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CICE Magazine

Center for Intercultural & Civic Engagement



Center for Intercultural & Civic Engagement | Student Involvement & Programming
Engagers in Tacoma
 Mother Earth



Dismantling Exclusionary Outdoor Culture

Local founder of climbing group, Big Girls Climb Too shares her work of increasing access and inclusion in outdoor communities | 10

Low-income and Indebted at Puget Sound

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All-Gender Restroom & Shower



Located in the Student Diversity Center at 3216 N. 13th St. (blue house)



To schedule a time when there are no meetings in the Center, email Vivie Nguyen at vnguyen@pugetsound.edu



Or drop in (open every day Mon-Sun) between 8:00 am - 10:00 pm



Includes locked door for maximum privacy



Bring your logger card to swipe in (ramp side) and all your showering supplies!



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Check out the final Yellow House
sticker developed by Charis Hensley.
Get your own Yellow House sticker
at the upcoming Wednesday @ 6
programming.

Front cover, current page, and back cover photos
are of various events and activities sponsored
by the Yellow House. Photos by Sy Bean, Kari
Nolasco '21, Skylar Marston-Bihl '08, Vivie
Nguyen, and volunteers at the events.



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International
and Civic
Engagement

EDITORS' NOTE

It is with mixed emotions that we worked on this final issue of CICE Magazine. Some of our readers are likely aware of the restructuring that took place in the Division of Student Affairs over the past summer. The restructure and new Division of Student Affairs Strategic Plan brought into focus the need to reallocate our limited resources. Thus, we are sun-setting CICE Magazine. This issue will touch only briefly on the restructure in the article by Chaplain Dave Wright who moved out of the Yellow House in this process. We also welcomed Associate Dean of Students, Marta Cady to the Yellow House office space, bringing her overall student support work and specifically sexual assault prevention work into close conversation with the overall work of the Yellow House. The restructure continues and we expect additional changes in the months to come. But for now, please enjoy this final issue of CICE Magazine and we hope to see you at some of the events included in these pages.

On a personal note, I have deeply enjoyed learning along the way as we worked to produce each issue. It has been a joy to work with the student writers, editors, and designers. I thank our readers for their patience and support as I learned new systems and skills, made mistakes, and worked to grow from them in the process of pulling each issue together.

-Skylar Marston-Bihl, editor

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I Am From...

Poems by Skyler Dela Cruz '23 and Teresa Nguyen '23

Reflections for the Civic Engagement Pathway Program

I Am From...

I am born Skyler Dela Cruz
Kuya. Big Brother. Role Model. The First.
From hard-working, appreciated,
jubilant, empathetic ethic
From emotional stability and unrelenting support
That gets me through each day
I am in the journey of life with many hurdles in my way

I am from the Big Bang
I am from this massive lava rock we call Earth
Standing on God's creation to look beyond the horizon
you can only admire, feel, and see with beauty
Land of the free and home of the brave
I am from the United States.
I am from the Golden State, California.

I am from the raising sun over the horizon
and setting chill of fog
I am from city lights and
warm rays of Sunshine Gardens
South San Francisco. South City. The Industrial City.
The calm and happy suburban streets I call home
I am from Daly City, my second home
Where the culture shines without shame
I am from the Bay Area
where gusty winds and foggy suns exist
From Karl the fog covering the skyline of skyscrapers
to the Lou the Seal controlling the bay
I am home.
I am home.
This is my home.

I am from immigrants
who I call Mom and Dad
I am from middle class status
Where saving money is valued,
clothes are used till you cannot use them,
being respectful guests and hosts,
and hand wash our dishes
are experiences that we share

I am from a generous, charismatic, loving father
who tells me to live my life to its fullest
To strive for more, he says
To learn from failure, he says
To take advantage of every opportunity, he says
I am inspired by a person who always has wisdom
I am from innovative, tasty, and
elegant steak cooking and
passionate, artistic, and inspiring music playing
I am from a hero who is not measured
by the size of his strength,
but by the strength of his heart

I am from gracious, empathetic, caring mother
who checks in with me about the latest news in my life
Hi Sky, how's it going?
Good night, son.
Take care and God bless, son.
I am cared for by a person who supports me everyday
I am from wholesome, delicious, love-filled cooking
and trustworthy, open, genuine relationships
I am from a superhero who gives love
to all four of her children
no matter the situation

I am from a "mixed" heritage
I am from pure Filipino descent, but
I get confused with black, spanish, or
mixed based on my appearance
I am proud to be Filipino
I live in it, through it, and a part of it
I am from a family that leaves no one behind
With plenty of family festivities to celebrate
and lots of prayers to go around to everyone
I am from delicious, heartwarming, and
mouthwatering delicacies
That are sweet, salty, bitter, tangy, savory, and crunchy
I am in between different languages
From Tagalog to English to Spanish
I am from the struggles of Spanish colonization
My parents are from the Philippines.
The nationalism among Filipinos and
Filipino-Americans
Still lives on with our lives

I am from the Lenten candles and
crosses of the Catholic church
For which my racial background suggests
I am from Catholic institutions
St. Thomas More School to Stuart Hall High School
That have changed my experience with religion
I am from Catholic practices
From baptism to confirmation
I am a Catholic
In the name of
The Father
The Son
and The Holy Spirit
Amen.

I am from male heterosexuality
Which was the norm as a kid,
Things changed;
I got introduced to the LGBTQ+ community
That shaped my view with openness and compassion
Toward different people unlike myself
I come from a binary gender role centered lifestyle
Which has opened my eyes
to other gender orientations
I am a man who is supposed to act, feel,
and say "manly" things
I am unique and so is everyone else.

