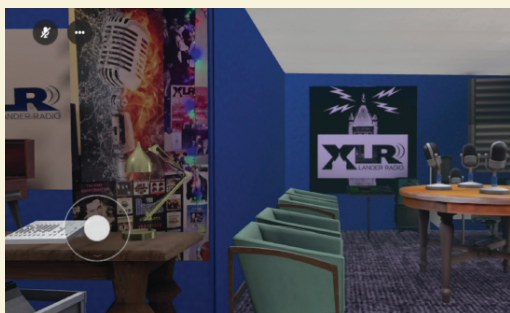




Don't Miss HASS WEEK, pg. 2



Lander's Golden EYE Award: find out how close you already are, pg. 17



Lander in Virtual Reality, pg. 18



Enter to win coveted trophy, pg. 5

Winter Storm at Lander: Safety First



LANDER UNIVERSITY

**UNDER THE
BLUE & GOLD TOP
HOMECOMING**

FEBRUARY 2-7

See "Homecoming: Under The Blue & Gold Top" pg. 10

HASS Week to focus on career readiness

By Graeme Simpson

This month, Lander University's College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences will introduce its first HASS Week, a five-day initiative scheduled for Feb. 23–27 that centers on career preparation and experiential learning. The week is structured to illustrate how academic study, mentorship and applied experiences converge to prepare

career experiences, mock interviews and semesters away, reinforcing preparation as an ongoing process rather than a singular milestone.

Study Abroad Day is designed to introduce students to the structure, expectations and purpose of international study at Lander University, particularly early in their academic careers, before course requirements limit flexibility.

Lander's study abroad opportunities include short-term, faculty-led tours as well as semester-long academic programs at partner institutions abroad. Faculty-led tours typically last between seven and 15 days and are structured to provide guided exposure to international travel.

"For someone who's never been on a plane or never left the country, it's more comfortable to

go with a faculty member who knows the location," said Debbie Dill administrative specialist for Lander's Study Abroad and Honors College programs. "You still get time to explore on your own, but there's a safety net."

Semester-long programs require greater independence and preparation, placing students at universities abroad where they navigate unfamiliar academic systems, transportation and cultural norms.

While Study Abroad Day sets the tone, HASS Week extends that focus across disciplines and programs throughout the university. Events scheduled throughout the week empha-

size career preparation as a continuous process, integrating academic study with professional development, alumni engagement and applied learning.

Continued on pg. 4



Attorney Kierra Brown '14 talks with Dean McMillan

students for professional life beyond graduation.

HASS Week opens Monday, Feb. 23, with Study Abroad Day, placing international education at the forefront of the week's programming. By beginning with study abroad, the college emphasizes global engagement as a form of academic development that strengthens independence, adaptability and cultural awareness — skills increasingly relevant across professional fields.

"The College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences aims to provide excellent teaching and mentorship of students to prepare them for life after Lander," Dean Lucas

McMillan said. "This first annual HASS Week is meant to showcase many careers that are possible through the college's academic programs." Events throughout the week will focus on internships, alumni



Study Abroad Day

By Saige Peterson

"We've got a little of everything and something for everybody," says Professor Lauren Corbitt when describing Lander University's Study Abroad Program. Study Abroad Day is scheduled for Monday, February 23, and Corbitt, Spanish instructor and director of Study Abroad, is thrilled. "This is our first year," she said. "I would love to make it a yearly thing."

Corbitt explained that the goal of Study Abroad Day is "to raise campus awareness of Lander's study abroad programs" because she wholeheartedly believes that "Study Abroad is for everyone." She continued, "It doesn't matter what your major is. It doesn't matter where your life trajectory takes you. I think that everybody can benefit from having that experience outside of the South Carolina bubble."

The study abroad director said she



Lauren Corbitt

believes that this program is not only a fun experience, but it can also grow people's character.

"Study Abroad is an area where you can push the boundaries of your comfort zone," she stated. Corbitt also noted that independence, problem-solving abilities, and many other helpful life skills are gained from studying outside of the U.S.

