

# THE UPDATE

Pensacola Christian College Alumni & Friends



## Education in Action

Think | Communicate | Engage

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A degree at Pensacola Christian College equips students like Mekenzie to share the gospel in West Africa and beyond.



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## FROM THE PRESIDENT



DR. TROY A. SHOEMAKER

When we feel uncertainty because of circumstances like an election year, a rising cost of living, and concerning shifts in culture, we must remember that God works through individuals: we each have an opportunity to make a difference wherever He has placed us. Our world needs Christian leaders who are willing to serve the Lord faithfully and uphold biblical wisdom, not only in full-time ministry but also as a light for Him in every career field.

At Pensacola Christian College, we're doing our part to support the cause of Christ by equipping students with an excellent Bible-based education that will help them grow spiritually and socially as they prepare to excel professionally. We've even frozen tuition, room and board for the 2025-2026 academic year to make sure a high-quality education is within reach. PCC students are taught to form ideas through sound reasoning and the biblical worldview, to communicate clearly and effectively as they share the gospel and defend truth, and to serve the needs of others in Christlike love.

In the classroom, students experience a high standard of excellence from top-notch instructors and state-of-the-art technology. They're encouraged to engage with the community right away through frequent ministry opportunities, and our prayer is that after graduation, they will continue to put their education into action.

It's easy to feel discouraged when we turn on the news, but with one person at a time submitted to the Lord, together we can each do our part to influence the world for Christ. And PCC is helping make it possible by providing academic excellence, the biblical worldview, and an incredible experience at an unmatched cost!

Sincerely,

Troy A. Shoemaker, Ed.D.  
President

Connect with us



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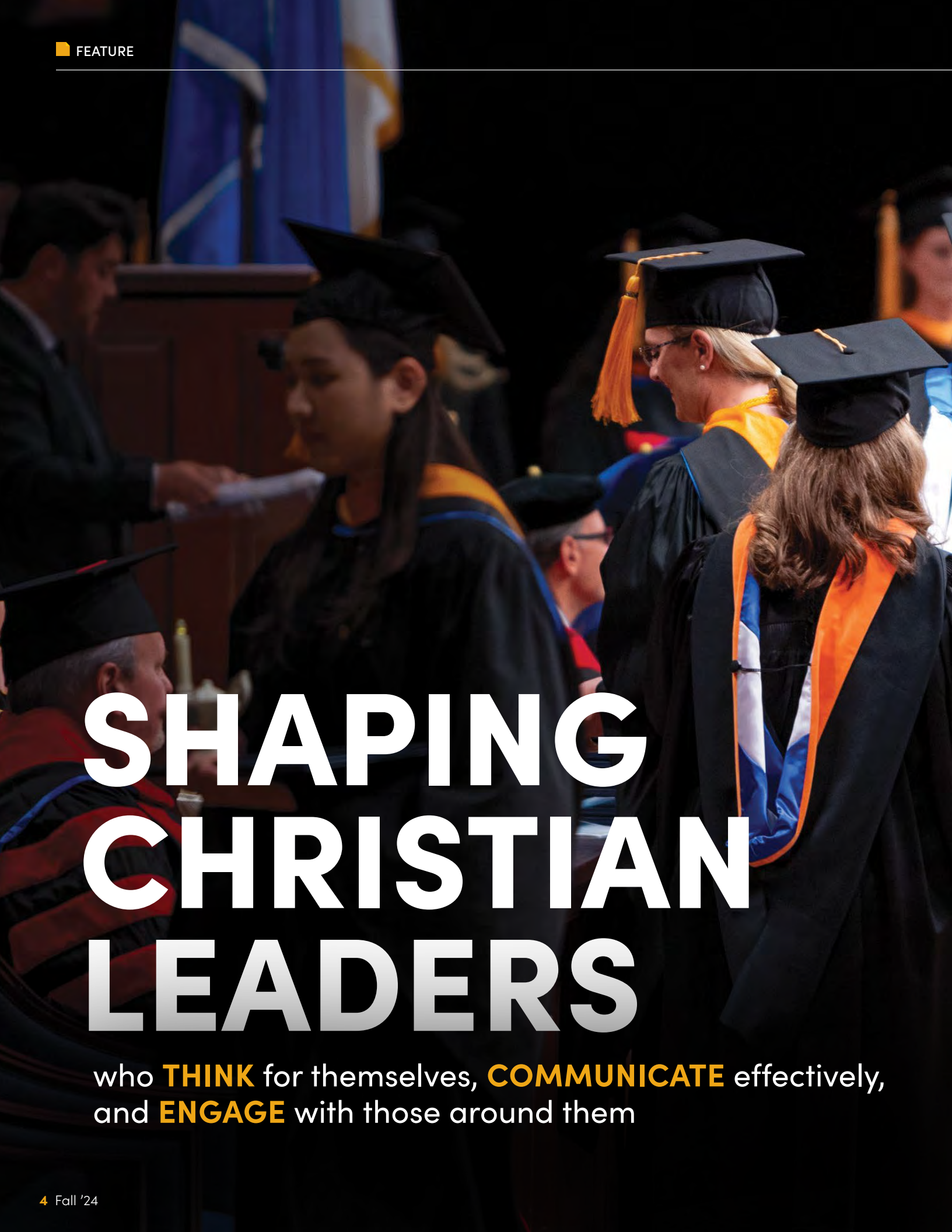
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# SHAPING CHRISTIAN LEADERS

who **THINK** for themselves, **COMMUNICATE** effectively,  
and **ENGAGE** with those around them





In each classroom, lab, and lecture on the Pensacola Christian College campus, every skill, principle, concept, and formula is presented through a biblical worldview and from faculty who are examples of Christian professionals in their field.

As an institution, PCC has laid a foundation of clear, attainable objectives that honor the timeless standards in Christian education. This includes the spiritual, intellectual, moral, cultural, and social areas of a student's life. Today, these values remain true and continue to empower graduates to embrace their God-given callings with confidence and excellence.





Mr. Benjamin Reid instructs his students how to think through concepts in an anatomy and physiology lecture.

## THINK: forming ideas through the biblical worldview and sound reasoning

Using relevant tools and skills related to their studies, students are equipped to cultivate understanding through faith-based insights and critical reasoning. The visual and performing arts programs, for example, include a variety of artistic mediums and the stage through which to deliver their message. “PCC is allowing me to find my voice in a culture that is so bent on squashing that Christian voice; it has helped me realize where my values should be,” shared Ashlyn Henley (*Graphic Design '24*).

“As Christian artists, our students are encouraged (and taught) to honor the Lord in all that they do and use the biblical worldview as a basis for all that they create,” explained Dr. Amy Bombard, dean of visual and performing arts. “The end product is skillful demonstration of their technique, creativity and imagination, and informed conceptualization.”

Students at PCC are in a place to grow professionally and personally. After graduation, Karen Eacho’s (*History '96, Secondary Education '97*) life involved being a wife, a mom, and a teacher in Christian schools and to her own three children

while serving alongside her husband in full-time Christian service for 26 years. “PCC prepared me for [my] future beyond college,” she said. “I was taught at PCC to do things right, with excellence, and for the glory of God.” Sarah Leiford (*Pre-Law '20*) shared how PCC was instrumental in sharpening her thinking and reasoning skills. “My EN 126 class challenged me not just to write well, but to argue a point well. My Origins class challenged me to truly understand what I believe. My debate class challenged me to think on

my feet. My Classics of Western Literature class challenged me to analyze pieces of writing closely to draw out the meaning. My World History Since 1900 class challenged me to pay attention to the details of a story,” explained Sarah. “These necessary skills have greatly prepared me for my future, in which I’m looking to attend law school.”

