CLIMB (VERB) TO RISE; ASCEND
WHERE TO START

BEGINNINGS DON'T ALWAYS
begin when we think they do. Beginnings are often small and
go unnoticed. What we think of when we think of a beginning is
usually in truth just the moment
when we started paying attention.
You hold in your hands Volume 1, Issue 1
of Sacred Heart University Magazine. The
numbers would imply a beginning, though —
calling it a “birth” might be more accurate—
there was a SHU Magazine for a time, first
in print and more recently online. In either
case, someday years from now someone may
somewhere say, “The school began publishing
Sacred Heart University Magazine in October of 2019,”
and while that sentence would be physically correct, it
would also be woefully incomplete.

Of course there is the time and effort that went into
the creation of this first issue which, frankly, would
make a decent story in itself. Our work on underage
vaping was originally intended to be something of an
exposé on both a hidden trend and its worrying rami-
fications. Then summer happened and we found our-
elves writing, rewriting and ultimately re-re-writing the
piece to stay current with news breaking on a weekly or
even daily basis. There was our story on Professor Der-
dre Yeater’s work with dolphins off the coast of Bimini
and our concern for her friends and colleagues there in
the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian. The announcement
of our promotion by the Carnegie Institute needed
the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian. The announcement
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MEGAN LYNCH may only be 5’5”, but you’ll probably
be craning your neck to see her. The SHU junior from
Rockville, MD, is both an exercise science major
and the women’s bouldering 2018 World University
Champion. For our cover, Megan was kind enough to
take a break from her studies and give us a tour of the
climbing wall at the new Bobby Valentine Health &
Recreation Center (feature, page 28).

Somewhere in there, an identity began to form. An in-
titution christened with the purpose of giving working-
class and first-generation Americans access to higher edu-
cation and opportunity never let aspiration get in the way
of empathy, so that even now, as campus continues to
stretch south down Park Avenue and west to the former
world headquarters of GE—not to mention to campuses
in Dingle and Luxembourg and service opportunities
worldwide—even now there remains the understanding
that our personal missions are merely part of a bigger
picture. Even now the kids on campus will often go to
gymnastic lengths just to hold the door open for you.

This magazine is not a newsletter. It is not a history
lesson. Nor is it a catalogue of all things great and won-
derful at SHU. This magazine is (we hope, we intend)
nothing more than reflection of who we’ve become—
and nothing less than a statement of who we aspire to
be. And as such, I suppose, it is something of a begin-
nings. Because while any adventure must first require the
planning and the preparation, and while everything we are
to the sum of everything we have been, no journey
can be called a journey until you take your first step.
And so, here we go.

TIM DEENHAN, EDITOR
SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE • FALL 2019

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The year is 1986 and Sacred Heart wins the national championship.

THE DINGLE COAST, COUNTY KERRY, IRELAND, HOME TO THE JOHN MORIARTY INSTITUTE OF ECOLOGY AND SPIRITUALITY, HOUSED AT THE SHU CAMPUS IN DINGLE.
SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY’S GREAT RIVER GOLF CLUB

SPECIAL ALUMNI VALUES

One visit to Sacred Heart’s Great River Golf Club and a tour of the facility will clearly demonstrate its friendly yet refined atmosphere of comfortable elegance and first-class amenities. You will witness firsthand how our professional staff takes great pride and responsibility in ensuring the finest hospitality service with a genuine commitment to member and client satisfaction.

What will also become surprisingly evident is the remarkable savings our golf membership plans offer to members of the Sacred Heart University community. Graduates of SHU are eligible for unlimited golf memberships as well as discounts when booking weddings. Sacred Heart University’s Great River is a source of pride for alumni looking for a unique and memorable experience at one of the best courses and most magnificent venues in the area.

ALUMNI MEMBER PRIVILEGES

Golf Membership:
- Unlimited rounds of golf and use of the practice facilities
- Individual: $3,000 ($1,000 serves as a donation to SHU)
- Family: $6,000 ($1,000 serves as a donation to SHU)
- No initiation fee or assessments

Wedding Packages Available:
- 10% discount
- Personal bridal concierge
- Stunning background for photos/access to waterfall on second hole
- One wedding at a time

Monty’s River Grille:
- Award-winning restaurant
- Fresh seasonal menus
- Specialty nights
- Picturesque views overlooking the golf course

A personal introduction to current membership opportunities and a private tour are easily arranged with our club manager or membership representative. Call Karin Attoleto, Membership & Outing Sales Director, at (203) 876-8051 x111, karina@grgolfclub.com.

For weddings, call Gail Hunt, Social & Corporate Event Sales Manager, (203) 876-8051 x132, ghunt@grgolfclub.com.

FORWARD

"The competitive advantage the marketplace demands is someone more human, connected, and mature.”
— Seth Godin

IS THIS THE REAL LIFE?

SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY faculty, staff and graduate students immersed themselves in the world of augmented, virtual and mixed reality (AR/VR/MR) at the University’s three-day Faculty Institute in May 2019. “We all came together to share examples of and ideas about how this technology can transform our students’ educational experiences,” said Shanshan Wang, assistant professor in the School of Communication, Media & the Arts, who organized the event with SHU’s Center for Excellence and Innovation in Teaching. Wang will be heading the University’s AR/VR Lab, which is set to open in the spring. The Institute came in the wake of a similar event held in April that focused on artificial intelligence.
THE ART OF THE SCIENCE OF HEALING

ARY ALICE DONIUS does not equivocate. “The future of primary care is in the hands of nurse practitioners,” says the dean of Sacred Heart’s College of Nursing. “If we are going to prepare the workforce of the future, then we need to be on the cutting edge. We cannot just prepare nurses for entry-level jobs. We need to position them for lifelong careers.”

For Donius, responding to that differentiation, cultivating not only practical skill but also professional outlook, is key to what makes the nursing program at Sacred Heart so unique—and so uniquely successful.

The results are indisputable. SHU’s graduating nursing class of 2018 achieved a stunning 99 percent first-time pass rate on the NCLEX-RN, the National Council Licensure Exam for nurses. As a matter of comparison, the national average is not even 90 percent. Thus, SHU’s near-perfect performance on the exam positions it not only as the highest pass rate in the state, but among the top performers in the nation.

But while proving one’s knowledge is obviously vital to licensure, the test maketh not the nurse.

“Caring is the ethical imperative of nursing,” explains Donius. “At SHU, nursing is defined as caring with compassion, empathy, altruism with the intention of healing body, mind, spirit.” She’s careful to point out that there is no “and” in that sentence. Nursing, it would seem, is a tapestry where no single thread will do the job alone. For Donius, the conjunction of that definition with the Catholic intellectual tradition, which is the core/hallmark of every Sacred Heart undergraduate education, is essential to a nurse’s preparation. It means that the formation of the educated person, grounded in the liberal arts and sciences, provides the context for the formation of the educated professional with an understanding of and appreciation for the human condition and a sense of purpose for the practice of nursing.

“Our students transition incredibly well to employment after graduation,” says Michelle Cole, assistant professor in the College of Nursing. “Their professional demeanor is applauded by local agencies and hospitals, and they are also praised for being well prepared for clinical practice.”

“Our reputation precedes us,” Donius says. “Our alumni are threading the needle so that our students are finding themselves recruited because of the quality of the work and the way in which [Sacred Heart nurses] do nursing.”

Thus, once again, it’s that foundational ethos of the University, the whole that is greater than the sum of its parts, that Donius graciously credits for her College’s evident success. “When you take caring with the intention of healing,” she says, “and put it in the context of the Catholic intellectual tradition, then it becomes something exponential.”
(NOT NECESSARILY) LOSING MY RELIGION

Dan Rober’s class looks to the careers of cultural icons and the history of our own University to help understand Catholicism’s role in a changing world.