"It challenges you in a way that you may not be challenged... here at home," said Corbitt. Recalling her own experiences of college trips to Mexico and Japan, she said, "Being

Continued on pg. 4

Keeping Bearcats Safe: Lander's Response to the Ice Storm

By Caleb Johnson

"If you are able to do so safely, I urge you to go home today." These were the words written in a letter from Lander University President Dr. Richard Cosentino as an icy winter storm approached Greenwood County. Sent on January 23, the message emphasized the University's commitment to student safety and encouraged those who could safely travel to return home before conditions worsened.

As preparations for the storm were underway, campus services began adjusting operations to reduce risk. Cones and warning signs were placed throughout campus to mark icy sections of sidewalks, stairwells, and building entrances. These visible precautions helped alert students to hazardous areas and demonstrated the University's proactive approach to maintaining a safe campus environment.

Academic, dining, transportation, and athletic operations were also modified in response to the weather. Classes scheduled for Monday, January 26, and Tuesday, January 27, were moved to a virtual format to limit travel and exposure to dangerous conditions. Campus bus services were suspended until road conditions improved, and athletic games scheduled to take place at the Finis Horne Arena were postponed until the following week.

Several dining and retail locations, including Freshens, Chick-fil-A, The Drop, and Starbucks, were closed throughout the storm. However, the Dining Hall remained partially operational with reduced hours, providing students who stayed on campus with to-go meal bags to ensure continued access to food.



Submitted by Lander alumnae Claire Regnault, Sproles Avenue provided for a beautiful picture of Lander's Jackson Library during the weekend's ice storm..

Throughout the weekend, Lander University provided consistent updates through campus email and the University website. Students and faculty were also given access to a Winter Walkways Map, which highlighted treated and safer paths for navigating campus during icy conditions.

This clear and frequent communication helped students make informed decisions and reduce confusion during a rap-

idly changing situation.

Fortunately, as the storm passed, there were no reports of major power outages, injuries, or serious incidents on campus. Adding a lighthearted moment during an otherwise stressful time, students shared on the app Yik Yak that Lander's beloved campus cat, Bear, had been safely placed in a temporary indoor home ahead of the storm.

Lander University's response to the winter storm reflected a

strong commitment to student well-being, preparedness, and community care, reinforcing the University's reputation as a campus that prioritizes safety even in challenging conditions.

As the storm grew close, Lander's president reassured the campus community, "Lander University is more than a campus – we are a family. In the uncertainty of this situation, that sense of family matters more than ever."

New Voices Launches Latest Edition

The Lander community joined the department of Communication and Languages to celebrate the latest issue of New Voices student literary and art journal on January 28. The party featured readings and presentations by student contributors. Lander University's student literary journal, New Voices publishes art, poetry, personal reflections and creative pieces written by Lander students from all disciplines. This is the first year New Voices also published a piece of sheet music. The publication is produced each fall semester. A team of student editors review submissions, choose essays for inclusion, promote the journal, and edit final selections.

New Voices is a class taught by professor of English, Laura Martin, where students can learn about the publishing process and how to create a professional publication while putting Lander's talented writers and artists on display. To read this year's edition of New Voices, visit www.lander.edu/student-media.



Pictured are this year's contributors at the January 28th New Voices launch party

Study Abroad, Broaden Your Perspectives

Continued from pg. 2

able to share that with other students ... to be able to send other students abroad to have those really cool experiences abroad is just a treat for me. It's just a pleasure."

Her desire to get the word out to the Lander student body led Professor Corbitt to create Study Abroad Day. At this function, students will get to learn everything they need to know about the program and meet many who are involved. This will allow them to ask in-depth questions and figure out where they should travel.

There are going to be a number of events that day. "The main one is going to be a tabling event in the Cultural Center Commons," said

Corbitt. This event will be held from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. She continued, "Our office is going to have a table, and students who have recently studied abroad are going to have a table, as well."

