Largest Gift in Peru State History will Support Student Scholarships

Learn more on page 10
THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO GAVE AS PART OF OUR FIRST GIVING DAY

On behalf of the College, its students, faculty and staff, I want to thank you for your continued support of Peru State College. During our first annual Giving Day, in recognition of our 152nd anniversary, we set goals to secure 152 donors and to have more than 152 student volunteers during the giving period. Giving Day was a resounding success with both goals exceeded. Giving Day was also a success from the planning stages at the Foundation, with its true-to-Peru-State vision of volunteerism on campus and in our communities.

Giving Days happen at colleges across the nation, sharing a laser-focus on fundraising and donors. There's nothing wrong with fundraising drives. Your generous gifts are incredibly important to campus, but at Peru State those gifts support a culture that is doing more than perpetuating itself. The College's unique mission to engage students in and out of the classroom has added a wonderful facet to our campus Giving Day: service projects. It was a natural fit for our student organizations to take on giving back to our community, as our community gives to support them.

Whether our students wrote inspirational notes to elementary students involved in the Auburn Backpack Program or cleaned up trails, that participation is important for a number of reasons. From an academic perspective, we know that high impact practices like community engagement make students more likely to succeed in college. Studies also show that young people who volunteer are more likely to volunteer when they are older – which is all the more important when you consider that studies are also showing a ten-year low in youth service.

Since Elaine organized the inaugural service project in the spring of 2010, we have taken great pride in sharing Peru State’s embrace of service to its communities. With these efforts, we have enjoyed witnessing ten years of students grow into civic-minded leaders across Nebraska and the region – growth that counters the national trends. Again, thank you for your continued support of Peru State College and its mission to engage students in a personalized education.

Your financial support for scholarships assists students struggling to work, take classes and raise kids. Your financial support assists professors to bring new opportunities to classrooms and assists professors in taking students outside the classroom. Your financial support makes it possible for students to study abroad, to visit places they never dreamed they would go.

Perhaps most importantly, your support continues the legacy of Nebraska’s oldest college. The college that shaped many of us and will continue to guide students for another 150 years.

Contributors

PSC Foundation Board of Directors
Joyce Douglas, Chair – Lincoln, NE
Jim Desbien (’73) – Plainville, KS
Sarah Beth Donovan (’85) - Rapid City, SD
Elton (’88, ’16) and Connie (Sims, ’87) Edmond,
Mike Guillatt (’67) – La Vista, NE
Carlos Harrison (’51) – Shenandoah, IA
Cindy (Plantenga, ’82) & Tim (’84) Hoffman, Treasurers – Lincoln, NE
Pat Mertens (’86), Secretary – Hastings, NE
Dr. Bill Snyder – Auburn, NE
Al Urwin (’82) – La Vista, NE

PSC National Alumni Association Board of Directors
Paul (’67) & Arlene (Borcher, ’87) Fell, Co-Chairs – Lincoln, NE
Branden Bender (’95) – Nebraska City, NE
Dan Cotton (’76) – Peru, NE
Mark Czapla (’87) - Unadilla, NE
Rich Daly (’88) – Lincoln, NE
Elton (’88, ’16) & Connie (Sims, ’87) Edmond – Lincoln, NE
Carlos Harrison (’51) – Shenandoah, IA
Mary Lu (Hicks) McCoy (’68) – Omaha, NE
Chuck (’69) & Alice (Massoth, ’69) Mizerski – Lincoln, NE
Tyler Nutsch (’13) - La Vista, NE
Mark Shively (’79, ’93) – Omaha, NE
Fritz (’74) & Char (Lutz, ’74) Stehlik – Omaha, NE
Kim (’90) & Kris (Kubert, ’94) Vrtiska – Falls City, NE
Ivan Wineglass (’94) - Bellevue, NE

College President:
Dan Hanson, Ph.D

Editor:
Becca Jewell, Interim Chief Executive Officer, PSC Foundation

Managing Editor/Writer:
Deborah Solie, Director of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving, PSC Foundation

Graphic Design:
Rebecca Johnson (’05, ’18)

Contributing Writers:
Kelly Cole, Business Manager, PSC Foundation
Paul Fell (’67), Co-Chairs, Alumnus and NAA Board Co-Chair
Jason Hogue, Director of Marketing
Ted Harshbarger (’77), Associate Athletic Director/Sports Information Director
Rebecca Jewell, Interim CEO, PSC Foundation
Annie Neveau, Program Specialist, PSC Foundation

Photography:
Dr. Bill Clemente, Professor Emeritus
Ted Harshbarger (’77), Associate Athletic Director/Sports Information Director
Brandi Hull (’15), Graphic Designer
Celebrating 2019 with a Top 9 List:

2019 was a great year at the Peru State College Foundation. To share the good news, here is a “Top 9 List” of notable Foundation achievements for 2019:

1. Awarding the first annual Thousand Oaks Alumni Excellence Awards to recognize the outstanding achievements of alumni and the lifetime of opportunities made available by a Peru State College education.

2. Celebrating the grand reopening of the renovated Performing Arts Center and the generosity that made the $7.6 million renovation possible.

3. Engraving the first paving stones in the new Sesquicentennial Plaza.

4. Recruiting and convening a Recent Alumni Board and hosting the first recent alumni event to build connections with alumni starting immediately in the first years after graduation. (Recent alumni include graduates up to 10 years from graduation.)

5. Holding the first annual Giving Day bringing students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends together to benefit Peru State and the community.

6. Securing support to establish 11 new scholarship funds. This includes the transformational $2.1 million gift to create the Norma Jeanne Fensler Memorial Scholarship. In addition, the Foundation received gifts to establish 10 other new scholarship funds.

7. Welcoming five new members into the 1867 Society. The 1867 Society celebrates and recognizes people who have made the decision to include the Peru State College Foundation in their wills or estate plans.

8. Celebrating and thanking Dan and Elaine Hanson for 10 years of leadership, service and support at Peru State.

9. Setting new records in fundraising. In 2019, the Foundation received nearly $3 million in contributions which is the most successful year in fundraising in the Foundation’s history. While the transformational Norma Jeanne Fensler Memorial Scholarship gift is the primary reason for this record-breaking year, the Foundation is seeing strong growth in giving across all categories including annual gifts made online and sent through the mail, major gifts for scholarships and special projects like capital improvements, and gifts through wills and estates.

Thanks to you, the generous and grateful Bobcat family, the Foundation is positioned for a bright future of supporting students, faculty, staff and the Campus of a Thousand Oaks.

Becca Jewell, Interim CEO
Bobcat alumni celebrating milestone reunions ride a float in the annual Homecoming parade. Their float decorations embraced the theme Peru and Beyond.

Jordan ('14) and Ashley ('14) Bergman with their daughter, attend the 2019 Lincoln Alumni and Friends gathering this past November.

Students with the Peru State Educators Association pledged to read 152 books to area children for Giving Day. The above photo is from the Peru Daycare.

A torrential downpour during Homecoming sent the 2019 Homecoming Court under umbrellas before halftime. Ultimately, the King and Queen were crowned in the Al Wheeler Activity Center due to rain.

The College's choir room was renamed during Homecoming as the Dr. Thomas Ediger Choir Room to honor Dr. Ediger's many contributions to Peru State.

National Alumni Association Board of Directors – Rich Daly ('68), Arlene (Borcher) Fell ('67) and Carlos Harrison ('51) – walk in the Homecoming parade.

The Starship Bobcat, part of the NAA Board of Directors Homecoming parade entry, is driven by Chuck Shores ('68). The entry was designed by Mark Shively ('79, '93).

Peru State classmates gathered at the Country Club of Lincoln in November 2019. From R to L: Kent Knoll ('79), Stacy Applegate ('80), Bob Parsley ('80), Stan Wissel ('77), Jack Moles ('80).

Student Senate officers pause together with shovels before working on the Wellness Trail as part of their Giving Day volunteer activities.

First Lady Elaine Hanson and Betty (Neil) Barrett ('57) met for tea on the china purchased by the Faculty Wives Club. The china has been used at many official events since its purchase.

Al Wheeler, Jr. poses by the painting of his father Al Wheeler, Sr. on campus. Painted by Heath Miller ('91), the painting was placed in the Al Wheeler Activity Center in 2017.

Bill Witty ('66) prepares to do the coin toss prior to the October 26 home football game. Witty was inducted into the Athletic Hall of Fame this year.

Students line up on the field of the Oak Bowl during New Student Weekend to form the letters PSC.
Bobcat alumni celebrating milestone reunions ride a float in the annual Homecoming parade. Their float decorations embraced the theme Peru and Beyond.

Jordan ('14) and Ashley ('14) Bergman with their daughter, attend the 2019 Lincoln Alumni and Friends gathering this past November.

Students with the Peru State Educators Association pledged to read 152 books to area children for Giving Day. The above photo is from the Peru Daycare.

A torrential downpour during Homecoming sent the 2019 Homecoming Court under umbrellas before halftime. Ultimately, the King and Queen were crowned in the Al Wheeler Activity Center due to rain.

