bGAB participants embark on service endeavors across the nation

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Habitat partner perseveres despite hardship

Amy Olea shares path to home ownership after years of renting

Stepha Poulin
Editor-in-Chief

After living through financial, emotional and physical abuse at the hands of her ex-husband, Amy Olea knew she needed to build a new life for her family.

Olea, now 39 years old, spent most of her life renting subpar apartments for her family to call home. Due to drafty windows and outdated baseboard heaters, she paid $300 to $400 electric bills — in addition to rent. But in May 2018, the promise of a new home through the Wood County Habitat for Humanity fulfilled her goal of becoming a homeowner.

Olea said her goal began with faith in God and her hope to create a better future for her family. She and her children, 13-year-old Ryan and 19-year-old Kerrie, managed to get to this point by staying hopeful in spite of adversity.

She first received a driver’s license in 2017 and bought a car after a divorce in 2016. Her ex-husband, who was an addict during their marriage, used the fact she couldn’t drive to keep her reliant on his support.

She endured the abuse of her husband, but when he threatened to kill their daughter Karrie, Olea couldn’t remain there any longer.

“I told God, ‘Please help me, I don’t know what to do.’” Olea said.

A voice from within answered her, and Olea did as it said. She immediately contacted her landlord, changed the locks and called her ex-mother-in-law.

“Once I got rid of that negativity, it was like everything fell in place.”

For Olea, hearing that voice set her on the path to homeownership. By 2018, her goal was to own a home.

Eventually she stumbled upon applications for a Habitat home in an email from her son’s school. Despite her goal, Olea considered not pursuing the application. She wasn’t sure if she would qualify due to her credit score and student loan debt.

“Then I contemplated for a half hour or so before I made the call,” she said.

After discussing her concerns with Mark Ohashi, executive director of the Wood County Habitat for Humanity, she said he encouraged her to apply.

Olea said she was “a little bit nervous.” Habitat sent a denial letter, but it wasn’t due to student loan debt; the organization didn’t have the correct phone number on Olea’s application.

Luckily the error was corrected, and Olea was accepted as an applicant. She still had to go through a lengthy application process, completing committee meetings, home visits and simply waiting to hear back from Habitat.

“I didn’t hear back from them for a month,” she said. “I felt this really weird vibe.”

It seemed like her suspicions were true. Despite completing other parts of the process without setbacks, her student loan debt now disqualified her from partnering with Habitat.

“This can’t be the end,” she recalls telling her daughter.

And it wasn’t the end.

“Something told me to get up and research it.”

Olea did some online research and discovered Habitat can’t consider student loans as part of an applicant’s debt-to-income ratio. She contacted Ohashi, and the application process continued.

After patiently waiting, Habitat asked to inspect the outside of Olea’s apartment. She knew this wasn’t really necessary, since she wasn’t the owner, and she had already completed the required home visits.

But at this home visit, the Habitat team surprised Olea; she found out Habitat wanted to partner with her for the 2019 home build.

While the home won’t be completed until February 2020, she’s already reaping the benefits of partnering with Habitat. She helps build other partners’ homes, attends financial literacy classes and will eventually help build her own home.

“Things can change from complete rock bottom to glory,” Olea said. “God turned my life around; a complete 360.”

On April 5, 2017, Olea heard a song on K-LOVE (WNKL-FM): “Just Be Held” by Casting Crowns. She remembers the exact date, because the song’s lyrics spoke of her situation with extreme accuracy.

“Hold it all together
Everybody needs you strong
But life hits you out of nowhere
And barely leaves you holding on
And when you’re tired of fighting
Chained by your control
There’s freedom in surrender
Lay it down and let it go”

Ever since that day, Olea has told her children “you can come out on top no matter what happens.”
How to find equilibrium in life’s chaos
Taking a step back and self reflection are important

Rosiland Fletcher
Columnist

Busy, busy, busy.

It’s halfway through the spring semester, and personally, I’m getting a little stressed with all the assignments and projects I am currently working on.

But, I’ve also been a bit stressed with life. Starting out as a first-year student and a young adult, I’m experiencing new stressors and having to plan a full-week schedule to assure I’m staying on top of things.