There will be tables from some of the study abroad provider as well. Providers such as University Studies Abroad Consortium (USAC) and Academic Studies Abroad (ASA) will be among them. These third-party providers help students travel to destinations where Lander does not have connections. Professor Corbitt said she is especially excited about Lander's partnership with a new provider called Atlantis.



"They're a new program that we're aiming at our nursing majors for medical shadowing in the summers," she explained.

This new relationship will open the door for so many students in the med-

ical field, allowing them to use their skills in different countries and in exotic settings.

Corbitt continued, "We're also going to have a visit from the University of Sterling, and ... we are working on organizing a virtual drop-in for any students that want information about attending Winchester."

Professor Corbitt and the rest of the Study Abroad team are pulling out all the stops to make this day successful and insightful, ensuring that everyone leaves happy.

"Career services will have a table where they are going to talk about how to talk about study abroad in a job interview or how to put it on a resume, how to leverage this experience into direct job benefits." The benefits of the program just keep coming, which is why Professor Corbitt is such an advocate for Study Abroad.

To learn more, visit the Lander's Study Abroad Website, and keep an eye out for flyers around school. Stay tuned and see you at Study Abroad Day.

Lander Kicks Off Festival with Short Film Competition

The Communication and Language department at Lander University cordially invites filmmakers from across the region to participate in the annual Short Film Competition - part of the 16th annual Lander Film Festival. The competition will begin with a kickoff workshop for entrants, scheduled for Thursday, February 26, at 4 p.m. in the Cultural Center room 250.

“We are excited to once gain welcome filmmakers of any skill level to join us, whether for their first time or

of the Lander Film Festival,” said Stevenson.

“Our filmmakers have to think outside the box, and in many cases completely re-work ideas they may have been considering.”

Filmmakers will compete across three divisions: High School, College and Open. The registration fee is \$20 for the High School Division, and \$25 for the College and Open Division. This can be paid through the day of the kickoff workshop.

Selected films will be shown on Saturday, March 21 at the

Lander students interested in entering the short film competition are encouraged to fill out the applicatoin available at landerfilmfestival.com.

Cash prizes and trophies will be given to

for the 16th time,” said Dr. Robert Stevenson, director of the Lander Film Festival and professor of journalism at Lander.

“Our festival continues to be an excellent experiential learning opportunity for our Lander students, as well as our greater community.”

Past contestants have noted that the competition is just as challenging as it is rewarding. Filmmakers have a mere 10 days to produce, edit and submit a five-minute short film.

At the kickoff workshop, entrants will receive a line of dialogue that must be incorporated into their film.

“The required line of dialogue is a unique component

the first, second and third place winners in each division.

Filmmakers interested in participating can visit the official Lander Film Festival website for detailed guidelines and to sign up: www.landerfilmfestival.com.

Support for the 16th Annual Lander University Film Festival comes from local businesses including: RoMac trophies, The Dixie Drive In, Flex Health & Fitness, McCravy Law Firm, Scoops and Cups, and Ethan's Tropical Pets.

For more information, contact Lander Film Festival Director Robert Stevenson at rstevenson@lander.edu.



16TH ANNUAL LANDER FILM FESTIVAL

	DATE	ROLL
Feb. 26	Short Film Contest Kickoff Workshop 4 p.m. Barksdale Recital Hall (CC 250)	
Mar. 9	Short Film Contest Deadline 5 p.m. Via povided online portal	
Mar. 17	Film Presentation: Dr. Daniel Harrison 6:30 p.m. Barratt Hall Auditorium (BH 126)	
Mar. 18	Tribute to Lander Alumnus Sam Thomas 6:30 p.m. Barratt Hall Auditorium (BH 126)	
Mar. 19	Film Presentation: Dr. Misty Jameson 6:30 p.m. Barratt Hall Auditorium (BH 126)	
Mar. 21	Short Film Screening and Awards 4 p.m. Abney Cultural Center Auditorium	

Register now at www.landerfilmfestival.com



Humanities, Arts, & Social Sciences (HASS) Week

February 23-27, 2025

General questions can be addressed to Dean Lucas McMillan at smcmillan@lander.edu.