## COMMUNICATE: connecting with others by exchanging information and concepts

Beginning their very first year, students are taught to precisely articulate concepts through foundational classes (like Fundamentals of Speech and Grammar and Composition I and II) that provide techniques to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing. “Communication is central to God’s heartbeat—Jesus is the Living Word. By teaching the essential skills found in language study, writing, research, and persuasive speaking, PCC has consistently emphasized communication with the express purpose of empowering students to influence their world with the beautiful message of the gospel,” explained Dr. Ma-



Graduate students communicate ideas with their classmates.





On a missions trip, team members Mekenzie Olinger, Jennifer Herman (*Nursing '24*), and missionary Karrie Ferguson engage with the African people.

rie Thompson, chair of the humanities department. By graduation, students are furnished with the tools needed to defend biblical truth as the basis for faith and practice in whichever career or ministry they are called to pursue.

During their time at PCC, students gain valuable and practical skills to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with others, actionable through multiple Christian Service opportunities. Sam Sinclair (*Pastoral Ministries '13, History '15, M.A. Biblical Languages '15, M.Div. '17*), did not realize that what he was doing every week was preparing him to pastor Cloverleaf Baptist Church in Mobile, AL. “Ministry is loving people where they are and leading them to where they need to be,” Sam said. From starting conversations with strangers in Seville Square or at Homestead Village Assisted Living, Sam has influenced many with the gospel. “I’m thankful for the experience I gleaned, the passion the Spirit deepened, and the hands-on training I gained through Christian Service. It has served me well.” These experiences in college often lead students

to broader avenues to share the gospel with the world.

## ENGAGE: interacting and relating with personal and social awareness

The nursing department emphasizes the care for every individual with compassion and Christlikeness, knowing that every patient is God’s creation. This heart for others led Mekenzie Olinger (*Nursing '24*) to serve in Côte d’Ivoire, West Africa, for a time with Kristine McLaughlin (*Nursing '01*). Alongside a team of professionals, Mekenzie treated over 1,000 patients and witnessed almost 300 people receive Christ.

Today, Mekenzie is a nurse in the emergency department of Greater Baltimore Medical Center and plans to pursue her Certified Emergency Nurse title as well as a Trauma Nurse Certification. “[Studying] nursing at PCC is extremely tough, but it prepares you so well for post-graduation,” she said. “Every single one of my teachers at PCC was influential in my life and emphasized the importance of being a light in our dark world.” Because each patient interaction is brief, Mekenzie

is aware this limits the opportunity to share the gospel. “Yet, people constantly notice the difference in your actions, allowing them to question what is different about you.”

Deliberately cultivating relationships with sensitivity to social contexts and individual needs is central to the PCC experience. “I feel like PCC prepared me socially and spiritually to know how to behave as a Christian adult in an ever-changing world,” recalls Julie Ryan (*Accounting, '95*). “Being guided with careful standards while having to make our own decisions really helped develop us in the right way.” Jackson Maciaszek (*Pastoral Ministries '20, M.Div. '24*) says, “God led me to PCC and it has changed me, influenced my walk with God for the better, and enhanced my social interactions.”

PCC remains committed to the goal of training young men and women for a lifetime of service wherever God leads them. For as long as the Lord allows, the College will continue preparing students to graduate equipped to influence the world for Christ. ▶





# JAMISON COPPOLA

## Applying a Biblical Worldview to Education and Politics

Today, most people consider politics a hot topic. Many advise, “Don’t talk about politics during Thanksgiving dinner!” But even the Bible talks about politics and government. In Romans 13, Paul calls those in government “ministers of God,” responsible for enforcing right and wrong.

In the United States, Christians can participate in politics and have a voice in government. Many vote for politicians they hope will stand for Christian principles. Others take an even more active role in politics. Jamison Coppola (*Criminal Justice '95, M.S. Ed. Admin. '97*), director of government relations for the American Association of Christian Schools (AACCS), takes his active participation in politics seriously.





Coppola speaking at the Religious Liberty Rally outside the Supreme Court

## Jamison Coppola, government relations director at AACCS, advocates for Christian education on Capitol Hill.

### LAYING A FOUNDATION

Enrolled as a criminal justice student, Coppola arrived at Pensacola Christian College ready for the 1991 fall semester. He chose the criminal justice major because he wanted to be able to help those in need. Classes like Introduction and Orientation to Criminal Justice and Dynamics of Human Behavior taught Coppola how those in his chosen field could help others while classes like Bible Doctrines and Worldview and Apologetics enforced a strong, biblical worldview.

Joining the collegian Delta Psi Raiders as a freshman, he was able to meet other students outside his college classes. Sports and outings encouraged camaraderie among members, and Coppola became friends with several guys from his collegian. One of those members, Scot Bryan (*Criminal Justice '94, M.S. Educational Leadership '20*), became one of Coppola's lifelong friends. "His friendship has been an encouragement and has sharpened me in too many ways to tell," Coppola shared.

Throughout his undergraduate years, Coppola learned the importance of academic excellence. His professors—and even Dr. Horton—taught him lessons in work ethics he never forgot. "Dr. Horton, both explicitly and implicitly through the PCC ethos, taught me to see things in terms of excellence and service to others. This principle has shaped so much of my view of the world," he shared.

"I'm grateful for the friendships I built at PCC," he continued. "The College draws together so many people who see the same truth, and solid friendships are inevitably born and strengthened through joining a

community dedicated to study, learning, and growth," Bryan agreed. "Jamie is now part of my inner circle of lifelong friends, which is a select and valued group."

When Coppola wasn't studying or playing sports, he and Bryan enjoyed talking about various topics from biblical theology to philosophy and politics. Using his discussions with Bryan and several other friends, God started to shift Coppola's focus to education. After graduating in 1995, he enrolled in PCC's educational administration program with the intent of helping others in the field.

The structure and discipline Coppola learned through his graduate classes further reinforced the ideals of excellence he learned as an undergraduate. His classes on leadership and management helped him learn effective ways to communicate with others, and he gained valuable skills that he could use wherever he went.



Dr. Jon Lands, Kaylee Soule (*Interdisciplinary Studies '22*), Olivia Summers (*Political Science '23*), and Jamison Coppola at the Supreme Court after a monumental ruling





Coppola, his wife Jordana, and their daughter Jianna

## LEARNING THE ROPES

Graduating in 1997, Coppola and his wife Jordana (*Bachelor of Science in Business: Management '95*) worked at their alma mater. Very quickly, he was able to use his leadership skills as Director of Ancillary Services. In this position, Coppola encountered many different workers from multiple departments. As director, he oversaw each one and ensured communication among them. He and Jordana worked at the College until 2005 when

they moved to Front Range Baptist Academy, where Coppola served as school administrator.

At Front Range, Coppola dedicated himself to helping teachers, parents, and students to the best of his ability. When parents would notice his undergraduate degree in criminal justice, he would sometimes joke, “The only difference between criminal justice and education is that schools deal with younger criminals!” In a way, this acknowledgment of fallen human nature helped bring clarity to the realities and difficulties of life that arose in working with students, parents, and even himself.

**“God made it clear what his plan was for us”**

After eight years of administration, Coppola felt called to help those in education in a slightly different way. “God gave me a desire to get involved with American governance and protect Christian schools,” he shared. “The direct working of the Holy Spirit brought about this decision. God made it clear what His plan for us was, and we willingly followed.” In 2013, the Coppola family relocated to Washington, D.C.