The consistent stream of school, work and other things like simply going to the grocery store or scheduling a doctor’s appointment can be overwhelming at times.

Sometimes, I want to relax and not have to face all my responsibilities.

But, at some point, I have to completely understand: life is not meant to, nor will ever, be on an equilibrium.

Though I realize this, I don’t tend to always practice it. Yes, I may use a planner and take time through the days to find a calm in the storm, but each day isn’t consistent, akin to life.

There’s a lot to consider and contemplate when trying to find some kind of balance in life. There’s stress, anxiety and the unexpectedness, and as people, we always want to take control. The unfortunate thing is we don’t hold the power. I find it important we realize this; we can’t control all things in our lives.

When we try to, we see the chaos, but when take a step back and hand it to a higher power or allow nature to take its course, we’re more likely to see life as a beautiful mess.

I am still learning to see life this way and take things thrown my way with compassion rather than displeasure.

As midterms approach, I recommend taking a step back. Take a moment to self-reflect and see where you’re at. Are you stressed, anxious, overwhelmed? Are you facing an unexpected situation? Wherever you’re at, take that moment to breathe and find a tranquil place in the beautiful mess that is life.

Good luck, Falcons!

Letter to the editor: Wally Pretzer
Gish sisters are an important part of film history

The Black Student Union at BGSU would like to see the Gish Film Theater name removed from the Student Union. These students should know that the Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize has been awarded to several African Americans, including Spike Lee.

In 1915, D.W. Griffith produced The Birth of a Nation, a racist movie that put the Ku Klux Klan in a favorable light. Lillian Gish played a nurse from the North caring for wounded soldiers. Because of her appearance in the film, the Black Students Union has implied that she is a racist; her sister, Dorothy, who was not in the film, is, by association with her sister, also, apparently, considered a racist.

The Birth of a Nation has never been shown in the Gish Film Theater. President Rodney Rogers, assisted by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Ray Craig, appointed a task force of students, faculty and other stakeholders to review the controversy to decide whether the name should be removed.

What is appalling is that there is this movement afoot to defame the stellar film achievements of Lillian and Dorothy Gish, born and raised in Ohio. There is no doubt, in my mind, that if these black students succeed in their defamation of the characters of Lillian and Dorothy Gish, they will have destroyed important film history. Ralph Haven Wolfe founded the Gish Film Theater in 105 Hanna Hall in 1976. Ms. Gish came to the BGSU campus at least four times to be honored. If the Gish Film Theater name is removed, I think that it will indicate to the world that Bowling Green State University, as an institution dedicated to providing opportunities for differing views, has failed in that endeavor.
Happy moments that have been happening before our eyes

Morgan Ward
Columnist

All I seem to hear about in the news is a lot of sad things going on. So, here I am sharing some happiness the world isn’t talking about.

1. The Gerber 2019 baby made history.
Kairi Yang is the first Gerber baby of Hmong descent. She is 15 months and full of cuteness. Hmong are an ethnic group from China and Southeast Asia with their own language. She was chosen from a record-breaking 544,000 of other entries.

2. Lady Gaga won her first Oscar.
I am a huge fan of the movie “A Star is Born.” If you haven’t seen it, I highly recommend you go to Redbox and get it. RIGHT. NOW. She won this Oscar for the song “Shallow” alongside Bradley Cooper.

3. Ariana Grande is a best in the studio.
Grande came out with not only one album, but TWO within the past couple of months. She is also going on tour very soon!

4. 42 people were sworn in as American citizens in Cleveland.
Last month, there was a ceremony to congratulate a huge group of people that are finally considered to be American citizens. Now they can say they are able to live in America happily.

5. Disney is coming out with new movies.
Disney has been a part of my childhood and it will continue to be a part of my children’s in the future. Disney is coming out with some new movies that are either very exciting or not in the public’s interest. Soon to hit the screen this summer will be “Toy Story 4.” Other movies to soon hit the screen are “Frozen 2” and “High School Musical 4.” Although everyone has different opinions, I believe we should give them a chance.