The College’s choir room was renamed during Homecoming as the Dr. Thomas Ediger Choir Room to honor Dr. Ediger’s many contributions to Peru State.

National Alumni Association Board of Directors – Rich Daly ('68), Arlene (Borcher) Fell ('67) and Carlos Harrison ('51) – walk in the Homecoming parade.

The Starship Bobcat, part of the NAA Board of Directors Homecoming parade entry, is driven by Chuck Shores ('68). The entry was designed by Mark Shively ('79, '93).

Peru State classmates gathered at the Country Club of Lincoln in November 2019. From R to L: Kent Knoll ('79), Stacy Applegate ('80), Bob Parsley ('80), Stan Wissel ('77), Jack Moles ('80).

Student Senate officers pause together with shovels before working on the Wellness Trail as part of their Giving Day volunteer activities.

Friends gathered during the 2019 Homecoming. From R to L: Dr. Judy (Green) Grotrian ('72), Becki (Young) Probst ('80), Kent Probst ('81), Cindy (Plantenga) Hoffman ('82) and Tim Hoffman ('84).

First Lady Elaine Hanson and Betty (Neil) Barrett ('57) met for tea on the china purchased by the Faculty Wives Club. The china has been used at many official events since its purchase.

Al Wheeler, Jr. poses by the painting of his father Al Wheeler, Sr. on campus. Painted by Heath Miller ('91), the painting was placed in the Al Wheeler Activity Center in 2017.

Students line up on the field of the Oak Bowl during New Student Weekend to form the letters PSC.

Bill Witty ('66) prepares to do the coin toss prior to the October 26 home football game. Witty was inducted into the Athletic Hall of Fame this year.
Gerdes, Hale, Keating, Urwin and Witty Inducted into Peru State Athletic Hall of Fame

Peru State inducted five individuals into its Athletic Hall of Fame on Friday and Saturday, Oct. 25 and 26. This was the 28th group to be inducted into the College’s Athletic Hall of Fame.

Scott Gerdes (Omaha/formerly Auburn), Norris Hale (posthumously) (Pella, Iowa), Tabitha (Foster) Keating (Plattsburgh), Al Urwin (LaVista), and William Witty (Syracuse) were the five inducted.

Scott Gerdes – Football Student-Athlete – 1992

Scott Gerdes was one of the main cogs in the Bobcat running game during Peru State’s only championship title in 1990. That Bobcat team topped Westminster (Pennsylvania) to win the NAIA Division II crown.

- The 1992 graduate was named the most valuable player in the NAIA first round playoff game against Wisconsin-LaCrosse and also in the semifinal matchup against Baker (Kansas).
- Following the championship season, Gerdes earned NAIA All-American Honorable Mention. In addition, he was named to the All Tri-State Athletic Conference First Team and to the Omaha World-Herald NAIA All-Nebraska First Team.

Norris Hale – Meritorious Service – 1951

Janie (Grindle) Hale, wife of the late Norris Hale, accepted his plaque and spoke.

- Hale gained his notoriety after graduating from the College as a very successful high school football and track and field coach.
- He coached football for 41 years while compiling a record of (252-132-7) 252 wins to 132 losses to 7 ties. As of 2000, that mark was the seventh-best in Iowa history. Hale’s teams racked up 15 conference/district championships in a 25-year span.
- Due to his remarkable efforts, Hale has numerous coaching awards. They include 21 Coach of the Year Honors at the conference/district level. He also was inducted into the Iowa Football Coaches Hall of Fame in 1982. Hale’s other awards included Iowa Football Coaches Distinguished Service Award (1992), the Gatorade Coaches Care Award (1992), and the Iowa High School Athletic Association News Media Award (1997).

Tabitha (Foster) Keating – Softball Student-Athlete - 2007

- Tabitha Foster Keating demonstrated outstanding athletic ability as a student athlete and member of the softball team which has earned her induction into the Athletic Hall of Fame.
- A 2007 graduate, Tabitha (Foster) Keating is just the second Bobcat to ever be named as an NAIA First Team All-American. In addition, she was a National Fast Pitch Coach Association First Team selection, the Midlands Collegiate Athletic Conference (MCAC) Player of the Year, the NAIA Region IV Player of the Year, and was the Omaha World-Herald NAIA All-Nebraska Team Captain.
- It was not just because Keating was successful at the plate, but she was an outstanding pitcher as well. At the end of the 2007 campaign, she was ranked in six different NAIA individual rankings: first in home runs – an NAIA record at that time, second in saves, third in runs batted in per game, seventh in total bases per game, eighth in slugging percentage, and 20th in total wins.

Al Urwin – Meritorious Service/ Football Student-Athlete - 1982

- Urwin proved his worth and was a four-year starter for the Bobcats and was a lead blocker for All-American and Peru State Hall of Fame members Alvin Holder and Roosevelt Brown.
- During his junior and senior seasons, Urwin was one of the captains for Peru State. Following his junior season, he was an Omaha World-Herald NAIA All-Nebraska Second Team Selection while earning honorable mention in the Lincoln Journal- Star. As a senior, he was named to the first team by both major papers. In addition, Urwin was an NAIA District 11 Honorable Mention following his senior campaign.
- Since 2013, Al has also served Peru State College as a member of the Foundation Board of Directors.

William Witty – Football-Basketball-Track and Field Student-Athlete - 1966

- Bill Witty demonstrated outstanding athletic ability as a student athlete and member of the football, basketball and track teams, which earned him induction into the Athletic Hall of Fame.
- A 1966 graduate, Witty is one of very few who graduated from Peru State having earned 12 letters. He earned four letters in football, basketball and track having been a starter and/or major contributor in each sport.
- Witty was twice nominated for the Nebraska College Athlete of the Year. During his freshman year, he was the starting quarterback on a 5-2-2 football team having outplayed two contenders to earn the top role. Not only was he the quarterback, but he punted as well.

About the Peru State Athletic Hall of Fame

The purpose of the Peru State College Athletic Hall of Fame is to recognize, honor and preserve the memory of those individuals and teams whose contributions have greatly enhanced Nebraska's first college.

The Hall of Fame gallery resides in the lobby of the Wheeler Center, named after the first inductee into the Hall of Fame, Alfred G. Wheeler. A candidate can be nominated in one of four categories: coach, player, team, or meritorious service.

A committee of alumni make the selections annually each spring. Nominations are welcomed and can be submitted to PSC Athletic Hall of Fame, c/o Alumni Office, Peru State College, P.O. Box 10, Peru, NE 68421. For additional information, call 402-872-2304. Nominations will be accepted through April 1.

2020 Hall of Fame

The 2020 Peru State Hall of Fame has been set for Friday and Saturday, September 18 and 19. The football opponent on Saturday will be MidAmerica Nazarene (Kan.).
Peru State’s First Giving Day Exceeds Goals

It was a new venture for Peru State College and its Foundation as it undertook its first “Giving Day” on October 24. October 24, 2019 was the 152nd anniversary of the College’s first day of classes and is celebrated as the College’s birthday each year.

“The Peru State College Giving Day was a day to celebrate the Bobcat family through volunteerism and philanthropy,” said Becca Jewell, Interim CEO of the Peru State Foundation.

“This single-day online fundraising and volunteer event for Peru State, brought together students, alumni, faculty, staff and friends to give back to our communities and – through philanthropy grant opportunities for the next generation of Bobcats at Peru State.”

College officials are viewing the day as a success with goals surpassed in philanthropy and volunteerism.

“I’m incredibly proud of our Bobcat family,” said Dr. Dan Hanson, President of Peru State. “Our students, alumni and friends stepped forward on Giving Day to give back to our communities, support students and celebrate Peru State College.”

The Giving Day goals were set at securing 152 donors and having more than 152 student volunteers during the giving period. The results far exceeded those initial goals. Both goals were met through the actual 24 hour period, with additional generosity tied to the event received following October 24.

There were 244 donors as of December 18, who have contributed $40,182 to support students. The documented student volunteerism shows 174 student volunteers putting in more than 516 hours of service.

Fifteen different student groups have reported on their Giving Day service activities. Members of the planning group believe additional student groups were also involved in several projects.

Student organizations reporting their efforts include Council for Exceptional Children, American Sign Language, Peru State Catholic Union, Red Cross Club, Christian Student Fellowship (CSF), Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA), Rotaract, National Association for Music Education, Peru Association of Student Athletes (PASA), Phi Alpha Theta and Social Science Club, Art Club, PRIDE, Black Student Union (BSU), Checkmate, Student Senate, Campus Activities Board (CAB), Science Club, and Book Club.

The Council for Exceptional Children partnered with the American Sign Language group to write inspirational notes and hang them around campus and in the community. The Peru State Catholic Union and Red Cross Club made birdhouses and hung them up around the campus.

Christian Student Fellowship, Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Rotaract collectively worked together to assist in the cleaning and maintenance of the trail around the campus.

Peru Association of Student Athletes did a week-long collection of personal hygiene and winter-related items which are being donated to Project Response and SENCA. This was done in collaboration with the month’s Make A Difference Day. Over 1,000 items were collected which will help those in need in Nemaha County and the surrounding area.