The suburbs were becoming the place to be. Emboldened by the presence of one of their own in the White House, Catholics throughout America found themselves daring to dream the traditional American Dream. Even the working classes were realistically aspiring to see their children through college. In 1963, Sacred Heart University was founded as a small commuter campus answering those Catholic working-class aspirations. In 1964, a 15-year-old Catholic kid in New Jersey named Bruce Springsteen watched the Beatles on the Ed Sullivan show and (so the legend goes) was inspired to buy his first guitar. That same year, Martin Scorsese was accepting his undergraduate degree, and the young Catholic-Italian from Little Italy was turning his own dreams toward filmmaking.

The careers of these cultural icons and others, such as the “openly gay, closeted Catholic” Andy Warhol and the nun-turned-artist Corita Kent began essentially in tandem with our own University, which affords a terrific opportunity to study Catholicism’s trajectory over the last 60 years in Dan Rober’s class, “Springsteen, Scorsese and SHU.”

A great number of our students come from families that identify as Catholic,” explains Rober, “but their understanding of ‘faith’ or what it means to be ‘a practicing Catholic’ is very different from how those ideas were understood even one generation ago.”

Today’s students are very practical-minded, he says. So for them to see these household names wrestling with the influence of Catholicism in their own lives and upon the world around them connects the students to a reality of the faith many had never considered as Catholic.

The idea that to practice Catholicism is to challenge assumed beliefs is rarely taught in the lower grades. “I went to a Catholic high school,” says senior Kiera Lehe, an accounting major and Catholic studies minor, “but I’m the only one of my friends still active in the faith. Everyone else is like, ‘I had my confession. I did my time. I’m done.’”

At a Catholic university, however, Rober argues that not only do we have a reason to face these questions, but “it’s a responsibility.”

Junior Kathleen Sullivan, a social work major, was particularly affected by the journey of Dolores Hart, a successful career who left the business in 1963 (the same year SHU was founded) to join the convent. Hart has written extensively about her journey. In one passage, she describes the challenges of exchanging the freedom of the arts for the order of an Order—until one particular priest encouraged her to bring her theatrical experience to bear on her vow to serve God.

The message was clear: our backgrounds, whatever they are, are a significant part of our identities; to deny them is to deny a fundamental part of who we are. For Sullivan, that acceptance and inclusivity is not only a defining characteristic of her faith as a Catholic; it’s the very heart of SHU.

The challenges of Catholicism are central to the creative work of some of the late 20th century’s most influential artists: Bruce Springsteen, above; Martin Scorsese, left; and Andy Warhol, below.

The careers of these cultural icons and others, such as the “openly gay, closeted Catholic” Andy Warhol ... began essentially in tandem with our own University.
RISE UP!

THE CARNEGIE CLASSIFICATION of Institutions of Higher Education has reclassified Sacred Heart University to its Doctoral/Professional Universities category in recognition of SHU’s doctorate degrees in nursing practice, physical therapy, finance and educational leadership. Additionally, just last month Sacred Heart was elevated to the national listing of U.S. News & World Report’s Best Colleges. Rupendra Paliwal, provost and vice president for academic affairs, notes the University has been investing strategically in graduate and doctoral programs for years. The classification, he says, “reflects our aspirations of becoming a nationally recognized university known for excellence and the relevance of its curriculum.”

NO VOTE, NO VOICE!

SHU has seen the data on student voter turnout—and the students are doing something about it.

Percentage of eligible millennials who voted in 2016 presidential election. 49%

Percentage of eligible baby boomers who voted in 2016 presidential election. 69%

FINDING A VOICE—MAKING IT HEARD

SHU has seen the data on student voter turnout—and the students are doing something about it.

The problem is not unique—which is a significant part of the problem. “We don’t have a particularly active student body,” admits Connor Hartgraves, assistant to SHU President John Petillo. That said, very few college campuses do.

According to a 2017 Newsweek report, just 49 percent of millennials voted in 2016, compared with 69 percent of eligible baby boomers. It’s numbers like these that are driving PioneerVote, a student-led initiative designed to get students more involved and, ideally, serve as a model for other schools.

As the helm of the project are Meredith Kennedy, a political science major, and Carlos Ruiz, a marketing major. The two will bring their talents in both politics and public relations to bear while working closely with Hartgraves, ensuring PioneerVote has the full backing of the administration.

Kennedy said a nationwide lack of education on the importance of voting “is a big reason why our generation” is underrepresented at the polls. She was introduced to PioneerVote during one of her classes with Gary L. Rose, professor and chair in the Department of Government, Politics and Global Studies. The idea of leading the effort resonated with her because “people in our age group don’t realize the power they have when they exercise their right to vote.”

Ruiz said he welcomed the chance to join when the concept was floated before the Interfraternity Council, of which he is vice president of public relations. Employing social media—from a University-hosted website (www.sacredheart.edu/pioneervote) to Instagram to a video distributed to students—Ruiz hopes to provide his peers with insight on issues and candidates at the local, state and federal levels, as well as how and where to register.

Kennedy also emphasized that PioneerVote is a strictly nonpartisan endeavor: “This is about the importance of recognizing the power involved in voting.”

Asked how many students they hope to register, Kennedy, Ruiz and Hartgraves all said, “As many as possible.”

“[W]e had 5,974 undergraduates as of fall 2018,” Hartgraves noted, “so if we can get 2,000 to 3,000 registered, then I’ll be happy.”

“IF THE HIGHEST AIM OF A CAPTAIN WERE TO PRESERVE HIS SHIP, HE WOULD KEEP IT IN PORT FOREVER.”

— THOMAS AQUINAS
After a nine-year intermission at the Fairfield Community Theater, a new partnership with SHU has the curtain set to rise on …

ACT TWO

1 T OPENED in 1920 on the corner of Post and Unquowa roads, at the heart of the Fairfield community, which, of course, would give it its name. The first film to be shown there was the 1921 Jackie Coogan film, _Peck's Bad Boy_. Over the years, it has seen its fair share of renovations and remodelings—balconies added, lounges removed, an organ rising from the basement, the single auditorium split into two screens. Its marquee has, at some time or another, boasted nearly every movie title worth seeing in the 20th century.

But things change. However quaintly small-town and endearing the Fairfield Community Theatre may have been, it simply could not compete with the multi-screen cineplexes that have come to dominate the movie-going experience. By 2001, the cinema was operating as a nonprofit, showing second-run and art-house films and staffed by a team of local volunteers, mostly high school students. It was a valiant attempt to keep the venerable establishment in business, but after 10 years of mounting debts and failing infrastructure, the marquee went dark.

End Act One.

Now, after an extended intermission, the lights are set to rise on Act Two when the space reopens in 2020—just in time for the building’s 100th anniversary—as the Sacred Heart Community Theater, following the signing of a 10-year lease with Kleban Properties to turn the space into a premier arts and education site. Preliminary plans call for a full-scale renovation including at least 400 seats.

The refurbished venue will provide a range of offerings, including high-profile lectures, author talks, unique films, concerts and performances not only for University students, staff and faculty, but—true to its name—open to the entire community.

“This project is another example of how a university gives back to the community where it resides,” said SHU President John J. Petillo. “We plan to turn this into a contemporary venue for the University and the community while maintaining many of the classical features that have been part of downtown Fairfield for 100 years. That we can breathe new life into this building after years of dormancy is truly exciting.”

Kleban will renovate the theater to Sacred Heart’s specifications, providing a state-of-the-art space for academic exploration and experiential learning in the arts and humanities. Students will also be involved in the management of the site, gaining vital experience in operating an arts venue.

“The Community Theater … has long been an iconic landmark in our town,” said Fairfield First Selectman Mike Tetreau. “I am thrilled it will finally be reopened.”

Ladies and gentlemen, please take your seats …
A shared fellowship between WSHU and Sacred Heart gives master's candidates an invaluable opportunity.

That sort of example of journalistic integrity is exactly the kind of experience Alciatore's budding media professionals need. Meanwhile, Sheridan is quick to point out that the benefits of the fellowship go both ways. As the fellows begin filing actual stories for broadcast, “it’s important that they don’t pretend to be anything they’re not. They’re young—they should sound young. If they have an accent, they shouldn’t hide it. People want authenticity. This gives us the opportunity to find voices that are diverse as the community we serve.”