Columnist explains why it’s okay if college isn’t the right fit

Going to college should not be the expectation

Mary Ross
Columnist

In this day, there is so much pressure on high school students to continue their education at a college or university. I know I felt it when I was a senior. This pressure results in people going to a college or university when they aren’t necessarily meant for it. In some cases, this pressure to receive a post-secondary education when it’s not necessarily right for a person results in them dropping out or failing school entirely. In the last week, I’ve heard from a couple of my friends about kids I went to high school with dropping out or failing college because it wasn’t right for them.

These kids, and probably many more students receiving post-secondary educations, feel the pressure to do so because there is a stigma around not having a college degree.

However, there is NOTHING wrong with not having a degree. There is NOTHING wrong with going for a semester or a couple semesters and realizing that college is not for a person. There is NOTHING wrong with deciding a post-secondary education isn’t right for you.

I mean, my entire senior year of high school, I didn’t want to go to college. I didn’t think college was right for me. My plan was to save as much money as I could, join the Peace Corps fresh out of high school and travel the world. Obviously, I changed my mind. But that doesn’t change the fact I didn’t think college was it for me.

I didn’t want to have insane amounts of debt. I didn’t want to be in such a high-stress environment. I didn’t want to run on coffee. I didn’t want to do a ton of homework.

But I felt the pressure to continue school. It was expected I go to school. It was expected I get a degree. It was expected I excel in school and after school; it’s expected I excel in my career. But those expectations came from others.

My expectations for myself ultimately have become to continually push myself to be better and be as happy as possible with my life in the process. I have disregarded what other people expect of me, unless disregard for their expectations inhibits my ability to achieve mine.

My expectations are why I ultimately decided to attend college. I’m going to get a degree that allows me to see the world in many different lights as to be a better person and citizen. And I’m going to get a degree that allows me to do the one thing I love to do more than anything – write.

Despite my story turning from thinking college isn’t for me to deciding to attend college, the point remains that college isn’t for everyone. And that’s okay.

There are so many other options out there besides a post-secondary education. People can join the workforce, enlist in the military, take some time off the travel the world, join the Peace Corp, go to a trade school and much more.

There is no shame in deciding college isn’t the right fit. There is no shame in doing a 180 degree turn in life to do something completely different. The happiest life stems from knowing what is right for you and going and getting that life.
BGSU student leads campus community, despite hardships

Brianna Blackburn
Reporter

“Self-made” may just be BGSU economics junior Summer McVicker’s mantra, but it appears to speak for itself as McVicker continues to overcome financial hardships, work through the tragedy of her father’s death and continue to build her successful reputation as a student.

When McVicker was 17, her mother could no longer afford to pay for her and her four-year-old little brother. She moved in with a friend of her senior year of high school and has since been financially independent. She attends college by receiving academic scholarships and working as a tutor.

McVicker said she knew she wanted to be different than the many students who attend college without financial support by not having to work minimum wage jobs.

“Everything has an opportunity cost. So you can either be working eight hours a day at a job to get by or you can be involved in activities. It’s really hard to maximize that sweet spot between being financially stable and being involved to build a resume and show future employers this is what makes me a good candidate,” McVicker said.

An Honors College student, involved with the Center for Leadership, a tutor for student athletes in the Learning Commons, the treasurer of Undergraduate Student Government, on the Pan-Hellenic Ethics Committee, a member of Kappa Delta and an intern on the Student Allocation Board, McVicker has shown her motivation to be involved. She continued to embrace that mindset even when tragedy struck her family.

McVicker’s dad suffered from a sudden heart attack and died the summer of 2018, before she entered her third year at BGSU.

“When he died I knew I wanted to make him proud. I stayed motivated to keep my head on my shoulders because I know he wouldn’t want me to give up, so I decided to make my life full,” McVicker said.

According to McVicker, the tragedy of her father’s loss taught her a lot about who she wanted to be.

“When it’s my time to go, I will have wanted to know I did everything in my power to be happy, to do good for those around me and myself and to fulfill my goals,” McVicker said.

“It made me thankful for hard work and for life in general, which I suppose most 20-year-olds don’t think about. I guess that’s just what happens when you are so close to death.”

