ASHFORD THEN & NOW

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Welcome to this issue of Ashford Connections from the administrators, faculty, and staff of Ashford University! Although we are physically located throughout the global community, we are united in spirit with students and alumni in our shared vision as expressed in the mission statement of Ashford University, which is “to provide accessible, affordable, innovative, high-quality learning opportunities and degree programs that meet the diverse needs of individuals pursuing integrity in their lives, professions, and communities.” As we surge forward to the future of higher education, may we all strive to liberate the printed words of our mission more actively in our daily lives.

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Welcome Letter: Sister William McCue

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ASHFORD NEWS

ASHFORD UNIVERSITY APPROVED FOR ACCREDITATION BY WASC

Ashford University has been granted initial accreditation for five years by the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). The WASC Commission Action Letter stated, “The Commission found that the University has responded to Commission concerns and judges that it is now in substantial compliance with Commission standards.” Until the transition is final, Ashford remains accredited by the Higher Learner Commission (HLC).

IOWA GOVERNOR VISITS ASHFORD CAMPUS

Governor Terry Branstad and Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds joined Ashford president, Dr. Richard Pattenaude, for a tour of the University’s Clinton campus in August. The tour was a great opportunity to showcase campus investments and the larger campus student population. Governor Branstad’s administration has focused on reforming the education system and elevating the state’s economy, so they were thrilled to see the investment in student success at Ashford. After the tour, Governor Branstad and Lt. Governor Reynolds spoke to Ashford’s Student Government Association leadership and BridgePAC members about higher education and issues impacting Iowa. (BridgePAC is the political action committee of Ashford University’s parent company, BridgePoint Education.)

NEW ONLINE PSYCHOLOGY CLUB AT ASHFORD UNIVERSITY

Ashford University’s College of Health, Human Services, and Science is proud to announce the launch of The Online Psychology Club, Ashford’s first online student organization. This student group is a collaborative effort between psychology faculty and learners who have a strong interest in psychology. The mission of the club is to build a community, offer a supportive environment, promote the understanding of psychology as a science, and provide students with information relevant to graduate school, career opportunities, research, and leadership opportunities at Ashford. The faculty advisors for the club are Dr. Eric Klein, Department Chair, and Dr. Stephen Brewer, Assistant Professor in Psychology. Students can learn how to create their own recognized online student organization by contacting studentorgs@ashford.edu.

CLINTON CAMPUS RENOVATED & IMPROVED

Over the summer, work was completed on Ashford’s campus in Clinton, LA to construct a new building, modernize older buildings, and move offices. The largest of the improvements was the construction of a new multi-purpose building at Ashford’s South Campus complex that will enhance athletic facilities (below, due to be completed by press time). Additionally, numerous projects were completed at Ashford’s bluff campus, including upgrades to classrooms, bathrooms, offices, conference rooms, and a parking lot. “We are continuing to make capital improvements that will enhance our students’ experience here,” said John Ballheim, Ashford Vice President and Campus Director.

CHANGE AGENT

Lisa Betczynski chosen for Al Gore’s climate change committee

by Michael Mussman

One night, Lisa Betczynski was driving home from a long day of teaching at Ashford University when an unexpected thunderstorm hit. The rain appeared without warning and nearly flooded the road. When she finally reached home, she discovered one of the trees in her yard had shattered. Its branches lay across the roof of her garage, covering half her home.

That moment changed Lisa. For the first time, she understood that climate change was real, and it was something happening in her own backyard. So she decided to get active. When she heard about Leadership Corps, an opportunity with the Climate Reality Project, she decided to apply.

Leadership Corps trains volunteers in social media, public speaking, and the latest environmental research. In return, they are expected to engage their communities through 50 activities in one year. The participants are chosen from over 40 countries through a highly selective application process. Lisa explains that the people at the Climate Reality Project “want to ensure that we’re willing and able to make the long-term commitment.”

Lisa is a mother of two children, and she lives in Geneseo, IL. She teaches courses in English and composition as an associate faculty member with Ashford University.

She takes inspiration from an idea expressed by Martin Luther King, Jr. “An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individual concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity.” And what concern could be broader than one for our environment?

Lisa has taught all levels from elementary through university, and her position as a teacher made her a unique candidate for Leadership Corps. When she heard that she’d been accepted to the program, she felt elated. “The prospect of meeting people from around the world was so very exciting.” Not to mention she now had a chance to address the broader concerns of all humanity.

In 2013, Climate Reality Leadership Corps Trainings were held in Chicago and Istanbul. She had the privilege of training with an international group of leaders from 40 countries, including Nigerians, Mexico, and Spain.

For Lisa, the highlight of the training was the eight hours she got to spend working face-to-face with former Vice President Al Gore. “His passion is unflinching,” she says. “He told us in no uncertain terms: when it comes to saving our environment, this is the greatest opportunity that civilization has ever had.”

Now that her training is complete, Lisa is going right to work. She has already begun reaching out to old colleagues and friends on Facebook in order to recruit more people. And she is busy researching sustainable energy sources like solar power. “I’m educating myself so that I can educate others,” says Lisa.

“As for her commitment to complete 10 projects, she has already started. She is currently putting the finishing touches on her presentation, which she will deliver to elementary and high schools in Illinois. She also plans to speak at Ashford University’s campus in Clinton, Iowa, as well as other colleges where she has taught. Ultimately, she intends to reach out to big organizations like the Quad City Food Hub and also to local politicians.

With a problem as global as climate change, many people feel overwhelmed and resigned, as if the problem is too big for them to do any good. Lisa is not naive – she understands that she is going up against attitudes of resignation. “For most people, climate change seems abstract and distant,” she explains. “My job is to show them that climate change is already happening in their own backyards, and it affects the things they love.”

What can we do? Lisa says we must start by eradicking myths through education.

“One of the big steps,” she says, “is to get young people to talk about the environment. Get the word out to their families and to the friends in their lives.” Only then can we begin to dispel the myth that this problem is too big.