That sense of service resonates deeply with Cioffari.

“As a journalist, you take an oath to represent the people factually,” she says. “To do that, you have to have a little bit of everyone. You’re a detective and a scientist, a student and a teacher.”

“Most of all,” she says, “you’re a human.”

SHU responds to a critical shortage of STEM-qualified teachers in underperforming school districts.

STEM elementary (K-5) teachers in local, high-need areas through a revised education curriculum as well as engagement in service learning and inquiry-based research experiences. The program will recruit prospective first-year and transfer students, as well as matriculated first- and second-year students, with an emphasis on underrepresented minority students, first-generation college students, lower-income students and veterans. Scholars earning their Bachelor of Science degree in interdisciplinary STEM and a Master of Arts in teaching will receive financial aid and student support that includes a nine-month graduate teacher internship, faculty advising, a master's mentoring program (which will pair Noyce scholars in their junior year with a STEM teacher in a high-need school district) and targeted STEM education workshops. As a result, the scholars will be better prepared to help their elementary students understand and solve problems holistically, integrating all of the STEM perspectives. This will especially aid students in multicultural and high-need classrooms who may need multiple perspectives and reinforcement to improve math and science skills.

“This opportunity helps SHU continue to grow a sustained vision and interdisciplinary culture for teaching and leading in STEM education,” says Kristin Rainville, associate professor and director of the Center for Excellence and Innovation in Teaching at SHU. The University’s response to the growing need for STEM-prepared teachers, incorporating an interdisciplinary approach from the Isabelle Farrington College of Education, the College of Arts and Sciences and the School of Computer Sciences and Engineering in the Jack Welch College of Business, represents, as Rainville says, “the best of SHU.”

IMAGINATION IGNITION

WO YEARS AGO The Connecticut Mirror reported that “hundreds of teaching positions go unfilled each year because school districts can’t find qualified candidates.” At the heart of the matter is a shortage of teachers familiar with Common Core math and Next Generation Science Standards, both of which are critical to the evolution of STEM—Science, Technology, Engineering and Math—subjects. As a result, “thousands of students are being taught by long-term substitutes—most of them in the state’s lowest-performing districts.”

It’s easy to see how hobbling underperforming districts with unqualified teachers only perpetuates an educational crisis. In response, Sacred Heart University has partnered with the Norwalk, Bridgeport and Stratford school districts to develop SISTEMEC—Scholars Integrating Science Tech Engineering and Math in Elementary Classrooms. With the help of a $1.2 million grant from the National Science Foundation’s Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program, SISTEMEC will prepare 18 scholars over a five-year period to teach STEM in high-need, multicultural elementary schools.

“Improving teachers’ abilities to teach STEM disciplines and make connections between STEM subjects will provide students with the skills necessary to tackle the ever-changing scientific and technological world that lies ahead,” said Mark Beckley, chair and professor of biology at SHU.

An interdisciplinary project from SHU, SISTEMEC will increase the number and effectiveness of qualified STEM elementary (K-5) teachers in local, high-need areas through a revised education curriculum as well as engagement in service learning and inquiry-based research experiences. The program will recruit prospective first-year and transfer students, as well as matriculated first- and second-year students, with an emphasis on underrepresented minority students, first-generation college students, lower-income students and veterans. Scholars earning their Bachelor of Science degree in interdisciplinary STEM and a Master of Arts in teaching will receive financial aid and student support that includes a nine-month graduate teacher internship, faculty advising, a master's mentoring program (which will pair Noyce scholars in their junior year with a STEM teacher in a high-need school district) and targeted STEM education workshops. As a result, the scholars will be better prepared to help their elementary students understand and solve problems holistically, integrating all of the STEM perspectives. This will especially aid students in multicultural and high-need classrooms who may need multiple perspectives and reinforcement to improve math and science skills.

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WANDERER AND WONDERER

SHU launches the John Moriarty Institute from its campus in Dingle, Co. Kerry, Ireland.

JOHN MORIARTY: WANDERER AND WONDERER

DOS ARE you’ve never heard of John Moriarty. Among those who hold him in awe of him, it has been said that the Irish philosopher, poet, amateur scientist, mystic, visionary religious thinker and all-around intellectual ecletic outlier was not only “not understood in his lifetime; he was not even misunderstood.”

Such is the cost of being ahead of one’s time.

However traditionally his education might have begun—born in 1938 in one’s time. Misunderstood.”

Although his education was far from conventional. As Michael Higginson, distinguished professor of Catholic thought at Sacred Heart and executive director of the John Moriarty Institute, explains, Moriarty engaged himself “in a larger task than simply recovering from a breakdown—he was rethinking dogma, constructing a creative alignment of creation and redemption, finding an answer to the legacy of Darwin’s Origin that had unsettled his universe when a teenager.”

The result is a body of work—notes, books, poems, interviews and lectures—wearing a tapestry of faith, science and philosophy that fearlessly embraces the possibilities inherent in unanswered questions and demands a commitment to stewardship as a means of actively appreciating the spiritual in the physical.

The John Moriarty Institute of Ecology and Spirituality, housed at the SHU campus in Dingle, was established by the University, recognizing the mission it shares with Moriarty’s legacy—cultivating a thoughtful union of spirituality and reason, treasoning creation with an enlightened stewardship and lived wisdom, inspiring the courage to truly make one’s life an expression of one’s faith.

THE RUNED REMAINS OF AN EARLY GAELIC MONASTERY ON SKELLIG MICHAEL.

returning to the Christianity of his youth, but rather “Christian for the first time.” Unsurprisingly, Moriarty’s faith was far from conventional. As Michael Higgins, distinguished professor of Catholic thought at Sacred Heart and executive director of the John Moriarty Institute, explains, Moriarty engaged himself “in a larger task than simply recovering from a breakdown—he was rethinking dogma, constructing a creative alignment of creation and redemption, finding an answer to the legacy of Darwin’s Origin that had unsettled his universe when a teenager.”

The result is a body of work—notes, books, poems, interviews and lectures—wearing a tapestry of faith, science and philosophy that fearlessly embraces the possibilities inherent in unanswered questions and demands a commitment to stewardship as a means of actively appreciating the spiritual in the physical.

The John Moriarty Institute of Ecology and Spirituality, housed at the SHU campus in Dingle, was established by the University, recognizing the mission it shares with Moriarty’s legacy—cultivating a thoughtful union of spirituality and reason, treasoning creation with an enlightened stewardship and lived wisdom, inspiring the courage to truly make one’s life an expression of one’s faith.

Additionally, the Courant is able to place the issues in the context of current events. DeNardis points out, particularly in the state legislature and executive branch, in order to help understand how public opinion factors into policy decisions in real time. For example, a SHU Policy Poll conducted in May by Government Research of Glastonbury provided insight on the public’s thoughts on electronic tolls, quality of life, the governor’s job approval and legalizing marijuana. But, as DeNardis says, “Disembodied data points do not advance the discussion.” So, in the week following the release of the findings of that poll, the Hartford Courant ran a series of four consecutive stories, allowing them to go deeper into the discussion, engaging readers and stimulating conversation.

“What the Courant does is that we could never do on our own is to widely publicize and disseminate poll results,” DeNardis says. “The poll is only good insofar as citizens and policymakers are aware of it.” It is that aspect of the partnership—giving Connecticut residents a means to connect the dots between public opinion, poll results and the policy process in Hartford—that is central to the core values and mission of both institutions.

“We get to provide meaningful content informing key political conversations to both policymakers and the public they serve,” says Julien. And in these noisy times, what could be better than that?”

WHERE IS DINGLE?

Dingle is a small port town on southwest Ireland’s Dingle Peninsula, known for its rugged scenery, trails and sandy beaches.

