Where All Streams Meet
The Jérôme Nadal, SJ, Jesuit Residence will stand at the heart of campus
In this season of giving, I am especially grateful for the many gifts that support and encourage our students, providing them with opportunities to explore and discover more about themselves and the unique gifts they bring to the world.

Our recently opened $100 million health sciences campus in Phoenix welcomed a physical therapy program this fall to go along with our four year medical school and existing programs in nursing, pharmacy, and occupational therapy. We also welcomed our first class of Next Generation Leaders, thanks to $5.4 million in scholarship support. I expect great things from these 32 freshmen who represent 13 states and a wonderfully diverse racial and ethnic makeup.

The gift of global and personal discovery — connecting decades of students so meaningfully with the people and culture of the Dominican Republic — celebrates a milestone this year, with the 50th anniversary of the Institute for Latin American Concern.

And, this fall, we announced that our new freshman residence hall will be named Graves Hall, in recognition of a $12 million lead gift from Lee Graves, BSBA ‘80, JD’83, and his wife, Judy, and our new Jesuit residence would be named for early Jesuit Jérôme Nadal, SJ. Both facilities will open in fall 2023 and embrace and reflect our Jesuit mission.

In addition, our stunning new five-story, $75 million CL Werner Center for Health Sciences Education continues to rise and take shape on the northwest side of campus. In dramatic fashion, a covered walkway, elevated over Burt Street, was installed this fall, connecting the new facility with our health sciences programs in the Criss Buildings and the Hixson-Lied Science Building. The CL Werner Center is also set to open in fall 2023.

These, and other gifts, add to our University’s exciting momentum and support and extend our mission, directly impacting our students.

I am certainly deeply moved and inspired when, during my visits across the country, our alumni share personal stories of how Creighton has made a difference in their lives and they voice their desire to give back. I hear of the excitement of a young alumni couple making their first $5,000 gift to the Creighton Fund, an alumna grateful to support a scholarship fund that was influential in her journey, or a heartfelt legacy gift in remembrance of a loved one or that special professor.

To be sure, of course, scholarships are critical to our students’ success, and to making a Creighton education more accessible to outstanding prospective students. With 98% of our students receiving scholarships or financial aid, scholarship support is a priority for our Forward Blue campaign.

The generosity of our alumni extends across our schools and colleges, as well as class years. Of note, we had more than 18,000 first-time donors in fiscal year 2022, and, on the flip side, 43% of our donors have given at least three times. You can read more about the campaign in the insert inside this issue.

I am grateful for the many ways our Creighton community contributes to the success of our University. I wish all of you a wonderful holiday season, a blessed Christmas, and a Happy New Year.

Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD
President
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Creighton is investing in the Jesuit community, whose values and vision have guided the University’s mission-driven approach to education. And with the construction of the Jérôme Nadal, SJ, Jesuit Residence, the Jesuit community will be more visible and available to students, faculty, staff and alumni.

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Researching online ‘mobs’

CREIGHTON CONNECTIONS
UNIVERSITY NEWS

BY EUGENE CURTIN

Creighton professors and their students study the formation, growth and effectiveness of online ‘mobs’

T he primary image evoked by the word “mobs” probably involves hundreds of rioters storming government buildings or perhaps burning commercial districts. How ‘mobs’, good or bad, form on social media, how the organizers coordinate their messages and the likelihood of mobs achieving their goals, is the subject of a $585,000, three-year research project recently awarded to a team that includes two Creighton professors.

Creighton undergraduate students will also be part of the ongoing research project, which aims to understand the genesis, growth and course of social media mob formation. That undergraduate students will assist the team during the project’s three-year timeline will further Creighton’s reputation for providing important research opportunities to undergraduates.

Undergraduate students have long been a valued presence in his work, says Samer Al-khateeb, PhD, assistant professor of computer science in the College of Arts and Sciences. “Since I joined Creighton, I have worked with five undergraduate students,” he says. “We even published a paper in an international conference with one of the students, which was about flash mobs, although the idea there was to look at how social bots affect the spread of a message.

“Undergraduates help a lot. A student who is working with me right now is doing a phenomenal job. For this study, I am planning to hire two undergraduate students, one in computer science and hopefully one in social science.”

The study is funded by the U.S. Air Force Office of Scientific Research through the DEPSCOR program, or Department of Defense Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research.

“The national security implications of understanding the process of mob formation could be profound,” Al-khateeb says. “If you understand how people coordinate a mob, then you might be able to understand how hackers will try to hack a government website, an electrical grid or make a hashtag trend.”

Understanding how and why cyber mobs succeed confers a better ability to respond, perhaps by creating a counter-messaging campaign, understanding better what kind of language to use, what kind of hashtag to use and even the sentiments that should be expressed.

“That is the proactive potential of understanding,” Al-khateeb says. The research team will include Al-khateeb, Rebecca Murray, PhD, professor and associate dean of social sciences and professional programs, and Nitin Agarwal, PhD, distinguished professor and director of the Collaboratorium for Social Media and Online Behavioral Studies (COMBO) at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. As demonstrated by the Department of Defense awarding this project to him, Al-khateeb has built a reputation as an expert in social networks analysis and cyber security.

He arrived in the United States from Iraq in 2009 and joined the Creighton faculty in 2018 after serving 11 years at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, where he earned his PhD in computer and information sciences.

Flash mobs, online propaganda campaigns and the dissemination of misinformation across the internet by terrorist groups, trolls and cyberbots became his area of expertise after first participating in metadata investigations during his years as a PhD student.

“Back then, ISIS was very active in Iraq and Syria, and they were posting a lot of propaganda videos and pictures and recruitment messages,” he says. “At that time, I was working on a mob model based on the theory of collective action and applied the model to their network to understand how the campaign was going, how successful it is, and what are the strategies that can be used to counter their acts on social media.”

Schmersal Named VP of Mission and Ministry

Creighton University welcomed Cynthia Schmersal, E.dD., M.A.S., as its new vice president of Mission and Ministry on Sept. 30. Schmersal succeeds Eileen-Burke Sullivan, STD, BScN, BSc, who retired. Burke-Sullivan served as vice president and the vice president of Mission and Ministry at Creighton since 2014.

“I am excited to welcome Dr. Schmersal to the Creighton and wider communities and to my leadership team,” said Creighton President the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD. “She is well-versed in Jesuit education and mission. For nearly 25 years, she has been a student, volunteer, employee, parishioner, and retreatant with various Jesuit apostolates.”

Schmersal was previously vice
At the beginning of the academic year, Creighton hosted its third Mission Week, a series of campuswide events and opportunities to gather in community and reflect upon and celebrate the University’s unique Jesuit, Catholic community and its connection between the humanities and theology, natural sciences, sociological sciences, politics, environmentalism, and film. "Fr. Hendrickson said Murray’s engagement with Jesuit education goes back 56 years when he enrolled as a student at Marquette University. Following graduate work at Saint Louis University, he arrived at Creighton, where he has taught for more than 40 years.

He is among the nation’s foremost authorities on the theory and philosophy of Karl Marx and has authored three books with a fourth and fifth in progress. His Marx’s Theory of Scientific Knowledge (1988) is considered among the finest English-language contributions to the study of Marxian philosophy.

Murray has partnered with numerous local institutions and organizations, including the University of Nebraska Omaha, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Film Streams, the Omaha Public Library, the Omaha Archdiocese, and the Nebraska Humanities Governor’s Lecture, on topics ranging from immigration to African American history in Omaha, climate change, and the social mission of Catholic universities, and the philosophy of law as it relates to race and racism.

But from this one small tooth, scientists — including Creighton’s Tyler Dunn, PhD — have been able to paint a more detailed portrait of the ancient human past. The girl belonged to a little-known group of ancient human known as the Denisovans who, though extinct today, share DNA with modern peoples in Australia and the Pacific Islands.

This group of human ancestors was only known previously from two other sites — one in Siberia and the other in Tibet," says Dunn, assistant professor in the Department of Medical Education and director of the anatomy lab in the School of Medicine in Omaha. “This discovery is sort of connecting the dots between where we know the fossils to be — in northern Siberia and Tibet — all the way down to islands in southeast Asia, where their modern descendants live.”

Dunn, who participated in the excavation, is one of the co-authors of the study about the discovery published in the journal Nature Communications. News of the find has been reported in the New York Times, National Geographic, and elsewhere.

The find, Dunn says, will likely result in a renewed scientific interest in southeast Asia, a region that’s long been overlooked due to decades of war and conflict. Dunn believes the Denisovans, Dunn says, remain a mystery in many ways. The only evidence they’ve left behind is a single finger bone — and tooth. The tooth — which abandoned in a cave and never cleaned — is one of the most complete ancient human fossils ever found.

"When we do discover ancient human remains, we can obtain ancient DNA and protein from the bone and teeth and then study the DNA and protein to understand the ancient human populations," Dunn says. "We can also learn about ancient human populations and how those differences have played out in the modern world."

The Denisovans, Dunn says, are likely to remain a mystery in many ways. The only evidence they’ve left behind is a single finger bone — and tooth. The tooth — which abandoned in a cave and never cleaned — is one of the most complete ancient human fossils ever found. The Denisovans, Dunn says, remain a mystery in many ways. The only evidence they’ve left behind is a single finger bone — and tooth. The tooth — which abandoned in a cave and never cleaned — is one of the most complete ancient human fossils ever found.