I am from working,
able body parts that I am grateful for
I am from stable mental health
that has not disturbed my life

I am fortunate enough to be physically active
With sports, activities, and events
I am coming from a place of empathy,
compassion, and love
When I say I am grateful
to have working arms and legs
And no current mental health problems

I am born Kuya Skyler Dela Cruz
Eldest. Leader. First.

~~~

I Am From...

I am from a history of war and destruction,  
carrying the weight of my ancestors' burdens  
even now, long after the fears they feared have gone.

I am from loving, yet wounded nurturing.  
Raised to heal pains I know too little too much about.  
I am from constant learning and re-learning,  
and change and pushing for change.

I am from tropical storms and weathering,  
where the sea seems to never meet the horizon--  
to man-made islands where the waters are  
not quite as warm, but much kinder.

I am from generational homes where there is  
always enough space for loved ones, but not much else.

I am from small beginnings,  
where the people never seemed to know  
much else other than themselves and  
the tiny town they never left.  
But that tiny town was the largest melting pot  
of cultures and ideas I never could appreciate  
until I left.

I am from late night walks through downtown,  
with neon lights and laughter filling the air.  
I am from afternoon sunbathing on rough sands,  
with the sea tickling my toes.

I am from a place I can only call home now  
that I understand what home means.

I am still searching to find this same feeling within myself.  
To know a place and a history,  
is still not the same as knowing this present existence.

I am from journeys of self-discovery I am still exploring.  
I am from too many wrong turns and speed bumps,  
yet still ending up right where I feel I need to be.

I find myself in the City of Destiny  
and things are beginning to make a little more sense.

I am leaps of faith from where I began.



# Operation Save: A Volunteer's Reflection

By Helena Marlowe '22, Diversity Programs Coordinator

During finals week the basement of Kilworth Memorial Chapel becomes the site of an operation that processes two and three-quarters tons of donated goods. Operation Save is a donation program orchestrated by CICE and its predecessor organization for 20 years. At the end of each academic year, volunteers and members of the Yellow House staff place large brown paper bags in each dorm and Greek house for various clothing and bedding items to be donated. Although Operation Save can be simplified into three steps: retrieve, sort, fold, a lot more goes into making Operation Save happen than you'd expect. Trip after trip to dorms and Greek houses brings back many bags to be carried in from pick-up vans in the parking lot to the basement of Kilworth for sorting. From under-garments to mattress toppers, each individual item is picked up by sorters encircled by a ring of item-specific sorting bags. Once the bags are almost full enough to topple over, they're dragged away by more volunteers and placed or folded onto large tables with like items.

I didn't get to see the basement with its empty tables labeled shoes, pants, sweaters etc., but I was around for the last four days where every bit of table surface area held mounds of clothes and mattress toppers threatened to unfurl from underneath the tables. Each shift I returned for revealed piles that seemed to grow larger and more intimidating as volunteers struggled to place yet another thick wool sweater atop an already leaning stack.

My earlier shifts shared with other student volunteers consisted of taking the CICE/ASUPS minivans to residence halls, and juggling the task of opening heavy doors while holding a giant brown sack of donated items. When you first swipe into a dorm, the once-organized Operation Save bags are found sitting amongst various rejected dorm items that people are too lazy to take to the Grizz Garage areas or literal trash bags people threw together in the rush of moving out during finals week. After picking through the student-created obstacle fields to retrieve the bags, volunteers teeter down to the vans and try to fit four or five oblong bags into the trunk and back seat. During the busy days, sometimes the bags were so overflowing that we could fill an entire van just from one residence hall. Several trips had to be made back and forth

to the chapel to clear out the full bags in the halls and replace them with empty ones to be filled with more items. The retrieval process could take as long as an hour, but it was interesting to go into buildings I'd never had an occasion to go into. Some of the older volunteers reminisced about not having been in Seward since freshman year. Despite being with strangers, it was a unifying experience trying to awkwardly handle bags that were almost as big as I am and hearing other volunteers grumble about the mess people were leaving in the halls.

**Funny PJs or quirky t-shirts gave way to alleviate some of the stress all of us feel at the end of the year. Sorting really gave people the opportunity to see exactly what the UPS community was getting rid of.**

As the days continued and the initial rush of the move out process began to slow, volunteers brought less and less back for sorting. Operation Save began to be more of a waiting game if you weren't out doing pick-up runs. But as soon as the full vans returned, a flurry of activity would halt any small talk between volunteers and turn to jokes about some of the items being pulled from the donation bags. Funny PJs or quirky t-shirts gave way to alleviate some of the stress all of us feel at the end of the year. Sorting really gave people to the opportunity to see exactly what the Puget Sound community was getting rid of. Reaching inside a bag and pulling up the first item your fingers felt was a mini guessing game each time; sometimes the item would be held up to others for general opinion to determine what exactly the item was. When a specific item bag was full, it would be weighed and dragged out to the tables where people stood folding seemingly endless amounts of clothes. The bags could weigh as much as 50 or as little as 3

pounds. In total, about 310 bags together weighed 5,472 lbs and 10.87 oz. All from one campus community, collected over the span of about one week. It is worth asking where that 5,472 pounds of stuff would have gone if Operation Save was not an option.