Black Student Union prepared 152 cards of encouragement to be distributed for the Auburn Backpack Program, Good Samaritan Nursing Home, and Long’s Creek Assisted Living.

Campus Activities Board members helped pick up trash around the city of Peru.

To learn more about Peru State’s Giving Day, go to www.peru.edu/foundation/givingday. Plans are underway for 2020!
A New Type of Scholarship at Peru State

The School of Education at Peru State prepares students to enter the classroom and implement engaging lessons that inspire.

“Our students learn innovative methods, effective communication skills and technology fluency,” said Stephanie Holmes, Director of Field Experiences and Certification Officer. “Their focus is learning now so they can inspire future generations.”

As part of their educational journey, it is state mandated that students take the PRAXIS Core Academic Skills for Educators test before they can enter upper level education courses. The trio of tests cost $150 and can be a barrier for students already struggling to pay for their housing, meals and education.

“I’ve seen other colleges establish scholarships to assist with the cost of the PRAXIS test,” said Holmes. “I knew this type of scholarship would be a huge help to our students who may receive financial assistance, but not enough to cover additional costs like this test.”

As this need was being identified by the School of Education, Kay (Hayes) Fish was exploring ways to give back to her alma mater, Peru State College. Fish graduated in 1967 with an elementary education degree and taught in Red Oak, IA and Oskaloosa IA throughout her career.

“Peru State prepared me for a career in elementary education,” said Fish. “Without Peru, I would not have been able to go to college. I would not have met my husband or met hundreds of children who went on to do amazing things.”

Fish and her husband, Paul, were presented with the opportunity to fund the PRAXIS scholarship to cover the test fees for students with financial need.

“We were excited to help students interested in pursuing teacher education as a degree and career,” said Fish. “We wanted to support students in need, but we were interested in other funding opportunities outside of a typical scholarship.”

The Fish PRAXIS Fee Endowed Scholarship for Education was established in 2018 and awarded for the first time in 2019. The scholarship was recently awarded to two deserving students.
Honoring Peru State Alumnus Captain Mark Williams ('87)

Captain Mark Williams excelled in his chosen field of work and on the baseball field during his time at Peru State College.

“Mark was a fine individual and outstanding teammate,” said Pat Dennis ('86). “He passed away in 2015 from cancer and his Peru State teammates wanted to honor his memory by naming a scholarship for him.”

Williams was a four-year starter and two-year captain on the Bobcat baseball team. He distinguished himself both as a pitcher and as a position player for the Bobcats and earned several athletic awards and other recognition. During his time at Peru State he studied Criminal Justice and Psychology.

Following graduation, Williams joined the Nebraska State Patrol where he worked in road operation and served his duty station for nine years. He was later permanently transferred to the Training Academy. He was promoted to the rank of Captain and served as Director of the Nebraska State Patrol academy in Grand Island.

According to the Omaha World Herald, Col. Bradley Rice, superintendent of the State Patrol, said in a statement, “Mark’s vocation was to find and train the best of the best to be state troopers. Our hearts are heavy as we mourn his passing. He was known and loved by many.”

Dennis led the effort to raise funds and in December 2019 established the Captain Mark Williams Scholarship for members of the Bobcat varsity baseball team who are majoring in Criminal Justice or Psychology and juniors in good standing.

Dennis and other teammates are continuing to seek contributions to support the renovation of the baseball complex press box and name it after Captain Mark Williams to commemorate his many accomplishments on and off the field.

Williams will be celebrated at the 2020 baseball reunion on April 18 at the baseball complex on Peru State’s campus. For more information visit www.peru.edu/foundation/events.

Transformation Tuesday Features Neal Hall

Want to see more transformations? Follow us on Facebook where we regularly feature how campus has transformed during our history. Visit facebook.com/PeruStateCollegeNationalAlumniAssociation.
Largest Gift in College History Will Be Devoted To Scholarships

A generous heart, a caring friend, and a grateful alumnus have provided the key ingredients resulting in Peru State's single largest gift ever received: $2,100,000, from the estate of Norma Jeanne Fensler. The gift will be devoted to scholarships.

College President Dan Hanson commented, “The number one need facing students today is financial support to begin college, and financial support to help them stay in school through graduation. This contribution will be life-changing for many students.”

The story of this life-changing gift began with Norma Jeanne Fensler, known to her friends as Jeanne. She was born in Kokomo, Indiana and later married her beloved husband Edward Leon Fensler on September 6, 1947 in Fort Wayne, Indiana. While natives of the Midwest, eventually they made their way west and spent much of their adult lives in California.

Pam and Fred Robertson ('73) were also Midwestern transplants to California. Pam met Jeanne shortly after Edward's death in the late 1980s when Pam assisted Jeanne as her realtor buying and selling two homes. Through this process, Pam Robertson became a close friend and confidant.

Pam played a pivotal role in Jeanne’s later years helping her with all manner of daily challenges as Jeanne aged and struggled with Alzheimer’s disease. Several years before the onset of Alzheimer’s, Pam orchestrated a meeting with an attorney to set up a Living Trust to determine what would happen with Jeanne’s estate as she had no living children or relatives. At that time, Jeanne asked Pam to direct the proceeds of her estate to a cause Pam felt was worthy.

Knowing that higher education brings greater opportunity in today’s society, and being very familiar with the good work being done by the Peru State College Foundation through her husband and having served as a former Board Co-Director of the Foundation herself, Pam directed the proceeds of Jeanne’s estate to create the Norma Jeanne Fensler Memorial Scholarship at Peru State College.

Pam said, “Fred and I both come from rural areas in Indiana and Iowa and know how hard it is for kids from those areas to be able to afford a college education. Our hope is that this will help those in need, especially those from the four-state region around Peru, to attend college and ultimately better their lives with a degree.”

Fred Robertson’s gratitude for his Peru State College education persists to this day. He proudly wears his Peru State College ring and speaks highly of the professors who made an impact on him. “The professors who invested in me as a student changed my life,” said Fred. “Professors like Lyle McRitcher, Daryl Long, Al Brady, John Christ, and many others were experts in their fields. They taught me so much, but I also know that they cared about me as a person. That was very motivating for me as a student.”

Pam’s intent for the Norma Jeanne Fensler Memorial Scholarship is to allow students who would not otherwise be able to attend college the opportunity to attend Peru State and seek a degree. Pam also intends this scholarship to memorialize the kindness and generosity of her dear friend Jeanne.

Pam said, “Jeanne always wished she could have had children but was never blessed with any. Making this gift to the college is a way for her to help children she never had herself.”

The Norma Jeanne Fensler Memorial Scholarship will provide more than $80,000 in scholarships each year. Scholarship awards will start at $2,000 per year and will be awarded to full-time first-year students who have financial need. The Fensler Scholarships are renewable for students who remain in good academic standing. The first Fensler Scholarships will be available in January 2021.

Hanson noted, “Every year, we have students who sit out a semester or maybe a full year to work. Sometimes they have to support their families because the family income is very low or unstable. All of these students have a goal and a dream to earn a college education. The Fensler Scholarship will help students every year who face this type of economic challenge.”

Interim Foundation CEO Rebecca Jewell stated, “The Norma Jeanne Fensler Memorial Scholarship increases the Foundation's annual scholarship awarding capacity by more than one-third, to nearly $400,000 per year. This gift will allow the Foundation to have an even greater impact in meeting the financial needs of Peru State students.”

Dan Hanson noted, “Pam and Fred Robertson were the catalyst that brought this incredible gift to Peru State College. Pam's devoted friendship and Fred's lifelong gratitude for his Peru State College education will be celebrated and commended as the conduits for this transformational gift.”

Learn more about scholarships at Peru State at peru.edu/foundation/scholarships.
Finding New Ways to Impact Peru State

Mark Shively often reflects on his experiences at Peru State and how it shaped him into the person he is today. “Peru State is where I developed learning skills, not only academically, but also interpersonally as an adult,” said Shively. “PSC was transformative in my life and my gratitude is forever.”

Shively wanted to give back to the College that meant so much to him.

“The retirement package from the Omaha Public Schools includes a life insurance policy option,” said Shively. “It was appropriate to give back in some meaningful way to the place that is responsible for a successful career in education.”

Giving through beneficiary designations using life insurance policies, IRAs, retirement plans and commercial annuities are often easy and flexible ways to support non-profit organizations.

It only takes three, simple steps to make this type of gift. Here’s how to name Peru State College Foundation as a beneficiary:

1. Contact your retirement plan administrator, insurance company, bank or financial institution for a change-of-beneficiary form.

2. Decide what percentage (1 to 100) you would like to receive and name the Peru State Foundation, along with the percentage you chose, on the beneficiary form.

3. Return the completed form to your plan administrator, insurance company, bank or financial institution.

Gifts like Shively’s make a lasting impact on Peru State and prepare future generations to follow his footsteps into successful careers.

Shively put it well when he said, “My engraved paver on the Sesquicentennial Plaza reads "Because of YOU, I am Changed." Those words best sum up my definition of what PSC means to me. It was faculty, interactions with other students, the setting, overall there is just something about Peru State College that resonates and made me who I am today. This gem of a college nestled in the banks of the Missouri River has and will forever shine in my life. Once a Bobcat, Always a Bobcat.”