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Health Care in 3D

What if you could see your diagnosis in three dimensions? What if you could hold it in your hand and examine it carefully? How much more in control would you feel?

At Creighton University Health Sciences Campus in Phoenix, medical students in the on-campus 3D Printing Club are exploring how to make this a reality for both patients and physicians. Using the latest imaging and printing techniques, students in the club are creating 3D models of individual patients’ anatomy that physicians can use to plan and prepare treatment.

“For a lot of patients, it’s hard to understand what’s going on when they get a new diagnosis,” says Eugene Moon (pictured below), a medical student at the Phoenix campus and founder of the 3D printing club. “Although we sometimes have general models to explain it, showing them a 3D model of their specific anatomy, I think, does a lot more to illustrate for them what’s happening inside the body.”

Working with medical students with no prior training, program administrators have found that, after six iterations of practicing a procedure with the Knowledge Donor bodies, the students were able to perform the procedure as fast as the trauma faculty with no mistakes, says Keith Paley, MD, program director of the surgery residency program.

“You now have medical students who are capable of performing a life-saving maneuver,” Paley says. “That’s the power of this type of training.”

Experienced physicians on campus have also benefited from the program. Last year, Thomas Gillespie, PhD, professor in the School of Medicine at the Phoenix campus, was able to practice a newly performed abdominal nerve procedure on one of the Knowledge Donor bodies before repeating it on a live patient.

Guided by Creighton’s Jesuit mission, the program operates in an environment that recognizes the humanity of the donor bodies. Students in the anatomy lab debrief after working with the bodies, and are invited to reflect on how the experience made them feel, Soe-Lin says.

“We are very cognizant that we are bringing students early on in their medical education, perhaps earlier than before, to interface with a program that involves lifelike dissection and models and trauma scenarios,” he says. “We certainly want to be sensitive to making that transition easy, while also helping these students recognize the depth of what they’re doing and how they’re learning.”

You now have medical students that are capable of performing a life-saving maneuver. That’s the power of this type of training.”

At Creighton, there is dignity among the dead.

“We use the term ‘cadaver’ very, very sparingly,” says Kayla Gray, director of the anatomy lab at the Creighton University Health Sciences Campus – Phoenix. “We refer to all of our decedents as ‘donors’ to really emphasize for our learners that these are human beings.”

For medical students and residents everywhere, working with deceased human remains is a part of the intense process of medical education. The bodies, usually preserved with formaldehyde, serve as a tool for physicians-in-training to learn human anatomy and practice new procedures.

But students and residents at Creighton’s School of Medicine in Phoenix are getting a different experience during their cadaveric training. They are working with bodies that have been preserved in a nonformaldehyde solution, which leaves the tissue in a more natural state.

The program, called the Knowledge Donor program on campus, allows students — and sometimes even experienced physicians — to train more effectively on deceased donors so that they are better prepared to treat living patients.

The contrast between traditionally preserved bodies and those on the Phoenix campus is stark, says Hahn See-Lin, MD, a trauma surgeon and clinical simulation director on the Phoenix campus.

When bodies are preserved in formaldehyde — a technique that has been common for more than a century at least — the skin yellows, the tissue dries and the bodys jovial joints stiffen.

“What we find is that, when students who have worked with formaldehyde-preserved bodies in the anatomy lab get to their clinical rotations, stepping into the operating room or trauma bay, they have to pretty much relearn all of anatomy,” Gray says. “They’re looking at unfamiliar body structures, because what they’ve learned does not translate into clinical relevance.”

The program involves medical students in the anatomy lab, and also surgical residents with Creighton’s School of Medicine in Phoenix. The idea, See-Lin says, is that residents working with the Knowledge Donor bodies will be able to learn certain procedures faster and better before working on live patients.

“If you take a learner, and you give them multiple repetitions in a high-fidelity simulated environment, they’re going to become better and pass that learning curve a lot sooner than they were before,” he says.

The program has had a profound impact on medical students and surgical residents with Creighton’s Surgical Education program on campus, allowing them a 3D model of their specific anatomy, I think, does a lot more to illustrate for them what’s happening inside the body.”
the expedition of German nobleman Maximilian von Wied and Swiss painter Karl Bodmer across North America between 1832 and 1834. In their travels, the pair encountered more than 20 Indigenous Nations, including the Mandan people, who would later be devastated by a smallpox epidemic in 1837.

The pair meticulously documented the people, plants, animals and landscapes they encountered on the more than 7,000-mile journey from New England to present-day Montana and back. The Joslyn collection includes more than 1,000 objects, including von Wied’s handwritten, three-volume journal and more than 400 original watercolors and drawings by Bodmer.

“All the while, they’re creating a visual record, while gathering ethnographic, linguistic and environmental data on this trip,” Sundberg says. “The collection that Joslyn holds is the most detailed, visual and textual European record of the American interior during this moment of profound demographic and environmental transition.”

With the newly awarded grant funds, project staff, including students from a wide variety of disciplines at Creighton and Nebraska Indian Community College, will begin digitizing and encoding von Wied’s journal entries and Bodmer’s artwork, with the aim of building a digital portal in which users will be able to browse pieces from the collection and follow the expedition on a historic map.

“This project will expose students in a really explicit way to some of the methods that we have in the digital humanities,” Sundberg says. “It’s not just professional scholarship they’ll be doing. They’re going to be learning these practical skills and employing them on a potentially very impactful project.”

Ann Mauzsch, PhD, associate professor of educational leadership in the College of Arts and Sciences, will also lead efforts to create a custom K-12 curriculum, developed in coordination with Native American communities, based on the material.

“A major component of this project is working with these communities that Maximilian and Bodmer encountered—the Omaha Tribe in northern Nebraska, the Mandan people and others,” Appleford says. “We want to work with them to make sure that what we’re doing—how we’re framing the project, how we’re talking about the project and contextualizing the expedition—reflects their perspectives.”

The grant award was one of 245 announced by the NEH this funding cycle for projects that “expand the horizons of our knowledge of culture and history... and bring high-quality public programs and resources directly to the American public,” according to the NEH.

$3 Million Grant to See Creighton Train Community Health Advocates

Access to health care services, routine for so many Americans, can be shrouded in mystery for some, beckoning elusively across a chasm of generational unfamiliarity and unaffordability.

To help bridge that gap, a three-year, $3 million grant has been awarded to Creighton through its Department of Health Sciences-Multicultural and Community Affairs. The Health Resources and Services Administration, an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has

Hands-on Research

Emma Goldsmith, BSEVS’22, trod the marshy grasslands of the Heron Haven Nature Center in Omaha last spring searching for grass samples. Her research is just one example of the many opportunities Bluejays have to work alongside expert faculty-mentors, making important discoveries with a real-world impact.

What were you researching?
We measured biomass levels in marshes. We took samples of the grasses and then dried them and weighed them. We combined this with satellite imagery to assess the health of a particular marsh or wetland. It’s really important, especially as the climate is changing, to be able to assess changes with the biomass, or with water quality.

What was the most important aspect of your research?
For me, it was water quality analysis. If I could develop an algorithm that I overlay onto satellite imagery, it might be applicable all over the world. So places off the coast of Africa, or other places that are hard to reach, would be able to assess water quality even if they don’t have the tools they need to do it themselves. That could be very important.

Should students interested in research consider Creighton?
Yes. The great thing about Creighton is that the class sizes are so small, and the professors are always engaged. I had one-on-one interaction with an expert in the field, all the time. It was great.

How did you assess your time at Creighton?
I feel I’ve developed as a friend, as an intellectual and a person. The pandemic threw things off a little bit, but overall, my time at Creighton set me up well to go into the world as a competent and confident person. Research opportunities at Creighton changed my whole experience.
Brelend Named Vice Provost and Dean

A. Barron Brelend, DM, was named vice provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs and dean of the Graduate School.

Brelend, who holds a Doctor of Music in Choral Conducting from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, has been on the faculty at Creighton for 14 years, starting as an assistant professor in 2008. He was promoted to associate professor in 2014 and professor in 2020. Brelend was named department chair in 2016.

He currently serves as president of the Nebraska Choral Directors Association (a state affiliate of the American Choral Directors Association), a governing member of the Omaha Symphony, and is on the board of advisors for Opera Omaha.

Brelend serves on the Faculty and Academic Councils for the University, and for the past two years he has been the Arts and Sciences representative on the Executive Committee. He also serves on the University Athletic Board and the Committee on Committees, and was a member of the University’s National Target Market Strategy Working Group and the Strategic Planning Steering Committee. In the College of Arts and Sciences, he has served on the Magis Core Curriculum Committee and serves on the Steering Committees for the Faculty Senate and on the Council of Chairs.

In his new position, Brelend will help with the planning, directing, evaluating and developing of undergraduate and graduate programs; collaborating with other divisions of the University to analyze and develop recommendations in response to evolving institutional needs and providing leadership for achieving select strategic initiatives.

New Residence Hall Named

Creighton’s new residence hall will be called Graves Hall.

The hall’s namesake is Lee Graves, B.B.A. ’63, J.D. ’83, who, along with his wife, Judy Graves, recently made the lead gift of $82 million to the residence hall now under construction at 23rd Street, south of Burt Street.

The $37 million project broke ground in the fall of 2021.

“Creighton needs to have the tools for campus to continue to grow and for the schools to continue to thrive,” says Lee Graves, chairman, founder and CEO of ELK Companies, which provides utility and energy management services.

