Confessions of a Non-Traditional Student

By Maria Hynson, WC Assistant Director of Alumni Giving

Confession time… I was once pretty bad at being a student. In high school, I read a lot, did the bare minimum of homework, graduated in the solid middle of my class, and did nothing to distinguish myself from my peers. After high school, I was accepted to a large, public university, developed an ulcer, realized that I was in way over my head, and withdrew on medical leave before Thanksgiving of my first semester.

Eleven years later, I started my job in the Provost’s Office, as a newly divorced single mom, anxious to try again at my education – if not for my own sake, then for my child’s. At the time, the wait to enroll was a year from your hire date, and because I started in October, I couldn’t begin taking classes until January 2004. On the Provost’s advice, I registered for Professor Donald McColl’s Introduction to the History of Western Art course, and began a truly epic journey that would span another eleven years, and take me to the other side of the world.

For the first time in my life, I stood out in the classroom. I was different from my classmates, and we didn’t understand each other. For my first paper, I went to the Library and checked out a stack of books. I didn’t understand online databases, and they didn’t understand my nostalgia for a piece of ancient technology called the “card catalog.”

Being a student got easier with practice. I was determined to do well, and so I did. I was determined to finish my degree before my daughter finished high school, and so I will. (A whole week and a half earlier, but hey, who’s counting?) This is not to say that the road ran smoothly for someone who was working full-time, raising a child, and going to school part-time. It didn’t. I’ve carried a textbook everywhere for years, and read during my daughter’s soccer/basketball/softball/dance/band practices. I got remarried, and studied for my Latin midterm while traveling to our honeymoon destination. The year that our home flooded due to a broken pipe, I almost gave up, but my advisor talked me out of it. I’d already come so far in my academic career that I couldn’t let a little thing like being temporarily homeless put me out of the game, now could I?

More confessions… along the way to getting my degree, sacrifices were made. My house didn’t get cleaned as often as it should. I didn’t bake for bake sales, I was never the Cookie or Team Mom, and I never joined the PTA. I routinely bailed out on an annual dinner for my husband’s company because it was always scheduled during finals week. We ate a lot of frozen pizza. And we all learned. I learned that I was a leader in the classroom and out of it, and discovered a purpose and passion through my service work with the Habitat for Humanity Club. My daughter learned how to be a much better student than her mother can ever hope to be. My husband learned how to cook, and has supported my educational goals, every step of the way.

Most importantly, I’ve learned that no one makes this journey alone. Whole armies of faculty and staff colleagues, fellow students, family members, and friends have helped me along the road to graduation. They gave advice freely, criticized and praised in equal measure, loved and supported me whenever I needed a boost, and taught me all that I needed to know to be a better student, employee, parent, and friend. With this year’s “Hi, Juvenes, candidati, alumni sunt!”, I will have a new role to learn and embrace – that of a proud alumna of Washington College.

If you are interested in accessing your educational benefits for yourself, dependents, or spouse, please contact Human Resources.
COMINGS AND GOINGS

Please welcome the following staff members to WC:

Alex Castro, Hilary Chubb, Veronica Golden, Jason Lee, Sean Meade and Victor Sensenig

The following staff are no longer with WC. We wish them well in their next adventure.

