THE DANCING RIVER

Biology major/dance minor Miranda Heckman is making learning more visual and entertaining. – Ryan Sullivan photo

Gonzaga University senior Miranda Heckman has found a way to blend her three academic loves: biology, dance and education. Spokane elementary schoolchildren are now learning about the Spokane River through her creativity and inspiring vision in a choreographed dance presentation titled, “The Dancing River.”

It all started at a dance conference in Montana where Heckman and fellow students witnessed a choreographed lesson in forestry and fire science. That was the “aha” moment when Heckman said, “Oh my gosh – you really can combine science and dance.”

When she mentioned the idea of doing a similar project in Spokane to Suzanne Ostersmith, dance program director for Gonzaga, Ostersmith was supportive.

Heckman doesn’t recall what sparked the idea of centering her project on the Spokane River, but “I immediately rolled with it,” she says. “The river is so important to our region.”

Last summer, the senior biology major/dance minor was a nanny, and when the kids went down for their two-hour nap every day, she did her research, emailed her biology instructors, even checked out the science standards listed on Spokane Public School’s website, and put together the pieces of what would become The Dancing River.

Ostersmith’s Strategies for Dance Instruction class wove the project into its curriculum, working on the choreography. Outside the classroom, Heckman worked with fellow student Leo Francovich (’15), a music major who composed the soundtrack.

Now, three dancers and a narrator take the show on the road, hauling a sound system with them to local elementary students where they teach about fish, phosphates and renewable energy.

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“After every show, Miranda was asking how she could make it better,” says Ostersmith.

One way was to develop grade-specific lesson plans for the teachers to use in the classroom to complement the production. Teachers and students alike had rave reviews.

But the best part of doing The Dancing River in local schools is not the kudos from admiring teachers, or the astonishment by administrators who can’t believe college students wrote and produced the whole show.

What Heckman enjoys the most is that the kids are so close the performers can hear what they say. “They’re reacting right away to what they see, and they’ll say the cutest things, like, ‘I’m gonna tell my mom we have to go pick up trash today!’ or ‘Did you see that? That looked really hard!’”

Perhaps more than anything, Heckman loves that the program validates her chosen fields. “People always ask, ‘So you’re a bio major and dance minor?’ and I reply, ‘Yep! And I can combine them, too.’”

– Kate Vanskike
SPASH
Students see impact, learn by ‘doing’

Students from organizational leadership, business, broadcast studies and nursing came together earlier this fall to truly collaborate in creating something for a common good; beautiful in every sense of the word. And they learned a ton from the experience. That’s truly the Jesuit way, isn’t it?

It all started with a Management 350 class in human resources with Associate Professor Kristine Hoover. “We were learning about intrinsically motivating jobs. So how do we put this into context? How can we learn and engage with the community?”

One of Hoover’s class speakers was Steve Enhaus, peer specialist from Eastern State Hospital, a mental health facility. The students greatly appreciated his presentation about the experiences of people living with mental illness.

The management project involved several partners. The Foundation for Hospital Art, whose goal is to add a painting to every hospital in the world, supplied the paintfest kit. Art Chair Shalon Parker and Art Assistant Galassi, ext. 6130 or galassi@gonzaga.edu. Special overnight room rates included. RSVP by Dec. 11 to Katie 6:30-10:30 p.m. Red Lion Inn at the Park, featuring an abundance of food including dessert and drinks. Music and dancing included. RSVP by Dec. 11 to Katie Galassi, ext. 6130 or galassi@gonzaga.edu. Special overnight room rates available. Call 326-8000 and mention “Gonzaga President’s Party” for a $69 rate.

What happens in the Foley Center today couldn’t have been imagined by those who designed the building 25 years ago when there was no commonly available Internet. Over the past few years Foley’s staff, university faculty and administrators have reimagined what Foley could be to meet the needs of students and faculty now and into the future. The plan is coming together with major construction on the first floor over the past summer and continuing after finals in December. “We are recreating Foley as a collaborative learning environment, bringing together support people and resources to meet a full spectrum of student needs, in addition to traditional library services,” says Interim Dean Kathleen Allen.