“This new freshman residence hall is going to be a great asset in attracting students to Creighton.”

The residence hall will be divided mostly into four-person suites. Each will have two bedrooms, two living spaces and a shared bathroom. Each floor will have kitchenettes and space for student development programs. The building will also have a larger kitchen on the second floor for all students.

The residence hall’s programming will include dedicated interfaith spaces and amenities supporting student development, wellness and academics.

“We are deeply grateful for the Graves gift and the ways it will transform how our students live and learn on campus,” said Creighton President the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, Ph.D.

“Graves Hall will represent a philosophical shift in how we house our freshman students, with accommodations that allow for both privacy and community.”

“The residence hall will allow us to enhance our commitment to creating a sense of belonging for our first-year students, including providing meaningful programming that fosters growth, learning and formation in the tradition of Jesuit, Catholic education.”

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Establishing a Clinic for End-of-Life Care

If you ask Mandy Boesch Kirkpatrick, PhD, BSN’05, conversations about end-of-life care need to begin far earlier than the last days. For both patients and health care providers.

“We’re so focused on saving lives that, often, talking about the end-of-life care needs to begin far earlier than the last days. Patients need to plan for the end of their lives. If you ask Mandy Boesch Kirkpatrick’s time as she works on her latest project. Alongside co-principal investigator Meghan Wallace Poffutt, PhD, BSN’00, associate professor and holder of the Keough Family Endowed Chair in Nursing, Kirkpatrick is working to establish an interprofessional clinic at Creighton in which students and expert faculty from across disciplines will work with Nebraska patients on planning for the end of their lives. Initially funded through the Dr. George F. Haddix President’s Faculty Research Fund, the project, called INTERACT, looks to bring together Creighton experts in law, dentistry, business and other disciplines to establish a clinic where patients work with aging Nebraska patients on advance care planning (ACP), in which patients make treatment decisions prior to a serious diagnosis.

In addition to Kirkpatrick and Poffutt, the team includes: Jennifer Jansen, EdD, BSN’04, associate professor in the College of Nursing; Laurie Baekke, instructor in the Heider College of Business and director of Healthcare Leadership Programs; Cathy Fox, BSW’09, assistant professor of social work in the College of Arts and Sciences; Victoria Haneman, Frank J. Kallosgher Professor of Trusts and Estates in the School of Law; and Beatriz Rodriguez, BSN’07, MPH’22, and current student Sydney Langlois, who serve as research assistants.

“When you envision your death, you probably aren’t thinking, ‘I would like to die in a Y-shaped area of interest for future research.” Kirkpatrick says. “You’d want to die in a place that’s comfortable to you, surrounded by loved ones. And you’d want the people you love to understand what your wishes are.” The problem, Kirkpatrick says, is that most people don’t want to discuss scenarios like this with their caregivers. Kirkpatrick and her colleagues on the project have found that though 92% of Nebraskans want their treatment wishes to be known when they die, only 3 in 4 have documented what they want their end-of-life care to look like. A larger proportion of patients are far more likely to engage in estate planning than advance health care planning.

“We’ve documented what our patient’s wishes look like. Now, how do the balance the need to support the protective and housekeeping functions of these antibodies while limiting the potential risk of autoimmunity? This is a question that Patric Schnawood, Ph.D., and student researchers have been investigating in their laboratory. Schnawood is director of the graduate program in the Department of Medical Microbiology and Immunology in the School of Medicine. Schnawood and his team have been studying B cells from mice engineered to express the larger of two polypeptide chains frequently found in a type of natural antibody that binds a common membrane lipid molecule called phosphatidylcholine (PC).

In a paper recently published in Cell Reports, Schnawood’s team provides evidence that generating a healthy PC-reactive B cell population occurs through a three-step process. The first two steps remove a large majority of potential light chain combinations, leaving most B cells to express predominantly one type of light chain. A third step then works to “test” the specificity of the selected cells, which increases the frequency of PIC-reactive B cells. “We suspect the third step may help protect the host and reduce the overall risk of autoimmunity,” Schnawood says. “In this way, the immune system is able to strike the right balance between the beneficial and potentially damaging roles of natural antibodies.” Determining whether defects in this process underlie some types of autoimmune disease is an arm of the research. The research team included Alexandra “Sasha” Worth, a graduate student and lead author; Max Schalla, BS’13, PhD’18, who has since joined Shoreline Biocesci in San Diego, working to develop novel cellular immunotherapy treatments; and PhD student Anna Fraser-Phillips.

Schnawood’s research has drawn support from intramural and extramural grants, including recent grants from the National Institutes of Health, one of which helped fund this project.

Physicians Explore New Frontier in Treating Emphysema, COPD

A team of Creighton University and CHI Health physicians are the first in the state of Nebraska to offer new hope to people suffering breathing difficulties related to severe emphysema or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. A new procedure involving inserting tiny valves into the airways of diseased lungs enables the healthy portions to expand, thereby lifting pressure on the diaphragm and making breathing easier. Dubbed “Zephyr Endobronchial Valve Treatment,” after the implanted “Zephyr” valves, the procedure was approved in Europe before gaining FDA sanction.

In 2019, Zachary Depew, MD, 07, division chief for pulmonary and critical care at CHI Health Creighton University Medical Center–Bergan Mercy and associate professor of medicine at the School of Medicine, began the process of bringing the procedure to CHI Health and therefore to Nebraska.

“But that takes time,” Depew says. “It’s a new device, and you have to go through the bureaucratic process of making the device available to the medical community.” Finally, in 2020, the noninvasive procedure uses a thin, camera-equipped tube known as a bronchoscope to insert the valves. The bronchoscope, which is inserted into the lungs through the mouth while the patient is sedated, compares well, Depew says, with established procedures that involve surgical removal of diseased portions of the lung.

“In my opinion, related to emphysema, the predominance of disease is in the upper lobes, and those are hard to get to,” says. “But surgeons went into the chest and surgically removed the upper parts of the lungs — in essence removing all the most diseased parts, which then reduces the total volume in the chest and thus the healthier, lower lobes more room to work.”

While the procedure worked well for patients who met specific criteria, its complexity has restricted it to a few large medical institutions around the world. Depew and his team have raised problems of access in addition to risks of mortality and post-surgery complications.

“Accord Health has been very helpful in terms of helping us get the proper care to the right people,” Depew says. “The care they bring out is so important to the community.”

As with the surgical approach, candidates for Zephyr valve implantation must meet certain criteria, although those criteria are not as rigorous. They must have significant emphysema, an “air trapping” condition in which inhaled oxygen cannot escape the lungs and a functional impairment stemming from that air trapping. Their conditions, however, while they may at times be quite severe, should not be so severe as to place them at high risk.

Depew says Creighton University and CHI Health are the first medical institutions to offer the procedure in Nebraska, and, as far as he is aware, the only one. The closest alternative locations, he says, are in Kansas City, Missouir, and Rochester, Minnesota. With eight procedures completed, and with outcomes ranging from transformed lives to others who gained little benefit, Depew says his team is learning fast.

“Creighton-trained pulmonologists are being sought after by other institutions. The know-how is good for Creighton and good for the nation,” Depew says. “One of the best things that we can do for people around the country is to train pulmonologists who know how to take good care of patients through procedures like this.” He says, “We send a lot of our trainees into the wider world, which means we can help provide more access to novel and effective care from Creighton-trained physicians.”
Meet the Freshman Class

Creighton welcomed 1,028 freshmen to campus this fall. Here are some facts about the class.

- 56% female
- 44% male
- 26% are Creighton legacy students
- 29% are students of color
- 54% report as Roman Catholic with many other faiths represented as well
- 32 Next Generation Leaders focused on equity, diversity and inclusion efforts
- 50% attended a public high school

First Cohort of Next Generation Leaders Launched

Creighton took a major step toward living out its equity, diversity and inclusion goals this fall with the establishment of the Next Generation Leaders program.

“We wanted to recruit students who are passionate about leading diversity and inclusion efforts, who have the desire to impact the next generation of students,” says Sarah Walker, PhD, vice president of the Division of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

The program is dedicated to identifying and empowering students from underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds and offers leadership opportunities in addition to a full, four-year scholarship. A minimum 3.8 high school GPA on a 4.0 scale is required, and students can pursue any major at the University.

The freshmen enrolled in the inaugural cohort represent 13 states—stretching from New York to Hawaii—and were selected based upon a written application, essay, video submission, interview and more. Out of the 107 students selected for an interview, 32 were chosen.

The racial/ethnic makeup of the first cohort is Black, Hispanic, Native American and Native Hawaiian, but there’s a lot more to the program than simple representation. The goal is to help students develop into leaders who are dedicated to equity, diversity and inclusion.

During their time at Creighton, the Next Generation Leaders will receive leadership development and coaching, make purposeful connections within Creighton and throughout the Omaha area, and participate in group service projects.

“We celebrate these students and the opportunity they have to be the next generation of culturally diverse leaders who will bring awareness and help us to carry out our mission,” says Mary Chase, EdD’14, vice provost for Enrollment Management.

“I am delighted the University and our donors have stepped up to create a scholarship and programming that enable students to live and create a more diverse and inclusive community.

“The Next Generation Leaders clearly benefit from the full-tuition scholarship, but they get more than just funding. They are asked to lead and are provided mentoring and an opportunity to help our community appreciate our diversity.” Ultimately, Walker and Chase say, the students will bring awareness and help Creighton fulfill its mission in action.