While this may be a generalization, many people who donate their items do not really know what happens with their stuff after we whisk it away from their buildings. After most everyone leaves campus, and volunteers are no longer asked to give their time to help, CICE's summer staff welcomes Tacoma community partners to essentially come "shop" through our home-made thrift store. Homeless shelters and churches come to collect clothes for people without the financial means to buy warm or formal clothing. One of the older ladies told me about her organization's program that lends formal clothing appropriate for court to men currently in jail. Another woman expressed that all the sweaters were good for housing insecure individuals in the winter time when they may not have access to a warm place for long periods of time. A man from a church picked through the jeans for sturdy work jeans for men who work demanding physical labor jobs. The roughly 55 foam mattress toppers and a small room's worth of pillows, mattress covers, blankets, comforters, and sheets were collected by the Northwest Furniture Bank which helps, "victims of domestic abuse, people suffering loss from fire and natural disasters, foster children and families coming from transitional housing who are trying to rebuild their lives." The men who arrived from the Furniture Bank were stunned when they came into Kilworth basement and saw all the mattress toppers rolled up under the tables. One exclaimed, "our boss told us to come get 'a few' mattress toppers from UPS!" Then they proceeded to make a competition out of who could carry the most at one time up to their truck. After two days of "shopping", our left over 80 bags were donated to St. Vincent's for their own low cost clothing store.

**In total, about 310 bags together weighed 5,472 lbs and 10.87 oz. All from one campus community, collected over about a week.**

Operation Save does not just help out community partners, but also goes directly back into our own campus community. We, too, pick out clothing that is appropriate for internships, job interviews, and outdoor trips to help stock our campus Clothing Closet. The Clothing Closet (located in the back of our office) is open during our business hours and free for anyone to take what they need. Laundry detergent donated during move out and consolidated following Operation Save is available at the Clothing Closet as well. Finally, the significant growth in the Lending Library is thanks to Operation Save and students who donate their used course textbooks. In a newly organized library within the Student Diversity Center, textbooks and other course books are available for those experiencing financial insecurity and others for a semester-long check-out at no cost (stop by the Yellow House to see if we have the textbooks for your classes).

I'd been told how many tons of donated clothes we'd processed in the past, but there is no way to conceptualize just what that looks like until you do it yourself. Two and three-quarter tons looks like a basement full of piles upon piles of folded clothes, a small room full of small, person-sized bags piled up to the ceiling, 55 volunteers' worth of help, and a whole lot of organizing by Skylar Bihl and Mandy Chun.



**For more information about how to volunteer with Operation Save in May or how to get your move-out deadline extended by contributing some hours to Operation Save, email: [volunteer@pugetsound.edu](mailto:volunteer@pugetsound.edu)**



# On Leaving the Yellow House

By Dave Wright, '96, University Chaplain

*In Summer 2019, the Division of Student Affairs made a number of major structural changes – the most significant shifts in how we work in the past 20+ years. Part of this new structure moved University Chaplain Dave Wright out of the Yellow House and moved Associate Dean Marta Cady into the space as Associate Dean for Student Support. Marta brought with her programming for the campus community to address issues of sexuality, healthy relationships, sexual assault prevention, and gender identity, strengthening the range of the ability of our teams to work for justice for all people. In September, Dave wrote the following piece – now updated to reflect the significant changes that have continued to unfold – as a reflection on their own personal journey from the creation of CICE to the current season of detangling and transition we're all experiencing.*

## On Leaving The Yellow House

It was my first moment at Puget Sound as the University Chaplain – a warm, clear August morning. I'd only been back on campus two or three times since graduating ten years earlier, and as I stepped out of my car I had a moment of blur, an overlay of arriving as a student on a similar August day with now being newly present again, returning in a very different capacity and – at age 27 – a very different person. It was a somewhat surreal moment of memory, of gratitude, and of beginnings.

In the arc of the last thirteen years, I have been a part of several departments, had five different supervisors, and been a part of

creating and evolving work that I believe matters more than I would ever have thought possible. Along that path, I've encountered a dazzling array of colleagues, friends, students, conspirators, and troublemakers, and rode through a variety of waves of change in my own life and the life of this campus.

Several years ago, renovations in Wheelock required that a few of us in Student Affairs move to a small, campus-owned house across the vast concrete gulf of the parking lot. The word "temporary" was mentioned, but thanks to some incredible clean-up and renovation by the university, it became a new home. Within weeks we were joking about putting in a moat, possibly replete with sharks. After a good deal of negotiation, the house was painted yellow. We started calling ourselves the Center for Intercultural and Civic Engagement, and while that entity never existed on an organization chart, after two years of dogged persistence we got a sign for the front of the house and the rest, as they say, is history.

Times passed. Trouble was brewed. Mischief was managed. Tears of love and pain and rage were not uncommon, and sometimes flowed together. Friendships were built, visions were brought into being, and even as dear humans came and went, the Yellow House became home.

I write this reflection on one of my last days as a resident of the Yellow House, surrounded by boxes, waiting for transit back across



the concrete gulf. I'm returning to an office I occupied for a few years, a space with its own memories and history and meaning for me. Sitting at my desk, almost ready (not ready) to move, I'm mindful of all those that have left the Yellow House before me. Several generations of students who found community, support, challenge, and more in this space – most graduating, some transferring, but all moving on.

The work of advocating for inclusion, diversity, justice, and equity is not done – in my role, or in the roles of the different departments that emerge from this year's Student Affairs restructuring. While the Interfaith Coordinators and the Chapel team are evolving into new forms, we will still be supporting the integration of spiritual life programs into our broader student support and intercultural work – and with new and emerging partners amongst the faculty, the still-to-be-hired Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion, and more. A lot is changing, but the heart is only growing.

But I'm leaving the Yellow House. I'm incredibly excited for the evolutions in my role – if nothing else, my title is simply University Chaplain, which is a lot easier to fit on a business card than any of the variants I've had the last decade and more. These changes will give me more space to engage in spiritual/social support for students, faculty, and staff. Being back in Wheelock will greatly increase the ease of collaboration with ASUPS, CHWS, the Dean of Students' Office, and more – it is AMAZING how huge that parking lot between Wheelock and the Yellow House is. In combination with the various other departmental changes that have occurred across Student Affairs in the last few months, the future seems to me a trajectory of freedom and liberation from a number of stuck patterns running in circles and “we've always