“When a student is starting a research project they can begin with a traditional library interview with a librarian and get help refining their search terms and locating materials. They could next visit the Writing Center to refine their report draft. If they need extra assistance in grasping concepts, they can work with a tutor in the Academic Advising and Support Center. For faculty, support is available through the Center for Teaching and Advising. And future plans call for a digital media center to assist both students and faculty with multimodal research projects using digital production and editing equipment and training,” Allen says.

The Virtual Campus production center already creates programming for Gonzaga’s online students.

In addition to Allen, leaders in creating this collaborative learning environment include English Professor John Eliasion, Writing Center director; Director Deb Stevenson, AA&S; Director Jeff Dodd, CTA; Virtual Campus Dean Mike Carey and Maciej Kosiński, production director; and Academic Vice President Patricia O’Connell Killen.
**NOTEWORTHY**

**New Hires**
- Annie Ostberg, medical assistant, Health Center; Olena Kudialieva, custodian; Terence McLure, custodian; Robin Dare, art handler/preparatory, Jundt Art Museum; Laura Hutton, library technician III/event public services assistant, Foley; Ashley Marlow, intern graphic designer, Marcom; Sean Cochrane, network technician I, ITS; Wade Sase, windows system administrator II, ITS; Stephanie Ranstrom, program coordinator/learning strategies, Student Academic Success; Linda Torretta, lecturer-IR, Nursing; Riccardo Fois, coordinator, men’s basketball analyst/operations; Samantha Briggs, office coordinator, Parent Programs; Peter Clark, assistant athletic trainer; Meghan Montelbano, admissions counselor

**New Positions/Promotions**
- Nathan Mannetter, assistant director, Admission; Falesha Ankton, regional development officer, University Advancement; Sarah Guzman, program specialist, Law Development & Alumni Relations

**Goodbyes**
- Joel Morgan, assistant athletic director/facilities; Kerri Conger, assistant director, Rudolf Fitness Center; Frank Stok, senior lecturer-AT, Communication Studies; Therese Thompson, program assistant III, Parent Programs; Debbie Vogel, senior program assistant, Education; Tim Powers, entrepreneurs application administrator, ITS; Erik Hoffman, assistant director, Admission

**Cradle Call**
- JD Morsch, assistant professor, Finance, and spouse Shannon had a baby boy, Franklin

**Anniversaries**
- Sam Anderson, grounds keeper; Todd Coleman, grounds keeper
- Brian Michaelson, assistant men’s basketball coach

**BENEFITS UPDATE**

Following are changes in our employ-ee benefit plan beginning Jan. 1.

- Washington Dental class II benefits increasing from 70 to 80 percent reimbursement
- Lincoln Financial new vendor for life, voluntary life, long-term dis-ability insurance. No changes to employees.
- New Employee SupportLin program offers work/life balance in-
cluding 24/7 telephonic/in-person/e-connect counseling services; also offers an array of referral services, and financial and legal assist programs, at no cost to GU employees
- New staff short-term disability program through Lincoln Financial

What started out as a trip to Spokane’s sister city, Jillian, China, with Spokane’s Lilac queen, has turned into an outpouring of compassion and support for China’s disabled community by this guardian angel.

Gonzaga Benefits Manager Lisa Schwartzenburg, is giving back in big ways “because I can.”

While visiting China in 2012 as part of Spokane’s sister city contingent, Lisa visited a U.S. government-run orphanage. In China, individuals with disabilities are shunned, often divorced from their families, and left with orphanages to care for them. She witnessed the work of quadriplegic orthopedic surgeon Dr. Jhang Xu, who helped to create a cultural shift after experiencing abandonment by his family following his diving accident. His ministry is in Anshan, a city of about 6 million people.