Once people start to spread the word, there are a number of practical steps families can then take. We can replace light bulbs, catch rainwater, and start composting on our yards and lawns. Lisa wants more people to see the importance of knowing where their groceries come from, and buying local whenever possible.

In fact, Americans have no excuse for inaction. Lisa points to the example of William Kamkwamba, the 14-year-old in Malawi who built a windmill out of bike parts to generate electricity for his home. In Denmark, the world’s largest wind turbine powers 6,000 homes. China recently became the largest country to tax coal. If they can do it, Lisa says, then surely so can we.

“We are so very fortunate to live in the United States,” she says. “We are trailblazers. We can drive the world to a clean energy future. We can do it!”
COMMENCEMENT / AU Alumni Magazine

OLD FRIENDS, NEW CONNECTIONS

On May 3, 2013, substitute teacher Tia Carter boarded a plane to Iowa from a layover in Chicago, IL with her mother, Janice, and one of her 3 daughters, 12-year-old daughter Capri. She was looking forward to celebrating the major milestone of becoming the first in her family to earn a college degree, having just earned her Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education online from Ashford University at the age of 39.

Once they were comfortably seated and settled in for the journey, Tia noticed a funny look on her mom’s face and asked her what was wrong. Janice replied that she thought she knew the woman seated in front of her. “Me and my daughter laughed because, well, grandma always thinks she knows everyone.”

After reminiscing about old times for a few minutes, the woman walked their other coincidence – Jonette’s daughter, Shelly Gause, was receiving her Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration, also from Ashford! Says Tia, “We thought it was so cool that two people who had not seen each other since they were teenagers would reunite by chance, both flying to the same commencement ceremony to see their grown daughters receive Bachelor’s degrees from the same college.”

The group quickly bonded, and upon landing they got each other’s contact information to spend time together over the weekend, which they did while visiting Ashford’s campus in Clinton, IA and in nearby Moline, IL, where the ceremony was held. “We all went out to dinner and had lots of laughs,” says Tia with fondness.

Despite her daughter’s skepticism, Janice was convinced she knew the woman. “Once I heard her voice, I knew I had to approach her.” Janice got up, introduced herself, and asked the woman if she happened to be from Washington, DC. “Right away, it all clicked,” recalls Janice. “She was my childhood friend, Jonette! We were raised in the same neighborhood, on D Street.”

The day of the graduation was like no other,” she continues. “Everything was so well organized and everyone made you feel welcomed and loved. Once it was time to walk out, I felt like I was a star, and everyone was there to see me!” The crowd yelled for everyone, and it just felt good to know my mom and daughter were there to support me – and I even had a new friend that I could cheer for when she walked across the stage.”

Tia says despite the late nights and times of stress while enrolled at Ashford, she’s glad she hung in there. “My experience at Ashford University was an awesome ride. I’ve even referred several friends to the school who are now pursuing degrees from Ashford.”

So do the reunited and new friends keep in touch? “We do keep in touch mainly through Facebook, and Shelly and I call and text to check on each other. I am so happy that I was able to meet her and her family.”

On May 5, 2013, an estimated 1,600 graduates and 8,000 of their guests traveled to the iWireless Center in Moline, IL to participate in Ashford University’s spring commencement ceremony. Pictured here are just a few of the attendees.

PHOTO GALLERY

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Have you had a chance encounter or made a new friend at an Ashford commencement ceremony? Let us know at connections@ashford.edu.

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PHOTO GALLERY
ASHFORD
THEN AND NOW

by Lorelei Plotczyk

Humble Beginnings
It all started in 1891 in Clinton, IA, when the Sisters of St. Francis were invited by Father John Murray to help teach local students. After purchasing land, they established a prep school for girls called Mount St. Clare Academy.

After moving to another building in 1910, the Sisters founded Mount St. Clare College, in addition to the Academy, to educate teachers in 1918. Both institutions as well as the convent were all in the same building, which is still part of Ashford’s campus today.

The College was accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools in 1950, and soon after that the school began to expand. A new library and gym were opened, and by 1967, the school was co-ed. The first four-year degree program, a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration, began in the 1979-1980 school year, and the College soon had more space to create additional four-year degree programs after the Academy merged with a local high school. The Sisters moved off campus to The Canticle mother house in 1997, and in 1998 the Durgin Education Center was opened, including Kehl Arena.

Going Online
The College began offering its first online degree in 2002, and the name was soon changed to The Franciscan University. However, to avoid confusion with similarly named schools, it was modified to The Franciscan University of the Prairies in 2004. The sports teams also became "The Saints" instead of "The Mounties."

Finally, in 2005, the University was purchased by Bridgepoint Education, Inc. and the institution’s name was changed to Ashford University. The school dropped its affiliation with the Roman Catholic Church and became the for-profit institution it is today, with campus and online modalities.

Where We’ve Been, Where We’re Going
In this feature, you’ll get to know some of the people who have helped shape, or been shaped by, Ashford throughout its history, as well as those who are currently part of its evolution. Plus, you’ll learn about landmarks on the campus both new and old, and about our latest online initiative.

As you make new discoveries about Ashford’s past and present, we hope the pride you feel today as a Saint will only deepen.

Today, Ashford University is known to most as an institution with a student body of tens of thousands, who study from all over the country and even the world using cutting-edge technology to connect them to their classmates and instructors.

But Ashford grew into what it is today from much humbler beginnings, and its history is rich.
SISTER BERTHA ZEISER

A centenarian alumni & former faculty member looks back on her time at Mount St. Clare Academy & College.

By Larry Libberton, Director of Communications

St. Clare Hall, the original building on Ashford University’s campus in Clinton, Iowa, was built in 1910. A year later, Sister Bertha Zeiser was born and would spend much of her life in this building - as a student, teacher, and administrator.

Now 102 years old, Sister Bertha lives just up the hill from the campus at The Alverno, a health care facility which, until March of 2013, was operated by the Sisters of St. Francis, the same Catholic order that founded Mount St. Clare (MSC) Academy and then Mount St. Clare College (now Ashford University).