## TAKING A STAND

Now in D.C., Coppola serves AACSB as the Government Relations Director. He oversees monitoring legislative, regulatory, and legal efforts on the federal level, paying special attention to issues affecting reli-

gious education. To do this, his office shares information with members of Congress, member schools, and non-profit organizations and advocates for issues related to religious liberty, educational freedom, family formation, and pro-life protections.

Networking allows Coppola to meet a wide variety of people from different backgrounds. “I enjoy investing in others, so education and relationship building have always appealed to me,” he explained. “Because I believe in the truth of Christianity, I enjoy teaching how Christian principles apply to life and advocating for the maintenance of our unique constitutional religious liberties.”



Meeting Senator Tim Scott

However, working with politicians on Capitol Hill can sometimes be discouraging. “Our work in D.C. has become especially challenging as our society moves away from God and Christian truth,” the acknowledged. “We have frequent discussions with those who completely oppose or mistrust Christianity.”

In times of challenge, Coppola remembers one of his favorite verses: “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (*Hebrews 11:6*). “As I read this verse, I see two things we must do,” he shares. “We must believe that God exists, but we must also trust that He rewards those who seek Him.” Seeking God daily, Coppola strives to grow his relationship with Him. “I want to know, like Paul in Philippians, that God Himself is our exceeding great reward. This truth will sustain me through life’s many challenges.”

Taking a stand for Christian education, Jamison Coppola continues to serve the Lord and walk by faith in Washington, D.C. “Politics is a ministry,” he shared, “And I’m honored God called me to it.”



# Be of Good Courage

By Pastor Cranston Knowles

Have you ever met a problem that seemed to swallow you up? Have you ever felt so paralyzed by fear that it held you back from doing what you knew you could and should do? As Christians, we are called to make an eternal difference in a world that is vastly different from us, but in our quest to fulfill God's purpose, we meet seemingly impossible obstacles that strike fear, intimidate, and paralyze us. This paralysis keeps us from claiming what God has promised.

Joshua knew this feeling all too well.

In Joshua 1, the Lord gave Joshua an amazing motivational pep talk on the banks of the Jordan River. In verse 9, He says, "Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." These words were exactly what this young leader needed to hear.

You see, Joshua was in the same situation 40 years earlier. He was there when Israel failed to enter the Promised Land because they lacked faith and courage. Likewise, many of us fail to enter God's place of promise because we lack the same.

God's place of promise is that place of victory, fulfilled purpose, and fruitfulness that God offers to every believer. God's promises (in His Word) are His reality, even if they are not my experience yet. According to God's ledger, when He writes a "check," the amount is immediately withdrawn from the account. As far as God is concerned, when He gives a promise, it is already done. His Word and His character back it up. Therefore, take possession of God's promises by believing they are for you, and then act upon what God has said. His promises will then become our reality!

How do we get to this place of promise? With *hope*, *faith*, and *courage*.

**Hope** is that forward look with anticipation and expectation. Hope motivates us to move from our present condition to the place of promise. Do not let anxiety step in and cloud your view of God's purpose

in your life! Every believer always has reason to hope, even in the darkest of times. Our God is bigger than it all.

**Faith** is the substance (foundation) of the things I hope for—those things that are based upon the promises of God. Dr. Bill Rice III says faith is "trusting God to do for me what I cannot do for myself." I do not mean presumption. Presumption is acting without God's authority and supposing He will back you up. But true faith rests upon the Word of God and His promises, which cannot fail.

Once we have the foundation of faith, **courage** then gives it the boldness to act in the Lord's strength. In Joshua 1:6-9, courage has a close partner: "be strong." The concept behind *be strong* is "to hold fast, attach, or harden." Think of a brace or a cast which provides strength for the area of weakness. *Our strength is the Lord!* We are weak. We need His strength. But "be of good courage" tells us to take initiative amid our fear—to take action leaning on the strength of the Lord.

The foundation of this courage is in those words *I [Jehovah] am with you*. The lion may roar, and the giant may shout words of intimidation. But when the LORD God is with me, nothing can touch me. He IS with me—that is a promise! I can walk through the valley of the shadow of death and fear no evil.

In a time when the world wants to intimidate, paralyze, and defeat the people of God, He has called us to be courageous. Jesus said in John 16:33, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer (take courage); I have overcome the world." So today, whatever it is you have to face, "Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."



**Pastor Cranston Knowles**  
(Evangelism '93, M.S. '95, M.A. '04, Ed.S. '06)  
shares his love for the gospel at home and abroad. Through the years he has taught in Christian camps, traveled as an evangelist, and currently serves as the Senior Pastor of Abundant Life Bible Church in Nassau, Bahamas.



# MEET THE NURSING PROGRAM'S NEWEST PATIENT

*The nursing program at Pensacola Christian College is raising the bar with a brand-new high-fidelity simulator!*

Since the beginning, the nursing program at Pensacola Christian College has maintained a focus on the Creator and value of life; this department exemplifies how, as an institution, PCC prepares students to influence the world for Christ. “Our nursing faculty do a great job of helping students to think, communicate, and engage,” said Heather Hartkopf, chair of nursing. “We often say that we want our students to be Christians who happen to be nurses, not nurses who happen to be Christians.”

“The biblical worldview informs everything we do—whether the excellence of our academics or the high quality of technology support that we use to train our students in compassionate caregiving,” Miss Hartkopf added. “We offer a high-quality nursing education from a traditional Christian perspective.”

## **SIMULATING REAL-LIFE CARE**

Over the past decades, students have practiced assessments on a collection of other simulators in the lab: METIMan, Newborn HAL, and others. This type of hands-on training has been a vital part of the clinical training that allows nursing students to practice and apply practical and critical thinking skills before working in a real hospital setting. “Simulation has been a long-standing part of our nursing program,” said Dr. Denise McCollim, dean of arts and sciences. “But introducing this cutting-edge, very high-tech simulator raises the bar for what our students are able to do.”

Between their junior and senior years, a nursing student completes 950 hours in the clinical setting, including 320 hours during a preceptorship. This puts them at almost twice the number of clinical hours that many schools offer, including hands-on instruction and one-on-one training—not just observing an instructor. PCC nursing students finish college with more hours of full-time, mentored hospital experience than most nurses







Using a nasogastric tube, a nursing student administers medication to HAL S5301, the lab's newest simulator.





NOELLE maternity simulator with Infant HAL

have even after completing their new-hire orientation.

“Simulation allows us to give real-world experience that helps our students to not just hear concepts in the classroom but to apply them hands-on,” explained Miss Hartkopf. “[Simulation creates] a consistent student experience to make sure everybody gets to see various diagnoses and complications, and it helps prepare them because they get to see things that you hope you never see in real life. We’re supplementing clinical time,

so they’re getting this simulation experience in addition to [the] clinical experience they used to get.”

## MEET OUR NEWEST PATIENT

In the nursing lab, the Guamard HAL S5301 (also known as HAL) is reclined on a hospital-grade bed. When an instructor or student enters the room and turns the lights on, HAL’s eyelids flutter open. This and other facial expressions are noticeable advancements from older models. Previous simulators relied on prerecorded audio clips or an instructor speaking through a headset, the sound coming from a speaker without mouth or

facial movement from the simulator. “HAL is able to speak using artificial intelligence and has realistic facial and mouth movements, which adds a layer of realism that we have not previously had,” shared Dr. McCollim.

**We’re supplementing clinical time, so they’re getting this simulation experience in addition to clinical experience...**

HAL responds when greeted and shakes hands. He can follow a pen light with his eyes, display lifelike seizures, sweat, shed tears, and more. And during assessments, he can state his name, share his symptoms, and explain why he’s been admitted. Because his speech is powered by AI, his answers are sometimes unpredictable—which is consistent with a realistic patient experience.