done it that way” ruts. As someone who loves playing with ideas and trying new things out, I'm genuinely having fun dreaming new things and creating alongside my longtime friends in Student Support and in Student Involvement and Programs, as well as new and newly emerging partners in crime elsewhere.

For all that, as I leave, there is a definite layer of loss – which is natural, especially for those of us who tend towards some degree of sappy sentimentality. I will miss my daily immersion in the quirky, sometimes outright bizarre reality of the Yellow House. Not sure what will happen with the “Days since Dave Last Interrupted Us” sign that students have created in the front room. Above all, the people that I won't see as often, students and friends who are dear to me. Come visit the Lavender Lounge by Wheelock 203, or find me at my new coffee hours in Diversions or Oppenheimer. I'm glad, selfishly, that change is not the end.

SO.

Thank you, CICErs past and present, those helped create this community and those who will create whatever comes next. It feels important to name the pro staff who have journeyed with me on this eight-year arc of my life as part of the Yellow House: Czarina Ramsay, Sarah Shives, Helen Fickes, Skylar Bihl, and Vivie Nguyen. If I was worried about that ongoing creation and re-creation, I might say things like don't get predictable, or be suspicious of spiders and squirrels, or try to make up some other faux wisdom to impart. But even in these last days in this office, I see things roaring forward with energy and newness and potential, and I smile. And I smile. Much gratitude, and much love. Please come by and say hi in WSC or at a coffee hour. This place – and more importantly, these people – will be missed.



# Big Girls Climb Too: Dismantling Exclusionary Outdoor Culture

By Grace Butler '21, Civic Engagement Pathway Advisor

Sam Ortiz is a technically trained mountaineer with an abundance of accolades and experience. She climbs, backpacks, hikes, and more. Despite all of this, Sam felt out of place in the outdoors, but could not pinpoint the specific reasoning. The feeling of not belonging and not understanding her discomfort revealed itself as fear and anxiety, and although Sam has all of the necessary qualifications, she struggled to fit in and feel comfortable. “Representation for people of color, and in particular, plus-size people of color, is non-existent,” Sam shares, explaining her on-going hesitation with and lack of comfort in outdoor communities. She would take a photo of herself with a group of strong, tall, cisgender white men, and immediately grasp how much she didn’t belong. She wasn’t seeing herself represented in her own personal photos, let alone on social media or in other outdoor communities. One of the most obvious ways that Sam felt she wasn’t seeing herself represented was because of harness sizes for climbing. Sam describes her experience with size inclusivity as trying on “every harness they [REI] have, and maybe one would actually fit my body. I have all of this technical skill; I can go rappelling, and canyoneering, or alpine

Representation for people of color, and in particular, plus-size people of color, is not-existent.

climbing, but it was impossible to find a harness that fits my body.”

This prompted Sam to create Big Girls Climb Too, an inclusive climbing club for plus-size womxn and non-binary folx. Sixty percent of U.S. womxn wear above a size fourteen, but Sam’s climbing gym only had three harnesses that fit plus-size folx. After asking, her gym Edgeworks Climbing, now has ten harnesses that go up to a size 6x!

The three top questions and fears that new plus-size climbers have are: will a harness fit them, will the belayer be able to hold them, and are they strong enough to climb? She eases their fears

by showing them the sizing charts for harnesses, explaining that belayers hold tension not weight, and encouraging them to think of climbing similarly to going up a ladder: power and momentum through your legs and stability through your arms and hands. Through addressing the underlying fears of plus-size womxn about climbing, she also sees the trauma caused by years of fatphobia, exclusion from sports, and fear of their bodies. But at Big Girls Climb Too, Sam provides these people with an amazing community that is inclusive to plus-size bodies, thus allowing people to feel comfortable participating in a sport, find awe in the capabilities of their bodies, and ultimately provide a bit of healing for past trauma.

Currently, there are historical systems of oppression in place that exclude marginalized folk from joining the outdoors community. Not only do all of these outdoor recreational activities take place on stolen Native American land, but they continue to perpetuate the oppressive systems that are the foundation of modern environmentalism. The push to privatize the outdoors is rooted in colonialism. Since time immemorial, this land has been the home of Native Americans, and the idea that the outdoors are for the white, rich elites to pursue for personal pleasure and leisure is an outgrowth of the colonial roots of the United States. John Muir, who is idealized by many white environmentalists, is credited for saying that Native Americans were lazy and superstitious, and that the Yosemite Valley's landscape was too beautiful for the "dirty and deadly" Native Americans to live there. Teddy Roosevelt, another man praised for his political conservation efforts, openly praised Madison Grant's novel "The Passing of the Great Race, or the Racial Basis of European History". This novel is based in white supremacy and Nordic ethnocentrism. It is not a surprise that the outdoors community, which heavily reveres Roosevelt and Muir for their conservation efforts, is exclusionary to people of color, plus-size folk, and others with marginalized identities.

And that is exactly why Sam advocates for space to be made for people who aren't cisgender, thin, white men. "If I weren't to talk about my body and embrace the word plus-size or fat, then I'm helping keep a system in place. And so many people have reached out to me saying they feel the same, or they don't see themselves

## If I weren't to talk about my body and embrace the word plus-size or fat, then I'm helping keep a system in place.

represented in the outdoors world." She finds that one of the most powerful things for her is to embrace her body and to talk openly about it.