Study Abroad Day questions should be directed to Prof. Lauren Corbitt at lcorbitt@lander.edu.

Monday, Feb. 23 – “Study Abroad Day”

- **11:00–1:00 “Passport Tabling Event” in Johnston Commons, Student Center**
Students can pick up a paper “passport” item and have it stamped at each table to be entered for prizes. Tables will represent these areas:
 - Office of Study Abroad (general info)
 - Students who have studied abroad (testimonials + flag guessing game)
 - Office of Workforce and Career Development (how to talk about your study abroad experience in interviews + booth to take passport photo)
 - USAC – third-party providers of study abroad
 - ASA – third-party providers of study abroad
 - Atlantis – new third-party provider, focus on medical shadowing abroad
 - University of Stirling, Scotland
- **4:00–5:00 Study Abroad Panel, Lois Grier Room**
Moderated by Director of Study Abroad Lauren Corbitt, this panel discussion will feature Lander students and alumni who have studied abroad as well as Lander VP for Marketing and Communications Bri-

an Apfel talking about the benefits of studying abroad in a career.

Starbucks Gallery to showcase study abroad photos and testimonials

Students and alumni can submit their favorite study abroad photo along with a testimonial blurb to hang in Starbucks (or other suitable location) for the duration of HASS week.

Tuesday, Feb. 24

- **Morning and Early Afternoon: an FBI Agent visits CRIM courses taught by both Dr. Jeremy Olson and Dr. Rebecca Sarver**
- **11:00–12:00 Presentation by an FBI Agent in LC 274**
Any interested students are invited to learn about the FBI and possible careers with the agency.
- **1:15–2:00 FBI Agent is available for students’ questions, HASS Lobby on LC third floor**
Students can have informal discussions about possible careers with the FBI.
- **3:30–4:30 HASS Student Presentations about Internships, LC 373**
Students will make mini-presentations about their internships and how they provide career preparation. Students in the audience can ask questions.
- **5:30–7:00 Communication Alumni Panel, LC 300**
Dr. Robert Stevenson will moderate a panel of successful alumni. Participants include:
 - **Eric Barber ’14**, an experienced Talent Acquisition professional who has

worked with pharmaceutical, medical device/diagnostic, and clinical research industries

- **Justin Kelley ’09**, Assistant VP for Student Affairs and Dean of Students at Pratt Institute
- **Kim Stoddard ’06**, former business development and client relationship specialist with Hexagon’s Asset Lifecycle Intelligence Division
- **Meagan Watson ’09**, Senior Associate Director of Alumni Relations at the University of Chicago Law School
- **Reyonia Whipple ’18**, Engagement Manager at PerceGray, an executive search firm

- **7:00–8:15 Wind Ensemble concert in CC Auditorium**
In the concert’s program brochure, there will be a ½ page feature on a successful Music alumna/alumnus.

Wednesday, Feb. 25

- **3:00–5:00 Mock Interview Sessions with faculty in Lois Grier Room**
a check-in table will be provided and 5 stations will be set up for 20 min mock interviews.
30 student slots will be available. Students should sign up with Workforce and Career Development Staff (perhaps via Handshake).

Mock Interview Sign-Ups
HASS Week: Feb. 25th 3-5 PM



HASS Agenda Cont'd

Thursday, Feb. 26

- **3:30–5:30 Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Training w/ Prof. Stacey Olson, LC 238**
This training relates to many careers in counseling, therapy, human services, and non-profits. Students from any major are invited to attend. Students must attend the entire training to earn this certificate. Please contact Prof. Olson with questions.

- **7:00–8:15 Piano Ensemble concert in CC Auditorium**

In the concert's program brochure, there will be a ½ page feature on a successful Music alumna/alumnus.

