called to step up to the podium and accept his medal, he could hear the screams of excitement from everyone around him. He had accomplished his goal and all he could think was, "this is pretty cool."

Not only had he broken the school record with a 14-foot-jump, but he had beaten his brother Kyle's record of 13 feet 6 inches. This was what Aamot was most excited about.

Going from high school to college-level pole vaulting has posed its challenges for Aamot. In high school he was at the top of his level, but now entering college he is faced with different challenges.

"It's like the transition from middle school to high school," he said. "You go from the top to the bottom

and all of a sudden you have to work your butt off just to get to where everyone else already is."

Aamot hadn't planned on continuing with pole vaulting but when the track and field coach at Western contacted him, he knew he had a decision to make.

"I knew it was a huge time commitment but I decided it was something I had aspired to do and get better at, I enjoyed it all four years of high school so I knew it would be fun in college," Aamot said.

As he continues his first track and field season at Western, there are a few habits he will most likely hold on to, with the consumption of watermelon Sour Patch Kids being one of them.

His love for the watermelon candy came after his high school coach fed him some candy to get pumped up for a jump. From then on, it became Aamot's ritual before a jump.

"Kids would always look at me funny," he said. "We're at the state meet and these kids are all making fun of me because we're at state, you're supposed to be healthy and I'm sitting there chowing down on Sour Patches, and I start beating them all and they all say, 'huh, can I have some?'"

As Aamot continues to succeed, he has a family who stands behind him,

supporting him each step of the way. Whether it means attending his meets, buying him loads of food or videotaping his jumps, his parents Matt and Brenda try to be as supportive of their son as possible.

Being the parent of a serious athlete requires certain things of any supportive parent.

"It's time consuming and expensive," Brenda laughs.

"It's a lot of fun, it makes you proud," Matt adds.

"It's really exciting to see them get better each time and reach their personal record and you know it's exciting for them," Brenda said.

As they watched Connor at state, Brenda described the moment as "a lot of screaming" at the top of her lungs.

"I was in disbelief actually because Connor had said he didn't think he was going to win this, but he kept going and others were dropping out and I couldn't believe it was happening," Brenda said.

While Aamot will always have the 2014 title to look back on, he has set a goal to continually be better than he was.

"He has a goal and he is always determined to reach that goal, so if I used one word [for Connor], it would be determined," Brenda said.

And determined he is.

Sellevoid is freshman of the year

Lindy Holmberg
THE WESTERN FRONT

Fastball. Changeup. Curveball. Screwball. Rise-ball. Dropball.

Seven pitches, 23 teammates and multiple awards.

Freshman softball pitcher Makinlee Sellevoid was named "Freshman of the Year," by the Great Northwest Athletic Conference Softball All-Star Team.

Leading the team in number of innings pitched, number of games started, strikeouts, appearances and saves, Sellevoid proved to the team she was there to get the job done and always put the Vikings in position to win games.

However, it hasn't been all fun and games for the freshman pitcher. During her senior year of high school, Sellevoid underwent surgery to repair a chipped bone in her ankle.

"I sprained my ankle sophomore year of high school and I played through it thinking it was just always going to hurt the rest of my life," Sellevoid said. "I played basketball, volleyball and softball on it for three years until senior year I finally went to the doctor."

Finding out that there was a chip in her anklebone wasn't what Sellevoid wanted to hear.

"All the cartilage around my ankle joint had been ruined, so they needed to go in and drill holes in my bone so new cartilage could grow in order for me to not be in pain anymore," Sellevoid said.

With nine months of resting and healing, Sellevoid never considered not playing softball for Western and neither did the coaches.

"I was so nervous telling [coach Amy Suiter] I wasn't going to be able to run for nine months, I was thinking she's not going to want me anymore," Sellevoid said. "It ended up being OK, she was really understanding and she just said to get better."



Makinlee Sellevoid was named GNAC "Freshman of the Year" for her strong 2015 performance on the mound. // Photo by Kesia Lee

Bouncing back from surgery, Sellevoid showed no sign of catching up or slowing down once she was out on the field.

Pitching 219.2 innings throughout the season, more than any other pitcher on the team, her teammates said they feel a sense of relief when she is out on the field.

Fellow freshman Sarah Morrow met Sellevoid on the field at Western this year and the stud pitcher has made a strong impact on her.

"I have confidence that she will get the job done, she's a really good pitcher and works really hard and is pretty selfless as a player," Morrow said. "I'm scared to hit off her in practice."

Sellevoid's seven pitch selection has been doing her well as she was not only the Player of the Year, but also was named Pitcher of the Week multiple times throughout the season.