“We celebrate these students and the opportunity they have to be the next generation of culturally diverse leaders who will bring awareness and help us to carry out our mission.”

MARY CHASE, EDD’14
Vice Provost for Enrollment Management

DAVE WEAVER
Could Vladimir Putin Be Charged With War Crimes?

BY EUGENE CURTIN

Vladimir Putin might learn something from Omar al-Bashir, according to Creighton law professor Michael Kelly, JD, LLM. Al-Bashir, who in 2009 became the subject of an International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrant for war crimes allegedly committed during the Second Sudanese Civil War, sits under house arrest in the northern Sudan city of Khartoum. For most of the 13 years that passed since the ICC’s action, al-Bashir avoided arrest even while traveling internationally. Today, however, the government of Sudan is negotiating the surrender of its 75-year-old former head of state.

In two recent articles published by the Lieber Institute for Law & Warfare at West Point, Kelly argues that Ukraine’s legal response to Russia’s military invasion is potent and something that Putin, like al-Bashir before him, should add to his list of worries.

“If the ICC issues an arrest warrant against Vladimir Putin for war crimes, it will be a legal thunderbolt,” wrote Kelly, who holds the Senator Allen A. Seck Chair in Law and specializes in international law. “It is a rare thing for sitting heads of state to come under the jurisdiction of international law, but a decade ago this is exactly what happened to President Omar al-Bashir of Sudan for his role in the Darfur genocide.

“The ICC’s arrest warrant weakened al-Bashir both at home and abroad to the point that he was eventually overthrown, leading to negotiations for his transfer to The Hague to stand trial.”

There is no doubt that Putin could be prosecuted, Kelly says, even though Russia has not signed on to ICC jurisdiction. Ukraine, which is also not a party to ICC jurisdiction, has nonetheless accepted its authority to investigate crimes committed on its territory since 2014. Ukraine has lodged a host of legal complaints since Russia’s 2014 annexation of the Ukrainian region of Crimea. These include illegally annexing Ukraine’s sovereign territorial waters and seizure of Ukrainian assets and investments in Crimea. All these cases are advancing in various international forums.

“Ukraine’s legal counterattack has put Russia back on its heels,” Kelly wrote. “Not only did Moscow not show up to challenge Ukraine at the ICC (International Court of Justice), nor respond to the ICC prosecutor’s announcement opening a war crimes investigation in Ukraine, Russia has withdrawn from the Council of Europe – a precursor to denouncing the European Convention on Human Rights – and is on the verge of being suspended from the World Trade Organization.”

But what are the chances that a head of state of a major, nuclear-armed power would be tried before an international tribunal, especially one whose jurisdiction is not acknowledged by that power?

Kelly acknowledges the difficulty. It’s one thing to issue an arrest warrant. It’s quite another to get a nation to respect that document, especially when the accused heads a great power that possesses critical energy resources. It would be unlikely to happen while Putin holds power, Kelly says.

“From a realpolitik perspective, it would require his overthrow where he’s not killed in the process,” Kelly says. “If it’s the Libya model, when the leader is killed during the overthrow, then that’s the end of the story.”

The key, he says, is that the offending power wishes to regain the international good standing lost because of its leader’s war crimes. If the cost is handing over the alleged war criminal, then nations have been willing to pay that price.

It is a hard-nosed approach to securing justice, but, Kelly says, that’s how the world works.

“That’s the nature of realpolitik,” he says. “And it applies to despots. Once they are out of power, they become pawns in a much grander game.”

About Michael Kelly: Michael Kelly, JD, LLM, coordinates the International and Comparative Law Program at the Creighton School of Law. He is past president of the U.S. National Chapter and currently a member of the board of directors of L’Association Internationale du Droit Penal, a Paris-based society of international criminal law scholars, judges and attorneys founded in 1924 that enjoys consultative status with the United Nations. Kelly recently discussed the role of international law in the Russia-Ukraine conflict at West Point’s Lieber Institute, at the American University of Paris’ Schaefer Center, at Friedreich Alexander University-Erlangen, Germany, and at Case Western Reserve Law School’s Cox Center annual symposium.

Creighton law professor Michael Kelly has published two articles arguing the case for holding Vladimir Putin personally responsible for war crimes.
This is a story about a building. But more than that, it’s about what the building represents to Creighton’s past and its future.

“If you want to get symbolic,” says the Rev. Larry Gillick, SJ, director of the Degelman Center for Ignatian Spirituality and a member of Creighton’s Jesuit community for more than 40 years, “the new Jérôme Nadal, SJ, Jesuit Residence will face out and face in. It faces out toward 24th Street, toward the busy world of trucks and buses and cars. It faces in toward the peace and serenity of the new Jesuit Gardens.”

What’s true of the building is true of the Creighton Jesuits themselves. Jesuits live between action and reflection. Their spirituality charges head first into the everyday of a messy world… then reboots in the quiet contemplation of home.

“My definition of ‘home’ is a place that receives you, then sends you back out into the world, over and over, again and again,” Fr. Gillick says.

What’s true of Creighton’s Jesuits is true of the whole Creighton community.

More than 30 Jesuits are now assigned to the campus community, yet they’ve touched the lives of tens of thousands. (Who have, in turn, touched the lives of many more.)

If you want to get symbolic in a different way… imagine Creighton University as a river. If the Jesuits themselves are the main stream, then every graduate, student, professor and staff member is a potential distributary, feeding Creighton’s values to all corners of the world.

Where does the new Jesuit Residence fit in to the metaphor? It’s the place where all streams meet.

CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY HAS SEEN A HANDFUL of key moments in its history. This is one of them, says Creighton President the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD.

“As it did in the 1960s, a lot has happened at Creighton in a very quick timeframe,” he says. “Creighton continues evolving and extending its mission creatively and concisely.”

He mentioned the 24th Street beautification, the reimagining of the Harper Center and Heider College of Business, the Hoovers Bridge connecting campus to Omaha, as well as the in-development residence hall, C.L. Werner Center for Health Sciences Education, renovated laboratories and the Jesuit Residence.

These buildings and improvements are, of course, necessary (in addition to being aesthetically pleasing). But, along with non-facility advances, such as an impressive 11 new endowed faculty chairs, they also represent and showcase some of the core strengths Creighton is investing in. Such as the Jesuit presence on campus.

“The new residence will be a venue that will celebrate and support Creighton’s Jesuit legacy and presence, inviting colleagues and guests to share in our lives in myriad ways,” Fr. Hendrickson says. “It is a symbol of our deep commitment to sustaining and enhancing the Jesuit, Catholic character of Creighton for future generations of students, faculty and staff.”

“We should think of this moment as the second founding of the Creighton Jesuits.”
When planning the new Jesuit Residence, Creighton identified three key themes for the building that embody the campus Jesuits themselves: visibility, access and hospitality.  

While you can find the Jesuits in all corners of campus, their current living quarters – tucked into Creighton Hall and barred by a golden elevator – are anything but visible or accessible.  

Most of the Jesuits we spoke with called their living situation in Creighton Hall “a fortress.”  

“That changes with the new residence,” says the Rev. Nicholas Santos, SJ, PhD, a Creighton professor and rector of the Jesuit community in Omaha. “Every student, faculty and staff member will be welcome to access our chapel and gathering spaces. And we will be out there, facing 24th Street, for all of Omaha to see.”  

The residence, he says, will be a true front door to Creighton.

AS POPE FRANCIS, A JESUIT HIMSELF, says of the religious order: “The world is our home.”  

Jesuits commit their lives to going where they’re asked to. Many don’t stay in the same place for long. One of the things that makes Creighton’s Jesuit community so unique is its many major exceptions to that.  

The Revs. Gillick, Don Doll and Greg Carlson have lived and taught here for decades. Other Jesuits saw equally long tenures, like the recently retired Rev. Tom Shanahan or the Rev. Dick Hauser, who taught here for decades. Other Jesuits saw equally long tenures, like the recently retired Rev. Tom Shanahan or the Rev. Dick Hauser, who taught here for decades.  

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It’s quite the opposite, Schuler says. It’s a call to renew intellectual life. She likes to tell her philosophy students that 500 years ago, a Basque Spaniard priest started a tradition of education committed to the mind — “to reflect, to examine, even sometimes to criticize” — that remains just as relevant and useful today.

“What an achievement,” she says, “to be so rooted in tradition yet so fully open to the world.”

The Tradition Continues

Creighton opened its doors in 1878 with a faculty of one Jesuit priest, three scholastics, Jesuits in formation and two lay professors. The first group of Jesuits met at the Union Pacific Transfer Station Depot in Council Bluffs, Iowa — as far west as the track’s eastern trains came those days.

The bridge over the river into Omaha was also owned by U.P. It cost each Jesuit 25 cents to cross the bridge into the city. As Omaha roads were still unpaved at this point, their campaign ride to Creighton was a bumpy, dirty and difficult one.

When they finally arrived, they brought to campus and Omaha a Jesuit presence that still endures today.

Nearly 50 years since the first Jesuits arrived on campus, Patrick Saint-Jean, SJ, PsyD, (pictured above at St. John’s Church) lives and works here today.

Saint-Jean — a psychology professor and a psychotherapist in the University’s counseling center — recently began his third and final year as a Jesuit retreat assigned to Creighton. Saint-Jean has seen much of the world. He was born in Haiti, studied in Paris, and has worked and lived in such places as Italy, the Congo, Brazil and Mexico.