Friday, Feb. 27

- **12:00–1:00 Resume Workshop in Jackson Library room 243A.** Students can work on their resumes using available computers and gain feedback from Workforce & Career Development staff members

Resume Workshop Registration
HASS Week: Feb. 27th 12-1 PM



- **3:30–4:30 Career Showcase with John Scott Ballentine, producer and creator of the**

Campfire Radio Theatre podcast, BH 126

Mr. Ballentine will discuss his insights on radio dramas, sound design, and producing. Contact Prof. Monique Sacay-Bagwell for more information.

Across the Week:

- *Students will hear about careers and successful alumni in their courses.*
- *Students will see alumni profiles in HASS common areas that showcase different careers.*
- *Lander's Office of Marketing & Communications will send out news releases, social media, and other publicity that highlights successful HASS alumni and students.*
- *Faculty and staff will be promoting all of these events in a myriad of ways.*

HASS Week

Continued from page 2

Programming during the week includes alumni panels, internship presentations, resume workshops and mock interview sessions led by faculty and staff. Career-focused classroom visits and professional panels will bring real-world perspectives directly into academic spaces, connecting coursework to post-graduate pathways.

“Feb. 23–27 will be filled with information and events about careers and HASS alumni as well as reminding students of ways to prepare for their careers through internships, semesters away, mock interviews, and mentorship opportunities.”

--Lucas McMillan

Internship preparation is a recurring theme, reinforcing experiential learning as a bridge between academic theory and professional practice. Alumni engagement also plays a central role, with graduates returning to campus to discuss careers in journalism, public service, law, international relations and federal service.

The focus on professional readiness extends beyond the week itself. This spring, the HASS College will add a Speaking Lab to strengthen students' oral communication skills, complementing the Writing Lab that supports written communication. Together, the resources reflect a broader effort to develop transferable skills that align academic study with professional expectations.

As HASS Week unfolds, its significance extends beyond individual events. By foregrounding study abroad, internships, alumni mentorship and communication skills within a single framework, the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences is offering students a clearer view of how academic study connects to life after graduation.

Rather than positioning experiential opportunities as detours from the classroom, HASS Week frames them as integral to intellectual and professional development — preparing students not only for their first job, but for the complexity of careers and communities beyond campus.

Communication Alumni Career Panel

Lander Journalism Professor Dr. Robert Stevenson will moderate a panel of Lander Communication alumni from 5:30 to 7 pm on Feb. 24 in LC 300. The event, which is open to the public, will focus on how majoring in communication has served these alumni throughout their successful careers.

The panel will include the following alumni:



Megan Watson, a 2009 Lander Mass Communication alumnae is a Senior Associate Director of Alumni Relations at The University of Chicago Law School. Watson leads strategic initiatives to strengthen alumni engagement through innovative programming, events, and communications. In this role, she oversees major alumni events, regional engagement strategies, and volunteer programs that foster meaningful connections between graduates and the Law School community. Megan completed the Executive Program for Emerging Leaders at The University of Chicago Booth School of Business in 2025.



Justin Kelley, a 2008 Lander Mass Communication alumnus, is Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs and

Dean of Students at Pratt Institute. He oversees student life, including involvement, housing, equity, Title IX, community standards, and behavioral intervention. Justin collaborates with student clubs, organizations, and campus media, drawing on his experience as a student leader and Mass Communication major at Lander. Kelley partners with the institute's communications team on branding, design initiatives, website editing, and storytelling.



Eric Barber, a 2014 mass communication alumnus, is an experienced Talent Acquisition professional who has 10 years of full-cycle recruitment and client-facing marketing expertise within the life science and medical device industry. Barber has the proven ability to improve profitability, operational efficiency, and organizational effectiveness. His excellent interpersonal and communication skills, which serve as a foundation for being effective in collaborating, negotiating, strategic planning, and building business relationships.



