



FAIRMONT STATE FOUNDATION

Official Newsletter - March 2020

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School of Nursing receives \$100,000 for patient simulator

The Fairmont State University School of Nursing has received \$100,000 from grants and private funders to support the purchase of an advanced pediatric patient simulator that will provide its students with enhanced learning opportunities and realistic real-world experiences.

"In the acute care clinical environment we are not able to guarantee that all students can participate in the care of pediatric patients. Many times, if at all, students are frequently placed in the role of an observer," said Laura Clayton, associate dean of the School of Nursing. "The use of simulated learning experiences will allow the students to assume the role of a registered nurse caring for pediatric clients, including those who are acutely ill."

"Our current pediatric simulator is over nine years old and provides limited learning opportunities for our students," Clayton said. "At the time of its purchase, it was considered the state of the art; however, simulation manikins have progressed in the last couple of years."

The Maier Foundation, Inc, through a \$50,000 grant, along with the Carl DelSignore Foundation, through a \$25,000 grant, and \$25,000 from an individual, anonymous funder provided the funds needed to purchase the simulator. "The hands-on experience our nursing students will get by virtue of this generous gift will set them apart from other job candidates," said Fairmont State University President Mirta M. Martin.

The primary focus of the Maier Foundation, Inc. is on the furtherance of higher education in West Virginia and on the higher education of West Virginia residents attending colleges and universities elsewhere. In addition, the Foundation makes educationally-related distributions to cultural and other organizations in the Kanawha Valley.

"Our hope is that these funds will assist the School of Nursing as it upgrades its simulation laboratory to provide an enhanced learning experience for the students," said Brad M. Rowe, president of the foundation.

The Carl Del Signore Foundation was created after the passing of Carl Del Signore in 1985. Del Signore was the son of Italian immigrants and hailed from Tucker County. He quit school in the tenth grade, fought in World War II on the USS Harder and later formed the Buffalo Coal Company, as well as many other companies.

"We are glad to be a partner with the School of Nursing in providing the best educational experience for their students," said James L. Crickard, treasurer of the foundation.



Why West Virginia is the aviation state

Tyler Lucas is not your typical pilot. You'll often find the Fairmont State University alum flying around the East Coast in a Lear Jet. Sometimes, he has corporate clients on board. Other times, he has organs – hearts, kidneys, lungs, livers – nestled safely on dry ice inside a Coleman brand cooler. That's because he's rushing the much-needed organs to help save the lives of sick patients at nearby hospitals.

"It's just like flying any other passenger," says the humble 25-year-old who still lives in Fairmont. "The most rewarding part of my current job is just knowing that people are receiving these organs that they waited on lists for. I have a hand in making sure that people are getting the healthcare they need, especially when there's something as important as internal organs."

Lucas, a native West Virginian, always knew he wanted to be a pilot. He enrolled in Fairmont State's Aviation Technology Program at just the right time, as there is a shortage of pilots in America. "The numbers are staggering," says Jason Vosburgh, an assistant professor of Aviation Technology at Fairmont and chair of the department. "The last number I heard was around 800,000 – so there is an opportunity to fill this need."

It's a recent Sunday afternoon and Vosburgh is giving a tour of the school's hangar near the North Central West Virginia Airport. The 48-year-old looks the part of a pilot straight out of central casting: a bomber jacket over a white shirt and striped tie, perfectly coiffed hair. He climbs into a twin-engine Piper Aztec, one of seven planes owned by the university, each one emblazoned with the Fairmont State University logo.

After around 10 hours of flight time, students are already getting the keys to fly these planes by themselves. "It's fantastic seeing the families come from all the counties in West Virginia," Vosburgh says. "You see Mom and Dad, their eyes sparkle when they know that their son or daughter are going to be flying a \$400,000 airplane in the next few weeks. You have your dream and we can create the reality for that dream. We live vicariously through our students."



Jason Vosburgh
Chair and Assistant Professor, Aviation Technology Program

Vosburgh moved from California six years ago because he saw something special in this part of Appalachia. "West Virginia is the aviation state," he says matter-of-factly, noting that Chuck Yeager, a West Virginian, was the first pilot to break the sound barrier. "The personality of the people in West Virginia is self-determinative, confident, stand on your own two feet, self-sufficient. That is aviation culture. And the people here are some of the greatest pilots."

His goal is to help shepherd the department to the next level. "With aviation, you never arrive," explains Vosburgh. "There's always something more to learn. There's another airplane, there's another airport, there's another complexity. There's another level."

For alumni like Lucas, the degree is their ticket to freedom. A career in aviation means you can be based anywhere. "It's easy to commute when you're going Mach .78," Vosburgh says of the nearly 600 miles per hour speed. "You can fly anywhere in the country and you can live here in West Virginia. It's like telecommuting, but we go really fast." The aviation industry is desperate for pilots and, straight out of college, students can secure jobs earning upwards of \$100,000 on the ground (airport management) or in the air (commercial pilot).

