

THE CROSS ROAD

Alumni Newsletter of American National University

Update from Academics

BY DR. CAROLYN SCOTT, CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER

I hope this newsletter finds you well and thriving. As we continue our journey of academic excellence, I am delighted to share some exciting updates and initiatives that reflect our commitment to providing innovative and accessible education.

Accreditation Milestones:

Our commitment to quality education remains unwavering, and we are proud to announce upcoming programmatic and institutional accreditation visits. These visits are a testament to our dedication to meeting and exceeding the highest standards in education. Your ongoing support and the legacy of our alumni contribute significantly to the continued success of American National University.

Medical Assisting Program - Now in Spanish:

In our pursuit of inclusivity and diversity, we are excited to announce that our Medical Assisting program will now be offered completely in Spanish. This initiative aims to break down language barriers and create a learning environment that resonates with our Spanish-speaking communities across the USA. We believe that education should be accessible to all, and this expansion is a step towards ensuring inclusivity and cultural sensitivity.

Your Continued Support:

As valued members of the American National University alumni community, your support has been integral to our growth and success. We invite you to stay engaged with us, whether by

participating in events, offering mentorship to current students, or sharing your success stories. Your experiences and achievements are an inspiration to the next generation of ANU graduates.

We remain dedicated to providing a high-quality education that aligns with the needs of our students and the demands of the ever-changing professional landscape. Thank you for being an essential part of our vibrant academic community.

Warm regards,

Carolyn

National News Throwback: President Conquers Kilimanjaro

Regular readers of the National News know that our students and graduates provide daily examples of ordinary people who have accomplished extraordinary things. It's an important part of National College and American National University's missions to prepare students for a full life, in which one is constantly expanding his or her horizons. President Frank Longaker, who began his "climb" at National College 41 years ago as an instructor, proved the point in spectacular fashion earlier this year, when at the age of 66 he completed an eight-day trek to the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro.

At 19,342 feet, Mount Kilimanjaro is the highest peak on the African continent. Accompanied by 69-year-old Patrick Kennard, a director of (Continues)

President Conquers Kilimanjaro

(Continued) institutional planning for National College, President Longaker traveled to the East African nation of Tanzania to accomplish this feat. A lifelong athlete who has competed in triathlons, adventure races, and other endurance sports, President Longaker felt inspired to complete the ascent. By no means a mountain climber, President Longaker was enticed by the climb's difficulty, which, while strenuous, did not require technical climbing skills.

The climb itself took eight days—six days up, two down—and the group was comprised of 14 people, mostly from the United States, plus about 35 Tanzanian porters and guides. One of the biggest challenges of the climb was the lack of oxygen at high altitudes. The first few days of the climb saw the group gradually ascend to 15,000 feet above sea level, where they spent several days traversing the mountain to different camps on the route to the summit. **“At that altitude, we were not carrying oxygen, so everyone was vulnerable to altitude sickness,”** President Longaker stated. The group learned breathing techniques suited for high altitude activities and took pains to avoid over-exertion.

On the day of the summit climb, the group had a light supper and early turn-in, to awake at 11 PM local time. **“We climbed all night,”** related President Longaker. **“We used headlamps, and just went one foot in front of the other.”** The last 4,000 feet, while steep, was largely a zig-zag route of switchback trails. As the group neared the summit, the sun began to rise in the eastern sky, giving them a dramatic view of the surrounding countryside. **“You almost want to stop and watch the sunrise, but you’re torn by a desire to finish the last few hundred feet to the top,”** admitted President Longaker.

After about two hours at the peak, where the group rested, snacked, and took photos, the group descended 4,000 feet back to the base camp they had left the night before, arriving early afternoon, local time. Due to the limited availability of water and supplies, they couldn't stay at this base camp for long. After about an hour's rest, they continued down the mountain until nightfall. A final day brought them the remainder of the way down the mountain to waiting transportation.

