THE NEW HEART OF SEATTLE UNIVERSITY
Spring is Near

While it’s technically still winter, the longer days and calendar suggest better and brighter days ahead and the evidence is all around us as the campus begins the blossoming transition to spring.

Photo by Yosef Chaim Kalinko
DID YOU KNOW
A compendium of news around campus and beyond.

ON CAMPUS
In motion with SU’s Kinesiology program and its new mobile lab.

CAREER OUTCOMES
Success by design: Per Anderson’s, ’21, career aspirations began with internships.

ART IS ALL AROUND US.

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT
College of Nursing Assistant Professor Kamheea Ro promotes diversity and equity in health care.

ON THE COVER
Faculty and staff share their experiences teaching and learning in the state-of-the-art Sinegal Center.

Alumni Spotlight
Ryan Schmid, ’07 MBA, is putting empathy at the forefront of the health care industry.

ATHLETICS
Men’s basketball guard Aaron Nettles, ’21, inspires confidence and leadership.

ENGAGEMENT
President Petalyer is hitting the road to meet with alumni.

IN MEMORIAM
Remembering Desmond Tutu.

ENGAGEMENT
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The Last Word
Ruth Zekeriania, ’22, is a true renaissance woman.
Meet Ellen Whitlock Baker, New AVP of Alumni Engagement

The Seattle University Alumni Association (SUAA) has a new leader in Ellen Whitlock Baker, assistant vice president for Alumni Engagement.

“I’m thrilled to join Seattle University at this particular point in time, with the new leadership of President Peñalver and the Strategic Directions and LIFT SU setting a thoughtful and ambitious course for the university,” says Whitlock Baker. “SU’s alumni community will play an active role in the implementation of these new directions and I’m looking forward to stewarding the transformative partnership between alumni, students, faculty, staff and leadership.”

Whitlock Baker joins SU from the University of Washington, where she served for 16 years, including more than seven years with the UW Alumni Association (UWAA). As a member of UWAA’s executive team, she was responsible for the strategic development of UW’s alumni engagement practices. Most recently, Whitlock Baker has focused her work on how to create authentic engagement with alumni who identify as Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC). She created an annual engagement conference for UW Advancement employees focusing on developing engagement programs with a racial equity lens, including securing sought-after Diversity, Equity and Inclusion speakers and community leaders.

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Learn how you can support Costco Scholars at seattleu.edu/costco-scholars/.

Seattle University continues its streak of earning high marks from academics to sustainability.

#14
Seattle University’s efforts to promote, teach and practice sustainability earned it this Top 20 ranking as a “Cool School.”

—Birch magazine

TOP 16%
of universities nationally—and #22 among colleges and universities in the West.

—Wall Street Journal/Times Higher Education College Rankings 2022

BEST COLLEGE
For 19 years running, Seattle University is named one of the best colleges in the U.S. for undergraduate education.

—The Princeton Review, The Best 387 Colleges 2022

Shinnyo-en Foundation Marks 16 Years of Support to Center for Community Engagement

Kudos to Julie Hurst, director of campus engagement at the Fr. Stephen Sundborg, S.J. Center for Community Engagement (CCE) and the center itself on receiving their 16th consecutive year of grant funding from the Shinnyo-en Foundation. The foundation supports CCE’s goal of offering transformational experiences for students, as well as one recent graduate, through a variety of co-curricular experiential learning and leadership activities to live out the center’s mission.

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Seattle University’s Kinesiology department is, literally, on the move. And students in the program now can conduct their studies in a new mobile lab. The mobile lab is made possible by the Dean’s Excellence Fund and supported by donations of SU’s alumni, faculty, staff and the community. The lab is the latest manifestation of the department’s motto, “Exercise for Life, Exercise for Everyone.” Kinesiology Department Chair Sarah Shultz was the main driving force behind turning the dream of a mobile lab into a reality. “The [mobile] lab provides an unintimidating environment where we can go into the community, work with the people of that community and collaborate on projects and activities that benefit them,” explains Shultz. “It is … about taking the time to understand another human, to see their perspective. It’s the approach of meeting them in their space and fulfilling our motto.”

“The mobile lab allows us to get out of the lab and into the community … and expand what we can do.”
—Jessica Kimm, ’22

Shultz and SU Kinesiology are busy building partnerships to double-down on the promise of the mobile lab and expand its capabilities. For instance, Novel, a global leader in accurate and reliable load distribution measurement systems, is a partner. Making Novel’s technology available to communities via the mobile lab will help transform lives by relieving some of the chronic aches and pains often associated with an active lifestyle. Additionally, Sawbones, a decades-long state leader in orthopedic and medical education has contributed several thousands of dollars’ worth of anatomical equipment for the department and the mobile lab.

“It’s really cool to have this equipment available,” says undergraduate Kinesiology student Jessica Kimm, ’22. “The mobile lab allows us to get out of the lab and into the community … and expand what we can do.” She adds that this type of exposure to research while an undergraduate is something that makes her experience unique to SU’s Kinesiology program.

Kinesiology is also partnering with community-based organizations like Upower, Swedish Sports Medicine, Rainier Beach High School, the Seattle Seawolves and SU’s own Fr. Stephen Sundborg, S.J. Center for Community Engagement to help lead individuals, families and communities to better health outcomes.

“We want the van going out daily to strengthen our relationships and partnerships,” says Shultz. Second-year graduate student Corey Wukelic, ’22, took part in the mobile clinic by operating the Xsens motion capture demonstration—equipment he’s featuring in his graduate thesis. Wukelic explains the advantage to this technology is the fact that it can work in any environment, not just a lab.

As he reflects on the program, which he began during the pandemic, he’s excited to now be learning in person and says that it’s been a wonderful experience. “All the faculty have been amazing. Dr. Shultz and Dr. [Erica] Rauff’s teaching and guidance, now and throughout the pandemic, have been very meaningful.”

Kinesiology program’s new mobile lab means greater community outreach

The mobile lab looks spartan inside due to a purposeful design choice. It must remain flexible to meet people where they are—both in their communities and their health journeys. Exercise is medicine and the mobile lab can make that exercise more impactful.

“As a department, Kinesiology has created a curriculum that enables students to understand the holistic nature of human function and the important role that exercise can play in promoting strong overall health and well-being,” Shultz says. “Within those courses, we provide hands-on experiential learning, community engagement assessments and access to cutting-edge technology, like that found in the new mobile lab—all with the intent of opening perspectives and becoming more inclusive in promoting healthy behaviors.”
Growing Enrollment, Increasing Diversity

This academic year marked the return to mostly in-person classes and activities. And with that was an upswing in the number of new and returning students from the previous, largely virtual, academic year. Enrollment for the start of the 2021-22 academic year was 7,268 students, up from 7,050 in 2020. Other gains were notable across the board, including among first-time-in-college students, which saw an increase in underrepresented minorities and Pell Grant recipients.

PRESIDENT EDUARDO PEÑALVER IN MOTION

Inauguration to Homecoming, ribbon cuttings to sporting events, it’s been a busy start for President Peñalver

The inauguration of President Eduardo Peñalver brought together the university and greater community to celebrate Seattle University’s 22nd president. Since that day he has been deeply engaged across campus and the city, connecting with students, alumni, community and business leaders and even one of his baseball idols!