Of all the places he’s lived, he says, Creighton and Omaha stand out as among the most welcoming. It’s a matter of interlocking communities supporting a larger, collective purpose. The city supports the University, which supports the campus community that cares for people with intellectual disabilities.

Her last semester at Creighton, she was prepared to take the next steps toward medical school. Then she ran into Fr. Gillick on campus one day. He encouraged her to take the Spiritual Exercises Class. That same semester, Hubbs also took a liberation theology course from professor Tom Kelly Ph.D.

Those two classes in particular helped Hubbs realize she wanted to take a more ministerial path into health care. She now hopes to become a hospital chaplain.

In the meantime, she’s found the perfect place to serve. This fall, Hubbs moved to Tacoma, Washington, to work for L’Arche Tacoma Hope, a community that cares for people with intellectual disabilities.

She thanks Jesuits such as Fr. Gillick, who “kept me walking down the right road. Which ended up being a different road.”

Hoping the Jesuits so woven into the daily life of campus, Hubbs says, “helps you remember Creighton’s original mission and makes you feel like you’re a part of it and this community. And if you’re grappling with the path of discernment, there’s always a Jesuit nearby.”

Hunter Allen, BSBA ’14, MD ’22, had an inverse journey to Hubbs’. His detour led him to medicine.

Allen was a Heider College of Business accounting graduate who decided to become a physician. The reason for the switch, as much with anything, was his time working as a bus driver.

Though he loved his business school experience, he’d decided this maybe wasn’t for him. Nonetheless, he was committed to earning his accounting degree. To support himself his junior and senior years of business school, he drove a school bus for Omaha Public Schools.

Allen would pick up and drop off elementary and high school students from class, park the school bus by Creighton Public Safety, run to the Harper Center for his classes, then head back to the bus to finish his day.

“That experience changed everything,” Allen says. “Every day, 30 sets of parents trusted me to keep their children safe. I realized that I thrived in the responsibility of caring for the well-being of others. I realized that this is what I like best. And that realization led me to medicine.”

The Jesuit Influence

We asked alumni to tell us about the Creighton Jesuits who touched their lives. Read some of their responses at creighton.edu/neighborhopes.
But it was also beautiful, enriching, he says. While uprooting their family and moving, yet again, would not be easy, they felt the Holy Spirit not only leading but gently nudging them.

Some six months later, in April 2022, Jason Beste was announced as the inaugural director of Creighton’s Arrupe Global Scholars and Partnerships Program—a $25 million initiative funded by an anonymous foundation gift to build a new, visionary global health training program for medical students grounded in health equity, global health decolonization, liberation medicine and Ignatian values. The program expands the traditional four-year medical school curriculum to a new five-year curriculum. It will enroll incoming medical students from Creighton’s Phoenix and Omaha campuses annually over the next 10 years, and graduates will earn both a medical degree and a Master of Public Health. The program is named for the Rev. Pedro Arrupe, SJ, founder of the Jesuits, who was deeply committed to justice and caring for people living in poverty.

Beste began his new role in July, welcoming the inaugural cohort of 12 first-year Arrupe scholars—six from Omaha, six from Phoenix—at an orientation in the Dominican Republic that same month.

While his new responsibilities will take him to points around the globe, he shares an office with his wife, Sara, at Creighton’s Phoenix health sciences campus, where she joined the School of Medicine faculty and supports the Arrupe Global Scholars program through curriculum development and student mentorship. The two form a unique combination of global health experience and passion—having both collaborated on projects in Malawi, Mozambique, and Liberia.

“This is where our gifts and passions were being called,” Jason Beste says. “It just made sense. This is the most unique and innovative global health training program in medical education right now. To build a global health program with amazing partners and collaborators is the greatest honor—to create a program with all the lessons Sara and I have learned.”

That includes lessons from their undergraduate Jesuit education experiences—Jason at Creighton, Sara at Boston College—where they both took part in spiritual formation and service opportunities.

“My undergraduate experience was transformative,” Jason says. “It really opened my eyes to the structural injustices that exist in the world.”

A native of Minneapolis, who knew he wanted to be a physician since the age of 5, the undergraduate biology major and theology co-major was drawn by the Jesuit ideals of service and a faith that does justice—participating in service and justice trips to Pascagoula, Mississippi, and Chinde, Arizona, and volunteering locally.

He got involved with Campus Ministry. And, with several classmates, formed an intentional community called Simply Peace, which was named Spirit of Peace, renting a University-owned house and sharing in service work, communal meals and reflections.

Also influential were classes on Catholic social teaching by theology professor Tom Kelly, PhD.

“These classes were really eye-opening for me,” Beste says. “I still remember sitting in Dr. Kelly’s classes and seeing my calling in medicine unfold more clearly, combining social justice. Catholic social teaching and medicine into one entity. I just didn’t know how to do it.”

The “how-to” came into greater focus after graduation, when Beste did a year of postgraduate volunteer work on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, at the Jesuit-run Red Cloud Indian School. He describes living among the Lakota people as transformative.

“I was exposed to the personal and generational harm that can result from racism, cultural insensitivity and power imbalances,” he says. “It really heightened my desire to weave justice, equity and dignity into my future medical career.”

Between teaching, coordinating student events and driving a school bus on the reservation, he was introduced to a book by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Tracy Kidder, titled Mountains Beyond Mountains, which chronicles the life of Paul Farmer, MD, HON’17, a renowned infectious-disease specialist, and his work to bring care and equitable health systems to those who live in poverty.

“I read the book and couldn’t put it down. I remember thinking, ‘Wow, that’s it. This is what I want to do.’” Beste says.

He enrolled in Creighton’s medical school, where he met a kindred spirit in Sara. She also dreamed of using her medical degree to work with populations on the margins and was equally interested in global health. The two married in 2009. After medical school, the couple, individually and together, pursued further study and global medicine opportunities in Malawi, Uganda, Haiti, Mozambique, Liberia, Ukraine, New York City, Boston and Seattle. One of Jason’s greatest memories was working directly with Farmer—as medical director for Partners in Health in Malawi and Liberia and as an infectious disease physician in the Division of Global Health Equity at Brigham and Women’s Hospital and Harvard Medical School in Boston.

Farmer’s unexpected death in Rwanda in early 2022 sent shockwaves through the global health community and—for those who knew him personally, such as Beste—the loss of a mentor and colleague was deeply palpable.

“Paul was not only my boss but became my close mentor and North Star,” guiding me to see the structural injustices and health inequities that people who live in poverty face every day,” Beste says.

Beeste now gets an opportunity to pass on that knowledge, experience and passion for global medicine to a new generation of Creighton medical students through the Arrupe Global Scholars and Partnerships Program. This new approach to global health delivery is less about charity and more about justice. The program’s core is to learn how to accompany people and develop more just and equitable health care systems. “We just can’t go into a country or community and fix things,” he says. “Our role is to be present, to listen and to accompany.”

And for the Bestes, this move just feels right. “It’s so great being back at Creighton. I feel like I’m back at home.”
Corinne Lieu Schmidt, MD'14, and Nick Matthees, MD'14, were just happy to be enrolled in the School of Medicine 10 years ago. They weren’t looking to also make history.

In 2012, Creighton officially took the first step in creating a health sciences campus in Phoenix, after many years of establishing relationships with area health care facilities for medical rotations. More than 40 medical students began serving their third and fourth years at the University’s new regional campus of the School of Medicine.

Today, the Creighton University Health Sciences Campus – Phoenix features nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy and pharmacy programs and a four-year medical school. A physician assistant program will open next year.

And today, Schmidt and Matthees, who were not originally from Arizona or the Southwest, have made new homes for themselves in the Phoenix area and are physicians with busy practices that they love.

Schmidt was originally from the East San Francisco Bay area in northern California. When she first began medical school at Creighton in Omaha, she says she “definitely had an interest in going to Phoenix for the third- and fourth-year track” and she attended a tour in Phoenix prior to starting in Omaha.

“Initially, a lot of my decision to go to Phoenix was location-based. It is closer to the West Coast and a short drive from where I have family. Ultimately though, the opportunities for clinical experiences solidified my choice to go down to Phoenix.

“We had some very inspirational lectures from Dr. Sanjay Singh (professor and chair of the Neurology Department in the School of Medicine) in Omaha and I couldn’t pass up the opportunity to be in close proximity to the Barrow Neurological Institute at St. Joseph’s Hospital in Phoenix.”

Now a pediatrician in Phoenix, Schmidt says being the first class in Arizona was “exciting. ‘The energy was there from both the students and the staff, and it was contagious.

“We definitely had a good sense of humor. The running joke was, ‘OK, are we pioneers or guinea pigs?’ But, at the same time, we were very intentional with our feedback of our educational experiences because we knew we were laying the foundation for future classes.”

After graduation, she completed her residency at Phoenix Children’s Hospital, followed by a year of chief residency, and then became a pediatric hospitalist at Honor Health Scottsdale Shea and joined Pediatric Medical Group, positions she holds today.

Matthees says before he arrived in Phoenix to complete medical school, “I told all of my family in North Dakota and Minnesota that Phoenix would only be a two-year adventure.”

Instead, after graduation in 2014, he stayed in Phoenix at St. Joseph’s Hospital and Medical Center for a year in general surgery, then four years of fellowship in neuroradiology and a one-year neuroradiology fellowship.