Afterward, the group took a jeep safari to a game preserve on the Serengeti Plain and saw a variety of wildlife—“lions and a wide variety of their prey” as President Longaker put it. Aside from the unusual wildlife, President Longaker remarked upon several aspects of life in Africa. **“It was a very different standard of living from what we are used to in the United States,”** he explained. Stores and shopping centers were few; street vendors were the norm. Agriculture appeared to dominate the economy, with livestock brought out to pasture during the day and returning to the protection of villages overnight. **“The local Maasai people in the villages outside of the cities [whose warriors are mythically renowned lion hunters] are no longer allowed to kill lions, except to protect their livestock,”** said President Longaker. **“However, it is still a mark of distinction for a young Maasai warrior to kill a lion protecting his flock.”**

A concluding point made by President Longaker was of the reception of his group received from the local populace. **“In all of the parts of Africa where we engaged, whether it was going through customers, in the cities, in the hotel, in the villages, or the people on the street, I never found anyone who had an unpleasant attitude toward visitors,”** he expressed. **“There was complete friendliness.”**

When people think of college and university presidents and their achievements, one typically thinks of contributions they make to education. President Longaker—who last year received the Imagine American Foundation's Lifetime Achievement Award for his 40 years of service to the career college sector—has certainly made his mark on the lives of thousands of graduates. It is not every day, however, that you see college presidents—much less at the age of 66—scaling 19,000-foot mountain peaks. Yet for President Longaker, this sort of accomplishment is routine. It is this ability to make extraordinary things look routine, in whatever you set out to pursue, that sets National apart. (Cont.)

(Continued) **“Our students and graduates show the world time and time again that challenges can be overcome, regardless of one’s age or circumstances,”** said President Longaker. **“I don’t see myself as anything other than an ordinary person, just like them.”**

Fostering Her Legal Career

BY CHLOE DANIELS

Dalyn Fountain was struck with a choice. She either goes to school to become a Paralegal to solidify her career choice or move on to something different. Once she joined ANU’s Paralegal associate degree program, she knew she made the right decision. With law school in her future, a family to look after, and a career to uphold, the program allowed Dalyn the flexibility she needed to graduate in her desired field. And in 2022, Dalyn graduated with her associate degree and became a senior paralegal.

Despite applying to other universities, it was only ANU that she felt **“a warm welcome with the people I talked to at ANU – and I didn’t get that anywhere else.”** It was also important to her to have an ABA-approved program like ours. **“I knew I wanted to sit for the state bar certification, and they wouldn’t let me do so without that!”**

The biggest pull for Dalyn to choose ANU was our class structures. **“I needed something to hold me accountable,”** she says, **“I enjoyed it. Even the two- or three-hour long courses, I enjoyed it.”** And her decision to go to ANU was solidified with the ease and comfort that her student services counselors provided her. No matter what it was, **“they were always super nice, easy to talk to. They were knowledgeable – I knew they knew what they were talking about. And I felt comfortable going into each course every term.”**

When it comes to her experience at ANU, Dalyn felt supported throughout her educational journey and even after because of the faculty. She explains that her professors got to know who she was and connected with her on places like LinkedIn. **“I had a few professors who took the time to talk to me about going to law school and what that would look like.”** She never felt alone in her education, either. **“The professors were up to date with grading, that was great! Response time was always good – 24 hours, if that, that I would receive a response from professors... Talk to your professors, especially in the Paralegal program, they will go the extra mile to help you and foster your legal career.”**

After graduating from ANU, Dalyn received a **promotion to Senior Paralegal from her workplace for completing her Paralegal education.** Along with that, she sat for the State Bar certification and passed, and also became a notary public. In her future, Dalyn hopes to finish law school and become an associate within the law firm that she is currently working in.



“Talk to your professors, especially in the Paralegal program, they will go the extra mile to help you and foster your legal career.”

DALYN FOUNTAIN

Mastering Your Finances: Creating a Budget with Student Loan Repayment in Mind

BY BETH OVERBEY, VP FINANCIAL SERVICES

Managing personal finances can be overwhelming, especially when student loans are in the picture. Getting started on the path to financial stability means making a budget that takes those loans into account. A good budget not only helps you cover your bills each month but also ensures you make consistent progress towards becoming debt-free. Let's explore some effective strategies for creating a budget that addresses both your immediate needs and long-term financial goals, including paying off student loans.