## INCREDIBLE BENEFIT FOR NURSING STUDENTS

With this advanced technology, instructors set up and run patient scenarios and then debrief the students on their performance. “When we send them into simulation, we give them a report; they go in and function in the role of the nurse, and if they do it right



The nursing lab’s expanding collection of simulators





Pediatric HAL

or do it wrong, they're in an environment where they have complete independence to practice their skills and critical thinking," Dr. McCollim explained. "I think we'd all admit that some of our best lessons in life are when we made a mistake. And [in a simulation lab] you can allow them to make that mistake and see the consequences."

The Gaumard HAL S5301 has the technological capacity to allow students to simulate patient care at the highest level. When they graduate, nursing students


will already know how to be a nurse and can focus on learning about the individual facility where they've been hired. "Their hands-on experience is that much more robust since they have done all of these assessments [simulated in our labs]," added Miss Hartkopf. "We often hear that our grads stand out because they graduate prepared for what they're doing."

After their time at PCC, nursing graduates are equipped to face a wide variety of real-world medical scenarios, ready to demonstrate God's love through quality care. ▶



Learn more about the nursing program and see an in-depth explanation of HAL at [go.pcci.edu/HAL](https://go.pcci.edu/HAL)





CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS

**PRESERVING**  
FREEDOM  
FAITH  
AND EQUALITY

During a special chapel donating her congressional papers to her alma mater, Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers encouraged the student body to live by Christian principles.





PCC presents Rodgers with a plaque recognizing her leadership in Congress.

Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers (*Pre-law, '90*), a respected leader in the U.S. House of Representatives and advocate for Christian values, is retiring after 30 years of civic and legislative service. Her career has been marked by a desire to preserve freedom, faith, and equality—values she believes are foundational to America's success.

## INSPIRING THE STUDENT BODY

On October 18, 2024, College President Troy Shoemaker introduced Rodgers to the student body in a special chapel. Highlighting the importance of her work in Congress, he said, "Throughout her career, Congresswoman Rodgers has been a true champion of conservative principles. Her values are not merely shaped by



Cathy McMorris Rodgers chairs the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

policy but are deeply rooted in her personal convictions—convictions shaped by her biblical worldview and the foundation she received at Pensacola Christian College."

Recognizing her influence and leadership in the nation's capital, Dr. Shoemaker presented Rodgers with a Distinguished Service Honor plaque. He also announced a \$5,000 one-time Commencement scholarship for a qualified pre-law student. And culminating the ceremony, he unveiled the donation of her congressional papers to the Rebekah Horton Library, making PCC the 7th college or university in Florida to house such a collection.

After receiving the plaque from President Shoemaker, Congresswoman Rodgers addressed the student body. Emphasizing the importance of Christian values in civic and political service, she encouraged students to integrate their faith into every aspect of life, especially when pursuing careers in government and public service.

In her remarks, Rodgers spoke passionately about the role of Christian character in the United States: "We must be people of moral character and conviction. We must be trustworthy. We must always choose to do the right thing, even when no one is looking." Her words left a lasting impression, encouraging students to let Christian principles guide their steps in life.

## RODGERS'S LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP

Cathy McMorris Rodgers began her journey into public service at PCC in 1986 as a pre-law student. After graduating, she enrolled at the University of Washington and received her Executive M.B.A. in 1994. That same year, she was appointed to the Washington State House of Representatives to represent the 7th legislative district.

After serving 10 years in that position, Rodgers made history as the 200th woman appointed to the U.S. House of Representatives and the first woman to birth three children while serving. Her experience as the mother of a child with Down's Syndrome fueled her passionate advocacy for disability rights. Throughout her career, she has championed veteran services, a cause inspired by her 2006 marriage to Navy veteran Brian Rodgers. Since 2010, Rodgers has chaired the House Energy and Commerce Committee, advocating for a balanced approach to energy innovation and environmental stewardship.



In 1990, Rodgers graduated with a pre-law degree from Pensacola Christian College.

As Rodgers bids farewell to Congress, her legacy as a Christian leader in government remains strong. PCC is proud to house her congressional papers, a valuable resource to those seeking to understand how faith and service can intersect. Though her political career has come to a close, Cathy McMorris Rodgers will continue to influence the next generation for Christ at PCC. ▾



PENSACOLA CHRISTIAN COLLEGE  
**CLASS OF**

**2024**

Introducing  
*New Alumni*



Rachael Stearns  
 Professional Writing

**THE VALUE AND POWER OF WORDS**

“I truly believe [PCC] molded me into the person I am today,” **Rachael Stearns** (*Professional Writing '24*) said, looking back at her college years with growth, friendship, and new experiences. She’s excited for her brand-new season of life working at a law firm as a legal assistant. “This is a stepping stone that I hope can launch me into a more creative, fulfilling career in the future,” she explained. “Graduating debt-free has put me in a great position to succeed financially, and my writing major prepared me for more than just a future career. One of the greatest things I took away from my PCC education is the value and power of words. Spoken or written, words have the potential to change lives. Whether I write a novel, type an email, or call a client, I have the power to affect positive change.”



Joseph Swanson  
 Cybersecurity

**READY FOR THE REAL WORLD**

Since graduation, **Joseph Swanson** (*Cybersecurity '24*) bought a car, got involved in a new church, and become a software developer at Ally Financial in uptown Charlotte. “I’m working in Cloud Engineering, deploying applications using AWS Elastic Containers Service,” he said. Looking back to college studies, Joseph appreciates his senior capstone: “[CS 414] prepared us for the real world in the sense that we had to figure out how to accomplish a specific tech-oriented goal. At PCC, God taught me that investing in people brings such joy, His plan is only visible to Him, and we can’t assume what our future looks like, only trust Him to get us there day by day.”





Madison Canterbury  
Music Ed. Instrumental

## A HARMONY OF PASSIONS

“The Lord used PCC in so many ways to mold me into the teacher that I need to be,” **Madison Canterbury** (*Music Ed. Instrumental '24*) said. She is grateful for all the faculty who worked patiently with her and feels peace knowing she is following what the Lord has for her life. “I was able to take classes that taught me practical teaching methods that I use in the classroom today. Through my internship at PCA, I was taught the importance of loving and praying for the students that the Lord places in my classroom.” Since getting to experience her dream career as the band director, fine arts coordinator, and special education teacher, Madison looks forward to pursuing a master’s degree in special education. “I love the idea of blending together my two passions: music and special education.”