Sam also urges people to question their outdoor outfitters and ask them to include more body diversity. REI is paving the way for this right now, as they have clout and power in the outdoor world. Sam recently was asked by REI to join a group of all plus-size people of color for an expedition in Iceland. The purpose of this trip was to highlight diversity in the outdoors community, push for inclusiveness and representation of people of color and plus-sized people, and for REI to use their clout in the outdoors community to advocate for these underrepresented groups. Both plus-size people and people of color need more representation in media, marketing, and within these companies themselves. Sam's advocacy work has garnered the attention of many companies that genuinely want to be more inclusive and welcoming to those with marginalized identities and people who feel as if the outdoor community is not a place for them. Privilege is never having to think about something outside of your own identities, and Sam understands that these companies are not necessarily being malicious in their lack of representation. Instead, they are most likely staffed by predominantly thin and white people, which is reflected in their marketing and media. Sam's work to shed light on environmental racism and fatphobia in the outdoors community, is forcing companies and organizations to reflect on their privileges and see what problematic systems they are upholding. For Sam, there is no way to enact change within the system without people having hard conversations and persisting through uncomfortable situations that are learning moments for other people. This will have to continue until the culture around the outdoors changes.



Sources:

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## The Campus Food Pantry

For those experiencing food insecurity

Various food products available to current University of Puget Sound community members.

Located in the Student Diversity Center at 3216 N. 13th St.

Open Monday -Sunday 8 am-10 pm



# The Forgotten Being Low-SES and Indebted at Puget Sound, a Narrative

By Sam Lilly, '19, Former Social Justice Coordinator

I remember when I first told my mom that I wanted to go to UPS. She looked at me and told me that it would be impossible.

"You know we can't afford that," she said.

I sat dejected, heartbroken, halfway up my childhood home's carpeted stairs. I rested my head in my hands. I started to sob. My mom climbed up the stairs and held me tightly. She knew how harsh reality could be.

Her husband, my dad, an alcoholic, lost his job when I was in elementary after his third consecutive DUI conviction. A convicted felon, the only job that he could hold down was stocking produce at a Wal-Mart fifteen minutes away at 5 in the morning. Some days he rode the bus. But, I recall many early mornings waking up, climbing in the back seat of my mom's Chevy Cobalt, full of resentment as we drove him to work.

The job could hardly pay for groceries, let alone pay for a private liberal arts college. Frustration radiated from my mom's voice as she told me, "don't be upset." I think my sadness came across as ungrateful.

My mom worked her ass off my entire life. She still does. As a third-grade teacher she somehow found a way to put food on the table for my older brother, my dad, and me. While simultaneously finding a way to afford to buy pencil boxes, crayons, and other school supplies for her students, with little to no help from anyone, but for the plethora of personal loans she took out and a second

job at the Children's Place clothing store at the Valley Fair Mall. Some mornings she woke up at 5am, drove my dad to work, my brother and me to school, worked until 4pm and then drove to the mall to work another shift until 9pm.

In hindsight, it makes sense that she was frustrated; after all she had done, I somehow still wanted more.

When I think back to this moment, I remember being in an incredibly fragile emotional and mental place. My best friend had just gotten into a horrific and pseudo-fatal car accident that left her comatose. That overwhelming feeling of grief on top of feeling the weight of inadequacy from being poor, pushed my heart to its breaking point. I had supposedly done everything "right" from elementary school up until my high school graduation. I played competitive soccer. I was captain of my high school's Varsity team. I was student body vice president. And, not to mention a debate state champion. I took ten plus AP classes and had a 4.4 weighted GPA. On top of all that, I somehow still had enough time to commute to and from school and soccer each day (a total of two and a half hours in the car). All while holding down a part-time barista gig. I have had a job since I was thirteen years old. To help out, and to pay for some school stuff. For example, I paid for my AP Exams, the ACT, and college applications, all on my very own credit card.

Just like my mom, I worked my ass off, and for what? To be told, I cannot do what others do just because of my father's mistakes? My mom's selfless decision to be an elementary school teacher?



## THE CLOTHING CLOSET

Free, rotating selection of outdoor, winter, and professional clothing for anyone in need

Located in the back porch of the Yellow House (3219 N 13th St.)  
Open Monday to Friday  
9 am-12 pm & 1 pm-5 pm

Hell no. I refused to accept this as my lot in life. So, I decided that I would enroll despite my family's inability to afford it. I put the \$500 enrollment fee on my credit card, accepted my spot in the Honors Program, found a roommate, and told the coach of the Women's Varsity Soccer Team to save a space for me.

**...but I was eighteen and thought that if others get to choose to go to UPS, I should be able to choose to go as well, despite my socioeconomic status.**

I made it up to Tacoma at the very beginning of August. And, I remember exactly the way my mom's face looked as I walked into Student Financial Services with her. She knew what my 18-year-old self could not. Although I was given the largest merit scholarship possible, multiple Pell grants, and a \$10,000 direct grant from the school, my freshman year, I took out over \$15,000 in student loans. My parents had no money to support me, so I supported myself via student loans. \$7,985 were borrowed from a private loan company, the rest were federal loans, including one Perkins Loan. Looking back, I wish I could have heeded the warning that appeared on my mom's face. She looked concerned and scared, but I was eighteen and thought that if others get to choose to go to UPS, I should be able to choose to go as well, despite my socioeconomic status.

As freshman year miserably crawled on, I began to mentally and emotionally embody the look on my mom's face that day. What had I done to myself? I resented my roommate and my classmates for their family's ability to pay for this school.

Why didn't anyone warn me?

Every time a peer mentioned their own student loans, I would run to the bathroom and cry, knowing that I was on the path to owing more than they would, in total, after my first semester sophomore year.

In April of 2016, at the end of my first year on campus and growing weary of the weight of my loans, I walked back into Student Financial Services. I asked the woman sitting across from me a simple question:

"Is this worth it?"

With no hesitation, she responded:

"Yes."

So, I kept taking out loans. But, no one told me that by my sophomore year, the federal government would cut my Pell grants in half and the University would no longer offer me that \$10,000 grant. Suddenly, I went from borrowing roughly \$7,000 in private loans to \$13,000. For my junior year, I took out \$16,000 from a private loan company. By my senior year, almost all of the financial aid from the federal government and the school I received in my financial aid package my freshman year, when I first decided to attend