(RIGHT PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT)
- Eduardo Peñalver on stage for his inauguration at Benaroya Hall.
- The president meets with SU alumni who are all legislators.
- Speaking to students at the School of Law.
- The president joins Jim Sinegal and President Emeritus Stephen Sundborg, S.J., at the ribbon cutting for the Jim and Janet Sinegal Center for Science and Innovation.
- President Peñalver catches men’s basketball in action.
- Engaging with students during Welcome Week activities.
- A big Mariners fan, the president meets with Mariners legend Edgar Martinez.
- President Peñalver is embraced by SU Rector Arturo Araujo, S.J., at the Inauguration Mass at St. James Cathedral.

“I am committed to looking hopefully to the future, even while giving thanks for the blessings we have inherited from the past. And I will work tirelessly to ensure that, for Seattle University’s second 130 years, there will be nowhere better than this place to imagine somewhere better than this place.”

—President Eduardo Peñalver in remarks at his inauguration at Seattle’s Benaroya Hall

Photos by Yosef Chaim Kalinko
With a passion for advocacy and community building, Marrakech Maxwell, ’22, is a natural in her role as Student Body President. The Public Affairs and Environmental Studies major shares her perspectives as a leader on campus and what it meant to her being an integral part of the inauguration of President Eduardo Peñalver.

What inspired you to become involved with Seattle University Student Government? How did your experiences in previous SGSU roles prepare you for your current position?

“When I came to SU as a freshman, I knew I wanted to get involved with student advocacy work as it has always been a passion of mine, along with getting involved with the university as a whole. Since then, I’ve held three positions in SGSU [before becoming president]: First-year representative, executive vice president and chair of external affairs. Each of these positions helped prepare me for the role of president in a variety of ways. I have learned to represent and advocate student perspectives in places where I have been the only student to make sure the student experience is incorporated in the decisions that will impact them. I also had the opportunity to manage, supervise and train other team members on leadership skills, professional development and conflict management/resolution. All these positions I’ve held in the past have allowed me to understand firsthand the responsibilities and expectations of each role and the investment it takes.”

You delivered the closing blessing at President Peñalver’s inauguration. What was it like to be part of such a momentous occasion and speak onstage at Benaroya Hall?

“It was an incredible honor to be part of something so momentous and historic. My administration asking me, as a student, to be a part of the history of Seattle University was incredible. Words can’t quite put together the feelings I had that day, the support and love that I felt from my community and how spectacular it was to be able to welcome President Peñalver into our lives and our community at SU.”

From a whole person perspective, what are some key things you learned at SU?

“One of the major lessons I’ve learned is that we are not alone. As we face our struggles in the world, all we need to do is make sure we lean on our community and reach out for support when we need it. I’ve had my own moments where I have felt as though everything was too much and that I could not handle the weight. But in those moments, I’ve been seen by my community and supported by them.”

What song or musical artist best describes you?

“I love folk as a genre because it can fluctuate between moody and sensitive to fun and danceable, which captures how I feel very well. I also love a good swing dance!”

What three words would your friends use to describe you?

“I just asked my friends in our group text and I was honored to get compassionate, engaging and hard-working.”

What’s your dream job?

“I know that I want to work somewhere that pushes me further in learning either about myself or the world or, ideally, both. My dream job includes the opportunity to do advocacy work and build community.”

“As we face our struggles in the world, all we need to do is make sure we lean on our community and reach out for support when we need it.”

—Marrakech Maxwell, ’22, Student Body President
Locally and nationally, College of Nursing Assistant Professor Kumhee Ro, RN, DNP, ARNP, is leading the charge to diversify the nursing profession. Ro, the newly appointed director of the Advanced Practice Nursing Immersion Program in the College of Nursing, joined Seattle University in 2016, where she covers a wide spectrum of clinical and theory courses for undergraduate and graduate students.

What she finds so rewarding about teaching is “building relationships with the students. It enriches my own learning and helps me become a better educator and a clinician,” says Ro, who is also a part-time Emergency Department nurse practitioner. “It is a great privilege to have the opportunity to create dynamic student-centered environments… We use technology and collaboration to influence and inspire our students to make a broader impact in our communities,” says Ro.

Equally gratifying is serving as a role model and mentor to first-generation immigrant students. “It motivates me to work with and mentor students, particularly those who have faced significant adversity in pursuit of education.”

Outside of SU, Ro’s collaborative social justice work is making an impact. She believes dismantling health disparities will depend on nurse educators’ abilities to inspire and empower students, along with building an inclusive and just learning environment. “My hope is that my research and related projects serve as examples that move us forward in our journey toward social justice.”

Ro co-leads the Diversity Committee within the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties. Assigned by its charge to diversify the nursing profession, the committee promotes and supports diverse populations. “I believe that perpetuating health disparities will depend on nurse educators, scholars and leaders.” The overarching goal is to harness the power of networking across Jesuit nursing schools to enhance diversity in academia and further diversify our nursing workforce.

Ro also supports the work of the Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission of the Washington State Department of Health “to guide the development of a critical nursing gap action plan for diversity in nursing and develop policies and programs that support nursing faculty and students of color.”

Nursing faculty lag in diversity compared to the changing demographics of nursing students and practicing nurses, says Ro. Along with the importance of sharing cultural experiences with students, “diverse faculty bring a unique perspective to nursing education and draw attention to policies and practices that perpetuate health disparities.”

The goal of her research “is to support the recruitment of faculty more representative of the population in which we teach,” ultimately advancing the objective of recruiting and retaining underrepresented students. SU doesn’t “just focus on educating culturally and clinically diverse groups of students,” says Ro. “We provide them with the skills to change health-care systems to enhance patient outcomes; make care accessible and cost-effective to lead change across complex health-care systems; and influence policies to address health inequities.”

Students are educated “to be ethical leaders, change agents and future nurse educators who will build a collaborative and equitable health-care environment.”

By Allison Nitch

Kumhee Ro, RN, DNP, ARNP

Locally and nationally, College of Nursing professor promotes diversity and equity in industry
Art has long been a part of campus life at Seattle University. Beginning with the murals and other works in the original Garrand Building, to the sculptural and visual arts that dot the campus grounds and the walls inside the colleges and schools, SU’s art reflects its Jesuit and Catholic heritage, ethos and broad cultural values.

The original A.A. Lemieux Library, which opened in the mid-1960s, incorporated a significant collection of original art by Pacific Northwest artists, including work by SU faculty members Val Laigo and Nick Damascus. In the 1970s, university friends Robert and Miriam Kinsey contributed a large collection of Japanese netsuke (miniature sculpture) and prints still visible on campus today. In subsequent decades, the opening of Sullivan Hall (1998), the Student Center (2002) and the Lemieux Library and McGoldrick Learning Commons (2010) each occasioned magnificent new gifts of art and funding for art acquisitions.

“The construction of the Chapel of St. Ignatius—in and of itself a major work of architectural art—made use of an Art and Furnishings Committee and raised the bar to a new level for collecting on campus,” says Josef Venker, S.J., assistant professor of visual art and since 2020, curator of what has become known as the Seattle University Permanent Art Collection (SUPAC).

Since then, “a concerted effort has been made to include significant art in most new buildings on campus,” says Venker.

Take a casual stroll through campus and you’ll see art inside and outside the buildings, such as prominent sculptural work at the library or striking paintings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor by David Tewhir on the first floor of the Student Center.

Some of the latest additions to the campus art story are inside the Jim and Janet Sinegal Center for Science and Innovation, with more art to come with the remodeling of the adjacent Bannan Center science buildings.

In the following pages you’ll find a sampling of some of the distinctive works of art that add another layer of vibrancy and discourse to the campus experience.

