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Gifts at work: spark wonder campaign

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spark wonder

By Laura J. Graham '07

Support from alumni and donors allows the Linfield community to shine. The ongoing \$75 million Spark Wonder campaign invests gifts – no matter what size – into Linfield’s people, programs and places. With the help of the entire community, Linfield’s uncommon experiences will spark wonder for generations.

Becoming her own kind of Wildcat

Elise Bedford '22 had a plan – graduate in three years, get real-world medical training and then attend medical school to become a doctor. What she didn’t know was where her journey would start.

Linfield was high on her list, but she questioned whether it was really the right place for her. Would she be able to discover her own path at a school her grandparents, aunt and uncle had also attended? A place she had been connected to her whole life?

“My grandma sat me down and said, ‘If you come into this not giving it a chance, you will waste time and money,’” Bedford remembers of her grandmother Nancy Haack '69. “She and my grandpa had this amazing time at Linfield. But she made sure I knew that my experience was going to be completely my own.”

And even before Bedford started her first year in McMinnville, she began to see how Linfield could help her achieve her goals.

“Seeing the cost of tuition was really daunting,” she said. “But at Linfield, I received several scholarships that cut tuition. It was significant.”

Linfield also set her on the path to graduate in three years. The school accepted the college credits she earned in high school and advisors worked with her on a pre-medicine course schedule to meet her desired timeline.

But, even in her shortened time at Linfield, Bedford has taken full advantage of the opportunities that Linfield has to offer.

“While I didn’t know much about liberal arts schools in the beginning, I am so glad that I ended up at one,” the biochemistry

and microbiology major said. “Each semester, I face a new challenge, but then I come out so interested in the class topic.”

A prime example is her love for food writing, a genre she never knew existed until an inquiry seminar her first year.

“After taking that course, I fell in love with this type of writing,” Bedford said.

Perhaps most influential in her time at Linfield is Bedford’s ongoing research with Shanna Bowman, assistant professor of biology. They are studying melanoma skin variants and exploring why people with red hair or albinism may be more susceptible to cancer. Bedford presented her work at the Murdock College Science Research Conference held in November 2021.

“Elise is driven, curious and independent,” Bowman said. “I am confident that the skills she has gained will greatly benefit her in graduate and medical school.”

Bedford’s experience in the laboratory has also strengthened her connection with her grandfather, Bob Haack '69. The retired high school biology teacher loves to talk science.

“He wants to know about what I am doing,” Bedford says. “As much as I love learning from him, it feels cool to have the roles flipped and to be able to discuss my research with him.”

Even Bedford’s post-graduation plans are uniquely her own. Bedford plans to take two gap years before attending medical school – the first year to earn a graduate degree in microbiology and the second to work as an EMT, gaining in-the-field medical experience.

It’s a journey that Bedford was able to uncover at Linfield – where the people, places and programs sparked her wonder for learning, exploring and connecting.

CHOOSING HER OWN ADVENTURE: Elise Bedford '22 created her own path at Linfield, tailored to her unique interests and career goals.



AN ARTISTIC EXPRESSION: A gift from Ronni Lacroute funded a new faculty position in art, filled by filmmaker and digital artist Kahlil Pedizisai (seen here working on a digital art piece with a Linfield student).

“I have always been super interested in people – the way that we work, how brains work and the chemistry behind it all,” she said. “Through my experience at Linfield, I have found something that I am good at and can see myself learning about for the rest of my life.”

Art course offerings expand with generous gift from donor

Linfield University’s College of Arts and Sciences expanded its art course offerings this fall, thanks to the help of longtime donor and arts patron Ronni Lacroute.

The support allows the school to fund a full-time faculty position in the Department of Art. This position was filled by Kahlil Pedizisai, a filmmaker and digital artist who prioritizes hands-on experiences for the students in his film and photography courses. Pedizisai had previously served as a part-time visiting artist.

“With the support from Ronni Lacroute, we are taking art beyond the classroom and creating high-impact experiences for students, faculty and the greater community,” Pedizisai said.

Pedizisai plans to continue DEPTH OF FIELD, a series of presentations and dialogues between Linfield students and photographers, photo editors and other artists specializing in digital photography from throughout North America.

“There is nothing better than making and teaching art. It is the combination of passion and pathways,” Pedizisai said. “As a working artist in the classroom, I can place students on a viable pathway so they can make a life and living doing work they love.”

New equipment increases equity in education and training

One Wild Day, Linfield’s annual giving day, was held in May 2021. Three months later, the newest class at the Linfield University-Good Samaritan School of Nursing received beginning nursing equipment kits – valued at \$200 each – at fall orientation.

The money raised also allowed the purchase of two female manikins with darker skin, an obstetrics simulation bed and a clinical baby warmer.

“Introducing visual diversity within our manikin family serves as the first step toward equitable delivery of healthcare,” said Christina Untiet, the School of Nursing’s experiential learning center manager. “It allows students to be better prepared to

enter the workforce, specifically with caring for mother and child patients and patients from diverse backgrounds.”

In addition, the equipment better reflects the work environments the students will find in their clinical rotations during the latter parts of their nursing education.

“Nursing schools have a very difficult time placing students in labor and delivery experiences because of specialization and the high staff turnover,” said Kim Dupree Jones, dean of the School of Nursing. “With the new equipment, our students can practice these vital skills prior to graduation and become better practitioners.”

Business school students attend VenuesNow Conference

Linfield students recently took their learning out of the classroom and to the largest conference for live entertainment venues. Natalie Welch, an assistant professor in the School of Business, took four graduate and undergraduate students to the VenuesNow Conference Oct. 21-22, 2021, in Seattle. Travel and accommodations for the students were paid for by donations made to the School of Business Dean’s Fund.

The conference included discussions and networking events focused on the existing and future vision of the industry.

“My favorite parts were seeing how excited and engaged the students were with the sessions and watching them network with industry professionals,” Welch said. “I could see them making connections between their studies and the practical application, and I loved that.”

Linfield students were able to attend as many sessions as they wanted on topics as diverse as venue technology, operations, sustainability, security, sponsorships, ticketing and design.

The conference was held in conjunction with the opening-week celebration of Climate Pledge Arena, the new home of the WNBA’s Seattle Storm and the NHL’s Seattle Kraken. The Linfield students were given a private tour of the new facility on the day of its opening.

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