Puget Sound, was nowhere to be found. No explanation was given as to why these changes happened, thus, to complete my degree, I took out \$22,000 in private loans for my senior year. These private loans had accrued a total of \$11,000 of interest by the time I graduated. I owe close to \$70,000 in private student loans alone and another \$45,000 in federal loans. In sum, I am \$115,000 in debt from my Puget Sound education.

But, the reality of the loans was not the worst part – at least not during my time as a student. It was the social climate at UPS that really hurt me. I felt forced to justify to anyone and everyone why I was attending UPS; why I was doing things that prioritized my happiness and the future a degree from Puget Sound promised.

**But, the reality of the loans was not the worst part – at least not during my time as a student. It was the social climate at UPS that really hurt me.**

The gulf between my experience of campus and that of my wealthier peers continued to grow. When I returned to school for my junior year, the housing I had secured had suddenly fell through. Considering that I pay for school and housing with student loans, I had no money to find new housing before my financial aid came in, leaving me homeless until September 2nd. I caught a horrible cold from sleeping on a mattress in the garage of a friend's off-campus house. Fevered and medicated, and trying to balance my soccer practice and training for my work-study job, I frantically searched for affordable housing as far away from the school as I could get.


I sought to live in downtown Tacoma for a few reasons. First, living near UPS rapidly deteriorated my mental health – I have never felt more alone in my life than I did at UPS – my identity as a young woman from a low-SES background was invisible to everyone. I felt unseen and forgotten about by my classmates and friends. Growing up, my mom taught in a more affluent area which meant better public schools, so that my brother and I could both get a permit to attend in the district where she worked. I learned how to socioeconomically code-switch by the age of seven. At Puget Sound, no one I knew understood what it meant to be a class migrant. I lost my friends back home, because the way I began to dress and speak didn't match who I used to be before I came to UPS. And, I couldn't keep friends in Tacoma, because I often felt ostracized or invisible; the assumptions of wealth and poverty inadvertently kept me from being my truest self. In short, it sucked to be there, always reminding me who I used to be, who I wasn't, and who I never will be.

The second reason I sought to live away from campus was due to credit considerations. I regularly must take into account my credit score and how it will eventually be impacted by my student loans. I thought: "Hey, right now, my credit score is incredible." (It's 792. Yeah, you read that right.) "If I were to get an apartment now, I would be able to have a renter's history – that way, when my credit inevitably plummets, I'll have a verbal reference as to what a great tenant I am, despite my sub-par credit score." But, as soon as I got an apartment, I realized that I could no longer eat at the SUB anymore. I could save money by not having a meal plan, but



## Author's Aside

As a brief aside, if you have ever once complained about SUB food (with the exception, of course, if you have dietary restrictions or allergies) you do not realize how good you have it! The variety! The nutrients! The fact that it is available whenever you need! Plus! The SUB workers work their asses off for you – the least you can do is be grateful that you know where your next meal is coming from. Please consider your class privilege when it comes to food.



**I have never felt more alone in my life than I did at UPS – my identity as a young woman from a low-SES background was invisible to everyone.**

not having a meal plan meant paying the considerably higher cash prices at the SUB.

So, I got a second job to feed myself. But that, on top of classes, soccer, and a work-study job proved to be too much. My teammates could not understand why I had to miss a game to work. My athletic trainer could not figure out why I was getting splitting headaches. And, my professors did not understand why I did not want to buy a CoursePac when I could simply find the articles online for free and print them out with the PrintGreen points I had already paid for via my tuition.

I had to reevaluate my priorities. I was upset that once again, my socioeconomic status forced me to choose between the things I loved and the things I needed to do to live. A full load of classes, soccer, two jobs. I had played soccer since I was in elementary

school and I loved it. Still do. I agonized over the decision, but in the end, eating regularly won out over playing soccer. It was a difficult decision to make, but not uncommon amongst folks from lower-class and lower middle-class families.

Looking back from the other side of graduation, if there is one thing I would go back to change, it wouldn't be taking out the loans. No. It would be the conversation with my Student Financial Aid counselor at the end of my first-year. Knowing what I know now, I would go back and give her the words I needed to hear.

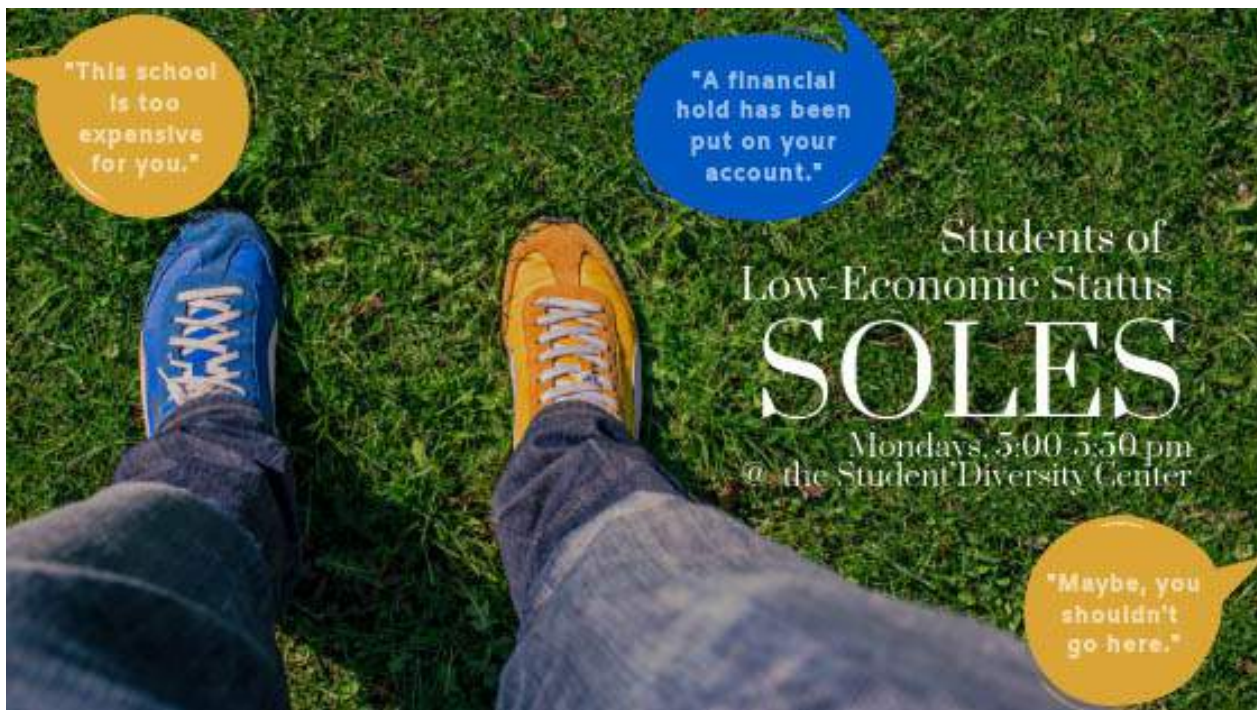
How could she look me, an eighteen-year-old, in the eye and confidently tell me that what I was doing to my financial future was "worth it?" I went to ask her because at that point I was concerned about my \$7,985 loan. I went to ask her, because I did not have the financial literacy to understand all the ramifications for myself and neither did my family, really. Yet I knew the raising panic I had been experiencing every time I thought of my loans must mean something. How could she not tell me that one of the most common complaints Student Financial Services receives is that financial aid often dissipates after a student's first year? Or that any outside scholarships students earn don't actually help reduce what they have to take out in loans each year, because the university reallocates school-based scholarships or funding support so that students end up still having to make up the same amount of need (which is what they thought they were tackling by applying for outside scholarships)? How could no one tell me that the family contribution amount from the FAFSA can't be covered by these scholarships?

Her encouragement alone clarifies for me what it felt like Puget Sound's first priority is when it comes to their students: it is not their well-being during or after their time at the university. No, it is merely their ability to pay for the university. Indeed, Puget Sound's

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ever-growing tuition and its apparent lack of concern for students' financial well-being, MY well-being, contributed to a severe bout of depression and suicidal ideation during my freshman and sophomore years. I felt I was nothing to the school but a walking, talking, tuition-paying, whole-buncha-loan-taking, bag of bones. The school boasts that students have access to free counseling, but not once have they ever taken ownership of the fact that the harmful and systemic practices of the college are often the very thing that force underrepresented students through the doors of Counseling, Health, and Wellness Services.