For further information on the John Moriarty Institute, visit https://shuidingle.com/john-moriarty-institute/
Too often ‘opportunity’ is exclusively synonymous with privilege. Brian Hamilton is determined to change that.
He’s a man of action, certainly. The 1987 Sacred Heart alum, entrepreneur, philanthropist and former University trustee has been working essentially every day of his adult life, and then some. With humble Bridgeport beginnings, Hamilton has recalled in other interviews selling soap and Christmas wrapping door-to-door as a young boy. An undergraduate in the early days of the school, when Sacred Heart was still a commuter college and most of the students had a least some side hustle, Hamilton started a landscaping business to make ends meet and would carry his earnings in cash to the bursar’s office to pay his tuition. He went on to grad school, earning his MBA at Duke and eventually becoming a professor there in addition to serving as the minority business consultant for the North Carolina SBA.

Expanding his work into volunteerism, Hamilton joined his friend, the Reverend Robert Harris, in his prison ministry, helping convicts find gainful legal employment on the outside. Their work led the two to launch Inmates to Entrepreneurs, a nonprofit aimed at helping the incarcerated learn the skills necessary to start their own busi-
niness once they are released from prison. At the same time, Hamilton and a student of his at Duke, computer programmer Sarah Tourville, cofounded Sageworks, the nation’s first financial technology company. Over the next 20 years, Hamilton grew Sageworks to employ more than 400 people and become the largest provider of software to financial institutions across the U.S.

So you can say he’s kept himself busy. But in 2018, Hamilton sold Sageworks and his interest in it to the private equity firm Accel-KKR.

Brian Hamilton’s legacy is his impact on institutions across the U.S.

The difference is subtle, but important. Both phrases address uncertainty. But the first—wondering what to do—implies bewilderment, befuddlement, a sense of being, overtaken to the extent that there even exists the option of doing nothing. The second phrase, however, the phrase Hamilton actually uses—casually, instinctively, it should be noted—takes a different path. It assumes not only action but personal responsibility for that action in one breath.

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ALL THE KIDS ARE DOING IT

BUT IS VAPING JUST BIG TOBACCO’S LATEST SMOKE-AND-MIRRORS TRICK?
One student was expressing concern over when Kerry Morgan, clinical assistant professor of public health, and Greer, too, had no idea what this new slang was. “We even searched ‘drooling’ in case I was hearing them wrong,” Morgan admits, amused in hindsight at her naiveté. Frustrated, the professors came back to the students themselves.

“And they were like, ‘Duhl JUUL!’” Greer recalls. And the professors’ ignorance turned to incredulity.

JUUL is a brand of e-cigarette, an electronic device roughly the size of a large pen or a USB memory stick. It heats a “pod” of “juice,” a pleasantly flavored liquid that almost always contains some level of nicotine—e-cigarettes were initially developed as a tool to assist with smoking cessation. That heated juice becomes an aerosol vapor users inhale (as they would tobacco smoke from a traditional cigarette) to get a “rip” of nicotine. Generically, the practice is called “vaping,” but JUUL dominates the market to such an extent that its name has become verbified, and “juuling”—the word the professors were hearing—is now synonymous with vaping.

Their incredulity stemmed from the idea that a practice developed (as far as they were aware) for smoking cessation would become a social trend itself. These weren’t kids looking to quit smoking. They were kids who had started vaping—and quite a lot of them. “To hear the students tell it, ‘everyone was juuling,’” recalls Greer.

Anecdotal data isn’t data, however, so Morgan and Greer, along with their colleagues in the psychology department, Jessica Samuels, ran a survey of undergraduates funded by a grant from Southern Connecticut State University. With responses from more than a quarter of the student body, the professors learned that more than two thirds of students had used e-cigarettes at some point. Of that group, only one in five could say he or she had quit the practice, leaving well over half the total number of students surveyed to describe themselves as either active or occasional users of vaping products and e-cigarettes.

But what was more worrying was the shocking level of ignorance surrounding the risks of the habit. Health science kids are the sort of consumers who bother to read the label. Not so, the rest of the population, as the survey bore out. For a start, most respondents believed they were inhaling harmless water vapor. But the vapor, as noted above, is actually an aerosol, often containing such heavy metals as lead, nickel and tin—all significantly damaging to the body, as noted above, is actually an aerosol, often containing such heavy metals as lead, nickel and tin—all significantly damaging to the body. Also, those sweetly enticing flavors like “Waterberry Crush” and “Cotton Candy Fluff” are made using diacetyl—a chemical harmful when eaten, however, when heated and inhaled, is known to cause a serious breakdown in the lungs called bronchiolitis obliterans, more commonly known as “popcorn lung.”

Then of course there’s the nicotine, often compared to heroin for the strength of its hold on the addict, known to hinder brain development in adolescents and linked to a lifetime of issues such as poor cognitive function, anxiety, depression, a tendency toward drug use and an increased likelihood of addiction later in life. The vast majority of e-cigarettes and pod juices contain at least some level of nicotine—even many of those claiming to be “nicotine-free” these days, like JUUL, proudly boast that a single pod contains as much nicotine as a full pack of traditional cigarettes. Yet the majority of survey respondents were unaware that e-cigarettes contained any nicotine at all.

It’s worth noting that e-cigarette manufacturers don’t deny any of this; they simply argue that vaping is less harmful than smoking. One might think that’s a pretty low bar to get over, but even so, public health officials are quick to point out there is no reliable evidence to support such a claim. “The product is just too new for there to be any long-term studies on the effect of its use,” Greer explains, a problem further compounded by the fact that in 2017 the FDA decided to allow e-cigarettes to remain on the market until 2022 without its review. “I think the agency earlier this year—and won—U.S. Judge Paul Grimm called the FDA’s delay “so extreme as to amount to an abdication of its statutory responsibilities.”

Even as regards vaping’s advertised use—smoking cessation—the optics aren’t good. Tobacco giant Altria recently paid $13 billion for a 35 percent stake in JUUL, an odd move until one learns that multiple studies indicate that non-smokers who start vaping have a significantly increased likelihood of transitioning to combustible cigarettes over time. In other words, Big Tobacco is betting e-cigarettes will get people to start smoking.

And who better to hook than the kids? With flavors like mint and mango and banana cream pie, the highest uptake in vaping—by far—is the adolescent and under-25 crowd. “It’s not unreasonable to assume they’re targeting a younger audience,” says Connecticut State Representative Cristin McCarthy-Vahey. “Even Walmart won’t sell the stuff,” she says, referring to the chain’s decision to pull fruit-flavored e-cigarette products from its shelves in May of this year over concerns the products were actively marketed to youths.

With no federal oversight, many state, local and private communities are taking matters into their own hands. Thanks to the Tobacco21 bill sponsored by McCarthy-Vahey, Connecticut recently raised the age limit to buy any tobacco-related product—incuding e-cigarettes and their paraphernalia—to 21 throughout the state. At Sacred Heart, existing restrictions regarding public tobacco use on campus are being rehitted to include vaping in an attempt to reduce visibility and to curb the normalization of the practice. At the same time, an aggressive education campaign—“Know the risks. Know the resources.” KnOpe vape.—was spearheaded by Gabrielle Diaz, a graduate assistant in the master of public health program, while a Tobacco Cessation Network has been established on campus to assist any student or faculty member interested in quitting smoking or vaping with free, one-on-one meetings with tobacco cessation specialists from the master of public health, science and psychology departments.

All of this because just two years ago, two public health professors were flummoxed by the conversations they were hearing and decided to start asking questions. ‘This is absolutely worth my time,” Greer says, explaining her decision to re-direct time and attention away from her diet and exercise research and focus on what the CDC has identified as a growing epidemic. “And certainly, with Big Tobacco backing the vaping industry with such a sizeable investment, this is a fight that has only just begun. But Greer’s not backing down. “If we had fought sugar or tobacco properly,” she says, “at the beginning and with every thing we had, who knows what we might have accomplished?”

Now, with Greer and Morgan, McCarthy-Vahey and Duzes, businesses like Walmart, states like Connecticut and schools like Sacred Heart all rolling up their sleeves for the fight, we may just get to find out.
TODAY’S STUDENTS HAVE HIGH EXPECTATIONS WHEN IT COMES TO HEALTH AND WELLNESS. THE NEW BOBBY VALENTINE HEALTH & RECREATION CENTER IS JUST ONE WAY SHU IS RISING TO THAT CHALLENGE.
“SHOW ME your recreation and fitness center . . .”

