It Started With a Student’s Heartfelt Plea

It Led to a New Program in Ghana and a Prestigious Award

More than a decade ago, Albert Ncancer, a student taking prerequisite courses for Weber State University’s respiratory therapy program, implored his professor, Lisa Trujillo, to visit his village in Ghana and teach.

“I remember we were standing by the stairwell right out there,” Trujillo said, pointing to an area outside her office on the third floor of the Marriott Allied Health Sciences Building. “I remember thinking ‘I don’t even know exactly where Ghana is located in Africa.’ I also remember saying, ‘Let’s plan for next summer.’”

Shortly thereafter, Ncancer moved to the United Kingdom, but he and Trujillo continued to discuss travel details via text messages. “To me, it was like planning a trip to the moon,” Trujillo said. “I had never done anything like this, so I had a lot of questions. Where would we stay was one of the most important. I remember asking him that very question. There was a delay in his response, but his next text read, ‘That is not an important question. Do not worry. It will all work out.’”

And it did. Today, 20 trips to Ghana later, Trujillo has been successful in helping the University of Ghana implement a Bachelor of Science in Respiratory Therapy degree program. It is the first of its kind in Ghana and, to Trujillo’s knowledge, the first of its kind in Africa.

The respiratory therapy field is new to Ghana, and in a country where asthma, emphysema and pulmonary disease are widespread, respiratory therapy training is badly needed. In the fall of 2016, an inaugural cohort of eight Ghanaian students began courses to become licensed respiratory therapists.

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International Recognition

For her efforts in helping Ghana implement the degree program, Trujillo received the International Council for Respiratory Care’s Toshiko Koga, MD International Medal. The honor recognizes an individual for excellence in promoting the globalization of quality respiratory care.

“Receiving the medal was very humbling,” Trujillo said. “It’s an award that absolutely needs to be shared. The bachelor’s degree program in Ghana was the result of the work of many, many people. I’m not one who likes to be on the stage or behind a microphone. In fact, I try hard not to be that person. I’m just Lisa. I’m not any more special than others in my field. I just happened to walk through doors that led me to opportunities, and those opportunities grew and grew.”

The new degree program is expected to be a pilot program for other institutions in Ghana and a model for the introduction of respiratory therapy in other developing countries.
Hinckley, Collaboration Award Selected

Computer science professor Brian Rague received the 2016 JOHN S. HINCKLEY FELLOW AWARD, and the Children’s Adaptive Physical Education Society! (CAPES!) was honored with the Exemplary Collaboration Award during a luncheon on Nov. 18.

Hinckley Award winner Brian Rague’s current areas of study are software engineering, parallel computing and programming languages. He also explores opportunities for creative software engineering in the fields of education, biomedicine and physics. Rague established the WSU Computer Literacy Center, where students receive individual help with computational literacy, so they can succeed in classes, academic research and the workplace.

“One of Dr. Rague’s interests has been increasing participation of underrepresented populations such as women and minorities in the computing sciences,” wrote Allyson Saunders, assistant dean of the College of Engineering, Applied Science & Technology (EAST), in her nomination letter.

Rague also was instrumental in creating the Master of Science in Computer Engineering, the first graduate degree in EAST. An active scholar, Rague has presented at approximately 50 local, regional, national and international conferences. He has written or co-authored more than 30 articles.

The Stewart Education Foundation awarded Rague a $100,000 grant to establish the Computer Science Simulation Lab, a state-of-the-art facility to investigate and research augmented and virtual reality systems.

The COLLABORATION AWARD was given to CAPES!, a program that uses a combination of exercises and games in and out of the swimming pool to help children, ages 5 to 12, with their social interaction, balance, dexterity, motor skills, strength and fitness. James Zagrodnik, assistant professor of health promotion and human performance, along with Natalie Allen Williams, associate professor of teacher education, created CAPES! in 2013 to positively influence children with disabilities.

Zagrodnik chose the acronym CAPES! because he wanted the children to think of themselves as superheroes who perform amazing feats of daring and dexterity. Students in various WSU classes have the opportunity to develop individualized instruction and work one on one with CAPES! class members.

“I was especially impressed by the life-changing effects of CAPES!” said Madame Miner, provost and vice president of Academic Affairs. “Children, parents and the students who participate in the project express tremendous gratitude for the opportunities provided to work together.”