Asked what he would tell potential students considering a degree in aviation, Lucas is quick with a reply. "Do it and don't look back because it's the greatest career on the face of the planet," he says. "I cannot stress how awesome this job is."

Scholarship helps students earn nursing degrees

Clarksburg-native Mary Ann Yambrick Sharp never attended Fairmont State University and was unable to become a registered nurse because her family could not afford college.

But thanks to Sharp and her daughter, Kristal Ayres, several nursing students from Harrison County pursuing a bachelor's degree in nursing at Fairmont State will be eligible for a nearly \$5,000 scholarship to help them through their junior and senior years. The Sharp's family created the Mary Ann Sharp Scholars fund to honor her and to help other disadvantaged, high potential students achieve their dream of a career in nursing.

Through the scholarship, four juniors and two seniors from Harrison County will be eligible for the scholarship in fall 2020, and the same four juniors will receive the scholarship as seniors in fall 2021.

"A great education that leads directly to lifelong career opportunities is the ultimate gift," Ayres said. "We hope that the recipients, when they have the opportunity, will 'pay our gift forward' to others."

Sharp, the only daughter of a coal miner, attended Victory High School and dreamed of enrolling at Fairmont State University but couldn't. As a 5-foot, 95-pound adult without a college education, she knew she would have to be more determined, more creative and have higher energy than her peers to avoid being underestimated and overlooked.

All those qualities were essential when, as a young mother of two, she revisited the idea of a nursing career—but with a twist. Sharp and her husband started a temporary placement agency for nurses which combined her husband's expertise in the temporary help industry with her passion for nursing.

Starting with just a home office, they launched S.R.T. Medstaff in the Baltimore/Washington market. The directors of nursing at several area hospitals were reluctant to give her a chance until she promised "never to disappoint." Nurses were thrilled to choose their own schedule and make more per hour, so they recruited their friends. At a time where there were no cell phones or internet, determination, perseverance and tenacity turned her dream into reality.

S.R.T. Medstaff became one of the largest temporary help agencies for nurses in the United States. It



attracted the attention of a publicly traded company, and Sharp sold the business.

"Mary Ann Sharp's story is truly inspirational, and we are forever grateful to her and Kristal for making the dream of a university education and a lifelong career in nursing a reality for Harrison County students," said Julie R. Cryser, Fairmont State Foundation president.

Sharp retired to Florida to enjoy being with her children and grandchildren, as well as playing tennis and golf. She visited Clarksburg regularly over the years, has wonderful friends there, loves pepperoni rolls from Tomaro's bakery, and knows that Ritzy Lunch has the best hot dogs.

Sharp was diagnosed with a terminal disease several years ago, but Ayres has continued and pursued her philanthropic interests.

"Everyone has to make their own choices with regard to charitable giving, but helping a talented young person receive a superior education is a gift that lasts a lifetime," Ayres said. "Education is truly the gift that keeps on giving."

Kristal is married to Jon Ayres and has two children, ages 23 and 21. Kristal is passionate about education, holds a doctorate degree in educational leadership, and leads a client success team as the chief services officer with BrightBytes, a research-based educational technology company.

Her husband has been in the field of education for more than 25 years and has been a high school and college baseball coach for 30 years. Kristal's oldest child, Thomas Ayres, earned a bachelor's in criminal justice and is currently a police officer in Marietta, GA. Saira Ayres is 21 years old and is finishing her senior year at Florida Gulf Coast University.

Academy for the Arts offers arts education to Community

Auditions for *Matilda the Musical* and *Shrek Jr.* are just weeks away, and 13-year-old Riley Moore still needs to choose a musical number and practice her comedic monologue.

It's the reason she and the 10 other teens gathered in a second-floor classroom at Fairmont State University's Wallman Hall signed up for *The Perfect Package!*, a class that promises to give their audition packages a professional polish.

The class is one of many Moore has taken through Fairmont State's Academy for the Arts. The academy began more than two decades ago as a place for community members to take private music lessons and has since morphed into an all-encompassing, all-ages program that offers lessons in acting, dance, music, musical theater, visual arts and voice, all right on Fairmont State's campus.



The culminating event each year is a musical. This year, the academy will stage two: *Shrek Jr.* in May and *Matilda*, co-produced with Fairmont State's Department of Communication and Theatre Arts, in June.

If Moore is cast in one of the productions, which she's counting on, it will be her third.

"Honestly, I wouldn't even know I had this passion without this place," Moore said.

It's a refrain that Academy for the Arts Director Leigh Ann Bolyard has heard many times. While local in-school programs and after-school lessons teach the basics, none of them are able to provide the professional instruction, wide range of offerings and access to university facilities that the academy provides.