“I liked everything I did, but I wouldn’t repeat any of it,” Sister Bertha said as she reflected on her long life that took her across the country and back again. “There wouldn’t be any ‘do-overs.’”

St. Clare Hall originally housed the MSC Academy, a high school for girls with the Sisters as their teachers and administrators. The Sisters’ lives revolved around their responsibilities at the school and their living quarters were even located on the building’s fifth floor.

Local students attended classes and some students from farther away took advantage of the boarding school arrangement, with 12 or 15 live-in rooms on the fourth and fifth floors of St. Clare Hall. Because students wore uniforms, there was not much need for other clothing, so students had little personal storage space.

“I remember most of the students were boarders back in those days,” Sister Bertha said. “In those days – I went to school there in 1924 – it was very strict and you couldn’t even go off the grounds without permission. When we went downtown a Sister would have to go with us. By the time I was principal, they could go downtown by themselves.”

Sister Bertha graduated from MSC Academy in 1928 and continued her studies at Mount St. Clare College, graduating in 1931 with an Associate’s degree. She then earned a Bachelor of Philosophy degree in mathematics from DePaul University, Chicago IL, and a Master of Arts in Mathematics from Catholic University, Washington, DC. She had secondary professional teaching and administration certificates for Iowa and Nebraska, and was a member of the National Association for Secondary School Principals and The American Mathematical Society.

The majority of her career was spent as a high school math and religion teacher, serving also as a principal for 14 years. She taught fifth grade in Chicago and served as a high school teacher/principal in Fonda, IA. Her tenure at MSC Academy spanned 15 years - 1939-1948 as a teacher, and 1948-1954 as principal and teacher. Then, after serving as high school principal in Victor, Iowa, and Lexington, NE, she returned to Clinton to teach at the College from 1962-1981.

Sister Bertha didn’t remember any advertising for educational programs, relying instead on word of mouth to promote the institution to potential students who came from both Catholic and non-Catholic families. Its curriculum consisted of language, math, English, history, religion and physical education. Many of the P.E. classes were held on the fifth floor of St. Clare Hall in a space now occupied by an Ashford classroom. The students played sports like basketball and volleyball in that small gym, as well as tennis, golf, and softball outside on the grounds.

“I taught math most of the time - all levels: algebra, trigonometry, geometry,” Sister Bertha said. “It was one subject they seemed to like.”

Eventually, the Academy opened its doors to boys. Sister Bertha says, “I had taught boys elsewhere before, so it didn’t bother me.”

After retiring from full-time classroom teaching in 1980, she assisted with the English as a second language program at Clinton Community College for five years, working with adult Southeast Asian refugees. Her last job was in Rosedale, CA, where she served as receptionist at St. Anthony Parish from 1985-1995.

Even after she retired and returned to Clinton, Sister Bertha continued to serve the community as a tutor of a developmentally disabled young man. This kind-hearted centenarian, who has spent her professional life educating others in Clinton and beyond, is a cherished part of Ashford’s history, now and forever.

“I went to school there in 1924 - it was very strict...”
JANELLE CROWLEY

Mount St. Clare’s legacy is felt beyond classrooms & across generations.

By Laurie Bianchi, Alumni Relations Manager

“At that which does not kill us makes us stronger,” Friedrich Nietzsche’s infamous quote has endured the test of time, and few have tested Nietzsche’s wise words more than Janelle Crowley.

Born in Desmit, IA, Janelle was one of six siblings raised in a middle-class environment who lived a typical life until age 5. It was at that time that Janelle vividly recalls watching a Lucille Ball film with her family. Not noticing that her mother was standing behind her – tears running down her cheeks – banging pots and pans together as she desperately attempted to gain Janelle’s auditory attention. That was the only time in her life she remembered seeing her mother cry. Janelle could not hear.

Shortly thereafter Janelle was brought to Iowa City where she met Dr. James Donaldson, inventor of the Donaldson Myringotomy Tubes used to this day to permit ventilation and equalization of pressures of the middle ear. The tubes prevented the constant ear infections that plagued Janelle and created problems for her to stutter as a result of her naturally mimicking her brother Craig’s stutter and her inability to hear.

By the time Janelle was in high school, she had endured more than 27 surgeries for her ears, three throat surgeries, three leg surgeries, and one brain surgery. Always the optimist, Janelle says the “gift” she learned from her challenges was “to take one day at a time because tomorrow it may be totally different!”

At the time, the Sisters at Mount St. Clare (MSC) Academy provided various forms of therapy as a community service. For his speech impediment, Craig received therapy every Saturday at MSC (and was later diagnosed with dyslexia). Janelle began to travel with him to MSC for speech therapy of her own and continued to do so for nearly six years. Thinking back now, Janelle states, “I can honestly say that the Sisters of MSC influenced my entire life.” There she learned of the story of Helen Keller, a story that became a source of inspiration to her along with her parents and grandparents.

Her visits to MSC – and the care and respect she was shown by her therapist and others on campus – created a legacy that reaches far beyond the borders of any classroom, campus, or town. She also developed a deep appreciation for education and now holds a B.A. in human resources development, the second in business administration – and most recently completed her PhD in applied management and decision sciences. Janelle currently serves as the Chief Human Resources Officer for Elgin Community College in Illinois.

With regards to her achievements and all of the challenges she overcame in her life to arrive where she is today, Janelle insists that the hurdles she has faced have made her who she is today. “My hearing impairment taught me at a very early age to read body language and pay attention to things that most people did not,” Janelle says. “My challenges and barriers turned out to be my best asset.”

The compassion and support Janelle was shown at the Academy has literally built a legacy of care through her passion and actions. She is president of the McHenry County (IL) Sheriff’s Youth Commission, past president of the Illinois Fire and Police Commissioner’s Association, past president of the StateLine Society of Human Resource Management, and the previous director of human resources for the city of Woodstock.