**Photos by Yosef Chaim Kalinko**
### BIPOC Art and Artists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td>Roger Shimomura</td>
<td>Three works from An American Diary, 1997</td>
<td>Gift of Stuart Rolfe, '78, and Lee Wright Rolfe</td>
<td>This painting is based on a personal diary written by the artist’s grandmother, Toku Shimomura, while the Shimomura family was interned at Camp Minidoka in Hunt, Idaho, during World War II.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td>Ronnie Tjampitjinpa</td>
<td>Untitled, 2008</td>
<td>Gift of Betty and Richard Hedreen</td>
<td>An Indigenous Australian of the Pintupi language group, Tjampitjinpa was born in the early 1940s near Muyinnga, Western Australia. Painted at Kintore, this work depicts designs associated with a Water Dreaming at the soakage water site of Malparingya in Western Australia. Since events associated with the Tingari Song Cycles are of a secret nature, no further detail is given.</td>
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<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td>Anthony White</td>
<td>Corrupt O/S (Portrait of John Stanley Ford)</td>
<td>Commission (2021)</td>
<td>John Stanley Ford became the first Black software engineer in America and at IBM, where he began his tech career in 1946.</td>
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<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td>Jacob Lawrence</td>
<td>Frederick Douglass, 1999</td>
<td>Screen print</td>
<td>This original print shows the escaped slave Frederick Douglass in Rochester, New York, editing his anti-slavery paper, The North Star— one of his many endeavors advocating for the anti-slavery movement, c. 1847. This print is based on the artist’s 1958-9 series of 32 paintings depicting Douglass’s life, which are now in the collection of the Hampton University Museum in Virginia.</td>
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<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td>David Teichner</td>
<td>Say His Name, Remember His Name: George Floyd (Double Portrait, 2020/2021 Edition)</td>
<td>Stencil and spray paint on plywood</td>
<td>Featuring street art window board-ups preserved from the Seattle International District, this public art created during the social unrest and marches for racial justice last summer memorializes George Floyd.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td>David Teichner</td>
<td>Say Her Name, Remember Her Name: Breonna Taylor (Double Portrait, 2020/2021 Edition)</td>
<td>Stencil and spray paint on plywood</td>
<td>Featuring street art window board-ups preserved from the Seattle Capitol Hill CHOP Zone, this public art created during the social unrest and marches for racial justice last summer memorializes Breonna Taylor.</td>
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</tbody>
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Catholic Heritage Art

1. Title: Chapel of St. Ignatius, 1997
   Architect: Steven Holl
   Gift of many donors, including initial donors Jeanne Marie Lee, ’51, and Rhoady Lee, Jr., ’50
   Location: North Campus, near The Union Green
   Holl chose “A Gathering of Different Lights” as the guiding concept for the design of the Chapel of St. Ignatius. This metaphor describes Seattle University’s mission and also refers to St. Ignatius’ vision of the spiritual life as comprising many interior lights and darkness, which he called consolations and desolations. The architect’s model for the building is in the design collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

2. Artist: J. Michael Walker
   Title: The Seven Social Sacraments, 2000
   Medium: Colored pencil on paper
   Campus Ministry commission with funding donated by friends and supporters in memory of Joseph A. Maguire, S.J., beloved Jesuit and first director of Campus Ministry.
   Location: Student Center
   This piece reflects the presence of the sacred in our everyday lives and it’s also a song of praise and thanksgiving to this place and its people.

3. Artist: Steve Heilman
   Title: Gratia Plena, 2001
   Medium: Carrara Marble, natural pigments, gold leaf
   Gift of Jack and Maralyn Blume
   Location: Chapel of St. Ignatius
   Gratia Plena, which means “Full of Grace,” is a translation of the biblical exclamation of Elizabeth as she greeted Mary, from which developed the most familiar of Catholic devotional prayers—the Hail Mary.
Sculpture

Not Pictured

Artist: George Tsutakawa
Title: Centennial Fountain (The Four Elements), 1989
Medium: Bronze, water, stone
Location: Centennial Plaza (The Quad)

This highly recognized bronze sculpture, in the center of campus, represents flames recalling Christian iconography of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit, which are enlightenment and wisdom.

Artist: JB Blunk
Title: Bird in Flight, 1970
Medium: Carved redwood burl
Gift of Weyerhaeuser Corporation
Location: Lemieux Library and McGoldrick Learning Commons

Blunk encouraged people to interact with his work, for people to sit on and touch his sculptures. This work shows the influence of his 1950s apprenticeship with Japanese artist Kitaoji Rosanjin.

Not Pictured

Artist: Nancy Mee
Title: Themis (Justice), 1999
Medium: Fused and slumped glass, photo sandblasted glass, steel and copper plated steel
Gift of the National Law Alumni Council
Location: School of Law (Sullivan Hall)

Mee celebrates the beauty and compelling virtue of justice and the ability to counterbalance the injustices of the world. The figure of justice is not blindfolded as commonly depicted in other art works, for justice must have clear vision to weigh all the facts.
SUCCESS
BY DESIGN

Per Anderson, ’21, a civil engineering alum who enhanced his career path with internships, shares his perspective on building a career in Seattle

By Allison Nitch

Internships and other experiential learning opportunities offer Seattle University students the chance to gain valuable, hands-on experience and make connections in the professional fields they’re considering for career paths. And it gives employers the opportunity to form partnerships with the university while helping to guide and evaluate talent through job fairs, networking and employment possibilities.

Take for instance Sellen Construction, a community partner with the university since it completed the construction of the Lee Center for the Arts in 2006. Since then, Sellen has been cultivating career opportunities for SU students by participating in professional panels, industry-related events and internships.

Much like SU, Sellen is a local “Seattle institution that works hard to help grow our community, both through our projects and the people we work with,” says Bobby Gutierrez, Sellen talent acquisition specialist. Examples of Sellen’s work include buildings for health care, arts and nonprofits, education, mixed-use, hospitality, high-rise offices and special projects.

Being able to work with students and staff from SU is a great way for Sellen to “continue building out the workforce in the Pacific Northwest,” says Gutierrez.

One such student is Per Anderson, ’21. A full-time project engineer at Sellen since June 2021, the civil engineering graduate got his start with the company as a summer intern in 2020. Anderson manages the progress of a project, from materials to construction. Knowing how to effectively handle all these elements simultaneously stems from his Sellen internship, where he learned by focusing on one stage at a time under the guidance of two advanced engineers. His early training also included monitoring the document control process to ensure proper installation at job sites.

Today, Anderson’s engineering role involves liaising between designers, builders and clients. He oversees procurement of materials by introducing product data to the design team and ensures projects remain on schedule. If there’s anything not communicated in contracts, he presents questions to the design team and connects with clients to keep them abreast on budget and schedule status.

“Being able to communicate well is the biggest thing that I got from Seattle University and I’m very thankful.”

He also credits his collective internships over the years, including with McKinstry and an independent contractor, for instilling in him effective communication skills.

“Seeing stuff being installed... really helped me understand how to design. It made me a better student by giving me more background, so it was easier to pick up concepts in school. And it got me more excited about designing stuff, because I got to see it in the field,” which helped Anderson grasp what he was learning in class.

Anderson says he looks at his education as being very solution-oriented. “... If you have a problem, you fix it. Not getting stumped by things and being able to conquer difficult tasks has been extremely helpful in the field, which I learned a lot at SU.”

Working with different teams—such as his group capstone project designing a 12,000 sq. ft. boarding school for underprivileged children in Colombia—as an undergard, “... really helped me learn how to manage my time well.”