This lack of concern grows more apparent every day. The school only points out the success stories; the students who are awarded fellowships and grants or who are making it big in the world, taking career risks only possible with financial means to fall back on. All schools like to brag about the successes of their alumni, but for current students and recent graduates, this lop-sided view of life post-UPS creates more anxiety. I'd like them to bring back graduates who are houseless, graduates who have been evicted, graduates who live below the poverty line. Or at least recent graduates who are still in entry-level jobs still figuring out life beyond Puget Sound. The road post-graduation isn't easy – show



# The Lending Library

Come to the Yellow House at 3219 N. 13th St., to see if we have any of the books you need for the upcoming semester. One of our staff members will help you retrieve and check-out the books all for free!

us those learning to walk it. I'd like to meet graduates I can see myself in. Because every time a super successful graduate is brought back, it feels like a slap in the face to current students and graduates who are struggling with their loans and are unable to climb the social ladder because their loans take more than half of their income. For example: if I were paying off my loans right now, I would pay \$1,300 a month; that's more than my rent, more than my parent's mortgage, and more than what I would pay in total to pay off my auto loan.

Now, don't get me wrong, I understand that there are an overwhelming number of social justice issues on campus that the Board of Trustees and other departments ought to address: systemic racism and anti-Semitism to name a few. However, it feels like there is no support or acknowledgment of low-income students who step onto campus and are not equipped with the support system to understand what \$64,000 actually means, let alone what it means to pay for the school in loans alone.

I believe the University of Puget Sound could better support and equip students who have been and will be financially harmed by their Puget Sound education. During my senior year, through my work study position at the Center for Intercultural & Civic Engagement, and with the support of Institutional Research and hours of collaboration and support from Dr. Carolyn Weisz, I had the opportunity to assess the experiences of other low-income juniors and seniors on campus. Based on my own experience and the results of this work and subsequent input from students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds, I would encourage the following:

- 1** Train Student Financial Services employees to respond to students differently from what I experienced, when speaking to them about their student loans, especially private loans. This looks like informing students with kindness and concern what their financial future will look like if they continue borrowing at the rate that they are. This does not mean saying that the school is worth it, nor does it mean telling them they ought to reconsider their enrollment. It does mean informing students of the reality of their loans so that they can make an informed decision about their financial future – really breaking it down for them with projected numbers. Prioritize students who are heavily indebted during their senior year and after graduation. This looks like creating a support team for students who owe more than \$70,000. Someone from Student Financial Services who can help them navigate their repayment options. Someone from the fellowship's office, helping these students find opportunities outside of immediately working or taking out more loans after graduation. Someone from CES, helping the student find a job that will pay enough so that they can pay their monthly loan payment as well as afford rent and food. And, most importantly, this looks like the administration checking-up on these students, who despite the horror of financing education with loans, chose to take their chances on a Puget Sound education. These resources exist, but having a specific team of support to guide us would help a lot.

- 2** Ensure that there is some cultural competency taught during orientation to incoming students

# Author's Aside

If you are a student at UPS who does have class privilege, please know that you can harness your wealth to actually affect change. An on-campus club called Resource Generation organizes a multiracial membership of young people with access to wealth and class privilege to become transformative leaders working towards the equitable redistribution of wealth, land, and power. Resource Generation or "RG" at UPS is organized by students working in coordination with other colleges across the country to build space to interrogate class privilege, provide a political education, and create a network that will hold you and others accountable to the power you wield coming from an upper-class, wealthy, and privileged background.

If this sounds interesting to you and you want to know more, or better yet, join! Reach out on Facebook @UPSResourceGeneration or contact Nina directly at [nkranzdorf@pugetsound.edu](mailto:nkranzdorf@pugetsound.edu). If you are an alumnus who still wants to get involved, contact Rose directly at [rosepytte@gmail.com](mailto:rosepytte@gmail.com)

concerning class privilege. We should not have freshman crying in bathrooms because they feel alone in their low-SES identity, period.

**3** Make sure that professors are aware of the small ways they can significantly unburden low-income students in the classroom. This looks like understanding that CoursePacs are often frivolous and unnecessary when course readings can be uploaded to Canvas for students to access. This looks like understanding that a 35 dollar CoursePac paid for in loans will eventually cost hundreds of dollars. This looks like allowing low-income students laptops in class so that they can access free versions of texts offered by Collins Memorial Library or the Tacoma or Seattle Public Libraries. This looks like understanding that sometimes the specific edition of a text is not as important as the student's financial and emotional well-being and willingness to learn. This looks like requiring professors to understand that not every student has the financial means to pay for items required on the syllabus and to collaborate with the student on what success looks like with or without these materials or help them find ways to access them for free.

**4** Bring folk back to campus from all different backgrounds – including those who are having a hard time financially. This is crucial, because it demonstrates that the administration acknowledges that, yes, this is a college that changes lives, but there are lasting challenges that come with that for some of us too.

Bryan wants students and their families to feel good about their decision to attend UPS when they're in their thirties. And, he recognizes that often this looks like offering the difficult advice of telling low-SES students that perhaps Puget Sound isn't the right financial fit.