It’s a common request on campus tours nationwide. Students are asking about rec programs and what they offer, says Kevin Herrick, AIA, the higher-ed practice leader and a principal at The S/L/A/M Collaborative that designed Sacred Heart’s new Bobby Valentine Health & Recreation Center. “It’s not just about physical fitness either,” he notes, “but about whether they can get on an intramural team or meet people outside their majors.”

The investment in facilities that address the non-academic side of campus life is a longtime trend for colleges, driven in part by a focus on the well-being of the whole student, notes Athletic Business magazine in a 2015 survey of what students want from campus recreation facility space. A 2018 article in the same publication observes that campus rec centers are evolving to offer a broad array of fitness needs, rather than just those of athletes and exercise enthusiasts.

Healthy Campus 2020, an American College Health Association initiative inspired by the nationwide Healthy People 2020 objectives, is another indication of higher education’s focus on student health and wellness. The effort challenges colleges to create social and physical environments that promote good health through collaboration between offices managing health care, academics and student affairs, as well as top administration.

At Sacred Heart, the focus on helping students lead healthy lifestyles has been evident in its academic programs for health professionals, its food service choices and its fitness centers within residence halls, such as the CrossFit facility at Bergoglio Hall. As Channing C. Vidal, director of student conduct and head coach at that facility, puts it, “Health plays into our Catholic mission to develop the best overall humans that we can.”

“For decades, we have made a commitment to health,” says James M. Barquinero, senior vice president for enrollment, student affairs and athletics. “It’s not a fad for us. It’s part of our value set. And it resonates nicely . . . with parents and their sons or daughters who are visiting institutions as part of their search process. [They are] impressed with this commitment to recreation and staying fit.”

That encompasses both physical and mental health as well as a large selection of Division I athletic programs, club sports, intramurals and recreation sports.

Now, the addition of the $21.8 million Bobby Valentine Health & Recreation Center to campus this summer takes the support of healthy lifestyles to a new level.

ABOVE AND RIGHT The School of Nursing’s Balance Kitchen stocks only healthy options to help keep diet, life and exercise in harmony.
The new Health & Recreation Center is sure to become the place for students to see and be seen this fall and beyond.

“It’s transparent, visible—no more going down into the basement for weight rooms. Floor-to-ceiling windows look out to the football field or the softball field or a beautiful forested area,” says Herrick. “And as you walk in, you’re greeted by this great volume of space that is floor-to-ceiling glass.”

The entry’s 40-foot climbing wall serves as a landmark that makes the building unmistakable from across campus. Look up and there’s the fitness area and running track weaving through it. “You’ll see all kinds of activity above,” Herrick says, adding that the second and third levels are dedicated to all sorts of recreation. The rec gym, for example, can accommodate basketball, indoor soccer and floor hockey. The third floor houses a juice bar.

The lower level, with a separate entrance, is geared toward athletes and their training. Besides coach offices, athletic team rooms and an athlete laundry facility, it features offices and training areas for club sports.

Then there’s a golf simulation area that can be used by anyone during off-season or by the golf team during inclement weather. “It’s blurring that line—serving double duty between athletics and recreation,” notes Herrick.

In a similar vein, the bowling center, complete with LED widescreen monitors, is for both the women’s Division I bowling team’s competitions and for the general student body’s evening entertainment. “At the flip of a switch, it turns to school colors and becomes a competitive environment,” says Herrick.

Overall, the Bobby Valentine Health & Recreation Center celebrates the importance of physical fitness as a part of the whole person, and certainly offers that WOW factor for visitors—whether they are guests of the president looking out of the end zone on game day or prospective students and families as they tour campus. Most importantly, however, Herrick expects it will house “a tremendous amount of vibrancy” for SHU students.

One might even say that it will be the students who give the building its Heart...
After two years in Kosovo serving in the Peace Corps, Adyel Duran '17 is headed to Serbia as SHU’s latest Fulbright Scholar. His mission: channeling peace through poetry.
borders have been drawn and redrawn throughout the centuries, often with little regard for the people who actually live there … and sometimes purposely in spite of them. National identity is more a matter of family and faction than any geographic fact. Grudges are passed down like inheritances. Wounded trust bleeds for generations. In this part of the world, history has long fingers. In these parts, history is very much present.

Kosovo—formerly a territory of Serbia, itself formerly a state of Yugoslavia—was recognized by the West as an independent nation some 20 years ago at the end of the Kosovo War. That war, of course, came on the heels of the Bosnian War and the greater hodgepodge of separate but related Yugoslav Wars. To war, of course, came on the heels of the Bosnian War and the greater hodgepodge of separate but related Yugoslav Wars. To

This fall, Duran resumes his duties as a teacher of English, though now with college students who already have some command of the language and—most significantly—across the border in Serbia. With his students, Duran will build a website translating poetry into and out of both Serbian and English, but avoiding literal translations whenever possible. Instead, Duran hopes to focus on universal experiential and emotional markers, using humanity’s shared experience to heal cultural differences. With his award, Duran becomes the eighth member of the Sacred Heart family in only 11 years to win Fulbright’s recognition for the school—and the sixth (of those eight) to be focusing their work in the Balkans.

There are grudges in that region going back hundreds of years,” says Bob McClaud, chair of Sacred Heart’s Fulbright Committee. “But what Adyel’s been able to do is leverage his experience in Kosovo over the last few years to inform his mission in Serbia.” Ironically, the biggest hurdle Duran faced when arriving in the region may prove to be his greatest asset: now, as a trusted outsider, he can appreciate the burden of history without carrying its weight personally.

“I’m doing amazing things,” adds Professor Robin Danzak who, as faculty fellow 3 years ago, was the first to propose Duran for a Fulbright. “He really captured the Fulbright spirit of wanting to develop a genuine exchange of culture,” she says. “I don’t know what it will lead to,” Duran says, looking forward into the unknown with typical calm. “I just don’t feel like I’m done yet. There are so many more stories to be heard.”

And it’s this final comment, offhand and unprepared, that says more about Adyel Duran than anything else to this point. In three sentences he casually sums up faith, uncertainty and his role as the servant of something larger than himself. Without using the words exactly, he knows he is the channel of a greater peace. What he does not realize, what he is too humble to recognize, is how this makes him exactly the ambassador we need. Undaunted by the fears that surround him, inspired by the humanity we share, Duran is comfortable with the uncomfortable work of serving not himself—open armed, open hearted and ready.
CATHOLICS ARE notoriously unaware of their history. As a consequence, we are often inclined to see current upheavals, both institutional and personal—clerical sex abuse, episcopal malfeasance, disclosures in the Vatican of a particularly unseemly nature—as unique to our time. It can seem as though it will never end. Will we ever break out of the darkness that envelops us?

The short answer is no.

Or rather, not without first shining a light into that darkness and seeing what lies therein; finding our bearings, as it were; determining honestly where we are and recognizing with candor the challenges we face. Institutional dysfunction and a moral corrosion we haven’t seen for centuries are compromising Catholicism’s integrity as a vessel of the Gospel, diluting its authority and squandering the faith of millions. This is not a church in transition. It is no exaggeration to call it a church in crisis. Indeed, we must recognize it as such so that we may respond appropriately.

The celebrated monk-poet and Catholic savant, Thomas Merton, wrote in *Seeds of Destruction* of the civil rights movement and the special heroism it elicited from the Afro-American community as a kairos time (the Hour of the Lord) when a critical moment emerges demanding decisions of a radical nature. We now face such a time in global Catholicism.

It is likewise important to note that such a time is not without precedent. Catholic reformers may not be legion, but their numbers are impressive: Bernard of Clairvaux, Francis of Assisi, Catherine of Siena, Nicholas of Cusa, Desiderius Erasmus, to name but a few. We have managed to surface the leaders and models we need in times that cry out not for renewal, but for reform. In the past, those who came forward to lead reform were monks, nuns, bishops, etc.