Summer McVicker is a firm believer in raising awareness of women’s issues on campus and the improvement of women’s economics.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY SUMMER MCVICKER

Read the rest online @ bgfalconmedia.com.
We invite you to worship with us and look forward to meeting you soon!

Church Directory

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**“You have chosen BGSU for your academic journey. We look forward to joining you on your spiritual journey.”**
BG Spotlight: Kylee Furar

Megan Borger
Falcon Communications

Kylee Furar is a freshman exercise science major and has recently been selected to take part on the U.S.A. Cheerleading Team.

Furar has been involved in cheerleading since she was 3 years old. She has spent countless hours in the gym training and working on becoming the best she can be.

“I realized how amazing of an experience it was gonna be and being there made me want to work my hardest and prove to my coach that they choose the right person.” Furar said about her first experience in Memphis, Tennessee for the first work weekend of the U.S.A. National Team.

Furar said when coming to BGSU she never imagined being selected for the U.S.A. National Team, even though she always watched the team perform. She is very excited for this once-in-a-lifetime experience, and she cannot wait to meet new people from other countries. Furar is ready to go down to Florida for training in three weeks.
Women’s basketball defeated in first round of playoffs

Zane Miller
Sports Reporter

The Falcon women’s basketball team was defeated by the Kent State Golden Flashes 86-62 Monday in the first round of the MAC playoffs, eliminating the Falcons from further participation in the tournament.

The first quarter of the game saw Kent State jump out to a commanding lead, as they outshot the Falcons 25-7 with freshman guard Asiah Dingle leading Kent State with 8 points and junior guard Ali Poole following close behind with 6 points. Kent State started out the quarter with a bang, getting 6 points on a pair of successful 3-pointers. While the Falcons had the next layup, Kent State went on to take the next 8 points, a run only broken up by a Falcons free throw. Kent State claimed the next 8 consecutive points to grab the early 20-point advantage.

In the second quarter, Kent State continued to hang on to the lead with a 20-15 quarter, as Kent State freshman forward Lindsey Thall and junior guard Megan Carter each led their team with 6 points on the quarter. The Falcons also had two players tied in leading the offense, as freshman guard Morgan McMillen and senior forward Maddie Cole each had 5 points, with the teams heading into the locker rooms with Kent State maintaining a 45-22 lead.

As the teams returned for the second half, they held even through the third quarter as they tied 22-22 in the third. However, Kent State still held on to a 67-44 advantage with 10 minutes to go. Dingle again led Kent State on offense with 12 points in the quarter. Falcons junior guard Andrea Cecil also had a strong performance with 10 points.

Kent State outscored the team once again in the fourth quarter, with a 19-18 advantage to take an 86-62 win and advance onto the next round of the playoffs. The Flashes eliminated the Falcons from further competition, as the team will also finish the season going wireless on the road against MAC opponents.

Cecil led the Falcons with 7 points in the quarter, along with McMillen who had 4 points to close out the game. The best scoring run for the Falcons came just after the midway point of the quarter, as Cole started out the rally with a successful layup attempt, followed up by a Cole free throw and a layup from Cecil, which after a Kent State score was followed up by a layup from freshman guard Kadie Hempfling.

Kent State had five players reach double-digit point totals during the game, with Dingle earning 25 points, Poole finishing with 14 points, Carter coming in with 12 points, Thall following with 11 points and senior center Merissa Barber-Smith, who finished with 10 total points on the night. Barber-Smith also finished the game with a total of 20 rebounds.

For the Falcons, Cecil led the team with 17 total points, aided by a strong second half, while McMillen had 15 points and Cole finished with 10 points.

The team will head into the offseason looking to improve on a 9-21 overall record with a 2-16 record in the MAC.

Lebron James to miss playoffs for first time since 2005

Max Lewton
Sports Reporter

For the past 14 seasons, it has been pretty much a given that LeBron James would be in the playoffs. LeBron has dominated the competition each year in the regular season, reaching the NBA finals eight years in a row. However, all good things must come to an end as LeBron’s Lakers are on pace to miss the 2019 NBA playoffs. This would be the first time since the 2004-2005 season that the playoffs would not feature a team led by LeBron James; with the regular season near its end, this may just be the case.