Although I cannot go back and talk to the financial aid counselor I spoke with at the end of my first year on campus as she is no longer at the institution, I recently spoke with Bryan Gould, the Director of Financial Aid, to (hopefully) glean some closure and inform the office of my negative experience regarding my debt situation. Bryan and I talked for an hour or so; it's obvious that he understands how expensive a Puget Sound education is. He spoke of the wide range of students' financial experiences: the students who are unconcerned and never step foot in the office and the students who frequent the office, struggling to make things work.

Bryan wants students and their families to feel good about their decision to attend UPS when they're in their thirties. And, he recognizes that often this looks like offering the difficult advice of telling low-SES students that perhaps Puget Sound isn't the right financial fit. Although I find this advice problematic, I would like to note that it's not unique to the University of Puget Sound that financial aid simply cannot keep up with the rising cost of tuition.

...if you haven't talked to your Student Financial Services counselor, you should! There is a tool on myPugetSound (Student Loan Statement) that will give you all your loan information and your estimated monthly repayment.

This is happening all over the country. The only advice Bryan really can offer is the reality of the situation.

Reader, if you haven't talked to your Student Financial Services counselor, you should! There is a tool on myPugetSound (Student Loan Statement) that will give you all your loan information and your estimated monthly repayment. It might be scary, but, if the goal is to be informed – get informed! Especially as tuition grows year after year.



I am finishing this article in a café in Amsterdam.

This past spring, I was awarded the Thomas J. Watson Fellowship.

This is an incredible, life-changing opportunity that I likely would not have received had I not also benefited from my Puget Sound education and the connections provided to me through it. But this formative year I am embarking on sits in tension with the reality that I just got off the phone with my mom. She was frantically asking me how much money she has to take out in a personal loan to pay off my private loans while I'm gone – yet another sacrifice she is making for me to try to let me take advantage of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. The Watson only helps pay for federal loans during one's fellowship year. So, although this was the most financially feasible option for me to take after graduation, it still proves difficult to navigate.

Even upon achieving some of my greatest dreams and biggest goals, my loans and my socioeconomic status will always be my number one priority. It's sink or swim. Do or die.

Some final thoughts: I wrote this article to hopefully elucidate a different narrative, one based primarily in the reality of being a low-income student at Puget Sound and maybe to spark some conversation about how the institution could better support students like me.

If you are a student at UPS who is taking out a ton of loans or who comes from a low-socioeconomic background, please know that you are not alone in feeling overwhelmed by money and the socioeconomic cards you were dealt. You are worthy and deserving of a Puget Sound education.



Sam Lilly in the Netherlands, the first country for their research during their Watson Fellowship Year.

Student Diversity Center related

# Scholarships

Apply by March 31, 2020

**Asian/Pacific  
Islander**

**Latinx  
Unidos**

**Black Student Union  
One More**

**LGBTQ+  
Leadership**

**Applications can be found on the Puget Sound webpage  
under Scholarships for Current Undergraduate Students.**

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## Hurley Community Service Scholarship

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One \$4,800 scholarship will be awarded to a currently enrolled student. to pursue a community service project over the course of one academic year. Stipulations apply.

Completed applications are due to Student Financial Services Jones 019,  
by **March 31, 2020**

Applications can be found on the Puget Sound webpage under Scholarships for Current Undergraduate Students.



## *Spiritual & Religious Life Scholarships*

Students interested in both on-campus and lifelong spiritual and religious leadership. This application applies to the following awards: Religious Leadership Award, Spiritual Life Scholar Award, Cyrus Ames Wright Scholarship, K. James Davis Chaplain's Award for Spirituality & Justice.

Applications due to Student Financial Services  
by **March 31, 2020**

Applications can be found on the Student Financial Services Webpage of [www.pugetsound.edu](http://www.pugetsound.edu)





Japanese Day of Remembrance

## **Remember, Not Remember: Developing an Exhibit about Japanese American Incarceration**

On Feb. 19, 1942, Executive Order 9066 authorized the United States military to conduct a mandatory evacuation of Japanese Americans on the West Coast. In Washington state, nearly 13,000 Japanese Americans were forcibly removed from their homes and placed in incarceration camps for the duration of World War II.

**February 19th  
12 pm | Rotunda**

Featuring:

Lifetime Seattle activist Yosh Nakagawa shares his story of incarceration during WWII and the significance of breaking silence.

~

Gwen Whiting, Lead Curator at the Washington State Historical Society, will discuss the development of an upcoming exhibit on Japanese American Incarceration.

LOGGERS IN TACOMA

# *Buy Black*

*Beauty Products*

*Support Local Black Businesses*

February 22, 2020

12:45-3:00 PM

RSVP by Feb. 17 at

[pathways@pugetsound.edu](mailto:pathways@pugetsound.edu)





# Watercolor Fridays

Sponsored by the University Chaplaincy

12:00-1:00 PM  
Piano Lounge  
All are welcome

# Green Dot Bystander Workshops

The Green Dot strategy is a comprehensive approach to violence prevention. The power of Green Dot is a simple shared vision, manifested through individual choices, to create a cultural change toward intolerance of violence. Get involved in helping others by attending a workshop and getting trained.

Fri. February 21  
4 - 9:30 pm  
WSC Boardroom  
Dinner and snacks  
provided

Fri. March 27  
4 - 9:30 pm  
Trimble Forum  
Dinner + snacks  
provided

Sat. April 04  
1 - 6:30 pm  
Library 053  
Snacks provided

Register at:  
[ups.edu/greendot](https://ups.edu/greendot)

Educate  
yourself  
and your  
friends

Deadline to register the  
day before the event;  
walk-ins are welcome

Joe Seamons & Ben Hunter are award-winning "folkster" duo from the Pacific Northwest.



UNIVERSITY CHAPLAINCY

SPRING 2020

# Blues Vespers

5:00-6:30 PM

All are free and open to the public,  
with 100% of tips going to the musicians

Sun. Feb 16

**Joe Seamons &  
Ben Hunter**

Sun. Mar. 8

**Randy Oxford Blues  
with Miranda  
Kichpanich**

Sun. Apr. 19

**Paul Green with  
the Brian Lee  
Band: Northwest  
Harmonica  
Blowout**

in Kilworth Memorial Chapel