Janelle has served as a certified assessor and team leader for the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA), was nominated and awarded the “Breaking the Glass Ceiling Award” by The National Center for Women and Policing in Los Angeles, California, and was a recent recipient of the prestigious “Dox Wilson” award for her vision and training through the University of Illinois, where she has served on the Advisory Board for the Police Training Institute. Additionally, Janelle was recognized as Woman of the Year by the Woodstock Women’s Business and Professional Association and supported her mother’s legacy by serving as an Ambassador for Rotary International in the eradication of polio in India.

Janelle marvels at how many of her family and friends who attended MSC pursued careers and lives devoted to the service of others. They become teachers and nurses, and almost always give back to their communities in some way. Those on this long list of people who care for others share a common thread - their MSC experience.
Dr. Lisa Marie Johnson has served with Ashford University’s College of Education since April 2012. She is currently an Assistant Professor within the Master of Arts in Teaching and Learning with Technology (MATLT), the Bachelor of Arts in Instructional Design (BAID), and the Master of Arts in Education (MAED) programs. She has been involved in distance learning initiatives at the higher education level in a variety of contexts for nearly 20 years. Here, she discusses these very modern Ashford degrees and how they are still evolving.

Ashford Connections: Please summarize what the Instructional Design and Teaching and Learning with Technology degree programs entail.

Lisa Marie Johnson: Both the BAID and MATLT programs’ curriculum are situated within the framework of ethical and effective uses of technology for designing, developing, implementing, and evaluating learning experiences across a variety of contexts, such as PK-12, higher education, military, government, and corporate workplaces.

Additionally, both degrees emphasize the significance of online learning today as central themes.

AC: What are some of your favorite assignments in the courses within these programs?

LMJ: By far, my favorite activities for the MATLT program involve the EDD 697 capstone experience where learners compile coursework from their entire program to showcase their demonstration of the program learning outcomes. Given tremendous freedom in how they develop their portfolio and personal learning outcomes, students often use a wiki, a blog, and build websites to house their artifacts of learning.

For the BAID program, it is actually quite similar. I enjoy how we incorporate a portfolio approach into that program from the first course, EDD 121, because students get excited about knowing they are creating with purpose in every activity — education, beyond just having the degree, is very applicable and meaningful to students in both programs in their daily lives and work environments.

AC: How have these fields evolved since you became involved in them, and how do you think they will continue to do so?

LMJ: A primary paradigmatic shift that has occurred in education in the last 20 years is the shift toward distributed learning. The power of place is diminishing when we talk about where and when people learn. We used to talk about online, hybrid/blended, and traditional/in-person learning. Today, we recognize all learning is distributed involving some level of “web” or “online” component regardless of whether the instructor designs that into the lesson or not!

Learners will use the web, and educators and designers alike are recognizing the importance of that fact to all we do inside of the formal learning ecosystem, be it in a traditional brick-and-mortar classroom as we have with our Iowa campus, or in some asynchronous format, as we do for our online learners. The mobile nature of learning and widespread high-speed broadband access to information and each other has enabled us to practically reach learners anytime anywhere.

Another major evolution in our practice in learning experience design has been the recognition of the importance of personalized learning. We have the capacity through mobile technologies and localized cohorting to create learning communities of practice that support each learner in more dynamic real-time ways.

In the next 10 years, I think we will see the recognition that learners’ personal distributed learning networks, through social media and in their daily lives, have an impact on their education as well.

AC: Any favorite student interactions?

LMJ: Recently, I received a feedback from a learner in reporting that I had made the difference in his continuing his education because of my obvious enthusiasm for our course topic and detailed instructive feedback on his submissions in our discussions and assignments. His note reminded me of the importance of making sure our faculty members are well aligned in their areas of expertise with the courses we teach. Our enthusiasm is contagious! And, obviously, our expertise is central to how enthusiastic we might be during a course.

AC: Ashford’s advertising campaign slogan is “technology changes everything.” How does this phrase apply to you in your own life and your job teaching at Ashford?

LMJ: My mother and I stay in touch through video calls, and I also keep in touch with other family dispersed throughout the southeastern United States also using various technologies. I am able to stay connected wherever I am and in whatever I do, and it has, indeed, changed everything!

Technology allows people today, myself included, to have flexibility in their work and learning lives. Speaking of which, as a remote professor within our College of Education, I can work from virtually anywhere! Between my mobile phones, tablet computer, and laptop, I’m never disconnected from my learners and colleagues, nor they from me. Technology influences me in every moment of my life and actuates changes for productivity and satisfaction in my work as well!
BRINGING LITERACY ALIVE

By Dr. Lisa Rollins, Assistant Professor & Lisa Jahn, BA in Journalism and Mass Communications, 2013

When Ashford Connections received the following email from Ashford Assistant Professor Lisa Rollins, we knew we had to follow up with this story. Below is Dr. Rollins’ heartfelt email, followed by Lisa Jahn’s account of her experience that resulted from Dr. Rollins’ mentorship. Their account is a great example of how technology makes new connections and life experiences possible every day in the modern Ashford learning environments.

LISA ROLLINS’ LETTER TO ASHFORD CONNECTIONS:
I would like to nominate undergraduate Ashford learner Lisa Jahn to be profiled in the future. I never cease to be impressed with how she overcomes adversity in her life and gives to others. She has been in about five of my journalism courses during the past two years or so, and she opted to go to school online after an accident her husband had that forced her to be his full-time, at-home caregiver, which she no doubt does a wonderful job with. She has said that because of this situation, online classes were what she needed, and Ashford offers courses in the area she wanted to study, journalism.

Her academic performance is stellar, truly, and so much so that I recommended that she apply to write for Examiner.com in her hometown area (Iowa). I have written for this news website for a little more than four years and was happy to recommend her. She submitted writing samples and applied, and is now a Move Examiner for Examiner.com. I am excited to see her have an outlet for her writing that she can put to use and gain a wider audience. Recently, after joining Ashford full-time as an Assistant Professor, I decided to try my first ever literacy outreach with online students. Lisa was the first to jump in and want to give to others, so we are working in our respective geographic areas to fulfill what we have named “Ashford Connections for Literacy Outreach.”