Peru State College Foundation 1867 Society

The 1867 Society was created to enable Peru State alumni and friends to give back to the College through their estate plans, to ensure that future students have the same educational opportunities that the College made available to them. Society members ensure that the College continues to provide students with a sound education and a way to a better life.

There are many ways to become a member of The 1867 Society including:

• Indicating in your will that Peru State College Foundation is to receive a lump sum or a percentage of your overall estate assets or the remainder of those assets after providing for other beneficiaries
• Naming the Foundation as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy, pension or savings plan
• Transferring your home title or other real estate property to the Foundation, after death, as set forth in a will or trust document
• Membership in the Society requires that the Foundation be informed about the individual’s plans to include Peru State College Foundation in your estate plans; a copy of the relevant documentation is desirable.
• Please join other alumni and friends who have become members of The 1867 Society. Take your place beside those who celebrate Peru State’s history of making a difference. Help ensure that the College remains strong and thrives into the future.

Contact the Foundation at 402-872-2304 or pscthonsu@gmail.com if you would like to learn more about including Peru State College Foundation in your estate plans.
The Bobcat Family Tree series are interviews with alumni highlighting their family members who attended Peru State and their own memories. This issue highlights Dr. Bob Bohlken ('59) and Steven ('90, '94) and Erin (O'Grady) ('91) Sayer.

Top: Bob Bohlken (5th person, front row) and Mary Bohlken (2nd person, 2nd row) participated in the Dramatics Club together at Peru State.

Dr. Bob Bohlken ('59)
Mary (Riley) Bohlken ('66)

Dr. Bob Bohlken ('59) taught at Peru State before moving to a tenured teaching position in communications at Northwest Missouri State University – below is his interview:

I learned about Peru State from family and when I attended 4-H camp, participated in track meets and music contests. My favorite memories are associating with most of the students, establishing mutual respect with the faculty members, serving students at the Bob Inn and necking with my future wife Mary (and a few other girls but not at the same time).

I chose to attend Peru State because it was small, close to home and I had the GI Bill. I also had work-study at sixty cents an hour cleaning the Bob Inn. Without those funds I could not have attended College.

I think that financial aid and faculty connecting with high schools are effective recruiting methods. I still remember Coach Jerry Stemper talking to me while I was a senior in high school. He didn't offer me financial aid but he cared to notice me at a track meet.

Many members of my family (the Jake and Theresa Bohlken family) attended Peru State College (formerly the Nebraska State Teachers College) including; Theresa Winberger Bohlken (summer Normal Training, early 1900s), Robert L. Bohlken (Nebraska State Teachers College, 1959), Mary Riley Bohlken (Peru State, 1966), Ivan Bohlken (Peru State, 1973), Mary Ann Bohlken (1975), Jack A. Bohlken (1970 and Michael Bohlken ('80). We also have members from other branches of our family tree that attended.

Al Bohlken ('69) – Bob Bohlken's cousin – was born near Peru State and lived in the area. He grew up hearing about the Peru State experience from family members and the affordable tuition. He loved Peru State football and some of his favorite memories are of the team.

Steve Sayer teaches American History and American Government at Syracuse-Dunbar-Avoca High School. Dr. Erin Sayer is an Associate Professor of Practice and Academic Advisor and Recruiter for Biochemistry at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, below is their interview:

Steve: My father grew up in Peru and had family in the community. I had been attending Peru State events from birth! I didn't miss many home football games growing up. I knew from a young age that Peru is where I would go to school.

My favorite memory during my time at Peru State was the social aspect. I met many friends.

Erin: I learned about Peru when the softball coach contacted me – at the time it was Maxine Mehus. She attended some of my high school softball games. I attended an open house the college held in Omaha and followed up with a trip to the college for an official try out and visit.

My favorite memory of my time at Peru State was playing softball and being involved on campus with the athletic programs and clubs/organizations.

I was also fortunate to meet Steve so early (move in day!) and connect to his family still living in the community. It seemed natural that we would continue to connect to the college by working there after we graduated – I worked in residence life and Steve in admissions.

Erin and Steve:
Peru was a large part of our lives – meeting so early and eventually getting married; our involvement with the community and the campus as we both worked there. We have many great friends from the college and it continues to be a huge part of our lives, especially as our daughter Sophie attends events through her high school.

In the Sayer family – Bill Sayer graduated with a bachelor’s and master’s degree, LaVerna (Roos) Sayer (bachelor’s); John Sayer (bachelor’s and master’s) and Renee Johnson Sayer (attended for pre-nursing).

Transformation Tuesday Features the Cat House

Want to see more transformations? Follow us on Facebook where we regularly feature how campus has transformed during our history. Visit facebook.com/PeruStateCollegeNationalAlumniAssociation.
The Loss of a Leader:
Former Peru State President Jerry Gallentine, 1940 - 2019

Dr. Jerry Gallentine, past president of Peru State College, friend, leader and mentor, passed away on Sept. 24, 2019.

“Dr. Gallentine served as president from 1983 to 1990. Under his leadership the college experienced a period of enrollment growth, improved community relations and renewal,” said Becca Jewell, Interim CEO, Peru State College Foundation. “Our thoughts are with his wife Shirley and their two children, Kim and JJ.”

According to the College’s sesquicentennial history book, Nebraska’s First College: Shaping the Future Since 1867, “During President Gallentine’s tenure at Peru State, enrollment had more than doubled, from about 850 to 1,720. He had resurrected the Peru State master of education program and had merged four academic divisions into two to whittle administrative costs.”

“During much of his time at Peru, the college labored under the burden of reduced funding from the state, yet was able to sustain its growth,” an Omaha World Herald editorial said of Gallentine. “That, along with the talented staff he assembled, is a testament to his abilities as a leader and an administrator.”

For 38 years, Jerry Joy (’64) worked with Gallentine at three institutions, starting at Peru State. “The Peru State College campus was like a family during Dr. Gallentine’s presidency,” recalled Joy. “He was a strong leader whose guidance at Peru State set it on a path of growth.”

“He was intelligent and committed to exploring new ideas. When I would go into his office, he always had 10-15 balls in the air. He would take a few of those balls, someone else would take a few, and I would take some, and away we would go to get the work done.”

Joy says he still adheres to one of Dr. Gallentine’s favorite sayings: “No hill is too high for a high-stepper!”

In 1990, Gallentine left Peru State to become president of Western New Mexico University, before serving as University President and CEO of National American University for more than twenty years.

Joy recalled, “After he left, the students truly missed him. He enjoyed connecting with students and was committed to helping young people get an education. He would err on the side of giving students a second or third chance to stay in school to make sure they would get the education that they needed to succeed in life.”

As word reached students that he was leaving Peru State, the 1990 Peruvian yearbook staff wrote as a tribute, “Good-bye Dr. G. He walked onto a campus that was deep in jeopardy when enrollment and funds were low. Dr. Gallentine jumped in with both shoes on and PSC’s success returned. Dr. G. worked hard to make Peru State College what it is today, a thriving campus with a lot of potential.”

Gallentine’s appreciation for Peru State continued throughout his life, as well as the relationships he formed during his tenure.

Dr. Dan Hanson, current President of Peru State, writes, “I met Jerry only briefly, but he expressed the strongest admiration for Peru State and its future.”

“I also know that many alumni, faculty and staff built strong relationships on campus under his leadership. They still often return to campus – for which we are thankful.”

Joy said, “He was a committed family man. His wife Shirley and their two children were the most important element in his life.”

Gallentine passed away in Norton, Kansas at the age of 78.

Transformation Tuesday Features the AWAC Hill

Want to see more transformations? Follow us on Facebook where we regularly feature how campus has transformed during our history. Visit facebook.com/PeruStateCollegeNationalAlumniAssociation.
Peru and Beyond! Homecoming at Peru State was Out of this World

Hundreds of alumni, friends, students, faculty and staff gathered on September 27 and 28 to celebrate Peru State during the annual Homecoming festivities.

“This year we were proud to honor our Peru State family during Homecoming,” said President Dan Hanson. “We re-named the choir room to honor Dr. Thomas Ediger’s contributions, recognized the many contributions of our Grand Marshals, Charlie and Judy Grotrian, and during the football game we honored Riley “Dale” Holstine – a student who lost his fight with cancer.”

Highlights from Homecoming:

2019 Grand Marshals: Mr. Charlie Grotrian (’71) and Dr. Judy (Green) Grotrian (’72)

Student Senate selected the Grotrians as Homecoming Grand Marshals for their outstanding support of and many contributions to Peru State.

Both Charlie and Judy are southeast Nebraska natives. Throughout their lives, they have been devoted to their children (Jay and Sheri), family, community, to working hard and always doing their best. Their family has always valued education, not simply as a means to an end, but as a way to an informed and fulfilling life.

Dr. Judy Grotrian shared during the All-College Dinner, “Over the 23 years I was on this campus with the Johnson-Brock students for the high school business contest, and the 21 years teaching Peru State students, I was continually reminded of how much of a gift this place is.”