Now it will be the laity. The idea is neither new nor revolutionary. But its implementation is long overdue. John Henry Newman—priest, cardinal, convert from Anglicanism and newly canonized saint (a moment auspicious, welcoming and providential in its own right)—wrote in his seminal work of 1859, *On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine*, of several instances in church history where the laity actually saved the church from error. They pressured their teachers and overseers on matters specific to worship, but also on Eucharistic doctrine. Newman reminds us, pointedly, that the Church would look not only diminished but foolish without the laity.

In the third edition of his work, *The Arians of the Fourth Century*, Newman is especially forthright in underscoring the indispensable role of the laity at the Council of Nicaea when “the Catholic people in the length and breadth of Christendom were the obstinate champions of Catholic truth, and the bishops were not.”

With Newman soon to be our canonized champion, our validating authority, it is a propitious moment to ask: what changes, what reforms, do the laity want in our church governance, our ministry and pastoral priorities in a time of dissolution and remaking, in this kairos juncture?

By Michael W. Higgins, Ph.D.

DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR OF CATHOLIC THOUGHT, SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY
Lay Catholics are not asking for a new Christological or Mariological dogmatic definition; they are not asking for a revision of the Code of Canon Law; and they are not asking for a reconfiguration of parochial appointments and episcopal elevations. What they are asking for—and this is universal and not parochial in its nature and scope—is for a scouring of the rot, a cleaning of house, a restoring of pastoral credibility to a beleaguered church leadership, instituting trust and comity with local clergy. The laity want a responsible clergy—attentive, given to prayer and mercy as the primary pastoral strategy, transparent in their dealings with the people of God, formed in a way that nurtures their psycho-sexual maturity and prepares them to function as sacramental ministers with spiritual integrity.

Just as turning to the laity for directional guidance in church matters is not a new thing in Catholic Christendom, neither would be a systematic reform of the clergy. Abuses such as simony (the selling of pastoral offices) and Nicolaitism (clerical concubinage) were once widespread. The introduction of seminarial offices as a means of dealing with clerical illiteracy and consolidating teaching in such a way as to counter the Reformation made perfect sense—for its era. But now we have a new era, and the curse or sin of clericalism—denounced at the Second Vatican Council and most vigorously by recent popes—has spread widely and deeply in the structures of the church. We can name it for what it is—entitlement, exaggerated sacral status, unaccountability, sexual predation and venality. We have seen the magisterial and senior church leadership struggle with ways of dealing with the toxins and aftershocks of clericalism. Still, the scandals continue to fester.

Failure to appropriately address the systemic causes of clericalism—clerical sex abuse scandals, for example—compounds the crisis of credibility. The predatory behavior of priests and religious toward innocent children and vulnerable adults; the persistent predatory behavior of priests and religious toward innocent children and vulnerable adults; the persistent predatory behavior of priests and religious toward innocent children and vulnerable adults. The clergy must not let this happen again: too much is at stake.

Let me suggest one way forward.

The second decade of the 21st century is a different world than 1940s France. It is time to resurrect this model of priestly living, and no better exemplar can be found than the life and ministry of the Dutch priest-psychologist and spiritual writer, Henri J. M. Nouwen.

A prolific writer—39 books to his name in addition to thousands of letters and countless retreats and public lectures—Nouwen was variously a professor (Yale and Harvard), an aspirant for the monastic life (the Trappist monastery of Our Lady of the Genesee in upstate New York), a liberation theologian (working in the slums of Peru) and an assistant and chaplain for the disabled (Daybreak, a L’Arche home in Ontario).

He was not your typical diocesan priest. He had been freed by his various Archbishops of Utrecht (he had four of them by the time of his death in 1996) to engage in his universal ministry and to do it outside his native country and in the English tongue. Nouwen happily obliged. He spent nearly his entire life as a priest in the United States and Canada. He avoided ecclesiastical controversies like the proverbial plague. He saw himself simply as a pastor called to witness to the saving power of God’s unconditional love, centered on Jesus, the unique embodiment of that love. His Christocentrism did not restrict the appeal his writings had for many outside Catholicism and indeed Christianity; he remained immensely popular in his life, and his books have sold in the millions.

The style and substance of Nouwen’s priesthood provide precisely the kind of Christian depth and maturity the church needs right now. His personal ministry as a priest serves as a marker for a renewed and meaningful ministry in these tremulous, fragile, yet (as they must remain) hope-filled times.

It is not enough to bewail our fractious church; we are called to heal it. Newman provides us with a foundation and Nouwen with an example of how we can proceed with our efforts at reform. Ecclesia semper reformanda—the church always reforming—remains a rallying summons for us as it was in the past. By undertaking the task of reforming the priesthood, the laity are engaged in the work of the Lord’s Hour. Asking the clergy to reform themselves is a self-defeating strategy. The laity need to assert their rights—well articulated in the 1983 updating of the Code of Canon Law—and be as persuasive as they are within times past in correcting this church, the Barque of Peter. The newly named John Henry Cardinal Newman reminds us of that truth and inspires us to take our share in the important enterprise of reform.

Much needs to be done. We can be easily dispirited by the myriad crises around us, but panic is not an option. Nor is looking backward with a con- soling sense of nostalgia. Time only moves forward.

THE TIME FOR TINKERING AND RENEWAL IS OVER. THE TIME FOR SUBSTANTIVE REFORM IS UPON US.

It’s time to change the way we do things; time to change the way we educate priest candidates for effective ministry; time to find new models for presbyterial leadership that can begin the arduous but creative task of reforming the priesthood.

As Newman has indicated, the laity have considerable power to effect change—even more so when lay students study graduate theology for accreditation as well as for enrichment in far greater numbers than seminarians, when lay people hold positions as diocesan chancellors, when they teach in divinity faculties, when they serve on various tribunals and commissions and when, in some cases, they actually function as “pastor in residence” sans the conventional canonical legitimacy. Necessity is indeed the mother of invention.

So it is not outside the realm of possibility that the laity can advocate for radically new ways to prepare priests for ministry. Such new ways would include the abolition of the now anachronistic seminary system; employing alternative channels of theological education, including emulating Protestant schools of divinity; the creation of internships so that priests-to-be are grounded in parochial ministry long before they receive formal assignments; extensive exposure to lay people throughout the entire training period; and the involvement of appropriate lay as consultants and co-discerners of a candidate’s worthiness and maturity.

In addition, this kaíros moment can also serve as a fortuitous occasion to rethink the nature of vocation itself and to begin the fecund or generative task of distinguishing between a calling and a career.

There is precedent. In the 1940s, the French Church ushered in a startlingly original exercise in priestly ministry with their Priest Worker Movement. The episcopal recognized that the working classes were long lost to the church and that a bold evangelizing initiative needed to begin, whereby priests were situated within the context of the workers and their lives—both on the industrial floor and in the apartments.

Yet, as it often the case, a creative response to a challenging cultural shift resulted in a hunkering down by ecclesiastical authorities. Eventually Rome suppressed the Movement and much, as a consequence, has been lost. The laity must not let this happen again: too much is at stake.

ASKING THE CLERGY TO REFORM THEMSELVES IS A SELF-DEFEATING STRATEGY.
You think this is a story about communing with the dolphins. You think it’s about a new Doctor Doolittle, reimagined as a young, female Navy veteran and marine scientist, talking with the dolphins and manta rays and sharks in the sun-drenched waters off Bimini. You think it’s about students strapping on fins and masks and snorkels and diving into once-in-a-lifetime underwater field research experiences in the tropics.

You think it’s about the photo ops.

And if we’re honest, the photo ops are what grabbed our attention, too. But they’re not the story.

The story is about an intersection of various, seemingly unrelated sciences that, in toto, are trying to inform a road to environmental sustainability, and about one Sacred Heart University psychology professor and her guiding mission to move humans toward a healthier relationship between us and the world we inhabit.
As a young girl in upstate New York, Deirdre Yeater was fascinated by the undersea explorations of French naval officer, filmmaker and conservationist Jacques Cousteau. She turned a fourth-grade shoebox diorama into a scene of deep sea marine life and, later, went on a whale watching expedition with her dad. She joined the environmental clubs in high school and studied marine environmental science in college.