This project is one that I have registered with the national Literacy Alive! initiative sponsored by Kappa Delta Pi (KDP). Our collective goal is to “change our own little corner of the world” with our literacy efforts. I have signed up to serve as a literacy tutor in my area, Oklahoma, and Lisa is reading to residents at a nursing home weekly, making look and media suggestions to a local church library, and most recently, she has volunteered to read to a blind woman at her local library. We are documenting how many we work with and must present a report in the fall to Literacy Alive!

Lisa is a leader, a budding scholar, and already preparing for grad school. At some point, she tells me she wants to try to teach online as her career, and I think she will be excellent in this role. She will be an alum any school would be proud to claim, and we are blessed Ashford is her chosen alma mater. She makes my role with Ashford one that is extra rewarding.

Lisa L. Rollins, PhD
Assistant Professor
College of Liberal Arts

LISA JAHN’S RESPONSE:
I have had the privilege of completing my Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and Mass Communications through Ashford University’s online program. The educational structure is excellent, and the professors are well versed in their respective areas.

Some professors go above and beyond what is expected, embracing the importance of experiential learning and connections beyond the classroom as an integral piece in the learning process. And it was through Dr. Lisa Rollins, assistant professor of communication studies and journalism at Ashford, that I became involved in the Literacy Alive! initiative.

This literacy initiative put theory into practice when it came to journalism and the written word. Journalists tell stories through the written word, but the stories hold meaning only when read by an audience and shared among the masses. Literacy Alive! allowed me to see the impact of these stories. My Literacy Alive! project was to read newspaper articles with the elderly in our local nursing home and discuss the current events with them. There are many elderly people with diminishing eyesight, but not a diminishing desire to read and share information.

I brought several local papers to the nursing home and sat down with a few residents who could no longer read, but desired to be read to. After a few weeks, a few individuals turned to many, and the conversations became animated as we shared current events. Literacy Alive! brought life into the nursing home. Journalism came alive, minds were enriched, and life was shared.

Soon, a second weekly reading group was started with inspirational readings. A group sat around a table and listened to uplifting stories and discussed them.

Participating in this on-ground initiative, which I learned about through my online education with Ashford and Dr. Rollins, was extremely personally rewarding, and I believe it will be professionally beneficial as well.

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About Lisa Jahn
A resident of Stacyville, IA, Lisa Jahn graduated cumma cum laude from Ashford in July 2013 with a 4.0 GPA. She is also a member of Alpha Sigma Lambda, Golden Key International Honours Society, and was the Ashford Golden Key Online Executive. She has worked in the writing field for the past 21 years. As a result of Dr. Lisa Rollins’ membership, in addition to her involvement with Literacy Now!, she is also a member of the Society of Professional Journalists.

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ALUMNI STORIES / AUI Alumni Magazine

ALUMNI STORIES Brought to Life

As Ashford continues to evolve, so does Ashford Connections. For the first time, to enhance our student and alumni printed stories, this issue includes videos. The following segments were all filmed at the Spring 2013 commencement ceremony on the Ashford campus in Clinton, IA as well as at the iWireless Center in nearby Moline, IL, where the ceremony was held. From a married couple to parent/child duos, we hope you are as inspired and moved by these stories of your fellow Saints as we were.

A MARRIAGE OF THE MINDS

FAssel & Sehar Rana

Married couple Fassel and Sehar Rana took online courses together at Ashford University and graduated together at the commencement ceremony held at the iWireless Center in May 2013. Although the drive to Moline, IL from Birmingham, AL was long for the couple, their two children, and Fassel’s parents, it didn’t compare to the Sehar’s parents took all the way from Indonesia!

Additionally, the couple noted that the quality of the instructors and the material were other aspects that made the program worthwhile. “The faculty members were highly qualified. Their credentials sometimes went on and on,” said Sehar.

“The innovation technology behind Ashford’s online programs played a big role in Fassel’s ability to finally be able to do so. “We used both Constellation and the Ashford Mobile app to do our discussions on,” he said. “I would do it on my cell phone as well as my tablet. Sometimes at work, I would take a break and pull my phone out and look at discussions and see if I could answer a discussion or two. So it came in handy quite a few times.”

As they got ready to round up the family and head home to begin their new lives as graduates, Fassel said, “We did a lot of research and looked at all the online schools, and we’re glad we did. Ashford’s a really good school.”

And Fassel shared that he is using his Bachelor of Arts in Organizational Management degree to back up the management experience he already has at his workplace. “Right now I’m hoping to be able to move up further in the company and eventually get into human resources,” he explained.

So how did it feel to have their loved ones together from such great distances on graduation day? Fassel shared that he is using his Bachelor of Arts in Organizational Management degree to back up the management experience he already has at his workplace. “Right now I’m hoping to be able to move up further in the company and eventually get into human resources,” he explained.

Shehla’s ability to finally be able to do so. “We used both Constellation and the Ashford Mobile app to do our discussions on,” she said. “I would do it on my cell phone as well as my tablet. Sometimes at work, I would take a break and pull my phone out and look at discussions and see if I could answer a discussion or two. So it came in handy quite a few times.”

Shehla has been worth it.” We look forward to following Shelly’s journey as she continues to work toward her Master of Arts in Organizational Management with a specialization in Human Resources Management.

Shelly Mathewis

On her graduation day from Ashford University, where she received her Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies, Shelly Mathewis was already moving along in her Master’s degree program at Ashford – and her hard work was already paying off. “Because of my accomplishments of graduating undergrad, and in the midst of my graduate degree program, I have received several promotions with my employer – so that’s awesome!”

LAUREN SCHEER

At her commencement ceremony nearby Ashford University’s Clinton, IA campus, Lauren Scheer stood and took it all in. She had flown there with her business partner and two adult children to accept her Master of Business Administration. “I keep tearing up. It was a lot of hard work and this was not easy, but that’s why it feels so good.”