“When you’re disabled in China, you really don’t leave your house,” says Lisa. “With Dr. Xu’s organization, we take disabled children and their parents on field trips to the Pacific Ocean or the mall, or bake cookies. We typically are the only Americans there, and it surprises the population to see us pushing wheelchairs or holding the hand of a child with cerebral palsy. We’re showing others that these people with disabilities are valued.”

Schwartzenburg also went to Tianjin, about 90 miles from Beijing, site of another U.S.-run orphanage called Shepherd’s Field. There, 80 disabled children receive education and medical support. “Infants through adults there interact, and learn enough to survive in the outside world,” Lisa says. “It’s a magical place.”

At Agape House, kids with brittle bones syndrome are super fragile and usually unable to participate in many activities. “We take the boys fishing and play games with the girls,” Lisa says.

After three trips to various places in China to care for these special people, Lisa is coordinating her summer trip, with 50 volunteers, to Anshan.

This Louisiana native, who hasn’t lost her twang, feels like she is blessed and can give back to others. “I like helping others. That’s what I do here at Gonzaga, and it is a natural extension to help others on my own time. This is so near and dear to my heart. To experience God’s presence becoming more and more evident overseas is cool to see,” Schwartzenburg says.

Everybody could use a guardian angel like her.

**Free bus passes making impact; still available**

More than 1,600 free Spokane Transit Authority bus passes are being used by Gonzaga faculty, staff and students this fall in the University’s ef-fort to reduce its carbon footprint. For the first eight days of the program in September, 1,500 rides were recorded. The University only pays for those rides used.

“We take the bus downtown for meetings to avoid parking hassles, to shopping malls on the weekends, as well as back and forth to work,” says Jim Simon, director of sustainability. “It shows that people here are interested in improving our environment.”

Free bus passes for employees and students are available at the Welcome Desk in Hemmingson. Simon advises that STA schedules and routes are online, and a bus tracker feature monitors where busses are, and if they are on time. Busses stop near Gonzaga on Division northbound on Ruby, and southbound on Hamilton. A Mission stop takes riders eastbound to Spokane Community College.
DERBY HOCKEY

On first glance, you might think this was just a neighborhood skating party. Kids, young adults and parents having fun times on the ice.

But upon closer examination, this is an extraordinary outreach by Gonzaga special education Professor Mark Derby and several Gonzaga students from various walks of academic life, to kids ages 3-22, who battle to overcome learning and communications challenges.

Every Friday night for 10 weeks over the winter months Derby and more than a handful of Gonzaga students – some special ed majors, others from counseling psychology, psychology and even business – assemble at Riverfront Park Ice Arena to help the youngsters become more socially adept and open to learning through the sport of hockey.

Some kids here are skating for the first time, others have been in the program since its inception in 2008.

Last year Derby’s program caught the attention of the National Hockey League, and last fall became a part of the Canucks Autism Network, coordinated through the Vancouver Canucks NHL team. The hockey organization brings expertise into the equation.

“Hockey allows us a social context whereby kids can identify things to talk about through an activity they’re all engaged in. They learn skills to interact with others and to follow directions within a group context,” Derby says.

“The best part of the program is our pizza party at the end, where unless you knew these kids had some special needs, by the laughter and communication more effectively. Derby, with two undergraduates and one graduate student, conducts the research.

“Hockey is doing great,” Swank says.

As founding director of GU’s Parent and Family Relations office, says “They found me in my office on Sunday of orientation, says “They found me in my office on Sunday of orientation, broke down and cried.”

They told her that because of the warm welcome Gonzaga’s community had given to them and their son, their anxieties had been relieved. Derby had checked on them throughout the academic year, just to communicate more often with them. They saw me as an extension of the community, a part of their family, they thought Gonzaga was the right place for their child; and it happens all the time,” Swank says.

The program is funded through donations, which cover ice rental, equipment and the pizza party. No child is ever charged to participate.