After graduating, she worked in marine science for four years. It was exactly the work she had trained for, and yet a nagging feeling persisted. Something was missing from the picture.

Then, while attending a professional conference, Yeater sat in on a session discussing marine mammal cognition and various human traits observed in other animals, particularly dolphins. Humans have long had the inclination to imbue animals with human characteristics like emotions and self-awareness, but true, empirical evidence had always been thin on the ground.

Yet here Yeater was, listening to serious scientists presenting serious research into things like mirror self-recognition and self-awareness in marine mammals.

A fire was lit. Passion suddenly had a purpose.

Heading back to school, Yeater refocused her work, turning from marine science in general to comparative psychology, studying the thought processes of marine mammals, comparing their similarities and differences to each other and, of course, to humans.

Now a full professor in SHU’s psychology department, Yeater takes a team of students every year to the Bahamas for a week at the Dolphin Communication Project’s Bimini Field School, observing and documenting dolphins living in the waters off Bimini Island. Regarding which, it’s vitally important for the scientists and their students to remember: however endearing, social and sociable these animals may seem, they are wild. Any interaction at all runs the risk of altering not only their behavior but their entire ecosystem. A simple touch could potentially transfer catastrophic disease. Less dramatically—but no less catastrophically—it could begin the domestication of a wild species, ruining their capacity to care for themselves and disrupting the balance of Life (with a capital “L”—from the smallest marine microorganisms right through to us humans ourselves) completely.

So this is no grown-up field trip to the petting zoo. “This isn’t eco-tourism,” Yeater stresses. This is work challenging her students out onto the knife’s edge between observation and interaction, between intentionally witnessing and inadvertently impacting, constantly weighing the benefits of the one against the myriad of potential unintended consequences of the other.

And it’s vitally important, both to her own specialty of comparative psychology and to the larger body of work known as conservation psychology.

Regarding the former, for example, comparing the behavior of dolphins in the wild to those in the controlled settings of managed care can offer insight into the thought processes of an animal with whom we would otherwise never be able to communicate. Plainly there is no common language shared between dolphins and humans. But then, neither is there between adult humans and infants and toddlers who are as yet unable to speak, let alone explain themselves.

So Yeater has based some research on tests already used with nonverbal infants studied by her SHU colleague, Dawn Melzer. The pair plan to see how their results compare and might be extrapolated, both to better understand and engage with animals and to more accurately gauge things such as intelligence and creativity in children who have what appear to be developmental delays.

It’s all work with unquestionable merit in its own right. However, there remains that larger purpose to which Yeater’s work makes an important contribution.

Humans have undeniably had an enormous impact on the planet, the life it
supports and its capacity to continue doing so. While it requires contributions from every field of science to understand exactly what that impact looks like—its many causes and effects, potential means of mitigating damage, etc.—none of it matters without the human will to act.

But humans are historically inept at responding to complex challenges. We’re great at fight-or-flight when it comes to a lion in the tall grass or a burglar in the house. The complexities of ecological interdependence, however, not so much. Consider, for example, the lowly pine beetle. A half-a-degree rise in temperature (which, frankly, humans can’t even feel) allows the pine beetle to migrate north to a region where it has no natural predators and where, until now, it has always been held in check by the cold. Yet now, in the Pacific Northwest, it is turning huge swaths of formerly lush pine forest into naked arboreal bone yards, leaving the flora and fauna beneath unprotected so that the whole region is turning to grassland at an alarming rate—which in turn leaves it prone to fire, mudslide, poor air quality and failing agriculture and makes it unsafe for development. One bug does that.

Yet going after the bug is like treating the headaches of a brain tumor with aspirin. The bug is a symptom. It’s the rising temperature that’s the disease.

But how do you get people to feel empowered to act in the face of such a complex issue? How do you inspire them to take a first step toward sustainability (ban-ning plastic straws, for example) so that second and third steps (like dealing with the effects of commercial fishing) seem less daunting and become possible?

Responding to that challenge is conservation psychology. “Psychologists can help with the human dimension of conservation,” Yeater explains. “Social psychology techniques help work toward empathy, social capital and social cohesion. Outside environmental activists and scientists who come into an area, telling the local people what to do … that doesn’t work so well. But helping people to gain an understanding of the impacts may.”

Yet the act of making those connections, as Yeater points out, presents its own ethical conundrum. The same risks of unintended consequences exist for the eco-tourist as for the scientist, and the professor is constantly challenging her students to weigh the benefits of shifting public attitudes against the potential risks of well-intended-but-poorly-executed interaction between the public and the wild. Petting wild dolphins, for example.

To combat those risks, you inform and inspire. And in this sense, Yeater seems to have taken a note directly from her childhood hero. “When one man, for whatever reason, has the opportunity to lead an extraordinary life,” Jacques Cousteau once said, “he has no right to keep it to himself.”

“You are the future,” Yeater tells her students. “The science—this planet—this is what you get. And we have a mission here.”

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** This article was written prior to Hurricane Dorian devastating much of The Bahamas. We are relieved to report that Dr. Yeater’s colleagues at the DCP, the dolphins they study and the facility itself all came through the storm with no serious injuries or damage.
FALL 2019 SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE | FALL 2019

Students and faculty take it to the streets.

OLGA KAYA has been campaigning for students’ rights since the days he was a student himself. As an undergrad in Turkey, he took to the streets to protest rising student tuition. It was then that one of his professors threw down a challenge. “He told me, ‘If you really want to help students, you should become faculty.’” He took the advice to heart.

As Professor Kaya, that young activist is now director of engineering programs at Sacred Heart University—and remains just as passionate about the economic challenges facing students. So in April, Kaya took to the streets again, this time running the Boston Marathon and raising over $8,000 for SHU’s general scholarship fund.

Approximately two thirds of the money came from within the Pioneer family as Sacred Heart students, faculty, staff and alumni contributed to the cause of looking after their own. Meanwhile, Kaya’s students regularly showed up to run and train with their professor as a sign of their gratitude, solidarity and support.

So for Kaya himself, he’s looking forward to returning to his event of choice—marathons—with the goal of someday making the Ironman in Hawaii. Perhaps another fundraising opportunity looms on the horizon ...

For Shane Finn, exercise science instructor at SHU in Dingle, the decision to cross North America entirely under his own power was a matter of snatching victory from the jaws of defeat.

In 2017, Finn ran 24 marathons in 24 days in 24 counties of Ireland. The numbers were a tribute to the nearly constant pain (24 hours a day) experienced by his cousin Mary, who was born with spina bifida. With his entrepreneurial spirit and hustle and some major corporate donations, Finn was able to raise over $140,000 for the charity Spina Bifida Ireland.

But two and a half months later, Finn was visiting Sacred Heart and Fairfield when he learned his charity’s funding had been cut by $50,000. “That’s a big blow to a small charity like ours,” Finn recalls.

Standing on Fairfield Beach, absorbing the news, looking out to the east—back toward Ireland and home and with the entire North American continent behind him—Finn was struck by an idea and committed to it on the spot. “I’ve got to run America,” he thought.

And so he did. On March 29 of this year, Finn set out from the Golden Gate Bridge and, for the next 36 days, followed Highway 50 more or less all the way to the Brooklyn Bridge. To make it on time, he would run 35 miles a day for two days, then bike 150 miles a day for four, in rotation.

Far from considering the challenge a sacrifice, Finn speaks of the experience with gratitude. “I’m very lucky to be able to do what I do,” he says.

Bad weather in the Rockies knocked him off schedule early, and it wasn’t until day 35, running the penultimate leg that would bring him into Sacred Heart’s campus for his final night before finishing, that he was finally back on track.

That’s also when he met Ryan Litwin, the softly spoken senior nursing major and cancer survivor who this summer crossed America as part of 4k for Cancer, a coast-to-coast charity run completed by a team of runners rotating relay-style through the responsibilities of support crew, community service and outreach, and good, old-fashioned pavement pounding.