Although Lauren has helped run a successful homemaker’s association management business since 1981, she recently faced a challenge when her company opened a new division in Las Vegas. “I found that things were done differently there, and I wanted to learn more about business and do better for my company, so I enrolled at Ashford,” she said.

With her busy work schedule, Lauren appreciated the fact that she could do everything online when it was convenient for her. She made Thursday nights meeting free and kept her Sundays clear, because those were the times she had set aside for course work – and if she had any left over, she would reschedule any Monday evening meetings. “Yes it takes time, and yes it’s work, but it’s very double. It was amazing.”

“I wanted to learn more about business and do better for my company, so I enrolled at Ashford.”

Among Shelly’s favorite aspects of being an Ashford student is the accessibility of the faculty members. “They were always available and very responsive. If I had a question, I could send them a quick email or call them on the phone, and they always responded to every need that I had.” She also enjoyed taking advantage of the Ashford Mobile app, saying she uses it everywhere, including at the salon.

“It’s been a long journey to get to this point,” she told us, “but being able to accomplish this goal and better myself personally as well as professionally has been worth it.” We look forward to following Shelly’s journey as she continues to work toward her Master of Arts in Organizational Management with a specialization in Human Resources Management at Ashford.

Some of the highlights for Lauren included making friends online with a group of fellow MBA students who all had several classes together and lived in her area. She also appreciated the interaction with the faculty members. “I was really surprised with the quality of professors. You had people in the real world doing real things, and you could ask them things in the real world, that was wonderful.” Another thing that impressed her was how much her courses stressed business ethics. “In this day and age, that is something that is overlooked often, but something the world needs more of.”

Memories of overcoming obstacles to get to graduation day.

“This is a 45-year-old human resources professional from Cincinnati, OH makes it look easy, having graduated magna cum laude and with memberships in the Golden Key International Honor Society as well as Alpha Sigma Lambda. But despite her accomplishments, Shelly faced a major obstacle in her personal life during her journey to her Bachelor’s degree, having lost her husband to kidney failure.

Even though this tragedy, Shelly’s outlook on life has remained remarkably positive. “Being able to finish this journey on time has been wonderful. It gets me to the point where, regardless of what life challenges you have, if you’re determined, if you stay faithful, if you stay dedicated, you can achieve any goal that you have.”

Her motivation in pursuing her higher education was to close the gap between her professional and academic achievements. “I knew there were some opportunities that I wanted to seek, and although I had the professional experiences, I wanted to have that education behind it.”

LAUREN SCHEER

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“I wanted to learn more about business and do better for my company, so I enrolled at Ashford.”
Sidney Hoffmann

During her senior year, Sidney was deployed in November 2012, just after Thanksgiving, and she was set to return by press time. Once she got back, she was able to attend Ashford's commencement ceremony and receive her diploma. "Earning a degree is paramount, really, if you want to progress in the military," said Andrew. "With Sidney done, I have a 3.84 GPA because I was dedicated to my goal. If there is any advice I can pass on it is this: Everyone has excuses, but only you are in charge of your success. If you want it, you have to make the effort. No one else can do that for you."

While visiting Ashford's campus in Clinton, IA during commencement weekend, Ashford University President Dr. Richard Pattenaude presented Tom with a traditional military-style challenge coin to giving Sidney's father Tom with a traditional military-style challenge coin to Sidney's father Tom with a traditional military-style challenge coin to thank her for her service and her family's support. "I didn't see this day coming," added Donna, who earned her Master of Arts in Organizational Management, with a specialization in Human Resources Management. "I was a teenage mom raised by my grandmother. I'll always be a mom — I'll always be a mom — I'll always be a mom for life — but I didn't want that to be the end of my story."

Donna, who was the first to enroll at Ashford, was thrilled when LaDonna called to let her know she had enrolled as well. They then worked together to provide to one another so much more to prove to be invaluable. "They are so great. We have to do it!" she continued. "I guess when I hear my mom's name and she's walking across the stage, then it will hit me: we did it, we are here together."

"We've had an amazing experience here at Ashford."

Claudia Cattle

Claydia will remain teaching at Head Start, but to further enhance her Master of Arts in Education, with a specialization in Early Childhood Education, she is now earning a certification to work with students who have autism and other special needs. "Pursuing a degree from Ashford and accomplishing that goal will help me better serve the children and families of the Chicago community." As Claudia looked back on the stage she'd just walked, she noted with emotion that she believes having earned a Master's degree will become part of her family's legacy. "It's helped me set standards for my children, my family, and future generations."

A FAMILY AFFAIR

DONNA BARBER AND LADONNA WATTS

A FAMILY AFFAIR

SHELTON BLACKSTON and LADONNA WATTS

A FAMILY AFFAIR

ANDREW DICKENS

Though serving as a Senior Airman in the Air Force he plans to enroll in a pre-med program wherever you're at, on top of making the education affordable. "He continued, "It's crucial for our service members to go back to school, and Ashford allows us to do that."

Andrew had briefly attended several other schools before finishing his degree at Ashford, and he noted, "One of the things that sets Ashford apart is the convenience and the innovation behind the programs. It just makes it so much easier when you have everything you need at your fingertips. I could do my homework in the airport, on the plane, really literally everywhere."

Now, Andrew is wasting no time pursuing his dream of one day becoming a doctor. He has already enrolled in an MBA program specializing in health care management, and after he separates from the military he plans to enroll in a pre-med program with the end goal of eventually applying to medical school. "It will be a long journey, but that's what I want to do. The reality is that Ashford is facilitating my future."

"Ashford is facilitating my future."
ASHFORD ALUMNI EARN PRO GOLF CARD

By Chris Shaw, Sports Information Director

Chien Hau Tan earned his Bachelor of Arts in Sports and Recreation Management in 2011. With his first event out of the way, Tan continued the tour at the PGM Perlis Classic on July 2-4 at Kelab Golf Putra in Perlis, Malaysia. There he played solid golf, recording a four-day total of 300 (75, 75, 74, 74), to finish in a tie for 24th place overall.