Reyonia Whipple, a 2018 Lander

Mass Communication alumnae, is an Engagement Manager at PierceGray, a retained executive search firm, specializing in operations and commercial leadership in Private Equity-backed and Fortune 1000 environments. Whipple brings over five years of experience in executive recruitment, and client engagement across purpose-driven and high-growth organizations. Reyonia has also held roles at GoodCitizen and DSG Global, where she supported leadership searches for clients in tech, consumer goods, and social impact. Her portfolio includes work with Google, Coursera, Riot Games, Diageo, and the Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta.



Kim Stoddard, a 2006 Lander mass communication alumnae, is a dedicated professional with a strong background in business development, client relations, and educational administration. She built her career in the corporate sector with organizations such as Hexagon Asset Lifecycle Intelligence and Infor, where she developed expertise in CRM systems, sales, development, and customer engagement. Building on her experience in organization and communication, Stoddard transitioned into the field of education and now serves as at Laurens County School District 56.

"For students considering communication as a major or a minor, these Lander alumni will discuss and demonstrate the variety of exciting career possibilities," said Stevenson. Their presentation will be followed by an opportunity for audience questions.

Well-Known Podcaster To Present At Lander



Forum Reports:

Lander Speech Professor Monique Sacay-Bagwell will be hosting John Ballentine, a versatile creative artist with experience in filmmaking, screenwriting, drawing, and photography.

Ballentine is best known as the creator and producer of the long-running audio drama podcast Campfire Radio Theater. Specializing in richly immersive sound design, Ballentine crafts intricate audio soundscapes that transport listeners into vivid, realistic three-dimensional worlds of horror and suspense.

This presentation, open to the campus community, will be 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. on February 27 in room 200 of Lander's Cultural Center.

Follow the Bearcats



<https://landerbearcats.com/>

Forum Submissions

Submissions to the Forum student newspaper should be 200 to 500 words and emailed in a Word document to rstevenson@lander.edu.

In order to be considered for publication in the March Forum, submissions must be received by February 22.

In addition to the article, please include a picture or graphic to accompany the article.

If you have a news idea for the Forum staff to cover, please contact us by Feb. 10. Thank you for your support!



EXPERIENCE THE UNFORGETTABLE



- Destination: Salalah, Oman ✈️
- Program Leader: Pedro Lopes
- Internship credit available
- Tutor Omani students in English Conversation - No experience necessary
- Interest meetings in the Spring
- Contact plopes@lander.edu or studyabroad@lander.edu for more information

Homecoming: Under the Blue & Gold Top

Homecoming Week 2026 invites Lander students to a week of campus traditions, spirited competition, and community celebration under this year's theme, Under the Blue & Gold Top. Homecoming Week celebrates Bearcat pride, involvement, and connection across campus. Throughout the week, registered student groups will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of signature Homecoming events, creative and spirit-based challenges, and campus-wide programming leading to the crowning of Homecoming Court and the winning team from each division. Homecoming week culminates on Saturday, Feb. 7th with the crowning of Homecoming Court between basketball games, and the Family Day Homecoming Tailgate.

Join us throughout the week to celebrate your school pride and cheer on your fellow Bearcats!

Feb. 2 | Banner Reveal & Opening Ceremony, 7 PM, Auditorium

Feb. 3 | Mr. & Mrs. Bearcat Vow Renewal & Dodgeball Game, 5 PM, Centennial Hall Lawn

Feb. 4 | Big Wheels Race & Showcase, 5 PM, Front Fountain | 8 PM, Horne Arena

Feb. 5 | Bearcat Trivia Night at Good Times Brewing, 7:30 PM, Good Times Trivia

Feb. 6 | Polar Plunge & Mascot Burn, 5 PM, Lander Pool | 8 PM Centennial Firepit

Feb. 7 | Homecoming Tailgate & Family Day, 10 AM-1:30 PM, Front Lawn

Lander families reunite for Family Day



Invite your loved ones to join us for the final day of Homecoming Week, Saturday, February 7, from 10:00 AM–1:30 PM for a fun-filled Family Day at Lander University.

Families are invited to enjoy carnival-themed activities, games, and entertainment for all ages under the Blue and Gold Top.