Not only was Grotrian announced as the Grand Marshal for 2019, but she was also the recipient of the Barb Lewellan Award during May of this year by Student Senate. This award is designed to honor an outstanding faculty, staff member, or administrator who has distinguished him or herself through the betterment of students and student life at Peru State College.

She became a part of the Peru State faculty in 1998 and recently retired this past spring, in 2019. She was a part of the Business Department on campus, teaching courses like Principles of Financial Accounting, Principles of Managerial Accounting, Employee Training and Development, and Organizational Communications.

Charles Grotrian is a Peru State alumnus who graduated in the Class of 1971. He went on to teach for three years at Weeping Water High School, before deciding his true calling was farming.

They partnered with Judy’s brother and wife (Larry and Sue Green) to name the auditorium in the Performing Arts Center in honor of the extended Green family. Judy and Charlie have also honored Judy’s parents, James G. and Mavis Green, by helping to establish and support a scholarship for high-achieving students pursuing business-related degrees here at Peru State.
Honoring Riley “Dale” Holstine:
The Peru State community remembered Riley “Dale” Holstine, a member of the Bobcat football team, at Peru State’s Homecoming game. Holstine lost his battle with leukemia the previous Sunday morning.

Holstine, a 20-year old from Mound City, Mo., played tight end on the football team and studied kinesiology with a desire to become a strength and conditioning coach.

During the football game, the College accepted free-will donations rather than gate admission with 100% of the proceeds directed to leukemia research. The Bobcat family donated more than $6,000.

A moment of silence was held prior to the start of the game to remember Holstine. Orange was represented throughout the game including the football players orange shoelaces. Orange represents the battle against leukemia cancer.

Homecoming Court:
Seniors Julia Zurek and Luis Constantino were crowned as the 2019 Homecoming King and Queen at a special ceremony moved to the Al Wheeler Activity Center due to a rain delay during the annual homecoming football game.

Zurek is majoring in Kinesiology with a business minor. She participates in Cross Country and is a Resident Assistant. She also participates in Christian Student Fellowship, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Rotaract, Phi Epsilon Kappa, Peru Association of Student Athletes, and is a student honors assistant.

Luis Henrique Ribeiro Constantino is from Varzae Grande, Mato Grosso, Brazil. Constantino is majoring in Kinesiology and Business Management. His on-campus activities include being a Resident Assistant and playing football.
Reappearance of the Fine Arts Mural by Paul Fell ('67)

When I joined the Peru State Art faculty in 1975, the art department was located on the second floor of the Jindra Fine Arts building. Some years after I left in 1984, the department was relocated to the lower level of what is now the Library and later to its current home in the A. V. Larson building.

Part of the reason for my hiring was to expand the course offerings of the art department. To that end, Dr. Leland Sherwood, department chair and I designed a mural painting class. I had been studying the work of the Mexican muralists like Diego Rivera and Jose Clemente Orozco, so this seemed like a good time to offer a class on this subject.

The class began in the fall of 1975 with about 8 or 9 students. (Their names are on the mural that they helped create). We determined that the wall facing the stairway to the upper level of the Fine Arts building would be a natural spot for our first mural project. I designed the mural, titled “Makers.” It shows three figures representing the various areas of the arts - music, theatre, and visual arts.

The mural was painted on four 4’ x 8’ pieces of Masonite board with acrylic paint. When completed at the end of the fall term the mural was 16 feet tall and 8 feet wide. It was mounted on the Jindra stairway wall and remained there for many years. As I recall, the mural class was offered two more times with murals created for the upper level of the old library (now the CATS center) and one other location. Neither piece survives today.

Some years ago, when the Jindra Fine Arts building underwent an extensive remodel, the “Makers” mural was removed. Unfortunately, the original location where the piece had hung was smaller after the remodel and was not large enough to accommodate the original art.

Over the years some of my former mural students returned to campus to view their work, but were unable to locate the mural. Luckily for future generations of art lovers, now-retired Professor of Art Ken Anderson located and stored the mural in the A.V. Larson building. This is where the piece languished until a couple of years ago when I told the story of the mural to college president Dr. Dan Hanson, and, over a period of years, with the assistance of Dr. Paul Hinrichs, arts and sciences dean, and a host of other Peru State staff, the mural now hangs in its new home, the A.V. Larson building. Two of the four sections of the “Makers” mural have been mounted in each of the stairways leading to the lower level of the building.

I am very pleased and happy that the “Makers” piece is part of the campus again after its long absence and look forward to a time when we gather those former students back on campus for a recognition of their work.

Transformation Tuesday Features the Library

Want to see more transformations? Follow us on Facebook where we regularly feature how campus has transformed during our history. Visit facebook.com/PeruStateCollegeNationalAlumniAssociation.

Russell Beldin, retired Peru State Professor of Business, passed away April 13, 2019. Beldin taught at Emmetsburg Junior College in Emmetsburg, IA, and at Peru State College before retiring in 1999. His many students remember him as an entrepreneur, dedicated teacher and mentor.
City and College are “ImPERUving as ONE”

In May, 2018, President Dan Hanson convened a group of local residents, business and organizational representatives, rental property owners, students, and city leaders to start a conversation about community improvement.

Hanson said, “The guiding assumption of the group is that we can achieve the best future for the City of Peru and Peru State College by working together. I have been pleased that dedicated people have come together around that idea.”

Soon, the group adopted the name “ImPERUving as ONE” and commissioned a Community Vitality Survey administered by Nebraska Extension. The survey was designed to determine the strengths and needs of the region across areas including quality of life, amenities and basic services. The survey reached students, residents of town, area farmers – anyone living or working in 68421 zip code – and 377 responses were received.

Focus groups and a town hall meeting were held to explore topics and discuss the survey results.

Following the survey, Planning Teams were organized in the following areas:
- Business and Economic Development
- Attraction, Retention and Communication
- Infrastructure
- Housing

Planning teams have focused on building relationships among landlords renting property to students, creating better communication between the students on campus and the businesses and organizations in town, and creating a directory of businesses and services as a resource for students and new residents moving to the area.

“The flood that struck Peru in March 2019 has been an interruption to the work of ImPERUving as ONE. However, because of that disaster, new resources have become available for flood-affected communities that are helping us continue our work,” said Hanson.

One significant new resource has already been secured. The City of Peru received a $500,000 grant from a special disaster-recovery housing opportunity offered by the Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund. This funding will allow the city to purchase, renovate and sell homes to improve the stock of owner-occupied housing. The ImPERUving as ONE group will continue to pursue additional resources for housing, infrastructure, business and downtown development and other priorities.

Dr. Hanson added, “The City of Peru and Peru State College have a diligent commitment to emerging from this flood better than ever. The priorities identified in the survey have laid a clear path forward. This group is creating a bright future for our community.”

Community Vitality Survey Identifies Best Things About Life in Peru

The survey asked people to rate their favorite community amenities. Among the top amenities listed were:
- Peru’s Splashpad located in Sid Brown Memorial Park
- Duck Creek Recreation Area and Lake (opened just north of town in the spring of 2018)
- College Library
- College Fitness Center
- Disc Golf Course located in Neal Park

The survey also asked, What Makes Peru a Great Place to Live, Work or Attend School? Many respondents said the people make the town a great place, offering comments such as:
- People know and care about each other.
- Friendly neighbors
- There are many people who are easy to connect with who care about everyone being comfortable in the community.
- Respondents also mentioned Peru’s “small town” atmosphere as a distinct feature, providing comments such as:
  - The small town feel makes Peru a great. We are smaller in number, making it easier to work together in making Peru an enjoyable place.
  - Everyone is kind and seems to be working to achieve the same goal
  - Safe place to raise kids
  - It’s overall a safe community
  - The natural beauty of the area was also mentioned frequently as a special quality about life in Peru. One person commented, “The feeling you get from town cannot be compared to anywhere else. Peru is absolutely lovely.”
Investing in Student Growth and Success: Strategic Enrollment Management

The entering class of freshmen at Peru State College is the largest in at least thirty years. The class size reached 290 on the first day of classes, Monday, August 19.

“Over the past year, the College has purposefully planned for a larger freshmen class,” said Dr. Jesse Dorman, vice president for enrollment management and student affairs. This growth is important in our mission to connect students with educational opportunities.”

With the increase in freshmen, Peru State is also seeing more students in its residence halls. This fall Residence Hall occupancy is 10% higher than fall 2018 occupancy.

This success is due to careful planning through a college-wide initiative called Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM). Led by Dorman and Dr. Tim Borchers, vice president for academic affairs, this initiative began three years ago with time taken to look at data, opportunities for growth and budgetary considerations. From there the SEM team held meetings with all campus stakeholders to solicit ideas and input on promising opportunities.

“We were looking for the best opportunity to attract students who wouldn’t have come to Peru State otherwise,” said Borchers. “We examined co-curriculars, academic programs and athletics.”

The first-stage of SEM is focused on junior varsity athletic programs, the development of a new major, a new scholarship model and a continual overall effort to be competitive.

To this end, Peru State added junior varsity baseball, softball, men's basketball and women's basketball. The College also made cheer a competitive team sport.