Additionally, he bolstered his skills by investigating available resources at SU, including a student license for 3D modeling software, Revit. He recommends students “reach out to faculty to see what options are available to broaden what you’re learning, in and out of course work.”

For students interested in the engineering side of construction, Anderson emphasizes starting early with internships. “Especially in construction management, you’ll want to apply by late summer or early fall.”

““We want students who are passionate about what they are studying and truly want to make a career out of it. ... If you have a passion, you will have great opportunities and potential to grow both professionally and personally, which is what we are looking for in a new hire.”

–Bobby Gutierrez, talent acquisition specialist, Sellen

By exploring options beginning in your freshman year, a lot of opportunities open after college, he says, “because you have experience in different aspects of the field.”

When it comes to recruitment, Gutierrez shares, “We want students who are passionate about what they are studying and truly want to make a career out of it... If you have a passion... you will have great opportunities and potential to grow both professionally and personally, which is what we are looking for in a new hire.”
Students and faculty share what it’s like to study and teach in the new Sinegal Center

By Tina Potterf and Allison Nitch

During a recent lecture and lab course—Invertebrate Zoology—taught by Associate Professor of Biology Kristin Hultgren, PhD, as students dissected various bugs and examined specimens, they shared their experiences of the first weeks of learning and conducting research inside the state-of-the-art Jim and Janet Sinegal Center for Science and Innovation.

Beyond modern amenities, the center offers more flexibility and ways for students to engage in their areas of study in an environment that is hands-on and interactive, says Dr. Hultgren.

“It is wonderful to be able to work with students ... in this new building,” she says. “Teaching in a lab space is also convenient, since we can have the flexibility to work on traditional ‘lab’ activities during class time.”

Marine Biology and Conservation major Jess Sarsfield, ’22, loves how the center offers centralized spaces that double as conventional classrooms and high-tech labs, allowing students to settle in and collaborate.

“Having a concentrated area for research is great. Since I just started my research work during COVID, it’s been so nice to have a physical space to work in.”

Senior Tyler Goodspeed, ’22, who is majoring in Marine and Conservation Biology, says the Sinegal Center “is totally geared toward sciences and in a very targeted way. It’s cool to have this new space with the new labs.”

Goodspeed believes the Sinegal Center’s impact will reach far outside of the sciences. “It’s a great space to elevate the sciences and I feel like the center benefits the whole campus.”

Illustrations by Traci Daberko
Photos by Yosef C. Sain Kalinke
“Having more dedicated space allows communities to form within individual majors,” says Tess Sharpe, ‘22, an Environmental Science major, who also likes the scientific theme within the building’s art collection and the open design concept, which offers tons of natural light through the abundance of windows.

Sophomore Luke Meyers, ‘24, calls the Sinegal Center “absolutely amazing” and is excited for the opportunities to do research here.

“The design of the research spaces seems to be a big factor in the building. I look forward to getting to that point [of researching], as it seems to be very well facilitated,” says Meyers, who is majoring in Marine and Conservation Biology and is the youngest student in Professor Hultgren’s class. “Seeing research taking place here is inspiring and motivating.”

What began in 2019 with blueprints and schematics is fully realized as a center—housing Biology, Chemistry and Computer Science—that represents the future of STEM. It also is a facility for all campus to experience, whether it’s a study session in one of the many spaces for collaboration, attending a lecture or connecting with service opportunities through the Fr. Stephen Sundborg, S.J. Center for Community Engagement. Students will also take their CORE science classes here. Think of it like this: Science students will be working and conducting innovative research in modern labs, while across the way a student from the English department may be creating something special in the aptly named makerspace.

The construction of the Sinegal Center provided the opportunity to also extensively remodel the facilities that historically have been known as the Bannan and Engineering buildings. The two buildings that were previously designated as separate entities are now being referred to as the Bannan Center. According to Skanska, SU’s construction and development partner on the Sinegal Center, extensive renovations to existing facilities in the Bannan Center total 66,000 square feet and will house the Engineering, Math and Physics departments and include an all-new PACCAR Engineering Innovation Center.

As for the Sinegal Center, College of Science and Engineering Dean Michael J. Quinn, PhD, calls it “the gateway to campus” and “the interface between the campus and the city.”

With its striking façade that merges the traditional with urban—think lots of glass and bricks, wood and steel, with walls of windows offering spectacular views of the city and campus—and an interior with innovative research labs, studio rooms, radio station and more, the Sinegal Center is truly transformative. Additionally, it is home to the Edward and Marjorie Billodue Makerspace, the Convergence Zone café, Oberto Commons and the Amazon Computer Science Project Center.
Equally impressive is the outdoor space, where students and visitors alike can soak up the serenity of the Kubota Legacy Garden, complete with lush greenery, native trees and wooden benches.

Here’s a closer look at three of the distinctive features inside the Sinegal Center:

**Art + Tech**

The curation of artwork exploring the interface of visual arts, life sciences, digital technology, engineering and math imbue a sense of excitement for scientific learning and discovery for all who enter the Sinegal Center. The collection was acquired through the collaboration of a 15-member committee consisting of faculty knowledgeable in fine arts, art history and science, working in consultation with external collectors, artists and thought leaders. Josef Venker, S.J., MFA, fine arts assistant professor and curator of the university’s permanent art collection, says themes factoring into this collection have been “composed very intentionally,” such as sustainability, cosmologies and technology, faith and science, diversity and racial equity. Among the art inside the university’s largest building are works by renowned local and national artists including Rachel Yo, Michael Schultheis, Intima Rosa Machita and barry johnson.

**Service + Engagement**

Founded in 2004, the Center for Community Engagement (CCE) connects classroom, campus and community to promote a more just and humane world through service and social justice. It’s a dynamic outgrowth of Seattle University’s Jesuit and Catholic tradition and mission rooted in service and humanity.

In honor of President Emeritus Stephen Sundborg, S.J.’s leadership in advancing SU’s mission and building partnerships with the neighboring community, the CCE was renamed the Fr. Stephen Sundborg, S.J. Center for Community Engagement. The center serves as the main entry point for students, faculty and staff who want to engage in the local community and acts as the focal point for community-based organizations and government institutions seeking university support to address unmet needs. The center’s new office is located on the first floor of the Sinegal Center facing 12th Avenue—symbolizing the link between the campus and the city it calls home.
Hitting the Airwaves

Since 1994, the university radio station broadcasted from the basement of Campion Hall. That changed with the opening of the Sinegal Center, now home to the student-run KXSU 102.1 FM.

“We are all very excited to continue growing Father John Foster’s and Professor John Carter’s original vision for an SU radio station,” says Randy Scott, station manager and director of Student Media. With a bird’s-eye view of the Edward and Marjorie Billodue Makerspace, the station is wired into the Oberto Commons for future station-sponsored events within the Sinegal Center.

Adds Scott, “This new space will allow KXSU to continue to serve the campus as well as the surrounding community. I have worked in several radio stations over the years as a broadcaster and I can honestly say that this space is as impressive as any major market broadcast facility.”

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—Randy Scott, station manager of KXSU/director of Student Media

FIRST REVIEWS

Here is some of what students had to say about the Sinegal Center when we caught up with them on the first day of fall classes, which was their first time in the new building and a return to in-person instruction after nearly two years.

Taking his first class in the new building, Biology student and sophomore Alex Jensen, ’24, was wowed by the modern layout and features of the Sinegal Center.

“It’s so nice and high-tech,” says Jensen.