“Taking the risk to move to Phoenix to be part of a brand new program was intimidating and nerve-wracking,” he says, “but from the very first moment we interacted with St. Joseph’s Hospital, Dignity Health and the Creighton Phoenix Regional Campus staff, we could see the Creighton values reflected.

“They invited us to Phoenix to tour the hospital and meet the staff and took us to a Diamondbacks game. They even had a Creighton alumnus drive us around the city so we could evaluate potential apartments. It was clear they wanted us to be successful from day one.”

Following his residency and fellowship years, Matthees returned to his home state and was a neuroradiologist at Methodist Hospital in St. Louis Park, Minnesota, for two years. He came back to Phoenix recently to be a staff neuroradiologist at Barrow Neurological Institute.

“Leaving the beautiful Midwest summers and the lakes was difficult, but ever since coming to the desert in medical school, I have felt a pull to the desert landscape, the diverse experiences in the Southwest and, of course, the weather. Leaving family was emotional, but I was excited to make new memories and reconnect with old friends in Phoenix.”

Now, looking back, both physicians are very happy with their decisions to attend Creighton and its budding Phoenix campus.

“Attending Creighton in Phoenix really shaped the foundation of my entire self as a doctor,” Matthees says, “from the specialty I chose to the place I practice. I did medical school rotations with world-class neuroradiologists at Barrow Without that opportunity I might have specialized in a different field.

“The excellent teachers I had in every field during medical school strengthened my passion for teaching and made me want to work in academic medicine. I now feel like I’m going back to all those who taught me.”

Schmidt says she chose Creighton because “the students seemed the happiest of all the places I interviewed. It was a very supportive environment to learn in, and I had an excellent clinical experience in my third and fourth years. I feel deeply privileged to be in the position to help people and their children and truly love what I do.”

Matthees adds that when their class first came to Arizona, “there were very few opportunities for people to complete health care training in the city of Phoenix, despite Phoenix being one of the most populous cities in the U.S.

“Creighton has played a huge role in helping ensure that this city can train and keep health care providers. With the number of new high-quality opportunities in Arizona now, I can’t wait to see Phoenix become a hub that draws and retains great talent in the health professions.”
Six professors across the Creighton campus speak about the meaning of authenticity, what it is and how we pursue it

Getting Real
The millennia-long quest for authenticity

by Eugene Curtin

It’s been a long time since Plato sat beneath a grove of trees holding forth on the authentic human goodness of Socrates, but the discussion of authenticity — what it is, what it means and how we should pursue it — has never slowed.

Aristotle, sitting at Plato’s feet, developed his own ideas until some 350 years later Christianity began stressing the importance to an authentic life of a contemplative, inner spirituality. And so the centuries passed, as various understandings of authenticity were advanced — all parts of a parade colored by names that echo through the history of Western thought: Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Sartre, de Beauvoir, Camus, to name but a few.

So, was anything resolved after all this contemplation? Do we at last have a decent grasp on what it means to live an authentic life? We decided to set sail across Creighton’s campus in search of an answer.

An important port of call, as is usually the case, was the office of the Rev. Larry Gillick, SJ.

Fr. Gillick, director of Creighton’s Deglman Center for Ignatian Spirituality, works in a modest though comfortable office atop a flight of stairs in one of the oldest buildings on campus, squeezed between St. John’s Church and Creighton Hall. Physically blind since a childhood accident, he has during his more than 40 years on campus built a reputation for spiritual insight.

So, we asked him the big question: What does it mean to be authentic?

A long silence ensued. Then, words — a stream of them, slowly enunciated.


And so he does, his thoughts on those various qualities resolving eventually into a single admonition: Don’t hide.

“Hiding is inauthentic,” he says. “As is not being adventurous, not allowing mystery.”

People often think that God is a mystery, Fr. Gillick says, but this is not so. God is simple. God is One. People, on the other hand, many and diverse even within their individual beings, are the real mystery: and the discovery of who anybody authentically is requires a willingness to emerge from hiding and to embrace adventure.

“The authentic person allows mystery and darkness and invitation,” Fr. Gillick says. “Not hiding. The inauthentic person hides from being authentic. I hide because I want to be who you think I am, or what you think I ought to be able to do, and I don’t accept my limitations.

“I don’t want you to see them, and I don’t want me to see them. So, I will live only the life that has no experience of my limitations. It’s pretty island centered. I know all the trees on my little island, so there is no adventure, and I can hide. I might say, ‘I’m not hiding; I’m right here;’ but I’m not knowing myself. The authentic person experiences awareness, acceptance, donation.”

The authentic person, Fr. Gillick says, understands that he or she has purpose and is not afraid to discover what that purpose may be.

“The authentic person knows he or she is an agent of creation,” he says. “Meaning that I allow you to create me, and I allow myself to be an agent of God’s creation of you. That is a central Jesuit thing. I’m open to your helping me know who I am. But the more I accept that, the more I am not mine — I become more for you. And if I am hiding, I am not going to be for you. If I am hiding, I cannot be a creational entity for you or an agent of God’s grace.”

Notebook entry: Don’t hide. Be open to adventure and to the unraveling of your personal mystery. Be open to the idea that others can help you discover who you are, even as you, as an agent of God’s grace, do the same for them. Authenticity is a voyage of discovery. Don’t be afraid to set sail.

So, we set sail. Our next port of call is the oldest campus building — Creighton Hall, the original college structure from 1877 where the ghosts of Creighton Past mingle with the students and administrators of Creighton Present. Here presides the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD, president of Creighton University, whose latest book, Jesuit Higher Education in a
secular age. A response to Charles Taylor and the crisis of fullness, we hope will have something to say about the journey toward authenticity. We do not travel alone in our conversation. Having swapped his clerical collar for civilian garb, Fr. Hendrickson looks every bit the college pastor whose doctorate in the philosophy of education allows him to welcome to the discussion such dazzling existentialists as the 19th century Protestant philosopher Søren Kierkegaard and the 20th century atheist Jean Paul Sartre, and thereby to engage with his fellow philosopher and social theorist Charles Taylor, who, at the age of 90, is still with us. Fr. Hendrickson finds Taylor’s idea of “fullness” closely related to authenticity.

“For Charles Taylor, ‘fullness’ is about myriad relationships with our-selves and with others, and with God.” Fr. Hendrickson says, “The God part is the most important for him because it is the biggest aspect, but he thinks we are all connected, and I think he’s right.”

“In my book, I speak about the three pedagogies of existentialism in Jesus’ higher education, in the ways we teach and work with students to form more self-awareness, stronger relationships with others, solidarity with those who don’t live like we do, and then connect somehow to God.”

“Those are my three pedagogies — the pedagogy of self and study, the pedagogy of solidarity or connecting with others, and the pedagogy of grace, which is openness to an experience beyond us.”

“It is that pedagogy of grace — an openness to a higher power and to the mystery, the beauty of the higher things — that Fr. Hendrickson leads us to an authentic human experience.”

“Taylor says that Western secularism — which is the U.S., Canada, Scandinavia and Western Europe — is shutting down our ability to be in relationship with God, and therefore we are less authentic.” Fr. Hendrickson says.

“He says that we in the West need to be re-engaged, even haunted, by the presence of God. He won’t say you should go to church and pray, because he’s an impractical philosopher in the sense that he doesn’t tell us what to do — which is true of all philosophers — but he does hope that we want to do. He wants us to be in relationship with a higher power, or with God. That, for him, is the expression of fullness of life and of radical authenticity.”

Notebook entry: Exercise your unique human ability to perceive a beauty and a power beyond the mundane. Experience “fullness” by developing awareness, building relationships with others and embracing a relationship with a higher power.

Fr. Hendrickson suggests visiting with Fr. Hendrickson’s father, Fr. Paul Hendrickson.

On to David McPherson, whose thoughts are given via the miracle of Zoom. He’s at home, apparently in a book-lined attic, but engaging and cheerful. An authentic life, he says, requires a pedestra, a goal in purpose in life, something we can look forward to and come to grips with.

“Authenticity properly understood, and that which we should be concerned with, is something we’re talking about in this context — feeling the search for ‘authenticity’ can lapse into just so much navel-gazing.”

“Authenticity is properly understood, and that which we should be concerned with — as a people and as a world — is the search for God.”

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Fr. Hendrickson suggests visiting with Patrick Murray, PhD, and David McPherson, PhD. Both are philosophy professors in the venerable Doleas Dentistry Department, which is hardly a surprise throw from Creighton Hall. So, there we go.

Murray is splendidly rumpled, in the professorial way having hatched these two pedagogies — the pedagogy of self and study, the pedagogy of solidarity or connecting with others, and the pedagogy of grace, which is openness to an experience beyond us.

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T he COVID-19 pandemic had ripped the soul out of medicine for Ingrid Berg, DO. A family practice hospitalist in rural Wisconsin, Berg had worked tirelessly to treat a deluge of patients with the virus, only to watch many of them die within days, or worse, linger for weeks and slowly suffocate. She had defended herself against conspiracy theorists and denialsists who screamed at her in the halls of her hospital. And her favorite part of the job — connecting personally with her patients — had been made difficult by layers and layers of PPE.

Berg is now a member of the inaugural class of the Master of Arts in Medical Humanities, a new degree program in the Creighton University School of Medicine. As part of the online graduate program, students explore how health care is shaped by the cultural, spiritual, political and economic environment that informs daily life. Led by expert faculty across disciplines, they study literature, history, philosophy, psychology, ethics and more, all with an emphasis on personal development and professional discernment.

