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Daily Local News

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Daily Local News (<http://www.dailylocal.com>)

WCU students design museum exhibits

By Bill Rettew, brettew@dailylocal.com

Wednesday, May 2, 2018



WEST CHESTER >> Every college campus has its unknown gems.

Almost “hidden,” in plain sight, at 775 S. Church St. at West Chester University’s Old Library, is the university’s Museum of Anthropology and Archeology.

Through February, the museum features several different displays concerning Rwanda.

Unlike the other museum spaces on campus, this museum is co-curated by students who picked up credit hours, while working on the newest exhibit, “Rwanda Nziza: Beautiful Rwanda.”

On Friday night, the Alumni Association sponsored a museum preview attended by 150 well-wishers and museum-goers.

After graduation, freshman Foster W. Krupp, hopes to work in museums. The university borrowed baboon and leopard specimens from the Delaware Natural History Museum and Krupp worked four months designing the animal exhibit.

“We get hands-on experiences,” Krupp said. “We’re not in the classroom all the time.

“This is a real museum that people can come visit five day a week.”

Michel Di Giovine is an assistant professor of anthropology and director of the museum.

He said the museum acts as a teaching laboratory for classes, which include, Collections Management, Museum Theory, Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Museum Exhibit Curation.

Three students are participating in internships at the Delaware Museum of Natural History. Students get to see what “goes on behind the scenes” and learn of museum techniques, said Helen Bilinski, who is exhibit manager at the natural history museum. Students visited there on a recent field trip.

The university holds 135,000 artifacts, some as old as 5,000 years. More than 1,000 items are cultural artifacts used in daily life, including fabrics and textiles.

Students checked out galleries at other museums and for the 10th year, the university has borrowed several items like the baboon and leopard from Delaware. A long-term loan to upgrade display cases was made by the Chester County Historical Society, along with glass donations from C&R Glass.

The first exhibit a visitor notices when entering the museum, located about 100 feet from the college’s mascot Golden Ram statue, is a floor-to-ceiling William Snyder III exhibit.

Hundreds of books containing 800,000 pages, or one page for each person killed during the Rwandan genocide. Snyder said the students learn about art and social activism.

“Art can make a difference,” he said.

Rebecca Chancellor, assistant professor in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology, and Psychology Department, and Aaron Rundus, assistant professor of the Psychology Department, are co-directors of the chimpanzee research station in Rwanda.

Rundus said that student visits to Africa are “immersive, cultural and historical experiences.”

Embroideries are collected by Juliana Meehan, curator of Pax Rwanda. More than a dozen embroideries created by the Women of Savane Rutongo-Kabuye are on display.

Hours: 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays when school is in session. To email the museum, go to museum@wcupa.edu.

Or check out the website at www.wcupa.edu/museum.

URL: <http://www.dailylocal.com/general-news/20180502/wcu-students-design-museum-exhibits>

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