Wayne Albury, athletic director, said, “The Athletic Department is proud and excited to see enrollment increases through new opportunities for student-athletes. We’ll continue to partner closely with Admissions to highlight Peru State’s great programs, faculty and facilities.”

The SEM initiative also led to the development of a new scholarship model – Invest in Success Scholarships.

“We have done research that shows students who are successful in high school are also successful at Peru State,” said Dorman. “As we studied the data, we have found that high school GPA is a better predictor of success at Peru State than a standardized test score.”

“We want students to continue that success and we are now awarding scholarships that are more strongly connected to GPA,” continued Dorman. “This approach has been very well received by parents and students because they recognize the high school experience matters and cannot be simplified into a test score.”

In addition to the emphasis on high school GPA and performance, Peru State increased the scholarship amounts available in fall 2020. All junior varsity athletes were recruited on success awards.

“We focused on junior varsity athletic programs because nearly every school in our conference offers JV,” said Borchers. “These initiatives connect students to the great opportunity of education at Peru State while helping students to continue to develop skills to compete at the varsity level.”

Initial rollout of SEM has begun but will take years to complete. This includes the development of a new academic major – strategic communications. Each strategy – whether it is the development of a new academic program, additional athletics programs or other opportunities – has a comprehensive analysis and extensive business plan developed before implementation.

“The College has a strong interest in providing a personalized and transformative education for more students,” said Borchers. “Peru State expanded and saw the benefits with the largest enrollment in 30 years.”

“The College is committed to SEM and plans to continue to work aggressively in a competitive environment,” said Dorman. “It is important for Peru State to continue to position itself for success through strengthened on-campus enrollment, positive student experiences and increased prominence.”

“Alumni and friends can support these new initiatives by coming out to watch a JV game,” said Borchers. “We are proud of our students and want to share their successes.”

Alumni and friends are also invited to share these new opportunities and success scholarships with prospective students. Learn more about the success awards at www.peru.edu/admissions/cost-aid.

### Invest in Success Awards

We know that high school GPA is a strong predictor of student success at Peru State College. Students that qualify are guaranteed a renewable tuition award in their admissions letter, by completing an application for admission, including submission of an official high school transcript and official ACT/SAT score. The priority deadline for these awards is March 1.

**Peru State College’s 2019-2020 Invest in Success Awards for Freshman**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholarship</th>
<th>GPA/4.0</th>
<th>Award</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chancellors</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>$9,000 ($12,250/yr)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidents</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>$8,000 ($12,000/yr)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deans</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>$7,000 ($11,750/yr)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TJ Majors</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>$6,000 ($11,500/yr)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To claim award, students must be enrolled as a full-time, on-campus student.
Great Colleges to Work For: Peru State Survey Results

In 2016 and 2018, Peru State participated in The Chronicle’s “great colleges to work for” survey – the largest higher education workplace survey – with excellent results.

“Peru State participated in this survey to further the College’s cultural enhancement plan,” said Kristin Buscher, Director of Assessment. “The goal of this plan is to empower employees to make a difference, foster mutual respect and support, and build community through collegial collaborative relationships.”

The survey covers 15 core dimensions including job satisfaction and support, collaboration, communication, pride, fairness and more. More than half of all Peru State faculty and staff voluntarily participated in 2018.

“The highest performing dimensions in 2018 were supervisor and department chair support, as well as pride in work and the institution,” said Buscher.

Additional strengths identified were faculty/staff relationships with colleagues and students, faculty/staff enjoy their work, satisfied with support and guidance from direct supervisor, feeling of being part of a community and improved feeling of being valued/appreciated.

Key Quotes of Appreciation (names are kept anonymous as part of the survey confidentiality):

“The College has faculty and staff members who are committed to our mission and work.”

“I love the people I work with.”

Employees commented that they appreciate the opportunity to engage with students and see them grow and develop. One employee wrote, “Knowing that I am able to make a difference in students lives.”

“Great group of people to work with and feels like one big second family.”

Employees commented that they appreciate the supportive leadership of their direct supervisor.

Peru State saw more higher performing dimensions and statements in 2018 – proving the cultural enhancement plan’s initiatives are making a positive difference.

“We are making an investment in our faculty and staff,” said President Dan Hanson. “They are what makes Peru State the high quality institution it is today. We plan to continue with our cultural enhancement plans and assess our progress through The Chronicle’s survey.”

Peru State administers the survey every two years with the next scheduled survey planned in spring 2020. To learn more about ongoing assessment at Peru State College, visit the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment website at www.peru.edu/oira.

Same Great Magazine.
Three Times Per Year.

Beginning this year, the Peru Stater will move to three issues – winter, summer and fall. Each issue will have the same great Peru State College content with additional alumni stories and donor highlights.

Beginning with the 2020 summer edition, the Peru Stater will feature a new design and size that will provide cost-savings and even better print quality.

“We are excited to add a third issue and bring more news to Peru State’s constituents,” said Becca Jewell, Interim Foundation CEO.

“The Peru Stater will continue to be a free source of news for all alumni and friends.”

Have a story to share? Contact the Peru State Foundation at pscfoundation@peru.edu.
Peru State Athletic Department Earns Top Champions of Character Mark

The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) revealed the organization’s Champions of Character Five-Star Award winners. Peru State was one of only 15 institutions nationally to hit the rankings top mark with a perfect score of 100.

This is the first time in ten years that Peru State has earned Gold Level status and earned a perfect mark. The award is presented annually to institutions that advance character-driven athletics by promoting competitive athletics, academic excellence and character values.

“I am so proud of what our student-athletes and the entire athletic department has accomplished by reaching the pinnacle of the NAIA’s Champions of Character program,” said Wayne Albury, Peru State Athletic Director. “Each team has contributed to the success of the department from their academic efforts to the servant leadership – it truly has been a ‘team’ effort.”

A total of 181 colleges and universities and 16 conferences earned the Champions of Character Five-Star Award. To receive the award members scored 60 or more points on the NAIA Champions of Character 100-point Scorecard and conferences named to the list had at least 60 percent of its member schools making the grade with 60 or more points.

Ally Hazen, the current leader of the student-led advisory council noted, “As the liaisons with our various athletic teams, we try to encourage our teammates to do their best, whether it is on the field, in the classroom, or in our community service efforts. Obviously, it has paid off!”

Peru State and Clarke (Iowa) were the highest-ranked members of the Heart on the Five-Star Award honor list, both hitting the 100-point mark. The College of St. Mary is the only other Nebraska institution to earn the top ranking.

Institutions are measured on a demonstrated commitment to Champions of Character and earned points in character training, conduct in competition, academic focus, character recognition and character promotion. Institutions earned points based on exceptional student-athlete grade point averages and by having minimal to no ejections during competition throughout the course of the academic year.

The Scorecard process is based on the NAIA’s flagship program Champion of Characters, which emphasizes the five core values of integrity, respect, responsibility, sportsmanship and servant leadership.

Four Junior Varsity Programs Have Begun Competition in 2019-20

In November 2018, Peru State announced they were going to add four junior varsity programs to the list of athletic opportunities available for student-athletes. The programs included baseball, softball, women’s basketball, and men’s basketball.

Assistant coaches were hired in three of the four programs with baseball utilizing graduate assistants to help lead their programs. Ian Holleran was hired as the assistant coach for women’s basketball while Reggie Kindle as named as the men’s basketball assistant coach. Whitley Albury joined the softball program as its assistant coach. Graduate assistants Kadyn Glass, Mark McGinnity, and Gianfranco Garlobo are guiding the baseball junior varsity squad.

The softball team played ten games in the fall and has six double headers planned for the spring. The baseball team had several scrimmages and two official games with plans to play at least 20 games in the spring. The men’s basketball team will play a total of 15 games while their women’s counterparts will compete in 19 contests.

All four teams are playing games against junior college and four-year teams in the area and within the Heart of America Athletic Conference. The baseball and softball teams have also played contests against select/elite high school teams in the region.

Student athletes associated with the Peru Association of Student Athletes deliver items collected by each athletic team for Project Response. Projects like this helped Peru State reach five-star champion status.

Women’s basketball junior varsity plays at Peru State and on the road.
Peru State to Add Four Varsity and One Junior Varsity Program in 2020-21

With its largest freshmen class in at least 30 years, Peru State is announcing it is adding four varsity and one junior varsity athletic programs that will begin competition fall of 2020.

The increased enrollment was due in large part to the success of adding four varsity reserve athletic programs and competitive cheer to the offerings in the athletic department. Over 70 freshmen were added within the five programs. In addition, at least 15 transfers have become Bobcats because of the new programming.

Peru State president Dr. Dan Hanson said, “Peru State College’s mission includes providing access to higher education -and all it means to provide a personal and engaging education.” Continuing, Hanson added, “As a former college coach and athlete, I know athletics can be an important part of the college learning experience. Adding additional athletic opportunities at Peru State gives more students an opportunity across Nebraska and the region.”

Hanson and Bobcat athletic director Wayne Albury, announced in 2020 that the College will be adding men's and women's bowling, men's cross country, competitive dance, and varsity reserve women's volleyball.