"She has all those pitches and so you never know what's

coming, you get up there and she's just scary," Morrow said. "Everything combined into one is scary and the drop curve is kind of crazy to me."

"It's Makinlee Sellevoid as a pitcher."

When Sellevoid found out about the "Freshman of the Year" award, she didn't make much of it.

"I don't like the awards and stuff, I just kind of like to play," Sellevoid said. "It still hasn't sunk in, I'm just playing my game."

Striking out 100 batters, her 25-9 record points to the hard work of getting back into shape after surgery. Sellevoid has a 2.33 ERA and was Western's go-to pitcher in 2015.

Coming from a not so athletic family, Sellevoid first started out playing softball by watching her older sister when the two were little.

"I just fell in love with [softball] and I knew if I were to play any sport in college it was going to be softball," Sellevoid said. "And now I'm

here."

Softball does not stop for Sellevoid when the season ends at Western. Although the free time is nice, the plan for her is to go back to her hometown of Everett and pitch with her dad.

"I hope to improve over summer, I'll be pitching, hitting and lifting at home with my dad," Sellevoid said. "I've had pitching coaches growing up, but ever since high school he has helped me and I just go back to him."

Sellevoid did not just have a team to support her but also a family who traveled, cheered and provided the support she needed.

"My family made it to every game besides four," Sellevoid said. "They flew to Hawaii and they were very supportive of me, they also surprised me in California and I started crying."

The Vikings ended the season with a record of 30-18 overall and 17-8 in conference play.



SCHREIBER LEAVING WESTERN

Sophomore Joey Schreiber has made the decision to transfer from Western. The decision was announced on Thursday, May 7, in a Western Athletics press release. He made 10 starts in 2015 for the Vikings, averaging 11.6 points per game and shooting a team-best 44.3 percent from 3-point range. Schreiber played mostly a sixth-man role, starting 10 games but playing in 31. Schreiber's best game came against Montana State Billings on Jan. 10 when he scored a season-high 38 points, the most by a Viking all season. Schreiber's new destination is not yet known.

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Vikings win back-to-back titles

Western takes on last season's champs in playoff matchup

Ben Goldstein
THE WESTERN FRONT

For the second year in a row, the Western men's lacrosse team has made the Men's Collegiate Lacrosse Association Championship tournament.

After going 10-3 and 4-0 in the Pacific Northwest Collegiate Lacrosse League, the Vikings swept the PNCLL Playoffs by beating Western Oregon University 15-7 and Portland University 18-7.

They will face the 2014 national champion Grand Valley State University on Monday, May 11, at University of California, Irvine, and team members said they are confident they can make a run to the championship game.

"I'm excited," junior midfielder Justin Ross said. "We get to play the national champions and prove that we can win."

Ross said the team has been so successful this season because of coach Adam Lent's style of play.

"Everyone bought into the philosophy," Ross said. "We



The Western men's lacrosse team practices on Wednesday, May 6, at the Wade King Student Recreation Center Turf for their upcoming game against Grand Valley State University at the University of California, Irvine.// Photo by Jake Tull

want to play stingy defense and put pressure on our opponents whenever we can."

Ross noted winning the ground ball battles and turning those into goals is what Lent has been harping on all season.

Grand Valley State University, which is 9-4, will travel from Michigan to the tournament, and Ross said the team respects their national championship-caliber talent.

However, he said he believes the Vikings can win the game.

"Lots of East Coast teams don't respect lacrosse teams in the west," Ross said. "We want to go to the tournament and prove that is wrong and make a name for the West Coast and its lacrosse."

Grand Valley State will still pose an impressive challenge for the Vikings. The Lakers posted a +79 goal differential in 2015 and performed well in

its conference tournament.

But Western was just as dominant this season in its respective conference. They scored 211 goals and gave up only 82 for a goal differential of +129. The next best goal differential in its conference was +54 by the College of Idaho.

The Vikings will look to freshman Zach Fritz for offense, as he has scored 32 goals, and also dished out 32

VIKINGS WINNING STREAK

Western is currently riding a six-game winning streak, including its conference playoffs.

23-7 vs. St. Mary's
17-8 vs. UPS
19-1 vs. CWU
23-1 vs. Gonzaga
15-7 vs. WOU
18-7 vs. Portland

assists. His 64 points lead the team in 2015.

Senior Jordan Foster leads the team with 41 goals.

Senior goalie Jordan Johnson will also be important as Grand Valley State has scored nearly 200 goals this season. Johnson has saved 63 percent of shots on goal this season, while the defense has helped around him.

The MCLA Championship tournament consists of 16 teams and eight first-round games. The Vikings leave on Saturday morning to drive to UC Irvine.

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