Daniel Mitchell  
Computer Science & Information Technology

## ENGINEERING EXPECTATIONS

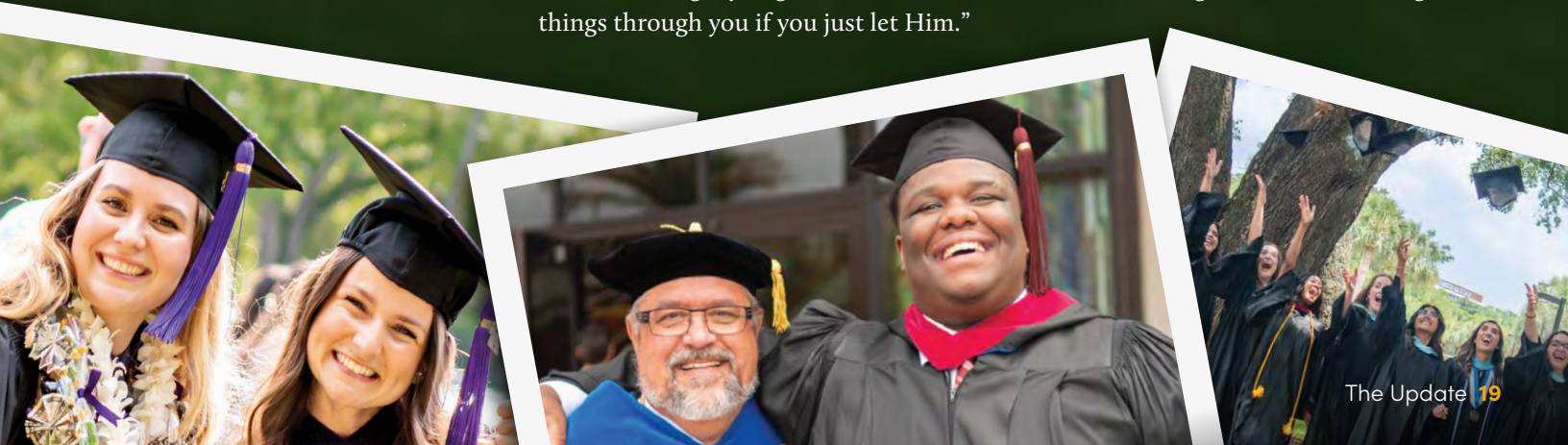
As a software engineer at a large contract candle manufacturer, **Daniel Mitchell** (*Computer Science and Information Technology '24*) felt confident for his career. “At PCC, the expectations are very real-world and designed to yield personal success. I was expected to be in class and participate, and my instructors generally expected that work be correct, complete, and on time,” he explained. “This translated directly to my career, where there is a high value placed on asking questions and identifying assumptions to ensure a high level of accuracy in a reasonable amount of time.” Daniel works with AI and analytical applications, and he plans to further his education through cloud certifications and a master’s program in the spring.



Reilly Varner  
Graphic Design

## TALENT DESIGNED FOR HIS GLORY

**Reilly Varner** (*Graphic Design '24*) is working at DaySpring as a design intern working with many products like planners, journals, and boxed cards. “I have the privilege of working with a team of incredibly talented designers who have years of experience and in an environment that is so encouraging and uplifting. It’s such a blessing to design products that align with my Christian values and spread the message of God’s love.” As she looks back at her time at PCC, Reilly can see how her experience prepared her for success in the workplace. “God taught me a lot about the value of using our talents for His glory and the importance of standing strong in our convictions. He also showed me that one person’s influence for Christ can be so far-reaching if you give God control and follow His leading. He can do amazing things through you if you just let Him.”







TANZANIA



ROMANIA



PHILIPPINES

# ENGAGING IN SERVICE: SUMMER MISSIONS TEAMS

Dozens of PCC students used their talents this past summer to share the gospel and encourage missionaries through trips sponsored by Youth Outreach Ministries.

When Sierra Graham (*Jr., Youth Ministries, IL*) arrived at Subic Bay Children’s Home this past May, she was met with a sight that has lingered in her memory. Dozens of children sat at picnic benches, excitedly waiting for her and the others from the Youth Outreach Ministry (YOM) Philippines team. For the next few minutes, they introduced themselves to the children; then, several children gathered and sang “Welcome to the Family.” “It was so sweet,” Sierra said. “They showed so much love and joy from the second we arrived.”

Sierra, like many others who traveled with YOM this summer, went to serve and be a blessing. In return, though, she saw God work in her own heart.

## MONTHS OF PLANNING

Preparations for the YOM trips began long before the teams boarded planes



for various countries including the Philippines, France/Italy, Spain, Romania, and Tanzania. From applying to go on the trip to raising support, team members trusted the Lord to meet needs and work out details.

Rachel Duncan (*Jr., Elementary Education, NC*) explained that the financial portion of a missions trip had deterred her from going before. However, this year, she said, “I decided to trust God to raise the sup-

port I needed to go. Whenever I began to doubt that the money would come in, God would remind me through His Word that He would supply my every need. God faithfully supplied all that I needed.”

While team members raised support, YOM leaders worked with missionaries to schedule activities and projects that the groups could assist with while on the field, such as helping with music or athletic events, volunteering in children’s activities, and canvassing areas with tracts or portions of Scripture.

## MINISTRY IN ACTION

At their destinations, team members quickly began serving. In Tanzania, students spent hours inviting people to three soccer matches where the gospel would be shared. “We had very long days of promoting the games before they happened,” Mr. Matheus Canada, a Tanzania





SPAIN



FRANCE



ITALY



PHILIPPINES

team leader, said. “That involved a lot of walking around the villages and talking with people who live in levels of poverty we had never seen before.”

The France/Italy group also spent hours inviting people to an event: an evangelistic music concert. Miss Heather Hartkopf, a leader for this group, said, “To advertise the concert, groups of students and members of the local church went out into the streets and sang. As people passed by, we handed out flyers that included an invitation to the concert on the front and a clear explanation of the gospel on the back. We passed out around 5,000 of these flyers.”

This team also helped with a youth rally for churches around Paris and passed out tracts and copies of the Gospel of Luke in Normandy, France “as part of outreaches

connected to the 80th anniversary of D-Day and the Olympic Torch coming through,” Miss Hartkopf said.

Groups in Spain, the Philippines, and Romania served by helping with vacation Bible schools and youth rallies, among other things. Team members taught lessons, performed skits, organized crafts,

**Whenever I began to doubt that the money would come in, God would remind me through His Word that He would supply my every need.”**

and played games. The Philippines group also partnered with Good News Hoops Ministry to host basketball clinics and assisted Subic Bay Children’s Home with a jail ministry, a ladies’ fellowship, and an outreach for local police and army officers.

“The team was able to use their talents and strengths to minister,” Mrs. Michelle Cirone, a co-leader to the Philippines, said.

## GLIMPSES OF GOD AT WORK

Though each trip came with surprises, God was evidently meeting needs and working in lives. “When you are serving the Lord in a unique manner, the attacks will come. Whether it is health, delayed flights, lost luggage, or miscommunication, something always happens,” said Mr. Nino Mendez, a leader for the Spain team. “However, when those challenges came along, the students reacted in the proper manner and prayed and were patient. Those people around us saw that reaction and were blessed to see the cheerful attitude.”

In France, pastors, ministry leaders, and church members expressed how encouraged they were to see so many college students excited to serve the Lord. “Our students were a wonderful testimony that God is still working in the lives of young people,” Miss Hartkopf said.





PHILIPPINES



SPAIN

In addition to encouraging believers, YOM team members saw hundreds of people come to know Christ. Isaac Smith (*Jr., Marketing, FL*), from the Romania team, shared that one morning, an eight-year-old boy approached him and began speaking in Romanian. Isaac found Noah, the missionary's son, so that he could translate. Noah explained that the boy wanted Isaac "to tell him more about the gospel! We spoke, with Noah's help, for an hour and a half, before and during the morning children's activities," Isaac said. "Afterwards, he prayed in his own words and tongue to accept Christ! It was amazing!"

### LESSONS LEARNED

While team members saw God working in lives around the world, many of them noticed God working in their own lives as well. "It changed my perspective in such a deep and profound way," said Carolyn Trejo (*So., Biblical Counseling, TX*).

From deepening their view of evangelism to learning to be more joyful and content to being reminded that God's timing is perfect, YOM team members came away having new perspectives and feeling blessed. "I really enjoyed the games in the villages," Reid Rhodes (*Jr., Engineering: Mechanical, PA*) said concerning the soccer matches in Tanzania. "One field was pretty much just dirt and dust. Those games gave me a different perspective. It didn't matter what we had to play on—this is what the other team was used to, and they made the most of it."