The men's cross country program is actually being re-established. The program was discontinued in the early 1980's after having many years of success. Albury stated that James Cole, a 2007 graduate of Peru State, will be the coach for the men's cross country team. Cole was a member of the Bobcat club cross country team while a student and also served as a student assistant while at Peru State. Cole began his duties on December 23.

By adding the four varsity sports, the College will now have a total of 13 programs competing for conference and national championships. Currently, Peru State offers football, women's cross country, women's golf, women's volleyball, men's and women's basketball, baseball, softball, and competitive cheer. All of the programs compete in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA).

AD Albury noted much research went into the plan to offer additional sports. He stated, “This decision was not made without a thorough review of the College’s current resources and the ability to adequately fund these additional programs.” Albury continued, “We are confident the addition of these programs will best serve the current and future needs of our student-athletes.

The addition of the junior varsity women’s program brings the College’s varsity reserve offering to five. Current programs that began this past fall were men’s and women’s basketball, baseball and softball.

Current head volleyball coach Laurie Felderman was excited about the addition of the varsity reserve component for her volleyball program. Felderman stated, “Watching the very competitive practices of the newly-added programs proves to me that this will definitely help strengthen our entire volleyball program at Peru State.”

Felderman announced that Madison Peters joined her staff on January 13 as an assistant coach. Peters will have the main responsibility for the junior varsity program while assisting with the varsity program.

Nathan and Jeni Seitz, co-owners of the Bowldog Alley in Auburn, began their duties as coaching assistants for the bowling programs on December 23. Both attended Peru State and are excited to have the College utilize their facility as the home site for the Bobcat bowling teams.

Albury noted that the College is still in the process of hiring coaches for the bowling and competitive dance teams.

The NAIA provides some guidelines for its member institutions that offer junior varsity programs. It allows student-athletes to compete at both the junior varsity and varsity levels as long as they comply with scheduling limitations.

Peru State competes in the Heart of America Athletic Conference (Heart) which has member schools in Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, and Nebraska. In addition to playing Heart schools, the athletic department will also play other NAIA schools in Nebraska, as well as, competing against area junior college athletic teams.

Heart commissioner Lori Thomas was pleased to learn of Peru State’s decision to add programs. She stated, ‘Congratulations to Peru State as they expand their sports offerings and student-athlete experience. With the addition of men’s and women’s bowling, that will bring the Heart to a national championship automatic berth and competitive dance will take the ten institutions sponsoring, the largest participation out of all NAIA conferences. It is great to see when an institution looks not only at what makes sense to their campus but also a great fit for the conference.”

Potential students interested in athletics at Peru State are encouraged to visit www.pscbobcats.com, speak with an admissions representative or coach. To express an interest, potential athletes can complete the College’s inquiry form at my.psu.edu/athletics/inquiryform.

Schneider Retires After Eight Years as Head Football Coach

Steve Schneider announced his retirement at the Bobcat Football Team’s annual banquet on December 8, 2019. Schneider had served as head coach of the team since 2012. He also served as Peru State’s Athletic Director from 2011 to 2018 before stepping down to focus on the football team for the last two seasons.

Dr. Dan Hanson, President of Peru State College, said, “Steve brought an important level of organization and professionalism to managing both the Athletic Department and the football team. His leadership and experience will have a lasting impression on both organizations.”

Under Schneider the Bobcats’ record was 39-49. In 2017 the team was second in the Heart of America Athletic Conference (Heart) North Division.

Schneider’s tenure as head coach saw the team produce eight Academic All-Americans, including two Academic All-Americans of the Year, Logan Paben and Gunnar Orcutt. The team also had 20 All-District Academic First Team Honorees and 41 Daktronics-NAIA Scholar-Athletes.

Wayne Albury, Athletic Director, writes, “I would like to thank Coach Schneider for his service to students and leading the Bobcat football program. Under his leadership, many players excelled on the field, in the class room and in the community.”

Two team members, Mitch Boshart and Logan Paben, were named A.O. Duer National Winners, the highest honor from the NAIA for a junior student-athlete. Schneider also coached Peru State’s only Good Works Team member, Gunnar Orcutt.

On the field, the team had one All-American, Tyler Ford, and one National Special Teams Player of the Week, Greg Conry.

Schneider was a part of to two fundraising operations on campus: renovating the historic Oak Bowl and renovating the vacant Peru Elementary School into the new Field House. Schneider helped raise funds for both projects and the Field House’s Jerry Joy Locker Room.

DeOntae Pannell, the team’s Defensive Coordinator, will lead the program while the College conducts a national search for a new coach. Pannell has been with Peru State since 2015.
**Bobcats We Will Miss...**

Winter 2020 Peru Stater.indd   22-23

Tonya Parra ('98)
Joe Dunn ('96)

...year in the new role of Secondary Principal for Arcadia Public Schools. Mike brings 30 years of educational experience.

Tammy Westhart (Haack, '00) started August 15, 2019 as the new accounting and finance manager at the Auburn Board of Public Works. Danny Hayes ('02) was voted President of Region 3 for the American Criminal Justice Association/Lamba Alpha Epsilon. This is Danny's fifth year in the position.

Lori Koker ('04) has been hired by DC Retirement Strategies as Manager of Operations.

Jason Polk ('04) took on the new role of activities director and business at Winder-Palmer Public Schools. Jason has 26 years of teaching experience.

John Swetha ('05) joined the Papillon-La Vista High School volleyball team as head coach. He had spent the 2016-17 has the assistant coach for the same team.

Cara Williams ('05) took over the Title I program at Johnson-Branch Public Schools this past fall. She will also be the head coach of the volleyball team.

Janine Crain ('08) is the new principal at Edison Elementary in Council Bluffs, IA. Prior to this position, she was the principal at Crescent Elementary.

Nichole Feldhausen (Creek, '09) started this fall as special education teacher at Valley Heights Elementary School, Blue Rapids in Marysville, KS.

Jennifer Hyde ('09) has returned to teaching at Auburn Public Schools after three years of teaching at Elmer Hills Christian School in Manhattan, KS.

Jacob Thompson-Krug ('09) coached the Blue Eye High School (MO) girls' cross country to a Class 1 State Championship and the boys' cross country team to a Class 1 State Runners-Up.

Melinda Schneider ('10) became the third grade teacher at Hayward Elementary in Nebraska City this past fall.

Sarah Ostmeyer (Mathewson, '13) was welcomed as the new 10th and 11th grade English teacher at Centennial. She will also coach middle school volleyball.

Emily Restau (Mares, '13-16) will be substitute teaching and the head volleyball coach at Milford Public Schools. Previously, she taught for five years at David City Public School.

Caleb Lempda ('14) was a new teacher this fall at Humboldt Table Rock Steinauer Public Schools. He is teaching Physical Education and coaching high school football and track.

Jess Grasmick ('15) took over as Mid-Plains Community College full-time dental assisting instructor. She has previously served this role as an interim.

Jonathan Robertson ('15) joined the firm of O'Donnell, Fioreno, Wills & Ferdig, LLP as a Staff Accountant.

Rachel Schwindt (Henry, '15) has been promoted to the marketing director of the Lincoln based marketing and communications agency, UNANIMOUS.

Todd Simpson ('15) was hired as the Vice President for University Advancement and Executive Director of the Foundation at Missouri Western State University.

Greg Conry ('16) has begun training for his cross country bike ride that will begin July 8, 2020. Greg will ride from Oceanside, CA to Annapolis, MD to raise funds for Colleen's Dream Foundation and ovarian cancer research.

Anna Rungen ('16) is the new special education/life skills teacher at Friend Public Schools. She will also coach softball and junior high volleyball.

Melissa Myers ('16) joined the teaching staff at Wilcox-Hildreth Public Schools. She will be teaching 7-12 special education.

Nathan Baker ('17) joined the faculty at Friend Public Schools. He is teaching health and physical education, along with serving as wrestling coach.

Marissa Gaston (Florian, '17) is now teaching fifth grade at Scribner Snyder Community Schools.

Ryan Zuhike ('17) is teaching junior and senior high mathematics at Johnson-Branch Public Schools. In addition to teaching, he will be coaching junior high football and junior high boys' basketball.

Amanda Dua ('18) started as a third grade teacher this fall at Hayward Elementary School in Nebraska City.

Cheryl Ferrero ('18) was named Teacher of the Week. Cheryl is a third grade teacher at the Bayard Elementary School.

Haeryn Hug ('18) began teaching special education at Auburn Public Schools this fall. Previously, she taught at Fort Calhoun.

Samantha “Sammi” Jackson ('18) began teaching junior high classes this fall at Red Cloud community school.

Maddie Kohns ('18) was hired as a fifth grade special education teacher at Hayward Elementary School in Nebraska City.

Schuyler Kuhlman ('18) is a new fourth grade teacher at Lewiston Consolidated School.

Stephen Bowers ('19) earned a mini-camp invite from the Minnesota Vikings in May 2019. He also was signed to a ‘future’s’ contract with the BC Lions, a professional Canadian football team.

Delaney Woodward ('19) has been hired as the middle school physical education teach with Beatrice Public Schools for the 2019-2020 school year.

Alumni

Jimmy Blex will be the high school social studies teacher, head high school track coach and assistant high school boys' basketball coach this year at Shelby-Rising City school district.