When LeBron joined the Lakers last summer, he had expectations of competing for a championship. He believed at the time that the Lakers were in a better position than any other team to win for years to come. However, not everything always goes according to plan, as LeBron is learning the hard way. The Lakers’ whole season has been full of ups and downs with the team showing signs of greatness one day, then underperforming the next. The beginning of the end started when LeBron strained his groin on Christmas Day and missed seventeen games. Without their leader, the Lakers had an unimpressive record of 6-11 during that span. This sent the Lakers down to the ninth seed in the West, which exposed the Lakers’ young and inexperienced roster.

The team believed once their leader returned they would get right back on the path to the playoffs; however, not all things always go according to plan. Since LeBron’s return from injury, the Lakers have gone an abysmal 4-11 and are currently sitting in eleventh place in the West. This record shows that LeBron’s absence was not the only reason why they have been losing winnable games all season long. The Lakers have one of the youngest rosters in the league with an average age of 25 years old. Along with the young and underdeveloped players, they have veterans who are forced into bigger roles than they are capable. The Lakers’ roster just does not have enough talent to compete with the all the teams in the West right now. The Lakers do have a nice young core of Kyle Kuzma, Lonzo Ball and Brandon Ingram, but these players are just not ready to compete against experienced teams. Coaching also plays a part in the lack of success the Lakers have been having this season. Luke Walton seems to have lost control of his team with them looking undisciplined and lackluster on the court.

The team has been playing terrible defense, with their defensive rating ranking 13th in the NBA and 20th in defensive rebounding. They also do not have enough shooters for a team with LeBron James on the roster. LeBron loves to drive and kick once the defense collapses on him. The Lakers do not have a very suitable roster for his kind of play, with the team shooting just 47.4 percent from the field and a lackluster 33.3 percent from behind the arc.

The Lakers have some work to do before they can become a championship-caliber team in the West. The team needs a change at the head coaching position and ideally, to sign a big-name free agent over the summer. It will be very odd to not see the best player in the game compete in the playoffs this season, and NBA fans will just have to accept it.
March Madness makes its way to BG

Gabriella Magallanes
Sports Reporter

As the Falcons head into the Mid-American Conference Tournament this weekend, their March Madness dreams aren’t guaranteed, but that’s not stopping the team from working towards them.

The Falcons have come away with 12 wins and six losses in conference play, and have seen a mere two losses in the Stroh Center through their 2018-2019 season. As their successes have continued to steadily pile, the Falcons are currently in second place in the MAC East, following the Buffalo Bulls who are ranked nationally at No. 18.

As the team has gained national attention, its focus has been to accomplish goals it has set and to sustain the highest standard to get it to where it ultimately wants to be.

“They approach everything like it’s a job. They still have fun, they still goof around, but when it’s time to focus up, they really focus up,” strength and conditioning coach Allison Papenfuss said.

Committing to the process and focusing on weekly goals has been a large part of the team’s success this year.

“We just have to keep winning each game each week. I think that it would be not just great for us individually as a team but great for the university and the BG community if we got to the (NCAA Tournament),” head team manager and senior communications major Jake Brock said.

With four MAC tournament games left, the team still has a ways to go to compete for a spot in the national tournament. And so, the Falcons’ concentration has not shifted from accomplishing fundamental goals and taking the basic steps needed toward getting to the NCAA Tournament.

“I haven’t forgotten about the San Francisco Giants, which was a powerhouse that won multiple World Series titles less than a half-decade ago. This division could go any way and will be fun to watch but tough to pick, but I’ll go the safe route and say LA will win their seventh straight NL West title in 2019.

Moving over to the AL now, let’s talk about the division. This division is very top-heavy, with two show-stopping teams fighting for the pennant down to Game 162. You know them well, and you love them or hate them: the New York Yankees and the 2018 World Series champions, Boston Red Sox. The Yankees gained shortstop Troy Tulowitzki and second baseman DJ LeMahieu in the offseason, along with keeping their core intact, headlined by their power-hitting outfield, which includes Aaron Judge and Giancarlo Stanton.