As Sierra got to know the children at Subic Bay Children's Home, she continued to be challenged by their positive attitudes. "The Filipinos taught me to have joy no matter your life situation," she said, noting that the children's positivity "encouraged me to work at having a better attitude towards not just service but life in general." ▾



ROMANIA



SPAIN

MISSIONS TEAMS '24



ITALY



TANZANIA



# NEXT

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Jeff Redlin  
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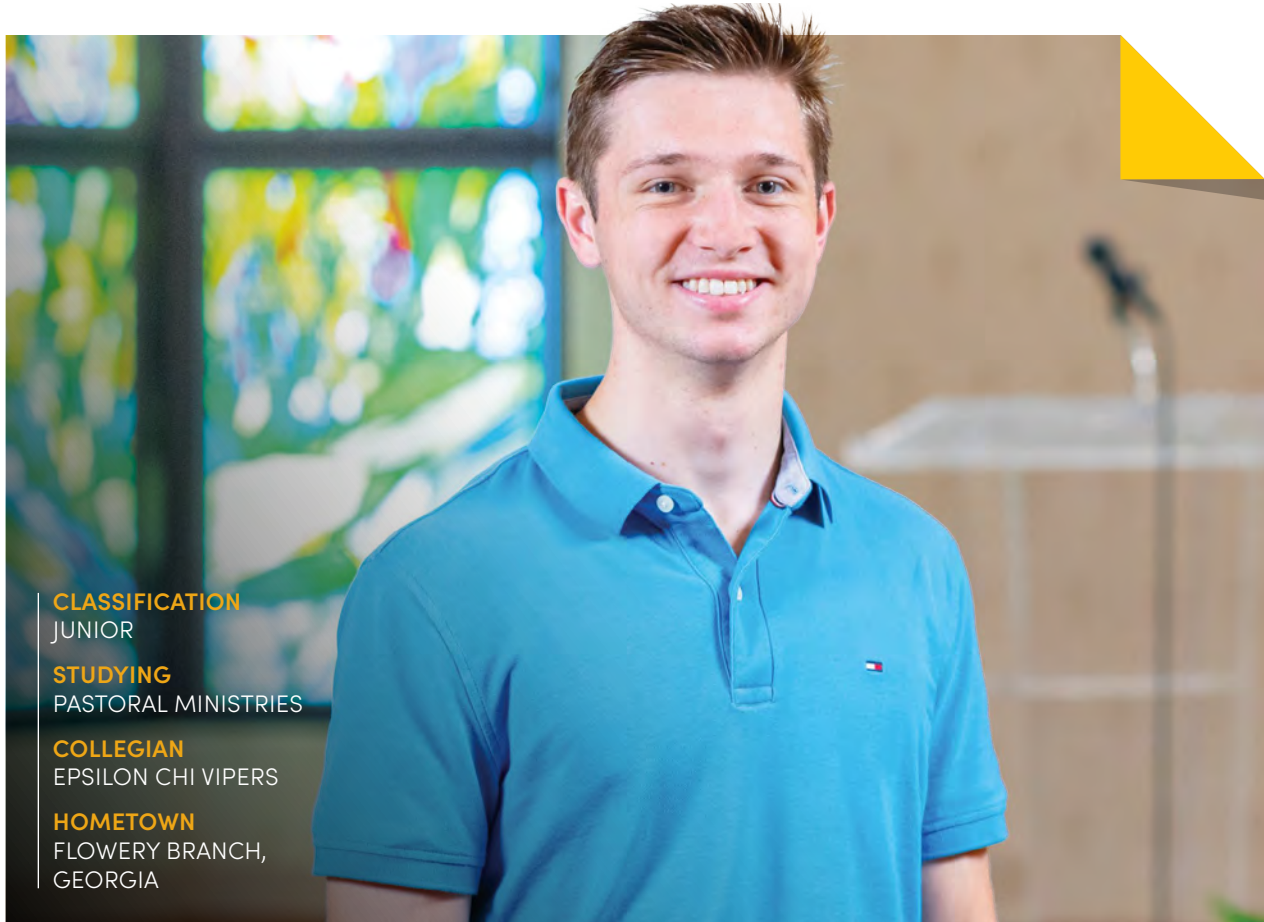


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# LEE MCDANIEL



**CLASSIFICATION**

JUNIOR

**STUDYING**

PASTORAL MINISTRIES

**COLLEGIAN**

EPSILON CHI VIPERS

**HOMETOWN**

FLOWERY BRANCH,  
GEORGIA

**Why did you choose to study the pastoral ministries program? And why at PCC over another Christian college?**

I chose to study the pastoral ministries program at PCC because I believe the Lord has called me to be a pastor of some kind. I prayed and asked the Lord to show me if PCC was the college He wanted me to go to; through some very specific circumstances that happened, the Lord made it clear that PCC was where He wanted me to be.

**How has the PCC community made an impact on you during your time here?**

The PCC community has helped me to balance my life well with school, social life, and my time with God.

**How has the Christian environment encouraged spiritual growth during your time here?**

I've been encouraged to have a genuine walk with the Lord. Being surrounded by Scripture all the time means that I can't run too far away from God before He gets my attention. If I am to be a Christian, then I am to have a genuine walk and have real fellowship with Christ, and PCC has helped me get there.

**What would you say to encourage other students when they face difficulties in college?**

When difficulties come up or challenging times come your way, then you can reassure yourself that you are there because of Christ.

1 Thessalonians 5:24 says, "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." If God has called you to do something and you are doing it, then God will give you the strength and ability to get through those hard times. It takes keeping your focus on Christ and finding your strength in Him.

**As an upperclassman, has PCC helped you feel prepared for the next chapter in your life? If so, how?**

Yes. It not only helped me to know more about the Bible, but also to trust God and keep Him at the center of every decision I make. I'm not sure where I'll be after I graduate, but I know that I can trust God, and He will help guide me in my path after graduation and beyond.

**What kinds of extracurricular activities at PCC have you enjoyed the most and why?**

My Christian Service. I am the leader of Grandview Retirement Home, and I have enjoyed every minute of it. We have seen this ministry grow and have gotten to know some great people at this retirement home. Also, the members of our Christian Service have been so wonderful and gracious. They give of their time every Sunday to come and show some of Christ's love to these residents at the retirement home, and I'm so grateful for that. Overall, I have loved getting to know the residents and seeing our members of this Christian Service serve God joyfully and faithfully. There is nothing greater than that.



# ABIGAIL GRIFFIN



**CLASSIFICATION**  
SENIOR

**STUDYING**  
PROFESSIONAL WRITING

**COLLEGIAN**  
CHI EPSILON TIMBERWOLVES

**HOMETOWN**  
DELCO,  
NORTH CAROLINA

**Why did you choose to study at PCC as opposed to any another Christian college?**

God planted a love in my heart for PCC when I attended Teen Extreme for the first time. Knowing how my life was influenced by PCC's youth ministry, that seed of love gradually became a rooted desire to further my education at the College. As a senior looking back on my freshman year, I [realized] that PCC's mission was not only academic growth but also an environment conducive for my spiritual and social growth, for which I am forever grateful!

**How has the PCC community made an impact on you during your time here?**

One of the greatest ways is through morning chapel services. Though chapel is irreplaceable for personal time alone with God, I love the unity that these services provide for college students as we gather with our friends and chapel buddies to sing and study scriptural truths. During a busy semester, it's so comforting.

**How has the Christian environment encouraged spiritual growth during your time here?**

It has encouraged me to be a light wherever I go. It is so refreshing to have friends

and peers that ask you what you read in your devotions that morning or ask how you prioritize prayer. This kind of atmosphere encourages me to have a closer walk with Jesus Christ and dig deeper into the truths that are found in God's Word!

