Department Spotlight

PRIMATE BEHAVIOR AND ECOLOGY PROGRAM

Director Lori Sheeran discusses one of CWU’s most innovative programs

How long has the department/program been active at CWU?
The Primate Behavior and Ecology bachelor’s program started in 1998; the Primate Behavior master’s program was initiated in 2008.

How many faculty, staff, students? New faculty? Recently retired faculty?
There are 10 faculty from different disciplines: three from biology, five from anthropology, and one each from psychology and philosophy and religious studies. There are 25 undergraduates and 25 graduate students. We have one new faculty member, Dr. Ralf Greewald, psychology, who joined the program faculty in spring 2013. Dr. Roger and Ms. Deborah Fouts recently retired, and Dr. John Alsoszatai-Petheo will retire this year.

Share a little-known fact about your department/program.
CWU offers the only bachelor’s degree in Primate Behavior and Ecology in the Western Hemisphere—perhaps in the world! We specialize in humane, non-invasive, observational research with nonhuman primates living in a wide variety of settings, both in Washington State and further abroad.

What are your growth plans for your department/program?
We are strengthening extant connections and forging new ones with sanctuaries, zoos, and field sites where our faculty mentor students as they work directly with non-human primates as interns, caregivers, enrichment specialists, and conduct scientific research.

If you were stopped in the airport by someone you don’t know and asked about CWU and your department/program, what would you share?
CWU’s Primate Behavior and Ecology program offers an amazing yet affordable opportunity for students interested in this field. We have a primatology curriculum unparalleled in its breadth and depth, multiple opportunities for students to conduct faculty-mentored projects, with small class sizes and beautiful facilities.
Department Chair Tom Cottrell talks about one of CWU’s oldest departments

**How long as the department/program been active at CWU?**
Biology has been a degree program at Central since the earliest years.

**How many faculty, staff, students? New faculty? Recently retired faculty?**
We have 21 tenured and tenure-track faculty and we hire four to five adjunct professors each year—two are on year-long contracts. We have seven staff and approximately 250 major students, and a significant number of undeclared majors.

We hired two new faculty this academic year. Clay Arango studies energy flow and elemental cycling in stream food webs, specializing in the nitrogen cycle and focusing on how humans alter stream ecosystems through landscape change and restoration actions. Clay worked for us an adjunct professor for a couple years prior to taking his current position. Clay will teach ecology and statistics in biology and will also teach in the Environmental Studies program.

Our second new tenure-track faculty member is April Binder. She studies reproductive biology and hormonal control of ovarian development and function. She is interested in examining gene regulation and transcriptional changes downstream of the estrogen receptor and other hormone-mediated signaling events. April began in winter quarter this year and will teach cell and molecular courses as well as in our introductory courses. No one has retired in the past few years.

**Share a little-known fact about your department/program.**
Biology faculty are very active researchers and we provide many research opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students. Several faculty members are leading research efforts on the I-90 corridor project to track vertebrate movement across the transportation corridor. This work is at the cutting edge of conservation biology and the project is a model for corridor studies around the world.

**What are your growth plans for your department/program?**
To be honest Kari, unless we get more building space for faculty and staff and research labs, we can’t grow. I started this section by rambling on, but thought I should just cut to the reality: no growth now. We’re working with what we’ve got. We’ve just finished a multi-year plan to modify our degrees and we are trying to envision the best ways to support and educate our students—more courses with cutting edge technology, more research experiences, and better education delivery.

**If you were stopped in the airport by someone you don’t know and asked about CWU and your department/program, what would you share?**
I taught at two colleges before coming to CWU. Colorado College is a top-tier private school in Colorado Springs, and Luther College is another private school with an international reputation. The students at these schools pay significantly more than our students but I honestly cannot find a way in which they exceed our ability to educate students. A student who is motivated will learn as much, if not more, attending CWU than either of these schools. They will know their professors, and they will have world-class lab and field experiences.


Senior chemistry major Jacob Buchanan had his poster, based on chemistry research conducted with Professor Steve Chamberland, accepted for presentation at the National Meeting of the American Chemical Society (ACS) in Dallas, Texas in March. The poster session consists of abstracts selected by division program chairs and represents the most exceptional abstracts submitted to participating divisions. Jacob also received a prestigious $600 travel award from the ACS Division of Organic Chemistry Travel Award Committee. Only one student at each university can be awarded a travel grant for the National ACS Meeting.