Their bullpen also brought back some familiar faces, but their starting pitching concerns me. The starting staff gives up way too many runs, and if the Bronx Bombers want to contend for the division and potentially the World Series, they’ll have to tighten that up. The Red Sox, on the other hand, maintained a great deal of the 2018 World Series team, except they lost key reliever Joe Kelly and closer Craig Kimbrel. If Boston can establish a closer and end games well, I think they’ll repeat as division champs. If not, I believe the Yankees will surpass them in wins and ultimately win the division. Red Sox General Manager Dave Dombrowski is a wizard, so I’m not too concerned about Boston’s loss at the back end of their bullpen; he’ll find players to fill Kelly and Kimbrel’s spots. A personal shout out goes to BGSU College of Business Dean Ray Braun (an avid Red Sox fan); I’ll take the Sox in the East.

The AL Central has been won by the Cleveland Indians for the past three years, and I believe Terry Francona and his crew will make it a fourth this year. With an excellent starting rotation, an infield headlined by third baseman Jose Ramirez and shortstop Francisco Lindor and a bullpen highlighted by closer Brad Hand, I think the Indians will make quick work of the division this year. The up-and-coming Chicago White Sox might make it interesting, but the other teams in the division don’t match up on paper with the Indians, and I don’t believe they will on the field, either. Give me Cleveland in the Central.

As for the AL West, my heart tells me to go with the tried and true Houston Astros, the winners of the last two AL West pennants, but I’m going to go off the grid and choose another team in the division I believe can trump the Astros and possibly win this year’s World Series. That team is the Oakland Athletics. The Athletics almost won 100 games in 2018 and have an iron-clad young core — this team has potential! I love third baseman Matt Chapman’s game; he’s an amazing defender (a 2018 Gold Glover) who can also hit with the best of them — he had a 0.278 batting average and 24 home runs in 2018. While some may see this as an off-the-wall pick, I believe Oakland can go toe-to-toe with Houston and ultimately win the division. I had to have one crazy pick, give me a break!

Now that I’ve predicted the division winners for 2019, it’s time for my World Series selection. While many teams are loaded and hungry for a title, we know only two can make the World Series and only one can win. I believe the Boston Red Sox will repeat as AL champs in the 2019 Fall Classic, and the Atlanta Braves will represent the NL. Though I believe Boston has the talent to repeat, it’s so difficult to do in today’s game. I’ll take Atlanta in six games over Boston.

Whoever you root for I wish them a season that defies even your wildest expectations.

Sports column preview MLB 2019 season

Parker Kern
Sports Reporter

MLB Spring Training is officially underway, which means the regular season is right around the corner. The 2019 season will be interesting, with some teams making big offseason splashes by signing big-name free agents and other teams standing pat with their 2018 rosters, hoping to contend again in 2019, especially with the九大冠军 Los Angeles Dodgers, having lost a great deal of depth due to free agency and trades. With Clayton Kershaw’s current pitching prowess of depth, many teams are looking to solidify their rotations, with the addition of catcher Yasmani Grandal and haven’t lost enough in the field or on the mound to convince me that another team could take the pennant. However, look for strong campaigns from the 2016 World Series champion Chicago Cubs and the St. Louis Cardinals, which added All-Star first baseman Paul Goldschmidt, formerly of the Arizona Diamondbacks, in the offseason.

The NL West will be a bit more open. I think any of the teams in the division have a chance to take the division title. The winner of the last six consecutive NL West titles, the Los Angeles Dodgers, have lost a great deal of depth due to free agency and trades. With Clayton Kershaw’s current pitching prowess questioned due to the series of injuries he’s experienced in the past couple seasons, it will be difficult for me to say Big Blue has the West on lock this year. The San Diego Padres signed Manny Machado to a 10-year deal, and the Colorado Rockies are an up-and-coming team in the division, despite losing second baseman DJ LeMahieu to the New York Yankees.