"We're filling a gap," Bolyard said. "We see a real need for this in our community."

"We have such a wealth of talent here with our kids and instructors," said Jessica Ford, whose daughter, Cate, is currently enrolled in a dance class. "It's a hidden gem."

In a typical 10-week term, 125 to 170 students from Marion and neighboring counties register for group classes and private lessons, a number that has grown over the past several years. So many of those students return to audition for the musical that there often aren't enough parts to go around.

It's one of the reasons the academy is producing two shows this year, hoping all who want to are able to participate.

But all of this growth requires money, which the academy hopes to raise with the help of the Fairmont State Foundation. Academy programming has traditionally been self-funded, with tuition dollars paying for instruction and production costs. But more participation means more shows, and more shows require additional sets, staff and costumes, which tuition alone cannot cover.

In addition to raising money for *Matilda* and *Shrek Jr.*, Bolyard would also like to expand the academy's existing scholarship fund, which offers need and merit-based assistance to deserving students.

"We never want someone not to sign up for a class or private lessons because of finances," she said. "The bigger we build our scholarship fund, the more we can offer. And we really believe in the importance of the arts to children and teens. Many studies have shown it and we've seen it firsthand — the arts build confidence."

Contact us

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Spies like us: Fairmont State University's National Security and Intelligence program

Four intelligence analysts are hunched over a computer screen. On the wall behind them are various maps of the world and three clocks that show the hour in different times zones. They have tracked everything from the Russian military's involvement in the Ukraine to vulnerabilities with NASA's Hubble Telescope.

But on this particular Tuesday afternoon, with the lights off and computer screens bright, they are diving into the nefarious underworld of email scams. The project's codename is Operation Trident.

The lab is known as OSIX, short for Open Source Intelligence Exchange, and it's run by the cream of the crop from the school's National Security and Intelligence (NSI) program. Out of the department's approximately 200 students, only 16 are currently working in the lab. "We take our best and brightest and put them in that environment," explains Professor David Abruzzino.

Students in the OSIX lab sift through court records, public databases and, now more than ever, social media posts. When the devastating floods ravaged West Virginia towns in the summer of 2016, a group of FSU students were monitoring Facebook and Twitter for people in need. "OSIX was instrumental in identifying somebody who had a need for police assistance and then notifying the state authorities," says Professor Todd Clark, who mentors the students in the lab. "Social media monitoring really paid off. It's a key to a lot of what we do." The

advantage these students have, he says, is that they grew up with these technologies. "They have a sixth sense of where to look on social media. They have a fresh perspective."

Nick Oliveto, a 29-year-old native of Fairmont, was one of the first students to partake in the OSIX lab before graduating FSU in 2012. After school, he got a job with Lockheed Martin before moving on to law school. He's now working as a counter-terrorism analyst in the Maryland suburbs. "The program gave me the professional foundation needed to pursue my career," he says. "I use what I learned at Fairmont every day."

Oliveto credits his success to teachers like Abruzzino who, before arriving at FSU a decade ago, was in the CIA where his area of expertise was the heroin trade in Afghanistan. "In many cases when we're talking about concepts that are expressed in their textbooks, I can bring up a real-world experience I had where I faced that situation and can explain to them how it played out in a real-world scenario," Abruzzino says.

Students have come from across the country – as far away as Oregon – to enroll in Fairmont's NSI department. The school's proximity to the national security community in D.C. makes having guest speakers easy. And the FBI office in Clarksburg comes to campus to recruit students for internships.

Alumni have landed gigs at dozens of national agencies – including the CIA, FBI and NASA. Many have opted to stay in the region and work for the West Virginia Division of Homeland Security and the West Virginia Army National Guard. An NSI master's program is in the works for those students who want to further their education even more.

Back in the lab, the team of students are prepping a presentation they will be giving at the state capitol in Charleston. There, they will meet state delegates and senators and show them the latest project they are working on. It may not be the CIA, but it's a step in the right direction. As a sign on the wall declares: "You don't have to start out as an expert. You just have to start."



Professor funds police scholarship

Fairmont State University professor Dr. John McLaughlin is working to help police officers looking to attend college by creating the Dr. John E. McLaughlin Police Scholarship.

McLaughlin, a criminal justice professor, grew up in Miami-Dade County, Florida, where he started his career in law enforcement after receiving his bachelor's degree. After 26 years, earning his master's and doctorate degrees, he retired as a lieutenant in the economic crime bureau heading up the Mortgage Fraud Task Force.



"I decided to donate to the Fairmont State Foundation after seeing a need in the policing community. This allows officers to get their education and become better officers," McLaughlin said.

McLaughlin completed his master's at Florida International University, where he began teaching part-time, and his doctorate at Lynn University.