Lynn Blex will be the advanced technology, STEM and Tech Integration Specialist for the Shelby-Rising City school district.

Neil Bowman is one of five new teachers at Johnson County Central Schools. He is teaching Physical Education and Health for grades 4-8. He will also serve as the head high school wrestling coach and as an assistant high school football coach.

Elise Buck is the new Middle School Social Studies teacher at Lourdes Central Catholic in Nebraska City. She will also coach Middle School Volleyball and Middle School and High School Girls Basketball, as well as serving as a High School Student Council sponsor.

Stevie Eickhoff has become the seventh through 12th grade art instructor at Auburn Public Schools this fall. She will also serve as Art Club sponsor.

Alexis Hahn joined the faculty at Sterling Public Schools for the 2019-2020 school year. Hahn is the Kindergarten teacher.

Lyle Hexom signed with Djugarden Basket Stockholm. Lyle spent the summer of 2019 playing with the Grizzlies in the NBA Summer League.

Jody Kerchal is the new principal at Clark Elementary in Oceola, IA. For the past two years, she has been the Dean of Students at Lovelace Elementary.

David Maguire has been promoted to chief operating officer by Prochaska & Associates. He has been with the firm for over three years. In his new role, David will be a significant part of the leadership team where he will be actively participating in the future of the firm.

Angela McCailler became the new Kindergarten teacher at Whiteoak Creek Elementary School with Gretna Public Schools.

Mackenzie Minzer began teaching grade 4 at Hayward elementary in Nebraska City this past fall.

Blake Mooney started teaching fourth grade this fall at BATTLE Creek. Previously, he taught sixth grade in Omaha.

Kimbrook Tennial retired after many years of coaching track and field, football, volleyball, basketball and wrestling. It was in girls' volleyball that he finished his career with a 79-49 record. Kimbrook has been a part of a whopping 36 state championships overall and 44 top-three trophies. He has also coached 14 individual state track and field champions.

Friends

Dr. Gina Bittner and Dr. Kelly Kingsley, Peru State education professors, have written and illustrated a children’s book: “How Rudy the Rooster Got His Voice.” It has been published by Handsender Publishing out of Lincoln.

Justin Hoffman, Peru State assistant football coach was selected to a part of the East coaching staff, coaching special teams, at the NAIA Senior Football Classic. It was held December 14, 2019 in Savannah, GA.

Mark Matthews, former Peru State Softball coach, was posthumously added to the Hastings College list of Outstanding Alumni Coaches. Mark’s coaching career began while he was at Hastings College with Legion baseball. He went on to coach football, basketball and track and field. He had just begun his 25th season coaching softball at Peru State at the time of his unexpected passing in 2017.

Bobcats in Love!

Logan Landwehr (‘11, ’19) was married to Paige O’Neal at an August 31, 2019 wedding in South Sioux City.

Sheila Remmerde ('13) married John Borch June 15, 2019 at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Tilden.

Vaux Stivers ('17) was married to McKayla Doudreba on December 14, 2019 in Salina, KS.

Bobcats We Will Miss

1930s

Josefina Genuchi (Dowding, '38) died on April 20, 2019. She was employed as a licensed realtor for more than 30 years and was very active in her community. Josefina served as a 4-H leader, was a member of the Historical Society and was one of the founding members of the New Windsor Heritage Committee. She enjoyed embroidery, crocheting, sewing, reading, baking, gardening, antiquing and refinishing furniture.

Max Burroughs ('42) of Kearney passed away October 12, 2019.

Margie "Marge" Byers (Weiler, '43) of Sherwood, OR passed away July 21, 2019. Margie was a wonderful homemaker and mother of three. She later joined the workforce as an executive secretary before retiring from the Huntington Independent School District. Marge and her late husband, Buzz, enjoyed travelling all over the country and world.

Loverude 'RH' Fanders (’43) of Council Bluffs, IA passed away July 15, 2019. Mr. Fanders taught in the Council Bluffs Community School District for 31 years, retiring in 1984. He has directed and acted in many plays, served as a lay minister at his church, served on several boards, and has been inducted into two Halls of Fame.

Mary Wolff (Hacker, '43) of Tulsa, OK passed away October 14, 2019. Mary was an active volunteer. She belonged to John Calvin Presbytery Church and other volunteer groups including Green Country Women where she started their Progressive group. Mary also loved to travel.

Lois (Winkle) Dragoo ('46) of Lincoln, formerly Pickrell, passed away June 7, 2019. Lois and her husband, Dean, owned and operated Dragoo Produce in Pickrell, owned the Pickrell Tavern and sold Triple F Feeds statewide until retirement in 1990. She will be missed for her

Look at Those Bobcats Go! Bobcats in Love!
honesty, kindness, sense of humor, strength and wisdom. Doris (Stockey) Harney (46) of Nebraska City passed away August 9, 2019. Doris taught rural school for many years and worked at FW Woolworth Company for 23 years. She enjoyed gardening, cooking, crafts, practical jokes and most of all, people in general.

1950s
Orville Gobbler ('50) of Manhattan, KS passed away October 18, 2019. Orville taught for 40 years before retiring. Upon retirement, he enjoyed spending time with other retired colleagues and attending Manhattan Area Retired Teachers Association meetings. Orville was a very gifted craftsman and took great pride in his work. His children have many of his pieces in their homes.
Mary Koetke (Cope, ’45) of Kingsley, IA passed away December 4, 2019. Mary taught for many years in Nebraska and mostly in Iowa, retiring in 1995. She married in 1956, lived on a farm until 1975, when they moved to the town of Kingsley where she continued to live until her passing.

Elinor Mougy (Fahnhnder, ’50) of Nebraska City, formerly Union, passed away December 21, 2018. She taught at a rural school for about six years many years ago. She loved embroidery and reading. Elinor was a member of the Gideon Auxiliary, Union American Legion Auxiliary and the Plattsburgh Order of Eastern Star.

Elaine Roberts (Beethe, ’50) of Ottawa, KS passed away November 7, 2019. Elaine taught for many years, later receiving her funeral director license to assist at Lamb-Roberts Funeral Home beside her husband. She was a lifetime member of the Lutheran Church, taking part in many activities at her church.

Leon Joy (’51) of Falls City passed away August 24, 2019. Leon served in the Army then went on to teach math for 25 years until his retirement. After leaving teaching, Leon returned to work in the oilfields. He had been a member of the Rotary Club, Falls City Power Board and he was President and Vice President of the Nebraska Education Association.

Dawnye Noell (’53) of Pueblo, CO passed away November 14, 2019.

Lois Blinde (Harms, ’55) of Johnson passed away November 27, 2019. Lois was very involved in her church. She taught Sunday School for 55 years, Vacation Bible School for many years, and served as Sunday School Superintendent. Lutheran World Relief Murders was a project very near and dear to her heart. In the past year alone, she put together more than 80 blankets.

Doris Jurgens (Parde, ’55) of Beatrice passed away December 9, 2019. Doris enjoyed serving and helping others, as a Cub Scout Mother. Girl Scout leader and working at Beatrice Good Samaritan Center in Activities for 25 years.

Jim L. Cotton (’56) of Woodbine, IA passed away August 24, 2019. Jim was a man of many talents, from singing and playing multiple instruments to carpentry to a breathtaking scope of knowledge, there were few subjects he didn’t know at least something about.
National Alumni Association Board of Directors:
In 2002, the National Alumni Association Board of Directors was formed to formally unite PSC alumni and coordinate efforts for involvement. Pictured above are the current Board members from R to L: Todd Simpson ('15) (former CEO of the PSC Foundation), Dr. Dan Hanson (president), Rich Daly ('68), Arlene (Borcher) Fell ('67), Paul Fell ('67), Elton Edmond ('88, '16), Connie (Sims) Edmond ('87), Mary Lu (Hicks) McCoy ('68), Alice (Massoth) Mizerski ('69), Chuck Mizerski ('69), Tyler Nutsch ('13), Mark Shively ('79, '93) and Ivan Wineglass ('94). Not pictured are board members Branden Bender ('95) and Mark Czapla ('87).

Inside this Peru Stater you’ll find...

| Pages 4-5 | Alumni Events and Photos |
| Pages 6-7 | Hall of Fame and Giving Day Review |
| Pages 8-9 | Fish Praxis Scholarship and Mark Williams Press Box |
| Page 10 | Fensler Scholarship Established |
| Pages 14-15 | Homecoming Review |
| Pages 18-19 | Record Enrollment and Peru Stater New Look |
| Pages 20-21 | Athletics Program Updates |

The Peru Stater is published twice each year by the Peru State College Foundation. Send your comments, news items and address changes to:

The Peru Stater
c/o PSC Foundation
PO Box 10
Peru, NE 68421-0010

For more information about Peru State College, Nebraska’s first college, visit www.peru.edu or find us on Facebook.

For more information about the Peru State College Alumni Association and Foundation, visit foundation.peru.edu or call us at 402-872-2304 or email us at pscfoundation@peru.edu.

Like Peru State College National Alumni Association on Facebook
facebook.com/PeruStateCollegeNationalAlumniAssociation