First-year student Audrey Chung, ’25, was taking a Biology course and she, too, marveled at the space.

“It’s really a nice building; there’s so much open space and it’s so modern.”

For Cathy Stickeles, ’22, the Sinegal Center offers cool and inviting new spaces for studying.

The Sinegal Center “is a really nice space to be in to simply exist in,” says Stickeles, a Marine and Conservation Biology major.

“I think it’s really gorgeous … (and) seems really comfortable to study in. I usually study in the library, so I’m looking forward to getting a change of scenery.”

Learn more about the Sinegal Center at seattleu.edu/science-innovation.
This spring, the Albers School of Business and Economics will officially commemorate its 75th anniversary, thriving behind a model of educating the best and brightest for success in the business world with faculty who are leaders in their disciplines and industries.

Much of what makes it a successful school today—Albers and many of its programs consistently rank high in the region and nationally in such publications as U.S. News & World Report—can be traced to its roots when it first opened its doors to students in 1947, as the School of Commerce and Finance. Instilling and teaching ethics, values, people skills and other so-called “soft skills” with students, championing and recruiting women faculty, emphasizing faculty scholarship, and offering students real-world experiences through mentorships, networking and career opportunities. Some of its touchstone programs include the Albers Placement Center, the Albers Mentor Program, the Innovation & Entrepreneurship Center (home to the Harriett Stephenson Business Plan Competition) and the Albers Executive Speaker Series.

“The Albers School of Business and Economics has endeavored, since 1947, to evolve with a world that never stays still,” says Dean Joseph Phillips, PhD. “One thing that stays constant, however, is our commitment to excellence and continuous improvement that is required to keep pace with a changing environment. We also have the humility to know we need to reach out to the business community to learn what the future will require from our graduates for them to be successful.”

What makes Albers stand out from other business schools or peers?

“What makes us distinctive is being a business school aligned with the Jesuit and Catholic mission of our university. We are focused on our students and their success. We have long promoted the importance of ethics and the responsibility of business to have a positive impact on society. That message is resonating more and more with the business community, as the recent pivot of the Business Roundtable illustrates.”

The Albers Difference

Business School Honors Past with a Focus on the Future

By Dean Forbes

While Albers honors its history, Dean Phillips says the school is “well-positioned for the future of higher education and business education because of faculty and staff. They have the commitment to excellence and continuous improvement that is required to keep pace with a changing environment. We also have the humility to know we need to reach out to the business community to learn what the future will require from our graduates for them to be successful.”

What stays fundamental to Albers today?

“The most important thing is for us to continue to recruit and retain outstanding faculty and staff who are devoted to their students and to the SU mission and vision. What stays the same is our commitment to student success. What evolves is the student experience—what is needed to ensure their success will change over time.”

What are you most proud of as dean?

“I’m most proud of the collaborative and inclusive culture we have among our faculty and staff where we keep our focus on what is best for our students. We are also forming business leaders who understand the important role the business sector must play if we are to address the most pressing challenge our society faces. That is an inspirational mission that everyone can get behind!”

The Faculty

Jennifer Marrone, PhD, Professor of Management and the George Eshelman, PhD, former Albers dean, 49th year on the Albers faculty. “We knew who our students were and they knew us,” says John Eshelman, PhD, former Albers dean and emeritus economics faculty. Recently Phillips, along with faculty, students and alumni reflected on what Albers means to them and how its storied past sets it up for future success.

THE DEAN

While Albers honors its history, Dean Phillips says the school is “well-positioned for the future of higher education and business education because of faculty and staff. They have the commitment to excellence and continuous improvement that is required to keep pace with a changing environment. We also have the humility to know we need to reach out to the business community to learn what the future will require from our graduates for them to be successful.”

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(The Business Roundtable is an association of chief executive officers of America’s leading companies). We are delivering on our mission of forming business leaders who work for the good of their organizations, society and the planet.”

How does Albers meet the needs of today and for the future?

What stays fundamental to its core and what evolves?

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THE FACULTY

Jennifer Marrone, PhD, Professor of Management and the George Eshelman, 2020-2023

Career preparation and ethical leadership are core tenets of an Albers education, as strong today as they were almost 50 years ago when there was an emphasis on educating and preparing students for employment opportunities, recalls Bill Weis, PhD, professor of management. Weis says then-Dean Gerald Cleveland built up the school’s programs in the late 1960s and 70s, including his own
driven by job market demands, program change or revision is tracks for students to specialize in. Many revisions, including multiple in Finance program has undergone time says the Master’s of Science Albers for a decade and during this Chair of Finance, 2019-2023 Professor of Finance and the Cathy Xuying Cao, PhD, Associate because we have really good people.” Amazing schools. I believe that is a decade, alongside some other 25 EMBA Program in the nation for in the Northwest in 2021 and a Top program has been recognized as #1 positive impact. Our Executive MBA working with businesses to have a creative and who are out there people who are innovative and about the scholar/teacher model, We have people who are passionate great faculty and staff and have great faculty and staff and great leadership in Joe (Phillips). We have people who are passionate about the scholar/teacher model, people who are innovative and creative and who are out there working with businesses to have a positive impact. Our Executive MBA program has been recognized as #1 in the Northwest in 2021 and a Top 25 EMBA Program in the nation for a decade, alongside some other amazing schools. I believe that is because we have really good people.” Cathy Xuying Cao, PhD, Associate Professor of Finance and the Dr. Kehilal Dibee Endowed Chair of Finance, 2019-2023 Cathy Xuying Cao has taught at Albers for a decade and during this time says the Master’s of Science in Finance program has undergone many revisions, including multiple tracks for students to specialize in. “The motivation for every single program change or revision is driven by job market demands, feedback from alumni and suggestions from our financial advisory board,” says Cao. She credits Finance Chair Jot Yau, PhD, for championing the need to remain current and relevant. What makes Albers different? Cao says staying current differentiates Albers from some other college business programs. “If there is a new trend we try to respond;” she says. For example, right after the financial crash in 2008, they introduced a course on financial crisis to help students understand what leads to these events and how to avoid potential future ones. The so-called FinTech or financial technology sector encompasses cryptocurrency, machine learning, artificial intelligence, big data and other new technologies that apply in finance. “We want students to be up to date on how nontraditional finance companies influence the financial landscape,” says Cao. “There is no textbook for this.” Bill Weis, PhD, professor of Management Albers’ longest serving faculty member is Bill Weis, who has spent nearly half a century teaching in the business school. Weis, a professor of management, began in the accounting program before transitioning to the management faculty and MBA programs in 1995. How Albers has changed over the years: “We are far more academically accomplished in terms of publications,” says Weis. “I look at our current faculty members, many are world class scholars as well as teachers. I’m on the Albers Personnel Committee and I look in awe at the accomplishments. The level of scholarship is amazing, especially considering we’re a school that doesn’t offer a PhD program.” Looking at Albers’ history and its many milestones, among them is the recruitment and hiring of women faculty. Weis was involved in hiring women faculty in the management program and says Albers in 1979 had the highest percentage of women faculty of any business school in the country. John Eshelman, PhD, former Albers Dean and Emeritus Economics faculty John Eshelman recalls that in the 1970s, the SU undergraduate business program was the only AACSB-accredited program in Washington besides offerings at the UW and WSU. The MBA program was the only AACSB-accredited evening program in the state. Accreditation was a significant milestone, Eshelman says. “One of our claims to fame and competitive advantages was that we were one of the few accredited programs in the state,” he says. How Albers has changed over the years: The university was in a tight financial situation in the 1970s and needed to increase faculty scholarly activity for accreditation. Harriett Stephenson, for whom the business competition is named and who preceded Eshelman on the faculty, was able to get grants from the U.S. Small Business Administration to help support research. Stephenson made a huge difference, says Eshelman. “Women were largely excluded from business faculties in the 1970s, but SU had several. In fact, we employed two-thirds of the first female graduates,” he says. “We had an unusual number of top-notch women faculty early on, which probably gave us an advantage in recruiting female students.” THE ALUMNI Lindsay McGrew, ’79 MBA Founder, The Madrone School Lindsay McGrew, ’79 MBA,
Why the IEC?