**What would you say to encourage other students when they face difficulties in college?**

I have found that when I designate time alone with God, my circumstances do become more bearable because of the One who bears my burdens. I remember when freshman me sat in history class wondering how in the world people

actually made it all the way to commencement. They stayed the path, and they took one thing at a time!

**As an upperclassman, has PCC helped you feel prepared for the next chapter in your life? If so, how?**

PCC has done an excellent job of creating a positive, hands-on classroom experience. And though there will always be something to learn, another headline to read, and another topic to research, I am excited to take what the College has provided as a benefit throughout my future career!



# BRIDGE TO A LIFELONG DREAM



Amy Lostroh at PCC's  
2023 Commencement



# Students who have yet to complete their degrees now can with the **Finish What You Started** program at PCC!

Amy Lostroh (*Liberal Arts '23*) had been praying for years for an opportunity to complete her degree at Pensacola Christian College. While at an Orlando Alumni Reconnect event, she was with her husband when President Troy Shoemaker unveiled the new Finish What You Started program. “I just remember us both looking at each other with such excitement,” she recalled. “This has been a tremendous blessing to me.”

Like Amy, many students attended Pensacola Christian College at one point, but when life took over, their degree went on the back burner. The Finish What You Started program at PCC can change that! In just a matter of time, students can finally hold an associate’s in liberal arts or an interdisciplinary studies bachelor’s diploma in hand—with their name on it.

## **A FLEXIBLE PATH FOR ESTABLISHED ADULTS**

The Finish What You Started journey offers students the opportunity to learn from the comforts of their own home, scheduled around their life. Students take one or two courses a term, completing all coursework in Canvas (PCC’s online learning management system), and following a convenient payment plan. Student success advisors are available to answer questions and give guidance for each step.

From the Online Learning Office, Rosemary Springs (*Music '18, MA: Music '20*) communicates with and assists students in the program. “Everyone’s situation is unique,” she shared. “The reasons vary from person to person, whether it was needing to drop out due to finances, a life change, or just a change in priorities.” Rosemary encourages the students she interacts with and helps them enjoy the experience as if they were on campus. “Even though God may call you away for a season from your degree, the option to finish still remains available.”

Amy Lostroh felt led to put her degree on hold to homeschool her children. “Going back to college as a mom with a job has given me more ambition and confidence,” she declared. “I graduated with my associate’s degree from this program in May 2023, and I will graduate again this spring with my bachelor’s degree. I’ll be 46 years old when I graduate and cross that stage for the second time, and that is so special to me. It’s never too late to accomplish more.”

As she continues on to her next degree, Amy finds herself applying her skills and knowledge in real time. “I can’t even tell you how many times I have used the skills and information I’ve acquired in classes for my job, and I marvel at God’s timing and how He has woven things together in such a beautiful way,” Amy shared.



Amy Lostroh and her family celebrating her accomplishment





Linda Worsham with her husband, nine kids, and grandchildren

## A COLLEGE DEGREE IMPROVES EARNING POTENTIAL

A college degree is so much more than a credential. It's also a competitive edge, door-opener, and opportunity-getter in an expanding workforce. It's a gateway to increasing income and new career possibilities. As students move closer to their goal, they have the freedom to choose the courses that matter most to them from 60 available online. And a completed degree can add to their qualifications, potentially increasing their salary. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (May 2023), an associate's or bachelor's degree could potentially increase earnings to \$52,260–\$74,464 a year. The added value is both economic and professional.

During her time on faculty and as chair of the Liberal Arts Division, Dr. Lauren McIntyre has worked with multiple students returning to their degrees after putting them on hold for a time. "I am excited to see just how many students have picked their degrees back up after 15–20 years." Dr. McIntyre has found that these students are driven to overcome any challenges—whether they be technology, balancing family, or professional responsibilities—and that they deeply appreciate what they're being taught. "They can see an immediate professional or personal benefit to their learning. It is not just another project or another reading quiz. Instead, it is a real-life opportunity to put into practice what you learned in the class last night—today. In a way, they already know why they need

to learn and how lifelong learning really is such a valuable process."

## BUILD CONFIDENCE AND SHARPEN SKILLS

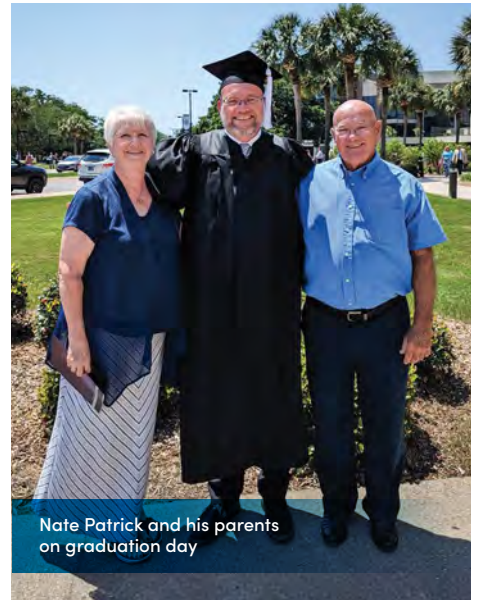
The spring semester of her senior year 32 years ago, Linda Worsham (*Interdisciplinary Studies '23*) put her commercial writing/graphic design degree on hold to focus on her growing family. By the time the youngest of her nine children turned four, she began teaching grammar at a local Christian school. And although she was capable, Linda felt the lack of a degree by her name personally and began applying to various online schools. But it wasn't until her family was dropping off their sixth child at PCC that she visited the registrar to inquire about claiming a two-year certificate. It was then she learned about the Finish What You Started program. And the rest is history.

**I am excited to see just how many students have picked their degrees back up after 15–20 years.**

"[Finishing my degree] came with challenges that pushed me to give my all, and [it] paid off in the end with something more than just the paper to prove it," Linda

said. "It gave me an extra boost of confidence in God's grace and mercy in my life—His goodness to me through others who came alongside me to pitch in with chores when things came down to the wire with final exams."

For carpenter Nate Patrick (*Liberal Arts '23*), completing a college degree has given him "a sense of accomplishment and boldness to try new things," he shared. "It also gave me an opportunity to be a good example to my family." To anyone considering if this is for them, he says, "Apply as soon as possible and get this done. Who knows where it could lead you?"



Nate Patrick and his parents on graduation day

Students who achieve their degrees through the the Finish What You Started program find themselves equipped with sharpened skills, strengthened communication, and fresh knowledge, ready to take on new opportunities and to influence the world for Christ. 📌



**Finish what YOU started**  
by visiting [go.pcci.edu/FinishYourDegree](https://go.pcci.edu/FinishYourDegree)



# FOUR WINDS COMPLETED REMODEL



Last issue featured plans for a renovated Four Winds. After spending a summer bringing that vision to life, the long-awaited updates are complete. The improved design features a classic colorscheme, themed alcoves, and even new dishware! PCC has also partnered with Nutrislice to help people make educated choices in the dining halls. Ingredients and nutrition information are easily accessible through QR codes at each line, or through the Nutrislice app. Overall, the campus dining hub now represents the College's worldwide influence in a much more modern way. Take a look at these snapshots of the new-and-improved building, and come see it in person next time you visit!



# ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Fueled by Quality Faculty

**Pensacola Christian College faculty members continually strive to improve in their fields to ensure students receive high-quality education.**

For 50 years, Pensacola Christian College has been known for its strong stance on academic excellence, a biblical worldview, and Christian values. This year is no different. Dedicated faculty members continue to work together, ensuring students receive a high-quality, Christian education.