Before diving into budgeting, it's essential to have a clear understanding of your financial situation. Figure out how much money is coming in, whether it's from your job or any other source. Then, list out your expenses, like rent, utilities, and insurance, separating them into fixed (things that stay the same) and variable (things that change) costs. Additionally, don't forget to factor in your student loan payments, including the total amount owed, interest rates, and minimum monthly payments.

With an overview of your finances, you can now establish realistic goals. These can be short-term, like building up an emergency fund, or long-term, like saving for a house or retirement. Including your student loan repayment plan into these goals ensures that you allocate sufficient funds to tackle your debt while also making progress towards other milestones.

Now, onto the fun part: creating a budget that's tailored to you. Start by earmarking some of your income for essentials like rent, groceries, and transportation. Try to keep these costs to about half of your total income, allowing flexibility for adjustments when needed.

Next, set aside roughly 20% of your income for financial priorities, including paying off debt and saving up. This category should cover your student loan payments, making sure you meet the minimums while also chipping in extra whenever you can to speed things up.

The rest—around 30%—is your play money. This is for things like eating out, going to movies, or buying things you don't really need. It's important to enjoy yourself, but keeping this category in check means you can put more towards paying off debt and building savings.

But making a budget is just the beginning; sticking to it takes discipline. Use tools and apps to track your spending and see how you're doing with your goals. And consider setting up automatic payments for your student loans to avoid late fees.

As life changes, so might your budget. Keep an eye on things and adjust as needed to accommodate new expenses or goals.

Paying off student loans can feel like an uphill battle, but don't forget to celebrate your wins along the way. Whether it's knocking out a big chunk of debt or hitting a savings milestone, give yourself a pat on the back. Just make sure any rewards fit into your budget and keep you on track for the long haul.

Making a budget that includes paying off student loans is a crucial step toward financial stability and freedom. By knowing where you stand, setting goals, and sticking to your plan, you can take control of your finances and work toward a debt-free future. Remember, it's all about staying consistent and keeping your eyes on the prize.

Faculty Feature

DR. DOMINIKA FALSEY

Dr. Falsey earns her Faculty Excellence Award, nominated by Business Programs Dean, Dr. Lyndsey Obringer, because of how much time she dedicates to her students and the business programs. As Dr. Lyndsey Obringer describes: "She is always working behind the scenes through research and training on how to improve student engagement and student success in the classroom. Her passion for teaching and industry experience shines in her online classroom and live lectures. She comes ready every day to support student success, curriculum improvements, and help our team of adjunct faculty. Dr. Falsey is a servant leader who accomplishes goals by putting students and faculty first. Everything else falls in place due to their hard work, enthusiasm, and passion."

Dr. Falsey graduated from Saint Mary's University of Minnesota with a bachelor's degree in international business and marketing. Within 3 years of graduating from SMU, she completed her Executive Master of Business Administration from Colorado Technical University. She then went on to earn a doctorate degree from CTU with a dissertation pertaining to motivation for online professors in higher education. After graduating from the bachelor's program, she worked for several years as the director of sales and marketing for a Chicago-based open-MRI company leading a team of 15 sales representatives and over 100 physicians. After switching interests in industries, Dr. Falsey took on the role of military director of admissions within the higher education industry. Her daily tasks included training and developing a team of admission advisors within the Chicago land area, traveling to US military bases to discuss the benefits of online education, and developing wounded warrior scholarship programs. Earning her doctorate degree opened doors in higher education instruction which she has been in for the past 16 years.

Dr. Falsey's hobbies include traveling to foreign countries, learning about different cultures, reading fiction books, spending quality time with her family, and trying unique foods. Her biggest accomplishments in life have been achieving her doctorate degree, traveling the world with her family, and buying my first home by the age of 22.



Quick Hits

GRADUATION

Save the date!
2024 Graduation is
June 22, 2024

CALLING ALL GRADUATES!

Please scan the QR code to take this post-graduation survey



CLASS NOTES

Got married? Had a baby? Landed a new job? We want to hear about it! Submit a class note here:
<https://alumni.an.edu/class-notes/>

UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

Moved? changed your email or phone? Let us know where to send communication to here:
<https://alumni.an.edu/update-my-information/>

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