I haven’t forgotten about the San Francisco Giants, which was a powerhouse that won multiple World Series titles less than a half-decade ago. This division could go any way and will be fun to watch but tough to pick, but "We have to stay together as a team and continue to focus in and defend at a high level," senior point guard and philosophy, politics, economics and law major DeAndre Austin said.

As the regular season begins to wind down for the Falcons, their seemingly unwavering commitment to achieving success game by game will factor into their standings throughout the month of March.

The Falcons play next as the No. 3 seed at the MAC Tournament March 14-16 in Cleveland. NCAA will be releasing the tournament teams on March 17 on Selection Sunday.
BGSU’s new provost looks to future success

Hunter Huffman
Reporter

BGSU’s new provost and senior vice president for academic affairs Joe B. Whitehead, PhD., made an appearance at the Undergraduate Student Government meeting this Monday to discuss goals for his first year in the position.

Whitehead began the job in January, and starting with this semester, he plans to redefine student success and improve academic and career advising at BGSU.

“We want to combine (academic and career advising), so when you come on campus day one and you start thinking about your future, you can plan a course of action to refer back to on a daily basis,” Whitehead said.

He plans to make these improvements both through short- and long-term goals.

“In terms of student success, for short-term goals, we want to increase first-year retention rates. (For) long-term, we want 50 percent of people coming to BG to graduate in four years,” he said.

For Whitehead, these are important steps to making college more affordable and ensuring future success.

“You leave (BGSU) with less money out-of-pocket and with the career and academic advising to walk into a job and do great things,” he said.

A Mississippi native, Whitehead attended Delta State University and Kent State University from 1979 to 1989, receiving a doctorate in physics. Following this, he worked for 23 years at the University of Southern Mississippi in several positions, including the dean of science and technology.

Whitehead also served as a professor of physics and provost at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University.

“After doing that, I was caught by an ad (for the provost position). My background fit the needs of BG, so I was offered the job and made the great decision to come to cold northwest Ohio,” he said.

Going forward, Whitehead said he wants to continue to implement BGSU’s six-step strategic plan into his position.

“You’ve heard our slogan, in a sense. Belong, stand out, go far; that’s the strategic plan in a nutshell,” he said.
bGAB trips promote service, inspire active citizenship

Andrew Bailey
Report

For students involved in BG Alternative Breaks, service is about passion and engagement with those in need.

bGAB is a student-led program within the Center for Community and Civic Engagement that organizes opportunities for students to travel to other communities and help them with social justice issues that hinder them, while also teaching the students about specific issues and how they can impact others.

bGAB is a BG-based subsidiary of Break Away, a national nonprofit organization that facilitates alternative breaks across the country.

The CCCE has organized four trips for BGSU’s upcoming spring break.

One of these trips is going to Woodland Harvest Mountain Farm in Boone, North Carolina. The trip, led by site leaders junior Madi Stump and sophomore Remy Schneider, is focused on providing assistance to the self-sustaining, environmentally friendly farm through clean-up on and around the property, structural maintenance and preparation for their spring harvest.

Their service tends to be weather-dependent and as-needed, so much of the farm work will depend on what the owners need. After each day, they reflect on their day and what they learned from it.

“That’s something that bGAB and our national organization Break Away does. … We don’t do service trips; we do service learning trips,” Stump said.

The learning portion of the trips is just as important to the students as the actual service. bGAB wants its participants to become “active citizens,” said senior Paul Garbarino, a site leader for the trip to Staunton, Virginia.

With this trip, Garbarino wants to ensure participants come to understand the difference between a volunteer and an active citizen. He defines a volunteer as someone who does service but lacks engagement.

His definition of an active citizen is what he hopes the participants will become over the course of the trip.

“We want to create active citizens who are individuals who don’t just volunteer; they’re individuals who are passionate about serving, and they also have a full understanding of what they’re doing and why the problem exists and have a genuine passion to finding a solution to the issue,” Garbarino said.

Garbarino, with fellow site leader and junior Will Robinson, will be assisting Renewing Homes of Greater Augusta in performing critical maintenance and modifications to the homes of disadvantaged individuals in Augusta County, Virginia.

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