"Miami-Dade had a program where they provided tuition reimbursement for all employees. After you completed each course, they would reimburse you 50 percent of your tuition," he said. "For that reason, I started taking graduate classes and got into a routine and did not stop until I got my master's and doctorate. I was working two jobs while earning my doctorate. I used the money that I received from teaching and the reimbursements to pay for my education, so I did not have to take out loans."

In 2013, he came to Fairmont State University as a professor in the Criminal Justice Program, teaching police operations, criminal investigations, crime scene investigations, Spanish for law enforcement, terrorism, advanced criminal law and homeland security.

Campus highlights

Alumnus appointed to Board of Governors: West Virginia Governor Jim Justice has announced the appointment of WV native Rusty Hutson to the Fairmont State University Board of Governors.

Hutson graduated from Fairmont State College with a degree in accounting and earned his CPA License. After college, he spent 13 years steadily progressing into multiple leadership roles at well-known banking institutions such as Bank One and Compass Bank. His final years in the banking industry were spent as CFO of Compass Financial Services. Building upon his experiences in the Oil & Gas Industry as well as the financial sector, Hutson established Diversified Gas & Oil in 2001. He continues to lead his team and expand the company's footprint throughout the Appalachian Basin. With a rapidly growing portfolio, Hutson remains focused on operational excellence and creating shareholder value.

University ranked among top in teacher preparation programs: Fairmont State University is among five traditional undergraduate programs in West Virginia to earn an A from the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) in the 2020 Teacher Prep Review. The new data and analysis from the NCTQ found significant progress on adoption of scientifically-based methods for teaching reading by the nation's teacher preparation programs with West Virginia ranking 15th in terms of the average score achieved by its programs.

Fairmont State University ranks among the top military friendly colleges: Fairmont State University has been recognized as a top ranked institution offering the best online Military Friendly Colleges by Intelligent.com. Fairmont State University was listed among 60 other competing public institutions across the nation. The student-focused comprehensive research guide is based on an assessment of 1,604 accredited colleges and universities. Each program is evaluated based on curriculum quality, graduation rate, reputation, and post-graduate employment.

Fairmont family establish scholarship in honor of parents



A Fairmont native and his family hope that through their newly established scholarship, West Virginia students who wish to pursue an education at Fairmont State will achieve their academic and life goals.

"We want to help provide assistance to West Virginia students to avail themselves of the many opportunities that a Fairmont State University education can provide," said Dr. Errol Reese, who received his bachelor's degree from Fairmont State in 1960 and his doctorate of dentistry from West Virginia University in 1963.

The Dr. Edgar B. Reese and Elizabeth Reese Scholarship, named for his parents, will provide scholarships to students from West Virginia, with first preference to those with financial need.

"We wanted to honor our parents in a way they would be proud of and consistent with their values," Reese said.

"Our parents provided me, my brother Charles L. Reese, and my sisters Emmajo Reese Shearer and Jane Reese Oreskovich, who all attended Fairmont State, with endless support and encouragement --simply excellent parents and role models," Reese said. All four siblings agreed to establishing the scholarship endowment to honor their parents.

Reese began his higher education career at Fairmont State just one week after graduating from East Fairmont High School. His goal was to complete the combined bachelor's degree program in two regular academic years plus five summer sessions, to help lower the costs for attending college for his parents.

"My educational and life experiences at Fairmont State University and WVU helped me achieve the successes in my long career in dentistry, dental education and university administration."

Reese started his career in the United States Army Dental Corps. His career took off after serving his country and earning a master's degree and specialty training in prosthodontics at the University of Detroit. He joined the faculty of the University of Maryland at Baltimore and spent decades in academia as a professor and dean. He ended his career in higher education in the United States as the president of the University of Maryland at Baltimore in 1994 but then worked with the World Health Organization and served as a Visiting Professor at the University of Dublin, Trinity College, in Ireland.

"There is no greater legacy for our family than assistance to future FSU students," Reese said. "Just reflect on what FSU has meant and continues to mean to the Reese family."



Nottingham joins Foundation Staff

Paulina Nottingham has joined the Fairmont State Foundation staff as the new director of development.

Nottingham, who holds a both a bachelor's degree in marketing and an MBA with an emphasis in nonprofit management from West Virginia Wesleyan College in Buckhannon, started Jan. 2. She will be working as a front-line fund raiser, meeting one-on-one with donors to help them match their interests with funding opportunities at Fairmont State University.



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Mark your Calendars

The second annual
Falcon Day of Giving
is scheduled for
Thursday, November 5,
11.5.20

A circular logo with a maroon background and white text. The words "FALCON DAY OF GIVING" are arranged in a circle around a central white silhouette of a falcon's head. A white banner across the middle of the circle contains the date "11.5.20".

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