“There are a lot of things that I have to work on in terms of my golf game, such as getting used to playing with guys that are better, as well as pulling the trigger under any circumstances on the course,” Tan added. “Professional events compared to college are completely different. I used to watch some of these guys on television when I was young, now I’m playing with them every week.”

The PGM tour resumed August 15-18 with the PGM Kinrara Classic held at Kinrara Golf Club in Puchong, Malaysia. Tan finished in 11th place. “I look forward to watching Chien progress through his career,” Ashford University Head Golf Coach Josh Heiple said. “He is one of the hardest working students, along with four campus chaperones, made the trip to Brigantine, and Toms River. This amazing group of young adults to sign up for this journey, but rather the opportunity to serve.

For all things Saints, use the hashtag #AUSaints on social media.

HELPING HURRICANE SANDY VICTIMS

Two years ago, this place was an ideal vacation destination, complete with all the beach, boardwalk, and animated nightlife that a college student dreamed of for a spring break getaway.

This point is driven home by Emily Ramsey, a current senior who participated in the trip. “I remember walking into our home for the week,” she said, “and not one person complained about the conditions. We were sleeping less than a foot away from another student. And, there were no showers. Even with the lack of space and showers, it was better than anything I could have expected.”

Over the course of four days, this group had the opportunity to serve and learn from a wide variety of experiences. Students worked with AmeriCorps to tear out drywall and insulation from water-damaged homes. Meeting the homeowners in the process, students were able to see hope return to those who had been leveled by the storm. “My favorite moment working with AmeriCorps was when we were on the last floor board. The bus arrived for us to leave, and none of us left. We all wanted to be a part of or see the project finished,” stated Ramsey.

Efforts were also spent on rebuilding the firehouse in Toms River. This project was one of the most enduring memories from the trip, as the Ashford group was able to bring a rejuvenating spirit to those who had given some much of themselves to the service of their community. As a volunteer fire department, members of the firehouse were on the frontlines during the storm. The stories these men shared were the purest examples of service that the students could experience. “One other very strong source of inspiration was the firemen and their courageous acts during Sandy: helping out others no matter the circumstance, staying up for days on end searching for people, and answering hundreds of call in a matter of days,” added Tyler Minnick, a current senior.

Students also served at the Atlantic City Mission and Cattis Island County Park, a place of learning and recreation prior to hurricane Sandy. During their day off, the group took a day trip to Philadelphia to learn about a part of our nation’s history; eat a Philly cheesesteak, and run the “Rocky stairs.”

Charlie Minnick, Dean of the College of Business and Professional Studies and Tyler’s father, chaperoned the trip and stated, “Our goal at Ashford is to educate the whole person, and this trip was a great example of teaching our students beyond the classroom.”

For most student-athletes, college is the final level of competition. The senior year acts as one last chance to lace up the cleats, step on the hardwood, or swing the club in a competitive setting. However for one recent Ashford University graduate, the collegiate level might just have been the warm-up to a brilliant career on the links.

Chien Hau Tan, a Sabah, Malaysia native, returned home after graduation this past May and immediately began working toward his goal of becoming a professional golfer.

In June, Tan competed in the Professional Golf of Malaysia (PGM) Tour’s Penang Satellite Event, a three-day event, with the top five competitors earning a year-long tour card. Not only did Tan play well, the former Saint fired a two-over par score of 218 and won the tournament after five sudden-death playoff holes.

“It felt pretty good to win the tournament,” Tan said. “Everyone would be happy with a win, and it meant a lot to me because it marked the beginning of my career.”

Tan has competed in two professional events since earning his tour card.

Eight days after his victory, Tan visited Templer Park Country Club in Selangor, Malaysia for the PGM-DMW Templar Park Masters. Tan carded two rounds of 76 and totaled an eight-over score of 152, missing the cut by three shots.

Failing to qualify was something new for Tan. During his collegiate career, especially his senior season, Tan dominated the NAIA ranks.

Tan was named to the NAIA All-American Second Team following the conclusion of his senior season and won four tournaments while placing inside the top ten of all individuals in 12 of 19 tournaments. Additionally, the Malaysian shot putter tallied a 72.46 scoring average, the best season scoring average in school history and recorded 13 rounds of par golf or better, also a new school record mark.

“For me, I think I did a little disappointing.” Tan continued. “Obviously I was hoping to make my first pro tournament, it was hosted by the Asian Development Tour (ADT), and there was a very strong field. I told myself to keep a positive attitude and prepare for the next tournament. There’s much more pressure in professional golf, especially when you start your career without a sponsor to cover your expenses. When you’re out there as a rookie, every stroke matters.”

“Especially his senior season, Tan dominated the NAIA ranks. Failing to qualify was something new for Tan. During his collegiate career, especially his senior season, Tan dominated the NAIA ranks. Failing to qualify was something new for Tan. During his collegiate career, especially his senior season, Tan dominated the NAIA ranks. Failing to qualify was something new for Tan. During his collegiate career, especially his senior season, Tan dominated the NAIA ranks. Failing to qualify was something new for Tan. During his collegiate career, especially his senior season, Tan dominated the NAIA ranks. Failing to qualify was something new for Tan. During his collegiate career, especially his senior season, Tan dominated the NAIA ranks. Failing to qualify was something new for Tan. During his collegiate career, especially his senior season, Tan dominated the NAIA ranks. Failing to qualify was something new for Tan. During his collegiate career, especially his senior season, Tan dominated the NAIA ranks. Failing to qualify was something new for Tan. During his collegiate career, especially his senior season, Tan dominated the NAIA ranks. Failing to qualify was something new for Tan. During his collegiate career, especially his senior season, Tan dominated the NAIA ranks. Failing to qualify was something new for Tan. During his collegiate career, especially his senior season, Tan dominated the NAIA ranks. Failing to qualify was something new for Tan. During his collegiate career, especially his senior season, Tan dominated the NAIA ranks. Failing to qualify was something new for Tan. During his collegiate career, especially his senior season, Tan dominated the NAIA ranks. Failing to qualify was something new for Tan. During his collegiate career, especially his senior season, Tan dominated the NAIA ranks. Failing to qualify was something new for Tan. During his collegiate career, especially his senior season, Tan dominated the NAIA ranks. Failing to qualify was something new for Tan. During his collegiate career, especially his senior season, Tan dominated the NAIA ranks.
Alexandra Doles has been awarded Emergency Medical Dispatcher of the Year for Pinellas County. Doles finished her course work online while she was in transit. Additionally, Alexandra completed a 200-hour internship with a non-profit agency that specializes in Advocacy and Support Services for Pinellas County. Previously, she served as a 911 operator for Pinellas County Public Safety. Alex- 
donia was named a recipient of the 1994 Infan- try Brigade has authored a piece in The Bayonet of Fort Benning. GA ranked Daily Ullomnian Offer.