**DEPARTMENT UPDATES, AWARDS, AND ACCOLADES**
One on One...

with Joseph and Gillian Stoltman,

Joseph and Gillian recently donated $100,000 to the Department of Geography to establish a new endowment which will fund scholarships for students in Geography, Resource Management, and potentially other programs on campus, too. It is the largest single gift that the college has ever received. Dr. Stoltman is a 1962 graduate of CWU and a longtime professor in the Department of Geography at Western Michigan University, where he is now a University Distinguished Scholar.

Tell us about your CWU experience.

JS: I graduated from Ellensburg High School in 1958 and was uncertain of my future plans. My parents and Marvin Schroeder (Superintendent of Schools in Ellensburg) encouraged me to attend college. I enrolled in Central Washington College of Education (CWCE). CWCE was my first choice since it was local, tuition and fees were a true bargain, and I would be able to continue assisting with the family ranch on Wilson Creek. The first quarter proved to be a big challenge since I had to adjust from a high school view of academics to college expectations. It was a steep learning curve and faculty members devoted a considerable amount of time and effort mentoring and interacting with students in relatively small classes. The student body was small, students came from throughout the state, and it was easy to make friends and become engaged in the student community. CWCE was a student oriented, friendly environment, with academic rigor. CWCE was my first choice since it was local, tuition and fees were a true bargain, and I would be able to continue assisting with the family ranch on Wilson Creek. The first quarter proved to be a big challenge since I had to adjust from a high school view of academics to college expectations. It was a steep learning curve and faculty members devoted a considerable amount of time and effort mentoring and interacting with students in relatively small classes. The student body was small, students came from throughout the state, and it was easy to make friends and become engaged in the student community. CWCE was a student oriented, friendly environment, with academic rigor.

What was your major?

JS: I majored in geography (secondary education) with a minor in English. I had my first course in geography from Professor Robert Funderburk. He had spent the prior summer traveling in Europe and returned with the most amazing photographs. I had always been keen on travel as a result of my elementary and junior high school geography classes. Dr. Funderburk was a superb teacher. The second course I enrolled in was physical geography with Dr. Martin Kaatz. A relatively recent University of Michigan PhD, Dr. Kaatz had a well-honed Socratic method of asking questions that challenged students to think and reason in depth. The motto was to be prepared when you entered his classroom. Mr. Otto Jakubek was the third member of the Department of Geography and he taught economic geography. It was in the three course that I realized that geography provide many opportunities as a major. Other students in the major were entering fields such as forest management, national park interpretive specialist, wildlife conservation, urban planning, map librarianship, cartography, nature photography, soil conservation, and teaching. If one’s first choice did not work out, then there were many other fields where geographic knowledge and skills could be applied to a career change. Geography was then and continues today to be a major with multiple opportunities.

Geographers do work in the field and Dr. Kaatz was an exceptional field geographer. He led students on field studies to Blewett Pass to study lava flows between sandstone outcroppings, the Channeled Scablands of the Columbia Basin, and the Yakima River watershed. Geography was rigorous, engaging, and applied outside the classroom.

Where has your career path taken you?

JS: I accepted a teaching position at Morgan Junior High School in Ellensburg for several years prior to deciding to pursue a graduate degree. I considered several leading geography departments. Dr. Martin Kaatz was very influential in recommending I apply to the University of Chicago based on my interests in geography and education. Dr. John Shrader, professor of biology at CWCE, who was my uncle and a biology educator, recommended geography education as a promising career. I earned my first graduate degree from Chicago and then my doctorate at the University of Georgia. Chicago was a huge cultural shock for a rural lad from Ellensburg, and the academics were demanding. The University of Georgia represented two opportunities: first, there was an exceptionally fine geography and education faculty with whom to study; second, it was 1967 and the enforcement of housing and school integration was underway and I became active in both. I consider volunteering my time and personal abilities to the integration of schools and housing in Georgia was my initial focused philanthropic activity as an adult.

I joined the faculty in geography at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, in 1971, and continue to teach, pursue my research interests, and engage in public service. During the years at Western I served as visiting lecturer at universities in the United States and internationally, and taught at the University of London Institute of Education, University of Zimbabwe-International Council for Science, and the University of Passau, Germany. As geographer and spouse, Gill and I have traveled to 86 countries and Antarctica.