Adriana Perez Mares, Financial Aid Office
Ana Reyes, College of Engineering, Applied Science & Technology
Aaron Roberts, Career Services
Kelly Rose, Continuing Education
Simone St Laurent, Child and Family Studies
Katie Swainston, Career Services
Niki Tonks, Goddard School of Business & Economics
Vadym Volkanov, Facilities Management
Byron Ward, Facilities Management
Gentry Williams, Academic Support Centers and Programs
Peggy Wilson, Facilities Management
Xin Zhao, Counseling & Psychological Services

On the Move/Promoted

Sarah Bateman, Continuing Education
Herbert Bradburn, Application Development
Seth Cawley, University Police
Heather Cross, Continuing Education
Michael Erling, Athletics Admin and Support
Patricia Glover, Lindquist College of Arts & Humanities
Yulia Goff, Development
Kevin Goodrich, Application Development
Sonja Green, Communication
Trevor Groves, Facilities Management
Julie Hamilton, Human Resources
Ashley Hilton, Marketing & Communications

Alisa Kimball, Respiratory Therapy
Marzzieh Larsen, Student Affairs
Melanie Martinez, Access & Outreach
James Maughan, Facilities Management
Margaret Rickards, WSU Davis
Christopher Sawaya, Academic Technology Services

Retired

Kathryn Bingham, Facilities Management
Lynnae Dopp, Academic Support Centers and Programs
Jill Kingsford, Continuing Education
Patricia Martinez, Facilities Management
Faculty & Staff Accomplishments


The Utah Council of Teachers of Mathematics awarded mathematics instructor Dixie Blackinton the Muffit Reeves Award in recognition of outstanding achievement in mathematics professional development in Utah. Recipients are exemplary “teachers of teachers.”


Ogden Mayor Mike Caldwell and Ogden City Arts announced the recipients of the 2016 Mayor’s Awards in the Arts. Matt Choberka, visual arts chair, was honored with a Visual Arts award for his dedication to students and the community. Additionally, Choberka had an exhibit of his paintings at the Beaux-arts Americaque gallery in Canada in October.

Charlie Chandler, Veterans Services coordinator, has joined the governing board of the National Association of Veteran Program Administrators.

Equality Utah presented education professor Forrest Crawford with the Utah Allies Award in October at an event that attracted 2,400 guests. Crawford was honored for making sure the LGBTQ+ community was included in the broader social-justice movement.

History professor Sara Dant had her book Losing Eden: An Environmental History of the American West, published by Wiley press. Dant’s book is the first to examine environmental history and development in the American West and explain how the land has shaped and been shaped by the people who live there.

The Europe-based Editions Management & Societe recognized Stanley Fawcett, Goddard Endowed Chair of Supply Chain Management, as one of the “great authors in supply chain management.” He was selected for his influence on the discipline.

Radiological sciences professor Diane Kawamura was selected as the Most Effective Radiologic Technologist Educator in the nation in the 2016 edition of the Minnies published by AuntMinnie.com.

Wendy Fox Kirk, business administration instructor, and Michael Stevens, business administration chair, presented “Symbiotic Leadership Theory: A Collaborative Path to Inclusive Leadership” at the 18th Annual Global Conference of the International Leadership Association in Atlanta.

Mark LeTourneau, professor of English, had reviews of four books published recently in Anglican and Episcopal History: Being Protestant in Reformation Britain; Shapers of English Calvinism, 1660–1714: Variety, Persistence, and Transformation; Royal Priesthood in the English Reformation; and The Vocation of Anglican Theology.

Criminal justice chair David Lynch, along with professor Bruce Bayley and assistant professors Molly Sween and Mark Denniston, published the book Seven Deadly Sins: Constitutional Rights and the Criminal Justice System with Carolina Academic Press, 2016.

The Utah Bar Association Business Law Section honored assistant business administration professor David Read with the Distinguished Business Law Practitioner of the Year award in recognition of editorship of the book Utah Business Law for Entrepreneurs and Managers. He was also appointed articles editor of the Journal of Legal Studies Education.

Sarah Steimel, Master of Professional Communication director, published two articles based on her research of refugee resettlement: “Negotiating Refugee Empowerment(s) in Resettlement Organizations” in the Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies and “Negotiating Knowledge and Expertise in Refugee Resettlement Organizations” in Cogent Social Sciences.

In the “Low-Dose CT Challenge,” sponsored by the National Institutes of Health, the Mayo Clinic’s CT Innovation Center and the American Association of Physicists in Medicine, associate professor of electrical and computer engineering Larry Zeng placed third in the world. The challenge was to produce a clear CT (computerized tomography) scan, used to find injuries, blood clots or tumors, while using a very low dose of radiation. Also, Zeng was elected to the IEEE Nuclear and Medical Imaging Sciences Council. IEEE is the largest international organization for electrical engineers.