Command Sergeant Major James Corey of the 1994 Infan- Credential of Excellence in The Bayonet of Fort Benning. According to the Captain of the 1994 Infantry Brigade, the company's heartfelt mission is to lead, inspire, and crush studentевс и увлеченно участвовал в нескольких проектах по социальной работе. Продолжая свою работу в области образования и здравоохранения, Сьюзан Ашфорд платит дань уважения своим институтам, таковым являются Университет Кентукки и Университет Северной Коннектикута.

Southern Community College, VA. She received her 

Command Sergeant Major James Corey of the 1994 Infan- try Brigade has authored a piece in The Bayonet of Fort Benning. A graduate of the University of Georgia, Corey has been a member of the U.S. Army Infantry Corps for 25 years. During his time in service, he has held numerous leadership positions, including commanding officer of the 1994 Infantry Brigade. Corey has been recognized for his leadership and dedication to the Army mission.

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JOIN ASHFORD’S ALUMNI COMMUNITY ON FACEBOOK!

WELCOME Ashford Alumni

In May 2013, the Ashford University Alumni Association (AUAA) launched a Facebook page designed specifically for graduates of Ashford. Since then, the page has gathered more than 1,245 likes and is one of the more active alumni pages on Facebook. Ashford alumni are using the page to connect with each other on a personal level while also staying up-to-date with the latest information about Career Services events, webinars, and other activities just for them. To make sure you don’t miss out on relevant info for Ashford alumni, visit the Ashford University Alumni Facebook page and make sure to “like” the page!

CHECK OUT WHAT ASHFORD’S SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNITY HAS BEEN SAYING IN THE PAST FEW MONTHS!

I just submitted my final assignment for my Master’s degree. Yes, I am done! Thanking God for helping me through graduate school.
- Lasonya Washington

Today is my last day of class at Ashford! I will be seeing you guys in Iowa next month getting my BA in Health and Human Services. #excited
- Beverly Roberts

I am the first person in my entire family to gain a Master’s degree. I come from seven siblings and I am the youngest. My middle sister is going for hers now, and I am proud of her.
- Joanna Delierness

I’m a single mom working 40-hour weeks and maintaining a healthy lifestyle AND a 4.0 GPA at Ashford!
- Andrea Fitch

I made the Dean’s List all 4 years here at Ashford and finished on August 26th! WOOT WOOT :)”
- Sharlette Morris-Walchey

I am the first child out of eleven to get an Associate’s degree, then a Bachelor’s degree, and then a Master’s degree. My mother was my influence, and she only got to go as far as the eighth grade.
- Cheryl Acup

College of Business and Professional Studies

Bachelor of Arts
- Accounting*
- Professional Accounting Program**
- Business Administration*
- Business Economics
- Business Information Systems*
- Business Leadership*
- Computer Graphic Design**
- Consumer & Family Financial Services
- eMarketing
- Entrepreneurship
- Finance*
- Human Resources Management
- International Business
- Operations/Management & Analysis
- Organizational Management
- Project Management
- Public Administration
- Public Relations & Marketing*
- Real Estate Studies
- Service Management
- Sports & Recreation Management*
- Supply Chain Management
- Sustainable Enterprise Management

Graduate Degrees
- Master of Arts in Organizational Management
- Master of Business Administration
- Master of Public Administration

College of Education

Associate of Arts
- Early Childhood Education

Bachelor of Arts
- Business Education*
- Child Development
- Cognitive Studies
- Early Childhood Education
- Early Childhood Education Administration
- Education & Public Policy
- Education Studies
- Elementary Education (grades K-8)**
- English Language Learner Studies
- Instructional Design
- Library Science & Media
- Physical Education**

Graduate Degrees
- Master of Arts in Education
- Master of Arts in Teaching and Learning with Technology

College of Health, Human Services, and Science

Bachelor of Arts
- Adult Development
- Applied Behavioral Science
- Complementary & Alternative Health
- Gerontology
- Health & Human Services
- Health & Wellness
- Health Care Administration*
- Health Care Studies
- Health Education
- Health Informatics
- Health Marketing & Communication
- Natural Science**
- Psychology*

Bachelor of Science
- Biology**
- Computer Science and Mathematics**
- Health Science Administration**
- Natural Science**

Graduate Degrees
- Master of Arts in Health Care Administration

College of Liberal Arts

Associate of Arts
- Military Studies

Bachelor of Arts
- Applied Linguistics
- Communication Studies
- Cultural Anthropology
- English
- English and Communication**
- Environmental Studies*
- History*
- Homeland Security & Emergency Management
- Journalism & Mass Communication
- Law Enforcement Administration
- Liberal Arts*
- Military Studies
- Political Science & Government
- Social & Criminal Justice*
- Social Science*
- Sociology*
- Visual Art**

*Offered on campus only. **Offered on campus only. All other listed programs are offered online.

For more information about on-time completion rates, the median loan debt of students who completed each program, and other important information, please visit ashford.edu/pd.

WE HOPE YOU ENJOYED THIS EDITION OF ASHFORD CONNECTIONS! WE WELCOME YOUR FEEDBACK – PLEASE SEND ANY COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS TO: CONNECTIONS@ASHFORD.EDU.