## QUALITY FACULTY

Providing a quality education includes making sure experts teach all academics. PCC faculty go to great lengths to become experts in their fields, including furthering their education. Because of this, many have multiple degrees. When hiring, PCC also looks for applicants with numerous years of field experience.

Furthering their education allows faculty to stay aware of current trends and improve their knowledge about their con-

terminal area. “Faculty are encouraged to pursue additional education and participate in ongoing professional development,” shared Dr. Raylene Cochran, academic vice president. “The College provides funding for those working toward a higher degree. We also provide professional development sessions throughout the year, focusing on philosophy, effective teaching, leadership, and assessment.”

Dr. Cochran continued, “This year we have over 230 faculty members. Across all departments, we have 413 postgraduate degrees represented and 109 terminal degrees represented.” A terminal degree is the highest achievable degree in an academic field. Biblical Studies, Visual and Performing Arts, Professional Studies, and Arts and Sciences all have faculty with terminal degrees. Almost 75% of those

terminal degrees are from other colleges and universities.

Dr. John Reese, a history faculty member, appreciated how his higher education helped him in the classroom. “After getting a master’s from PCC, I pursued a Ph.D. in history from Florida State University,” he shared. “All in all, it was a broadening educational process that equipped me with skills I use virtually every day when I teach.”

Criminal justice faculty member Dr. Barry Walker earned a Ph.D. from Liberty University to help improve the criminal justice program. The training he gained helps him effectively teach skills to students. “I push them to build their critical thinking skills,” he said. “C.J. students must think quickly. I teach them to look





Dr. Reese shows his students a model of the H.M.S. Victory in the Rare Book Room.

at the problem in front of them and solve it to the best of their ability.”

“The Lord has allowed me to complete a terminal degree, but I believe it was also important for me to become certified in the areas I teach in the medical office programs,” shared Dr. Donna Smith, who earned her Ed.D. from Nova Southeastern University. “By my doing so, I believe students may be inspired to keep improving their skills throughout their lifetime.”

Many faculty members also receive recognition for their hard work. Mark Baral, a visual arts faculty member, was recently featured in *Southwest Art Magazine’s* “21 under 31” list. While producing stunning art of his own, he also spends time investing in and training the next gener-

ation of Christian artists. Baral received his M.F.A. from PCC and still uses the knowledge he learned in his classes to teach his students.

“Working on my thesis for my M.F.A. allowed me to dive deep into one of the key elements of art and design,” he shared. “[Earning my M.F.A. has allowed me to] build expertise in an area that I now use every day with my students in drawing and painting classes. I have been able to simplify the concept into wording that my students can more easily understand and apply.”

## QUALITY STANDARDS

Challenging academic courses also ensure a quality education. Chairs regularly work with faculty to continually improve PCC’s educational courses. Dr. Marie

Thompson, academic chair of humanities, detailed this evaluation process. “Each chair completes a program review every three years,” she said. “For this review, we evaluate course syllabi, look at curriculum content, and benchmark our programs with other colleges’ programs.”

These evaluations have led to more rigorous coursework, improved syllabi, and even new classes! “Sometimes when looking at other colleges’ programs, we realize that we need a new class,” Dr. Thompson added. “By reviewing our programs and departments as often as we do, we ensure that our students receive the best education possible at PCC.”

In addition to program reviews, chairs also evaluate courses each semester. “Once or twice a semester, I’ll sit in on a





Mark Baral alongside one of his works in the VPA (Visual and Performing Arts) center



particular class to get a feel for how the course is going,” Dr. Thompson shared. “At the beginning of each semester, I’ll meet with faculty members, and we’ll discuss what their goals are for the classes they teach. I love sitting in on a class and seeing my faculty meet their goals!”

Both faculty and chairs desire the best education for students. “We speak reg-

ularly in our division meetings about how to help our students follow Christ’s model,” shared Dr. Lauren McIntyre, chair of liberal arts. “Our division model is ‘Educate the mind and cultivate the soul.’ Teaching is not just a transfer of skills or facts. It is a cultivation of the whole person to be more like Christ so that he may excel in his calling.”

Graphic design teacher Elijah Principe, who earned an M.F.A. from PCC, does not take teaching at his alma mater for granted. He’s honored to be able to influence the next generation for Christ. “It’s a great opportunity to help students learn, grow, and develop into whatever God’s plan is for their life,” he shared. “I’ve thoroughly enjoyed working with my students and seeing where they go after graduation!”

He continued, “Many reach out to me after they’ve graduated and excitedly tell me about their job opportunities and how they are using the skills we teach [at PCC]. It’s amazing and fulfilling to see students understand the value of what



Dr. Lauren McIntyre gives the writing capstone tour.

they have learned and are able to apply in their fields.”

College faculty are passionate about their academic fields and their classes. But more importantly, faculty members are passionate about their students. PCC will continue to influence the world for Christ, one generation at a time. ▾



Dr. Marie Thompson speaks on composition methods and keys to good writing.



# HAVE YOU CONSIDERED

how the Lord could use  
*YOUR SKILLS* at PCC?

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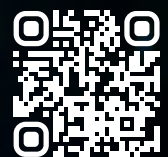
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# UPCOMING EVENTS

## JANUARY

**19–22** Opening Convocation

## FEBRUARY

**6–8** Fine Arts Series: *Heart and Humor*

**19–21** Bible Conference

Be encouraged in your Christian walk through inspiring messages from God's Word during PCC's Bible Conference.

**24–25** Educator Recruitment

## MARCH

**11–13** Enrichment Retreat

Get the refreshment your spirit needs at Enrichment Retreat. Become sharpened and challenged among pastors and other ministry leaders, renewing your zeal for serving God.

**17–21** Greek Week

**26–28** College Days

## APRIL

**2–4** College Days

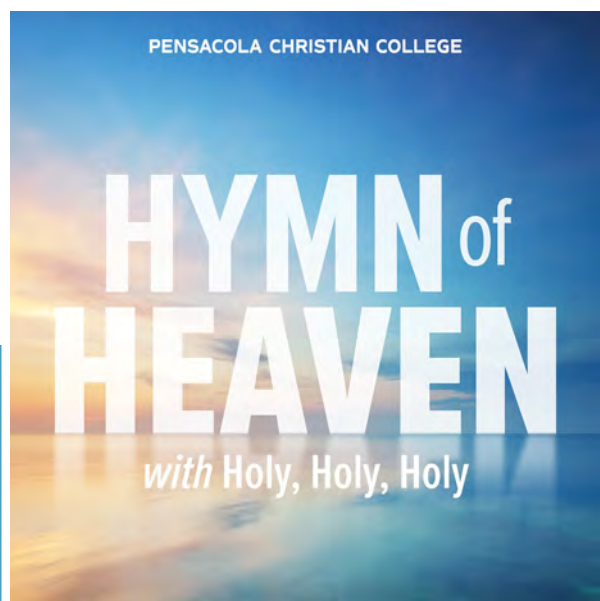
**11** Explore PCC

## MAY

**2** Fine Arts Series: Mendelssohn's *Elijah*

The combined choirs of Chamber Ensemble and Symphonic Choir join PCCymphony under the direction of Dr. Cleusia Gonçalves to present Mendelssohn's *Elijah*.

**8–9** Commencement



Experience the inspiring music of "Hymn of Heaven with Holy, Holy, Holy" recorded by the PCC Chamber Ensemble. The lyrics remind listeners of heaven's eternal hope, evoking reverence and a heartfelt call to praise.



Learn more at the **NEW** PCC Music home page!



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