“I always enjoyed the idea of starting businesses and people coming up with ideas and their enthusiasm,” says McGrew, who won the 2016 Business Plan Competition for her concept of what was The Madrone School. “That is probably one of my biggest accomplishments as a student and something I will always remember. Specifically for the experience and for the honor.”

In 2015, McGrew founded The Madrone School as a nonprofit, with the school formally opening two years later. The business was not planned. Her son, now 14, has autism and there were few schooling options for his needs. “I’m not a teacher or a therapist but had the business background,” says McGrew. Today, Madrone has grown to include locations in Redmond and Woodinville.

How did the Albers MBA program prepare you for the “real world”?

“One thing I really appreciated about the school was the real-life experiences of the professors. They were able to talk about what worked, what didn’t work. That was really meaningful.”

McGrew remains involved with SU as vice president of the Women of Seattle University alumni group and as a judge with the Business Plan Competition.

Ann Jarris, MD, ’17 LEMBA, Founder, Discovery Health MD

Discovery Health MD was Ann Jarris’ capstone and winning project of the Business Plan Competition in 2017. The company was founded that same year and initially was designed to serve the maritime industry with medical support services. The business—with 200 employees—“exploded” during COVID-19 to provide direct consumer and employer testing. Jarris was a practicing MD in emergency medicine and was interested in building telemedicine programs. “I did not have the knowledge or education to articulate the value proposition to my employer so I decided to go back to school to effect the change I wanted,” says Jarris. The Executive Leadership Program helped her articulate that vision.

Why SU?

“For me, it was the emphasis on the soft skills, the emphasis on the leadership aspect and what your personal leadership goals were,” says Jarris, who also attended SU in the early 1990s to earn a Post-Baccalaureate Pre-Professional Health Studies Certificate.

THE STUDENTS

Jenna Maeda, ’22, double major: Marketing and Business Analytics

Jenna Maeda, ’22, chose to attend Albers for its internship opportunities, small class sizes and the ability “to get to know your professors and your professors wanting to get to know you as a student.”

“Albers’ emphasis in and ability to get jobs out of college and set students up for internships really drew me toward Seattle University,” says Maeda. “With a focus on that and preparing students for the workplace, I felt this would be the best place to start my journey.”

Maeda took advantage of the Albers Mentor Program and the Albers Placement Center, getting early access to them as a junior by joining the Albers Undergraduate Leadership Program. “It was a nice and really comforting thing to talk to professionals and learn what their process was like for getting jobs, having them bring in some of their coworkers, talk about the digital job search, what to look for in a job that is going to match not just what you want to do professionally but your values and making sure you find the right fit.”

Maeda did her first internship last summer and has another now with a movie and entertainment marketing company.

Kevin Dong, ’22, double major: Finance and Marketing

As he was applying to business schools, Kevin Dong was looking for one that offered diversity and a sense of community. “I did so much research and I came across SU. I was attracted to its Jesuit values because I attended a Jesuit high school.”

The number of resources available for students in Albers was an “amazing factor and gave it the upper hand over other schools.”

Dong is currently interning with Washington State Department of Transportation doing budget analysis and operations work costing. He credits the Albers Placement Center with helping him with networking. Post-graduation, he has jobs lined up in the transportation field.

“The university and Albers prepared me so well because I think a lot of the time at schools, we get this notion that we have to build these hard skills like technical skills, understanding syntaxes for accounting, building a ledger for accounting, which are all important. What made SU so important to me was their emphasis on soft skills as well.

“For me, it was the emphasis on the soft skills, the emphasis on the leadership aspect and what your personal leadership goals were.”

—Lindsey McGrew, ’19 MBA

Lindsey McGrew, ’19 MBA

The IEC gravitated toward the graduate program because it does not use a cohort model, which suited her preference to work with different students in various business programs. She was also actively involved with the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center (IEC).
HARRIET STEPHENSON BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION

Among the popular and unique programs of Albers is the annual Harriett Stephenson Business Plan Competition (HSBPC). It was started in 1998 by Harriet Stephenson, PhD, a Seattle University faculty member and professor emerita who taught at Albers starting in 1967 until her retirement. It is designed to help students and alumni in launching new business ventures, corporate entrepreneurship and social enterprise. Participants get feedback on business concepts and ideas, network and ultimately share their business plans to potential investors—while competing for a $10,000 grand prize.

The competition is part of the Albers Innovation & Entrepreneurship Center (IEC). The IEC has launched entrepreneurial leaders for 30 years, providing students and supporters experiential engagement opportunities and lifelong connections.

NEW PROGRAMS HEED THE TIMES AND ADVANTAGES OF LOCATION

Two recent Albers master’s programs epitomize the school’s ability to leverage the strength of its location in Seattle, while staying abreast of regional and national business trends.

The Master of Science in Business Analytics (MSBA) program is the first of its kind in the Northwest. It is designed to help graduates tackle the complex business challenges of today’s big-data-driven corporate environments. The curriculum includes study in leading-edge courses such as Communicating and Visualizing Data, Mathematical Models for Decision-Making, Data Mining for Business Intelligence and Programming for Business Analytics. The program is committed to educating the analytical, ethical and adaptive business leaders of tomorrow, while meeting the market’s high demand for business data and intelligence analysts.

The MBA in Sport and Entertainment Management combines academics with hands-on learning and practical knowledge gained from Seattle sports industry professionals. Sports represent one of the fastest-growing business sectors, expected to rise by 5.9% annually to more than $600 billion this year. Being located in Seattle, a city with a thriving sports industry, the graduate program allows students access to numerous internships and career and networking opportunities.

Learn more about the Albers School of Business and Economics at seattleu.edu/business.

“WE ARE DELIVERING ON OUR MISSION OF FORMING BUSINESS LEADERS WHO WORK FOR THE GOOD OF THEIR ORGANIZATIONS, SOCIETY AND THE PLANET.”

—Joseph Phillips, PhD, Dean
Aaron Nettles, ’21, comes from a basketball family. The guard on Seattle University’s men’s basketball team started shooting hoops in the second grade and grew up around the sport as his family operates the Eastside Basketball Club (EBC) Training Centers. It is here where Nettles started working with rising hoop stars as both a coach and a mentor to youngsters whose love of the game mirrors his own when he was their age.

“The last couple of years I have gotten involved (at EBC Training Centers)—coaching my own team and mentoring them. Over this past summer I was able to run my own camp, which was an experience I’ll never forget,” says Nettles, who before coaching there played on teams from 2009-2016. “I remember coming into the gym and seeing all these fourth and fifth graders, seeing them so excited and engaged. It’s inspiring.”

It’s the passion for the sport that is so intrinsically part of who Nettles is. That continues to motivate him and it’s what drew him to Seattle University. The graduate of Seattle Prep was looking to continue to build upon his basketball playing at a Division 1 school close to home.