“My entire life has changed because of this program,” says Berg, now a year into her course of study. “The most challenging and most tender moments in practicing medicine are those steeped in discomfort and ambiguity and suffering, and a purely biomedical curriculum often doesn’t teach physicians how to address these.

Guided by the Jesuit charism of cura personæ, or ‘care for the whole person,’ Creighton has long endeavored to incorporate the humanities into the curricula of all its schools and colleges. But there is, perhaps, a greater urgency for it in the medical field, which is facing a looming burnout crisis in the wake of the pandemic. In 2022, U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy issued an advisory on health care worker burnout. With physician demand outpacing supply, the advisory on health care worker burnout. With physician demand outpacing supply, the U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy issued an advisory on health care worker burnout. With physician demand outpacing supply, the advisory on health care worker burnout. With physician demand outpacing supply, the advisory on health care worker burnout. With physician demand outpacing supply, the advisory on health care worker burnout.

Working with McKillip, Berg discovered a previously unknown passion for end-of-life care. “Areas like palliative care and hospice often get labeled as a ‘death squad,’ but it’s so much more than that,” Berg says. “I learned from Dr. McKillip that, in palliative care, we do things like conducting a ‘life review’ with our patients, helping them answer the tough questions and serving as extra support when things are complicated.”

Berg was particularly moved by her experience learning more about end-of-life care through the medical humanities program. During their course of study, students engage in a two-week-long palliative care or hospice experience, working alongside physicians in a clinical setting. Last year, Berg traveled to Omaha to shadow the palliative care team at Bergan.

The experience affirmed a passion for end-of-life care, reinforcing a decision she made to change careers. Berg recently moved from Wisconsin to begin a palliative care fellowship at the University of Missouri. Her dream job, she says, is working at the intersection of her two newfound passions — teaching medical humanities in an academic space and working in palliative care in a clinical setting.

“I didn’t realize that in mid-life, I could make a change like this. The mentors and professors in this program have been so generous and enthusiastic and supportive,” she says, adding, “I would just plea that more medical schools embrace the humanities. We demand so much from our learners in health care, it may seem at first glance unfair to ask them to do more. But a nose-to-the-grindstone approach to our science courses isn’t enough. A curriculum like this helps to expand our sense of what it means to heal through exploring what it means to be human.”
Elliot Orion Shell was learning how to roar. Standing on a couch, the 16-month-old would often point at the animal stickers decorating the window of his hospital room, mimicking the sounds of the creatures he saw. A lion. A monkey. A fish.

He loved stickers, his mom says. When visitors came, Elliot would peel off the COVID-19 screening stickers they were given at the front desk and slap them on his own belly. He threw left-handed — his grandpa called him “Southpaw.” He loved music. He was fascinated by lights.

And he had a look, his parents remember, in his bright blue eyes full of heart and verve. A look that brought joy to those who met him and showed the world just how much love he had to give. “People would always talk to me about how special he was, and he’s the only kid we had, so we really didn’t know any better,” says Elliot’s mom, Dana Freeman. “But I get it now. He had some quality, an energy that touched people’s lives.”

Erin Miskell, an occupational therapist at the clinic and instructor in the School of Pharmacy and Health Professions, learned to self-feed, eat and swallow, tasks that proved difficult for him throughout his life.

“Elliot was a beam of sunlight with those beautiful eyes,” Jordan says. “What a joy and gift it was for me to work with Elliot and his family. It truly made me a better human and clinician. It has been an honor and blessing to walk this journey with them.”

In March, Elliot was admitted to the C.L. Werner Cancer Hospital to receive a bone marrow transplant, which doctors hoped could help improve his immune function. Jordan nominated Elliot for consideration for Jays for Peds, a student group in the School of Pharmacy and Health Professions, to host Make-a-Wish-like events, called Make-a-Miracle events, for nominated children each semester.

“Seeing the kids’ smiles on the days of their Make-a-Miracle events — they’re always excited to be the center of attention,” says Erin Miskell, an occupational therapy student and president of Jays for Peds. “Usually, the families are very grateful for the opportunity. Sometimes they have ideas in mind for what they think their kids would enjoy; sometimes we work together on them. We usually end up with some pretty great ideas.”

In Elliot’s case, it was a light show. At home with his parents, Elliot would be transfixed by the glowing geometric shapes of a glass chandelier and floor lamp, says his father, Stuart Shell. Toys also held wonder, and he would turn them over and over again, watching their movement.

Because of his condition, which made him susceptible to infection, Elliot’s hospital visitors were highly limited. So Miskell and his parents came up with a safe alternative: Jays for Peds would bring him toys to play with in his room, and in the street below his seventh-floor hospital room, they would produce a dazzling flashlight show that Elliot could watch from his window.

But 12 days after receiving his bone marrow transplant, Elliot contracted an infection. Just a few days before the scheduled light show, he died, surrounded by his family.

“I let (Jays for Peds) know when it happened, and I wasn’t sure what they wanted to do at first if they already had gifts. They could give them to someone else,” Freeman says. “But they decided to still give Elliot his miracle.”

After Elliot died, Jays for Peds donated several items in his memory to organizations throughout the Omaha area. Board books, baby swings and a butterfly sound machine to Children’s Hospital and Medical Center. A rocking chair to the pediatric intensive care unit at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. A memorial brick at Laurinart Gardens.

About a week after he died, Jays for Peds and Jordan held a small ceremony at Creighton Pediatric Therapy with Elliot’s family. They dedicated a bird bath, marked with Elliot’s name and released balloons in his memory.

“The clinic was a familiar place for Dana and Elliot, but not for me. It was always something those two did together. So it was nice for me to have a chance to see a place where Elliot spent a lot of his time,” Stuart says. “To be able to imagine him there; it was a comfort.”

For members of his extended family some of whom had rarely been able to meet Elliot in person because of his condition, the ceremony provided one more precious opportunity to get to know him — and to grieve for him together, Freeman says.

“That was such a gift to our family,” she says. “Especially since it came from all these people who had never met Elliot, but went to such great lengths to do all these things for him. In his life, and in his death, he touched so many people. And that really was the most meaningful part for us.”
Gift Celebrates 24th Street Beautification

More than six decades ago, an Irish sprinter arrived at Creighton with an enduring vision: to create a campus in a concrete world.

From 1955-1959, the late John Mulhall, H’97, developed and meticulously cared for the grounds of the University. He brought to campus life-affirming, natural elements and in his hand, plant-life flourished.

Creighton graduate Mike Leighton, BA’70, met John when Leighton joined the Creighton staff in 1972. The two became friends during the time Leighton calls “John’s second era at Creighton.”

“In 1977, while John was working full-time at the University, he and Maureen launched their landscaping business out of their garage, hiring college students and firefighters to mow lawns. Maureen worked behind the scenes as the bookkeeper, custodian and inventory clerk. Together, they grew their business into one of Omaha’s most iconic landscaping and gardening companies.

Today, Sean and Dan are second-generation owners and managers of Mulhall’s Nursery. The Mulhalls’ sons were among 11 other donors who led the way for the $2.5 million endowment of 24th Street running through campus to be transformed into an elegant boulevard.

“The splendor of Creighton’s campus and its design are a result of John’s care and his big heart,” Leighton says. “Some of my fondest memories of John are his stories, of Ireland and Creighton, and his love for Maureen and their boys. I’m so happy to hear their name is tied to the 24th Street project. It’s very fitting.”

Send Us Your News
Printed your long awaited novel? Toured around the world? Received that awesome promotion? Earned a prestigious honor? If so, we want to hear about it. Share your memories and milestones by emailing us at alumni@creighton.edu.
BIDONG TOT’s Journey to Creighton began the day his father told him they were going for a walk.

It was 1995, and Tot and his father, Yien Tot, walked beneath the hot African sun for a week, journeying from their native village of Akobo in southern Sudan through countryside beset by civil war, to neighboring Ethiopia. The United Nations maintained a refugee camp there, where Tot’s uncle worked, and when the father knew his 7-year-old son would get a first taste of education.

“One day my father said, ‘Oh, you need to get ready, put a couple of clothes on, we are going somewhere tomorrow.’” Tot recalls. “My mother made me a good meal, and that was it. Just like that we walked to Ethiopia. I was really young, so sometimes my dad carried me. You will see at the end of the book that I am waving to my mom.”

The book is, in a way, a book about Sudan, a children’s book of pages written by Tot and illustrated by Marta Lopez-Rogel. It tells Tot’s story of growing up in the small, straw-hut village of Akobo. The book describes a simple rural life, of children rising before dawn to clean the animal barn, of meals of cornmeal, fish and milk, of helping cows and goats, of finding of gorging lions and playing in the river while watching out for crocodiles, attending the village church on Sunday and drifting off to sleep amidst tales and stories of ancestors.

And no school. The village, Tot says, consisting of a few huts, lacked education. “That transform began in 1999, when the UN opened the door to the world of higher education. Since then, I knew that I would work hard, and I knew I would have a great support system, especially with the professors, some of whom I knew from high school.”

Tot’s life has been full of remarkable moments, but none more so, he says, than the bus journey to the refugee camp after arriving in Ethiopia. “That was the first time I encountered the modern world,” he says. “I remember seeing a different color to me. I sat next to an Ethiopian and being amazed that they were like this. This was something I could have cried all I wanted to, but there were no tears.”