Nakesha Bowers, Gary Grant and Curtis Hammer and Robert Oesterling

FEATURING EMPLOYEE

The featured employee for the month of March 2015 is Frank Buchanan

When the temperatures rise or plummet outside, Frank Buchanan is our knight in shining armor, riding a white buggy to the rescue. Wielding wrenches and pliers, he is locked in a titanic epic battle with aging HVAC systems, leaky pipes, and cranky building inhabitants, and yet Frank always works very hard to make us all a little more comfortable in our own daily work. Here in Bunting, he has come to anticipate our call for help, as he rides by and sees the front door open to let in (or out!) the hot air. When he sees that we are uncomfortable, he will always stop and make the adjustments necessary to keep us happy. He is always polite, always helpful, and always willing to listen to our constant complaints, and do what he can to alleviate the problem. Over the Winter Break, one of my colleagues in Bunting had scheduled a leak to be fixed in the wall of her office. Unfortunately, what was thought to be a trickle became a torrent once the wall was opened up, and Frank came to campus several times during the night to empty buckets, and keep the flood from overwhelming us all. He eventually resolved the issue on Christmas Eve (a day that the rest of us were snug at home with our families), and the office was restored to working order in record time. Frank’s dedication to his work, and to the care that he takes of his colleagues, make him a strong candidate for Featured Employee of the Month. I know that my job as Bunting’s Building Safety Coordinator has been made much easier by having such a responsive and collegial co-worker in his job. I am grateful for everyone in B&G for all they do. But today, I would like to single out someone. Frank Buchanan. Frank is my go to person for all the things that break down in Toll. When I see him coming I know that the problem will be solved that day if at all possible. Sometimes something as simple as a 75¢ fuse can take down a $2500 piece of lab equipment. This happened with a steam dish washer in the biology dept. The person issued the work order verified that the machine was getting electricity and told me to call a dishwasher repair man. No blame to them. It was out of their job scope. But that left us out of commission. I snagged Frank in the hallway and asked for his help. Frank looked at it and five minutes later brought me a burned out fuse. And an hour later, we were back in business. And that pretty much sums up how great he really is. Frank will always try to help. And if he can’t fix it, you can be sure he will involve someone who can. Kudos to Frank for always doing a great job, day in day out, weekdays and weekends. Frank truly makes my job easier. I hope you will consider him for employee of the month. Nominated on January 23, 2015

ANSWERS to your QUESTIONS

From the Staff Council Webpage:

Why does it take so long for the minutes to appear on the website?

The Washington College Staff Council meets monthly, typically near the end of the month. Minutes are taken at each meeting by the Secretary. The Secretary then types up those minutes and submits them to the members of the Staff Council prior to the next month’s meeting so they can be reviewed by the members. At the next month’s meeting any suggested corrections or changes to the minutes are brought up and discussed and the Council votes on them. The minutes are then amended if necessary by the Secretary and at their first opportunity they are then posted on the Staff Council webpage. Therefore Staff Council minutes are not posted until at least a month after a meeting because they must be typed up, reviewed and voted upon at the next meeting.

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National Student Employment Week
April 13 – 17, 2015
“Student Employment – Essential to Our Success!”

The National Student Employment Association (NSEA) has declared that the second week of April each year be set aside to celebrate National Student Employment Week. Washington College is pleased to recognize the valuable role you play in sustaining the institution and assisting the staff and faculty.

You, our student employees, are a vital resource providing invaluable support to departmental and administrative functions. Your efforts go far beyond assisting with day to day duties. You also make significant contributions in terms of energy, creativity and enthusiasm.

The Washington College community warmly extends a heartfelt round of applause to all of you this year. You are all, indeed, essential to our success!

The 2015 Student of the Year Ceremony will be held on Friday, April 10th at 3:30 pm in Litrenta.

Nominees:

Catherine Hamilton - Athletics Communication - Nominated by Phil Ticknor
Jacqueline Petito - Geographic Information Systems - Nominated by Nichole Gillis
Courtney Walls - Kohl Gallery - Nominated by Alex Castro
Emily Sallade - Advancement - Nominated by Paula Blouch
Kelsey Groomes - Public Safety - Nominated by Susan Golinski
Shannon Shirk - Advancement - Nominated by Judie Barroll

This is a great event for both our staff and their student employees.

Don’t forget that Administrative Professionals Day is:
Wednesday April 22, 2015.

Take time to celebrate the Administrative Professionals in your departments to thank them for all they do.

The WC Staff Council sends a HUGE THANK YOU to all of Washington College’s Administrative Professionals for the extraordinary job they do here. Thank you all for your support of the mission of Washington College.
DID YOU KNOW?
There is a WC Staff Facebook page?
Like us at: facebook.com/washcollstaff

WHOOPS
We missed this
We apologize as we accidentally missed putting the December 2014 Featured Employee in a Newsletter so we hope he will forgive us as we recognize him now

DECEMBER 2014
WC Featured Employee
James Arnold, WC Director of Visual Arts, Admissions Office
Thank you James

He created a perfect logo for the Faculty and Staff Campaign and did the tee-shirt design, never complaining at a suggestion change or last minute request. He designed the invite that will draw about 500 large donors to a CES ribbon cutting. His material went well beyond a simple request. His Fish Fry invite design brought a record attendance, many Alumni complimenting the new invitation format at the event. He designed a campaign poster with only a few hours notice. He also is a fine Artist by training; he created the outstanding pencil drawings that were presented to John Conkling and Peter Maller for the Alumni Service awards. He has never complained, never rolled his eyes, and never uttered a sigh. In fact several of our staff comment that no matter what time or day of the week that they come into the office, James Arnold’s light is also burning. He is simply amazing and Joy to work with.