Nettles, who earned a degree in Communications in 2021, is currently pursuing a Certificate in Entrepreneurship & Innovation and taking advantage of a fifth year of athletic eligibility due to COVID-19.

As a senior member of the men’s basketball team, Nettles cites the special connection and close-knit feeling among players that creates a winning formula. The bond between players was further strengthened over the summer with a trip to Turks and Caicos in the Bahamas, where the team got in some games and training. “It was the most memorable time,” recalls Nettles. “We are all really close and that trip to the islands really helped a lot.”

For Nettles, being a leader on the team comes not only from experience but also from learning from others—coaches and mentors alike—who helped him along the way.

“I have always had a lot of people in my corner over the years who kept pushing me and I kept stepping up.”

“As a mentor to the youth players he also coaches at EBC, it goes deeper than scoring points or making free throws. The work off the court is even more impactful.

“Every chance I get I acknowledge every kid. My biggest thing is instilling as much confidence as possible as it can be so fragile,” says Nettles. “The earlier you can build that confidence the better, as it acts like a muscle.”

Looking ahead to life post-Seattle University—he’s slated to earn his Certificate in Entrepreneurship & Innovation this year—Nettles is keeping his options open while not ruling out continuing to play basketball, perhaps overseas.

“My dream job would be running my own company. If it’s related to basketball, that would be great,” says Nettles. “I would also like to do something along the lines of helping youth.”

Athletics

Aaron Nettles enjoys time with nieces (from left) Delilah and Charlotte and nephew Taige, as his brother Jordan looks on, between coaching sessions at the Eastside Basketball Club (EBC) in Kirkland, Wash. Nettles’s family runs EBC, which provides an intense training program to help develop fundamental basketball skills, while promoting good sportsmanship, teamwork, self-confidence and respect for others.

Some of Aaron’s “Faves”

Favorite NBA player: Stephen “Steph” Curry, Golden State Warriors
Favorite musical artist: Drake
Favorite TV show or movie: Blacklist (TV show); The Wood (movie)
Favorite thing to do for fun: Hanging out with his family and friends and enjoying time together—whether it’s watching a movie or going out to eat.

On-the-Court Highlights

Seattle Prep:
• A varsity starter all four years at Seattle Prep
• Earned All-Metro honors, sophomore, junior and senior years
• Named Prep’s MVP in 2016-17 season
• Talled four 30-point games
• Finished season with 1,300 career points, landing #6 on Seattle Prep’s all-time scoring list

Seattle University:
• Started all 14 games he appeared in 2020-21 (before injury)
• In 2019-20 season, appeared in all 29 games and finished #2 on team for three-pointers
• Entered 2021-22 season with 110 career three-pointers
• Scored a career-high 20 points in a game twice
• 104 career games started
• Once went 16-for-18 from the free-throw line

“I have always had a lot of people in my corner over the years who kept pushing me and I kept stepping up.”

—Aaron Nettles, ’21
Ryan Schmid, ‘07 MBA, has long been passionate about solving issues concerning health and health care. Early in his career, he began questioning the structure of our nation’s health care system and how it negatively impacts people on a local level, specifically the South Seattle communities he was serving at the time.

“You can do a lot to support individuals, but unless you also work to transform this system around them, then you’re ultimately not going to see the kind of transformation that I was hoping to see,” says Schmid.

With a background in nonprofit community development bolstered by a Seattle University MBA, intensive entrepreneurial mentoring and a quest to support the greater good, he went on to launch Vera Whole Health in 2008, a nationally recognized advanced primary care model (APC) that helps people achieve optimum social, psychological and physical well-being, while driving down the total cost of care. Defined as “the next evolution of primary care,” the proven Vera APC model delivers “the essential 1:1 patient-provider relationship through informatics, referral management, care coordination and integrated health coaching.”

The Vera APC model is value-based and focuses on empathetically treating people, not symptoms. Essentially, “it’s transforming how patients engage with health care, how providers deliver care and how payers and employers pay for health care.”

This spring will mark the 15th anniversary of Vera Whole Health winning the Albers School of Business Harriet Stephenson Business Plan Competition, which provided $10,000 in initial seed money. As founder and CEO of Vera Whole Health—now a $400 million company—he went on to launch Vera Whole Health and Central Ohio Primary Care, which is the largest independent primary care medical group in the country. Vera Whole Health and Central Ohio Primary Care are creating a coordinated care platform that will serve JPMorgan Chase employees in Columbus as a starting point.

“That is a vastly different approach than just building one care center for one client. We believe that by partnering with other providers, who are equally passionate about delivering on value, that scale and that commitment we can genuinely shift entire geographies. And what that means is improve health quality outcomes, reduce the total cost of care, create a better experience and health equity, which are the four buckets of outcome that we really focus on.”

What impact did your Albers’ education—and specifically the Business Plan Competition—have in the formation of what is today Vera Whole Health?

“There wouldn’t be Vera Whole Health without the Business Plan Competition and Albers School of Business and Economics. It was a fantastic way to kick the tires on an idea under incredible mentorship from specifically Kent Johnson, Steve Brilling, Harriet Stephenson and a bunch of volunteers who supported the program. Creating an environment for students to really test an idea—under the mentorship of seasoned professionals, made all the difference in the world. Because by the time we ended up winning the competition we were able to leverage the tailwinds from that to raise our initial capital, so it all very much is directly tied to the school and the program.”

Can you speak about the value of mentorship and how your work with Vera Whole Health board member Kent Johnson helped you achieve your vision?

“Kent was with me through the whole thing—going back to the original idea of the business plan for the competition. I vividly remember sitting in Kent’s conference room and pitching him this concept of what was originally Vera Fitness and he asked a lot of challenging questions and by the end, it was like, ‘You’ve got a lot of work to do. But there’s probably a nugget there. Let’s go.’

How do partnerships and collaboration help shape Vera in its mission and services?

“For our clinical model to be successful, there’s almost always a partner that has aligned financial incentives working hand in glove with us to drive outcomes.

“As we continue to evolve, we are focused on shifting entire geographies and that requires a vertical and horizontal strategy for that to happen. We are very committed to working in partnership with other providers and payers.

“An example, Morgan Health (the new business unit of JPMorgan Chase focused on employer-sponsored health care) recently invested in Vera Whole Health. We are going to market in Columbus, Ohio, with Central Ohio Primary Care, which is the largest independent primary care medical group in the country. Vera Whole Health and Central Ohio Primary Care are creating a coordinated care platform that will serve JPMorgan Chase employees in Columbus as a starting point."

By Allison Nitch
“There’s no way that Vera would be here today without really leaning on Kent and his advice, especially in those early days when things were difficult.”

What are some of the milestones or great achievements of Vera Whole Health over these past 14 years?

“The first thing that comes to mind is our business model has evolved dramatically over the years, not just from point A to point B. I mean from A to B to C to D—it has changed so much and continues to change. The biggest accomplishment is we’ve stayed true to who we are and what we’re trying to accomplish in the world. How we’ve gone about trying to accomplish that is what’s evolved, but our mission, our vision, our values are the same.”

“That core has allowed us to pivot wisely when necessary. We launched in March 2008 and the Great Recession happened practically overnight… If we hadn’t been able to pivot we just would not have survived as a business, so that happened practically overnight.”

With respect to what’s now called value-based care, we were ahead of the curve with clinically integrating social and mental health into the primary care context. Vera and others were ahead of the curve with clinically integrating social and mental health into the primary care context.