Today, after securing a Bachelor of Arts in history and a teaching certificate from Creighton University, Tot teaches social studies at Omaha Bryan High School. “That was the first time I encountered the modern world,” he says. “I remember seeing that Ethiopia and being amazed that they were a different color to me. I sat next to an Ethiopian and wondered if the color of my skin was going to change to look like these Ethiopians. All of a sudden there were different people, and all these machines. It was like flying to a different planet and realizing that there are different people in this world, people who speak a different language than my language.”

That language is Nuer, and when Tot joined the faculty at Omaha Bryan High School he became the first Nuer-speaking teacher in Omaha Public Schools — no small matter since Nebraska and Iowa have become national centers of Sudanese immigration. Today he is a recipient of Bryan High School’s Gold Award, granted to outstanding teachers. He is also married with three children after meeting his wife, Victoria Shelton Tot, MS’14, at Creighton, she graduated with a Master of Science in school counseling.
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College of Public Health. She will begin a two-year fellowship at Michigan Medicine in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Dr. Christopher J. Moshan, BS, Douglas, Michigan, graduated from Michigan State University College of Veterinary Medicine in May 2022, and he has joined a small-animal practice in Aiken, South Carolina. Dexter R. Turner, BS'14, MS, Omaha, joined Broadlawns Talent Partners as vice president, senior associate.

Matthew E. Gutfryl, PharmD, Scottsdale, Arizona, was recognized with the Arizona Pharmacy Association’s Distinguished Young Pharmacist of the Year Award in June 2022. This award is presented to an Arizona pharmacist who has demonstrated significant leadership in Arizona pharmacy in the previous year. Gutfryl is an ambulatory clinical pharmacist at Banner Health in Phoenix.

WEDDINGS

- Anne M. Jenkins, BSN, and Gerard V. Costello, April 21, 2022, living in Edmonds, Washington, and Chicago.
- Linnisa Weeks and Johnny L. Antell Jr., DDS, May 14, 2022, living in Austin, Texas.
- Grace M. Moshan, BSN, and Joseph C. Winter, BSBA'16, Oct. 1, 2022, living in Minneapolis, Minnesota.
- Amanda Croy, DPT, and Adian C. Schenk, PharmD'18, Oct. 1, 2022, living in Denver.
- Kathryn Collins, BSN, and Mark Kallweit, BSBA, Aug. 28, 2022, living in Portland, Oregon.
- Katie M. Peterson, JD, and Austin Devos, JD, Oct. 2, 2022, living in Lone Tree, Colorado.

BIRTHS

- Nathan T. Wurtz, BA, and Catherine Hoex Wurtz, BSBA'07, MBA'11, St. Louis, a daughter, Anna Catherine, Nov. 11, 2021.
- Bredyn R. Kaintz, BS, and Kelsey Holmes Kaintz, BSN'12, St. Louis, a son, August Paul, June 22, 2022.
- Adrian C. Schenk, PharmD, and Amanda Croy, DPT, Denver, a son, Mackinley, Dec. 16, 2021.

DEATHS


2022 ALUMNI MERIT AWARD RECIPIENTS

The Alumni Merit Award recognizes outstanding alumni from the schools and colleges. The following were honored at this year’s Evening of Honors event held in August.

Read more: Visit alumni.creighton.edu/alma-2022 to read more about each recipient.

2022 RECENT ALUMNI AWARD

The Recent Alumni Award recognizes significant professional achievements, personal responsibility, and service to Creighton and community among alumni or alumna during their first 10 years following graduation.

Read more: Visit alumni.creighton.edu/alma-2022 to read more about each recipient.
Outside the Box
Stepping book come to life starring Tony Hale (logical level.”

Fong has several projects in the works. A time travel murder mystery set in Nashville and Taipei over the last year to be released by Sony this fall. He’s also spoken about these topics at conferences and churches across the country.

“I think sometimes we create boxes for ourselves that we choose to never step outside, so in doing that, we miss out on the opportunity to explore new ideas and experiences.”

SHUN LEE FONG, BA’95
“That JayNet port is the reason I met so many of my best friends,” Lupo says now. “We would hook up our Xboxes and play Halo 2 games. For me, it was just one of the best examples of Creighton being a warm and welcoming place. It helped make me feel like I was part of a community like I belonged here.”

Lupo’s belief in the power of gaming (and sometimes for others) is strong. So much so that he’s made a wildly successful career out of it, with his network expanding from Creighton dorms to millions of fans all over the world.

Born and raised (and currently Omaha) Ben Lupo is one of the most popular professional gaming streamers in the world. Known as DrLupo, he has 4.87 million followers on his YouTube channel, nearly 2 million on Twitter and more than 4 million on Instagram. Before leaving the streaming platform Twitch and joining YouTube Gaming exclusively, he had more than 1.2 million subscribers.

“My transition was just a natural evolution,” Lupo says. “That’s also one of the reasons I love Creighton so much — it’s the kind of place where you can keep on growing your career here. I never could have anticipated. The quality of education was certainly a factor. But what was also important to me to do something good with the money I’ve raised more than $10.5 million for cancer treatment and research at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital. He has raised more than $2 million in a single all-day stream.

Lupo has been featured in the New York Times. He’s been named by the Online Gaming Awards as one of the most influential people on the Internet. He’s scored several sponsorships. In fact, if you walked into a Best Buy today you’d likely find his face on the packaging of various Logitech products.

Of all Lupo’s impressive stats, the one’s he’s proudest of is the fact that more than $2 million dollar has been raised for a good cause. Through multiple initiatives throughout the year, 21Lupo and company have raised more than $10.5 million for cancer treatment and research at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital. His work has allowed him to give back in a meaningful way.

“The more I give, the more I get,” he says. “That’s one of the things that makes it so rewarding to me.”

## Alumni Profile

**Ben Lupo, BS'09** — JayNet

JayNet was the first iteration of an entirely wireless Creighton. When it launched in the early 90s, JayNet was deemed “the super highway of campus computers.” Eventually every residence hall room had a port connecting it to the rest of campus through JayNet. Fast-forward to 2005, Lupo’s freshman year in Kiewit Hall. Every room of every hall had two network jacks — one for the Internet and one for JayNet, which by that point served mainly as a LAN (Local area net-work) connection between dorm rooms.
Marcus Blossom reflects on his first year as the athletic director at Creighton University.

**How would you describe your first year?**

Fun is a good way to describe it. Moving to a new place, getting to learn about a new community, understanding our student-athletes and coaches and how everything works. It's been fun.

**It seems like each program had a milestone moment last year. How did you enjoy those moments?**

It feels good that the student-athletes and the coaches are having success. That's what brings me joy. A lot of people had the opportunity to learn about Creighton, whether through the men's basketball tournament, the women's basketball tournament or the success of volleyball. It all enhances the profile of the University.

**One of the great moments had to be the women's basketball team's win at Iowa, to get to the Sweet 16. What was that experience like for you?**

First of all, it was a great environment — a great day for women's basketball. There were over 14,000 people there, and it was broadcast on ABC. Iowa was the No. 2 seed (in the NCAA Tournament), so it was a great, great win for those young women, a great win for Coach Jim Flanery. (The Bluejays then beat Iowa State to advance to the program's first Elite 8.)

**What kind of spectator are you?**

I go back and forth. Sometimes I'm reserved. But then sometimes in key moments I get excited and then look around, like, maybe I need to sit down a little bit — maybe I'm a little too excited. Just like any person, it depends on the moment.

**Did the CHI Health Center Omaha experience meet your expectations for men's basketball?**

I was at a special place for fan support during last year's men's basketball exhibition game. I watched a few highlights from exhibition games across the country, and the 8,000 fans we had against Upper Iowa was not the national norm. I thought, “Hmm, the fans here are pretty passionate. This is going to be different than what I've experienced in the past.”

**What have you learned about other Creighton sports?**

We've had success in some sports that may not receive the same attention that others get. For example, the rowing team finished second in the West Coast Conference, the highest finish they've ever had. Coach Daniel Chipps won Coach of the Year.

**How have you engaged with student-athletes?**

Student-athletes are busy. They don't have a lot of time. But I have met with almost every team. I've asked them questions, learned about how we can better their experience, learned what has been working well, learned what we need to improve. This is the fun part — I've been there cheering them on at their events, watching them compete, watching them have success and watching them really enjoy the moment and the experience that they have at Creighton.

**What have you learned about Creighton's student-athletes?**

It's difficult to balance Division I Athletics and the rigors of a Creighton education. But I'm impressed by how our student-athletes accept the challenge. In 2021-2022, our student-athletes carried a 3.42 cumulative GPA, nine of our teams were recognized for having perfect multiyear APR (Academic Performance Rates) scores, and a BIG EAST-high four teams earned conference Team Academic Excellence Awards. That speaks not only to the individual dedication of our student-athletes, but it's a testament to our culture that so highly values and supports their academic success.

**What's ahead?**

The future's bright. The landscape of college athletics is changing. There are a lot of dominoes that will fall into place in the next year or so, but Creighton is positioned very well to have tremendous success. One, we attract quality student-athletes. Two, we've been able to recruit and retain quality coaches and staff members. And three, we have great support in the community and from the University.

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– ROBYN ACOB, BSN’21

COLLEGE OF NURSING