Diagnosed with an aggressive form of testicular cancer the summer before his junior year of high school, Litwin is familiar with keeping a cool head, facing his challenges with a quiet peace and uncommon perspective.

He doesn’t talk about the miles. He mentions no blisters. There’s no hint of aches or pains.

Instead, “People are so generous,” he says. “Doing this run, crossing the country on foot, you get to connect so many different communities together.”

The entire journey is supported through planned volunteerism, from the food they eat to the places they rest at night. But it’s the impromptu generosity that really leaves an impact. He tells the story of one such encounter in Ohio.

With the heat index over 100 degrees, the team had paused alongside the road at a relay point when some locals stopped to make sure they were okay. After explaining what they were doing, the team found themselves invited to a family reunion at a nearby swimming hole. Soon they were escaping the heat with a dip in the pond, refueling on proper Midwest barbecue and sharing stories with lifelong friends they’d only just met.

“You hear all the bad stories in the news,” Litwin says, “It’s important to remember: people are really so generous. It’s inspiring.”

Indeed, they are.

And indeed, it is.
FIGHTING THE DARK WITH LIGHT, CHALLENGING HATE WITH HEART

SHU’s latest lecture series confronts a divided world head-on

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FR. ANTHONY CIOGRA AND RABBI MARCELLO KORMIS LEAD PRAYER AND DISCUSSION AT THE FOURTH HEART CHALLENGES HATE LECTURE, “RELIGION: PART OF THE PROBLEM OR A REMEDY FOR HATE?”

WHERE HORSEPLAY IS HARD WORK

With a top-10 national ranking, the Pioneer equestrian team takes winning in stride.

Tiffany Hajdasz became coach of Sacred Heart’s equestrian team. She never once focused on winning. The focus was always on team culture,” she says. “And our administration allowed that. They supported us. This led to success, and our focus still hasn’t changed.”

If winning wasn’t the point, it certainly became the product. The team (that now includes nearly 40 riders and a support coaching staff) is ranked 10th in the nation by the Intercollegiate Horse Show Association.

Individual student-athletes had competed at the national level in the past, but the 2018–19 season marked the first time the team as a whole went to nationals.

The key was making it to second place in a qualifying zone competition. “I didn’t realize how difficult it would be to break into that level,” Hajdasz says. Year after year the team came in third place, often missing that qualifying position by mere points.

The focus was always on belonging—and not the other way around. So though not all the riders on the team were able to compete at nationals, Hajdasz believes it was important that everyone went. “They all knew they contributed to the team in some way, she insists. “And I think they all understand that, too,” she says. “They all knew they belonged there.”

Equipment that may not even be sized correctly. Nor are they afforded any time to practice with their new “teammate” and gear beforehand. “You’re really improvising as you go,” Hajdasz says.

Additionally, she adds, “Many people don’t realize … equestrian is an all-season sport.” There is no pre-season, Hajdasz explains. Equestrian practice begins as soon as students come back to campus in the fall.

The team started practicing at Silvermine Farm in Norwalk in August after outgrowing their former facility. The pastoral farm is situated on 10 acres of land in the historic Silvermine community on the New Canaan/Norwalk line. It features two outdoor rings and an attached indoor ring with a heated viewing lounge. The partnership will allow the team to add additional horses to their program.

Hajdasz, who’s been riding since she was 9 years old, credits much of the team’s success to its alumnae. “They sacrificed so much for the current team and positioned them where they are now,” she says. It was only four years ago that the team was able to provide scholarships to its riders. This marks the first year freshmen will receive some of that aid. “That’s another milestone for us.”

Whatever the team’s success, Hajdasz keeps her focus on a positive team culture. Winning, it would seem, is the product of belonging—and not the other way around. So though not all the riders on the team were able to compete at nationals, Hajdasz believes it was important that everyone went. “They all contributed to the team in some way,” she insists. “And I think they all understand that, too,” she says. “They all knew they belonged there.”

A university, especially a Catholic university like ours, whose mission is rooted in the Catholic intellectual tradition and whose core values focus on the dignity of each person and the importance of the common good, has a critical responsibility to respond to the culture of hatred, bigotry and violence with knowledge, reason, faith and dialogue,” said Michelle Laric, associate dean of the College of Arts & Sciences and Catholic studies chair. “We have a critical role to play in sustaining a democratic society in which we maintain the open flow of ideas, the rule of law, the acceptance of diversity and, most especially, respect for human dignity and the common good.”

Hate is learned behavior, explained psychology professor Christina Taylor during the first discussion. Still, she insists, people have the ability to choose between good and evil. In the second talk, delving into the rhetoric of hate, media literacy professor Bill Younstan stressed the importance of calling out hate speech directly, whether in person or through more formal and coordinated protests such as letter writing or boycotting advertisers who employ or endorse such divisiveness. At the third discussion, professors Gary Rose and Jennifer McLaughlin discussed how the First Amendment allows for free speech—even speech that may be difficult to digest—but does not allow for speech that leads to violent or hateful action.

The fourth lecture—“Religion: Part of the Problem or a Remedy for Hate?”—was especially hard-hitting as it occurred just three days after the Easter Sunday tragedy in Sri Lanka where churches and hotels in the Colombo region were bombed, killing more than 200. Fr. Anthony Ciorra, vice president for Mission and Catholic Identity, was joined by campus chaplains Imam Gauzned Aga and Rabbi Marcello Kormis. All three view religion as a remedy to hate, particularly as Kormis reminded the audience that if one accepts the doctrine that all people are created in the image and likeness of God.

The University plans to keep the timely, eye-opening series around for the coming school year as a way to maintain thoughtful conversation and to inform the community. Laric said the new dialogues will focus more specifically on one group at a time, with such likely discussion topics as racism and women’s rights.
It began February 3, a Sunday. Liz-Ann St. Onge was sitting with the choir at St. Mary’s in Newington when a fellow choir member, Stephen Bailen, quietly slipped into the seat next to her. He couldn’t stay for Mass—his infant son was looking jaundiced, and doctors wanted the boy brought to the hospital. Stephen simply wanted to be sure to pay Liz-Ann for her husband’s snow plowing the week before. What followed for the Bailens was something of a blur. Within days, the doctors confirmed that the baby was experiencing liver failure and, only a few days after that, confirmed he needed a transplant. The Bailens were told: “Get the word out. Call everyone you know.” From her office as SHU’s associate controller, Liz-Ann forwarded the Bailens’ request that willing donors contact Yale New Haven to present themselves for testing. Then she picked up the phone herself. “There was something driving me to call,” she says. “I can’t put it any other way. I felt compelled to act.” She left her contact details but didn’t hear back that night. She tried again the next day. What followed for them both was something of a blur. Even as the surgery was a success, it was two months before the hospital hosted a reveal where the Bailens could finally meet the person who had saved their son. Seeing Liz-Ann as they walked through the door, the Bailens were all but speechless. “We were running late and I’d been rehearsing apologies in my head the whole way,” Stephen recalls. “And then we walked in and saw her and the only thing I could say was, ‘Really?’” This story goes further than one woman’s actions saving the life of a single child, however. When the call went out that the Bailens were in urgent need of a living liver donor, the response was so great that the doctors not only matched Liz-Ann to baby Stephen, but were able to make three other donor/recipient matches as well. In all, four lives were saved. For both Liz-Ann and the Bailens, it’s all just evidence of God’s providence. The mysterious balance of life’s trials and tribulations, and the ways we are all called to be, as Liz-Ann says, quoting a song from her parish choir, “one body in Christ.”
It’s one thing to read a magazine. It’s another to walk the campus, visit the chapel, take in a game or a show, maybe catch up with a former professor or an old friend. Or just marvel at how we’ve grown.

Come back to SHU. We’d love to see you.

Plan your visit to campus by contacting Todd Gibbs, executive director of development & alumni engagement, at 203.365.4526 or emailing gibbst@sacredheart.edu.

We are Pioneers.