“How did Seattle University’s holistic approach of mind, body and spirit influence you as an entrepreneur?”

“I would say it’s literally woven into the business model of Vera Whole Health. Our values are to do well and do good, to love those we serve and personal and corporate authenticity, so it shows up in our values, which then shows up in our culture.”

“The reason I went to SU in the first place was [due to] a meeting with Harriet Stephenson where she pitched me on triple bottom line—people, planet, profit—and how that’s woven into the curriculum in the business school, which I think is synonymous with mind, body, spirit. That’s where it all started, so it’s very much connected.”

Advice for fledgling or would-be entrepreneurs?

“If you don’t have a clear vision of what you want to accomplish, I mean a clear vision of who you are and what you’re trying to accomplish, it is infinitely harder than you ever imagined. And even if financially you’re a huge success, I guarantee there’s going to be so much thrown at you…you really have to believe in it. You need to believe in what you’re doing, because it will be so much thrown at you…you really have to believe in it. And you must know who you are and stay true to that.”

“Entrepreneurship is hard. When a company like Vera Whole Health finds success, it is a great reminder of how important all the many stakeholders were along their journey. The professors in the classes that inspired them, the coaches in the competitions like Kent Johnson who encouraged them to keep going and the many advisors, investors and supporters from within the Albers and Seattle University community who supported them along the way.”

—Peter Rowan, Laurence K. Johnson Endowed Chair of Entrepreneurship

“Innovation & Entrepreneurship Center”

VERA MERGES WITH LEADING HEALTH CARE DATA CO.

On January 5, 2022, Castlight Health, Inc., a leading health care data and navigation company, and Vera Whole Health, Inc., jointly announced an agreement under which the companies will combine. This merger will integrate Castlight’s market-leading technology and Vera’s purpose-built clinics, health care professionals and strategic partnerships with local providers, with the potential to transform how patients access and engage with care, how providers deliver this care and how employers and other purchasers pay for it.

Learn more about Vera Whole Health at verawholehealth.com.

The impact of your support is meaningful and far-reaching

Thank you to the more than 25,000 alumni and friends who supported the most ambitious fundraising campaign in Seattle University’s history, which came to a successful close on June 30, 2021. Experience the benefits of your generosity and the ongoing impact of the campaign through The Campaign for the Uncommon Good Impact Report. The report shares—through numbers and stories—how the many gifts of time, treasure and talent are already making an impact on SU’s mission and programs, improving access to education for more students and creating a new era of STEM education that will shape generations of future leaders.

We encourage you to read the report and be inspired by the power of giving.

Learn more about Vera Whole Health at verawholehealth.com.
Desmond Tutu, the South African bishop and theologian revered for his longstanding work as an anti-apartheid activist and as a tireless champion for human rights, passed away December 26, 2021, at age 90.

Ordained in 1961, Tutu retired as archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa, in 1996. In 1984, he was honored with the Nobel Peace Prize “for his role as a unifying leader figure in the non-violent campaign to resolve the problem of apartheid in South Africa,” according to the Nobel Prize organization. In 1994, he was thrown from the table of someone who considers himself my master. I want the full menu of rights.” —Desmond Tutu

Seattle University remembers those in our alumni family and university community we’ve lost.

Our Thoughts Are With You
Seattle University honors the memory of those in our community who we’ve lost.

Send notice of a loved one’s passing, including an online or newspaper obituary if available, to memorial@seattleu.edu.

James D. Johnson (January 2022)
Robert J. Punter (July 3, 2021)
Jacqueline C. Grayum (August 8, 2021)
Barbara J. Kelly (July 30, 2021)
Katharine A. Fleming Neal (September 5, 2021)
Martin C. Schumacher (August 29, 2021)
Richard F. Ambur (September 22, 2021)
Vanessa M. Mulcahy (September 28, 2021)
Donald J. Larkin (August 9, 2021)
Bernice M. Zerr (October 30, 2020)
Carolyn L. Hojaboom (June 5, 2021)
Virginia J. Helbling (June 2, 2021)
Gerald F. Molitor (September 20, 2021)
Robert M. Neubauer (September 20, 2021)
Gerald F. Molitor (September 5, 2021)
Dale L. Palella (June 3, 2021)
Virginia J. Helbling (June 3, 2021)
Katharine A. Fleming Neal (September 5, 2021)
Martin C. Schumacher (August 29, 2021)
Richard F. Ambur (September 22, 2021)
Vanessa M. Mulcahy (September 28, 2021)
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Robert M. Neubauer (June 5, 2021)
Ruth Zekariase, ’22, is a Sullivan Scholar, student, teaching assistant, artist and aspiring doctor

By Allison Nitch

Biology major Ruth Zekariase, ’22, knows what’s next on her impressive list of accomplishments—pursing a medical doctorate program. “My dream job would be to open my own neighborhood clinic wherever I settle down and become a local primary care provider, building solid relationships with families and people in my community.”

Growing up in Burien, Wash., Zekariase attended John F. Kennedy Catholic High School, where she was a student ambassador and entered Seattle University as a recipient of the prestigious Sullivan Scholar Leadership Award.

“The Sullivan community has been the backbone of my Seattle University experience,” she says. “The learning and growing that has been fostered by the scholarship community provided me wisdom and insight to help best prepare me for life ahead.” She met some of her closest friends through the program, “and it is those mentors and peers who have shaped me into the peer I am today.”

Now a teaching assistant for an organic chemistry lab in the Jim and Janet Sinegal Center for Science and Innovation, Zekariase shares that the new building is a huge upgrade for her learning style. “Getting to be hands-on is the most important part of science for me. … It is fascinating to see how doing all my favorite experiments again with the new equipment completely elevates the experience.”

When asked how SU has shaped her both personally and professionally, Zekariase says it’s the faculty who continue to amaze her with their attentiveness and support. “The relationships I have developed not only enrich my learning, but also boost my confidence as a STEM student, giving me the … space to make mistakes and be guided toward the right answer.”

“In 2021, she participated in the university’s first Racial Equity Summit during an Art in Action segment, visually capturing the virtual experience from her room by drawing in front of a live audience of nearly 1,000 people. “It was so interesting participating in the Racial Equity Summit. The task was completely out of my comfort zone, just because I have minimal experience creating in front of others, much less a whole audience.” She describes it as “an honor to be one part of a whole experience that enriched our SU community with the wisdom and vulnerability of educators, academics and leaders willing to share their experiences as People of Color.”

Zekariase’s interest in art started through the guidance of her high school art teacher. She has continued to self-teach and “slowly watch my art transform into a plethora of styles and focuses.” The canvas and paintbrush have become her favorite form of self-expression and serve as “a daily challenge to see what I am capable of making next,” she says. Next summer Zekariase, who is also a published poet, will exhibit some of her artwork as part of a show at Wa Na Wari Gallery.

When Zekariase has some free time, she looks to Seattle: “There are so many fun things to do in this city, it’s hard to keep the list short. Whether it’s a hike out in the pass, going out to grab some delicious food, studying at one of the many, many coffee shops, hitting a farmers market or shopping at some local businesses, I find joy in living in a city that has a million and one things to do.”

“The relationships I have developed not only enrich my learning, but also boost my confidence as a STEM student, giving me the … space to make mistakes and be guided toward the right answer.”

—Ruth Zekariase, ’22
COMING TO CAMPUS MAY 7, 2022

SIX SPEAKING TRACKS:
Social justice, business & innovation, environment & outdoors, power & policy, science & health and culture & history