Tell us something personal about yourself–family, hobbies–something most folks would not know about you?

JS: I have three adult children and am married to a marvelous lady from England, who has a PhD in virology-immunology. My family name, Stoltman(n) comes from the Saxony Region in Germany. In the late 1600s, people in Saxony were attracted to available farm land in the Lithuanian Polish Commonwealth. In 1720, the Duchess Anna Radziwill of the Commonwealth gifted approximately 300 acres to the Stoltman family. Today the village of Stoltmanny, Poland, is there and can be viewed and visited on Google Earth. Geography and the Stoltman name are closely related. I did not discover the connections until 2002 when a distant relative wrote a history of the family going back to 1430. Gillian and I plan to visit Stoltmanny, Poland in 2014.

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Joe Stoltman continued:

What does philanthropy mean to you?
JS: Philanthropy is giving, serving, and private citizen action intended for the common good. I have a rather broad view of philanthropy due to my early experiences as a student when I was able to give service, but had no money to give. The definition may be expanded to include the giving of time, using of personal skills and abilities, and donating monetary or capital resources to a worthy cause. I served as writer/editor of Civic Ideals and the Giving Society, in which I thought a great deal about the importance of philanthropy to the civic ideals we share as a society in the United States. The United States is a country populated by people who give. It is a unique national aspect and activity of our civic-minded society.

When you started to make gifts to non-profit organizations, what was the trigger?
JS: It began in 1947 following the end of World War II. I attended Washington Elementary School and several times each year every student was responsible to prepare a small cardboard box with several pencils, eraser, several small note pads, a ruler, protractor, and a small pencil sharpener. Some items were donated and others we purchased ourselves. On the outside of the box were the letters CARE, and the boxes were being sent to school children in Europe. Later I became involved in the March of Dimes to eradicate polio, and students contributed and asked adults to contribute. These were school-based efforts that involved students, teachers, and parents in the community. In addition, I was raised in a family and rural community along Wilson Creek where people gave freely of their time and service to help neighbors who were in need. The help wasn’t called philanthropy, but that is what it represented.

When and why did you begin to give to CWU?
JS: It was probably about 20 years ago that Gillian and I began to give to CWU each year. We also gave in memory of my cousin and long-time Ellensburg resident, Floyd (Buck) Minor, and in memory of Professor Martin Kaatz. Why did I begin giving? The Kittitas Valley and Central were important in launching me on a successful and enjoyable career. Gillian and I have made an enduring gift to Central that will provide future students with similar opportunities through the study of geography.

What inspires you to continue to be involved with CWU?
JS: Geographers use the concept of “sense of place” to associate values, emotions, and experiences that people gain as a result of living in or visiting a particular place. My family and personal roots are deeply imbedded in the landscape of the Kittitas Valley and Central. I visit Ellensburg often since I have extended family there. When visiting I often take a short stroll through some part of the campus and remind myself of the importance the “place” known as CWU to me and to my career. In short, my inspiration comes from my optimism for the future and the significant impact that Central has for individuals, society, and the natural environment.

If a potential donor were to ask you, “Why contribute to CWU?” what would you say?
JS: Giving to CWU is an investment in the future. The university is committed to building the capacity of students to apply the CWU educational experience in local communities, the state, the nation, and the world. Your gift will help with student successes, and student successes will make a world of difference in the future.

UPCOMING EVENTS

CWU NATURAL SCIENCE SEMINAR
March 7, 4 – 5 p.m.
Science Building Room 147
Kirt L. Onthank, Dept. of Biology, Walla Walla University
– Uncovering the life histories of cephalopods using stable isotopes

EXPANDING YOUR HORIZONS
Saturday, March 1, 8:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
The choices you make in school today will affect your career opportunities for years to come. Come find out about exciting careers from women who work in science, technology, engineering, and math fields in our part of Washington. Let us show you the possibilities!

NORTHWEST ANTHROPOLOGICAL CONFERENCE
March 26-29, Bellingham, WA
Join CWU anthropology alumni for a social on March 27!

FIRST WA. REGIONAL ROBOTICS COMPETITION
Wed. March 26 to Sat. March 29, All Day
The Conference Program is excited to provide Lodging to the PNW FIRST Robotics Central Washington University Districts Event.