The day will also feature special family-only activities, including our highly anticipated Dad Joke-Off. Dads are en-

couraged to start preparing their best jokes now, with sign-up details to be shared closer to the event.

Following the Family Day festivities, attendees are invited to head to Horne Arena to cheer on our Bearcats basketball teams as they take on the University of North Georgia Nighthawks. Tickets are \$5 at the door per game.

We look forward to welcoming those you care about to campus!

Sometimes an Ordinary Day Provides Glimpses of the Sacred

COLUMN

By Dr. Renee Love

How can we find more opportunities for peace, beauty, and mindfulness in daily life?

By now you have seen in the news a story about a group of monks and their dog “Aloka” making their way from Texas to the White House on a “Walk for Peace,” a journey that will take about 120 days and cover around 2,300 miles.

In January, their journey came through rural South Carolina, and I drove to see them. On most days, the town square would have been empty, but that day the main street spilled over with visitors. We did not know what we might see, but we all sensed that something special was happening. We knew, as Walt Whitman did, that “Peace is always beautiful.”

Describing the mission of the Walk, one of the monks, Reverend Nguyen, said that the Peace Walk “is a journey to bring blessings to countless lives in a world filled with uncertainty and restlessness” (quoted by Mona Thomas, People online). The Reverend Bhikku Pannakara added, “We walk not to protest, but to awaken the peace that already lives within each of us” (USA Today, Michelle Del Rey).

The Walk was organized by the Huong Dao Vipassana Bhavana Center in Texas and includes about two dozen monks. The monks’ dog “Aloka” walks with them, too, often in the lead position, like an ambassador symbolizing the prayer “peace for all beings.”

“Until [we] extend the circle of compassion to all living things, man will not himself find peace.” - Albert Schweitzer

In Sanskrit, the name “Aloka” means “light, brightness, illumination, or radiance,” the perfect name for a dog who started life as a stray. “Aloka” is an experienced peace walker, and this is not his first Walk for Peace. The monks met “Aloka” in India when he followed them

on another walk for over a hundred days despite the difficult conditions. He has a white heart-shaped mark on his forehead, and the monks adopted him. Crowds gather not only to see the monks but to see “Aloka” who has been described as “a symbol of loyalty and ‘heart’ of the walk” (Travis Maurer, January 13, 2026).

Back in India, on another peace walk, “Aloka” was hit by a car, and that injury has flared up because of the group’s walking schedule. To repair ligament damage, “Aloka”

made a stop at the Charleston Veterinary Center and had laser treatment. He will need to gradually build up to walking long distances again.

One of the monks, the venerable Phra Ajarn Maha Dam Phommasan, was seriously injured during the current Walk for Peace when he was hit by a truck in Texas (November 2025). As a result of the accident Phommasan’s leg had to be amputated. Incredibly, he expressed forgiveness rather than anger toward the person who caused the accident. In an interview, Phommasan said that “if losing a leg is the sacrifice, he didn’t mind making [that sacrifice] if it helped to spread his message of peace, love, hope, compassion, harmony, and kindness.”

“An eye for an eye will only make the whole world blind.” -Mahatma Gandhi
Phommasan also saw the accident as an

opportunity to spread greater awareness about the monks’ Walk for Peace. In each town, crowds gather to welcome the monks and “Aloka,” to give them flowers or perhaps encouraging words. Since the accident the monks have an escort of local law enforcement officers who shepherd them down the main streets. Town officials clear a path for the group and lead them to a place where they can have a meal or rest. Sometimes mayors, law enforcement officers, or other officials present the monks or “Aloka” with symbolic lapel pins representing respective cities or shared values. Townhalls and church fellowship halls have become impromptu hostels where the monks can rest for an afternoon or for the night, sharing a meal, good company, or prayers.

“Peace begins with a smile.” -Mother Teresa

Why are we interested in the monks’ walk?

When I drove to see the monks that day, I drove in silence, listening to the sprinkling rain on the windshield: Nature’s music. I enjoyed the picturesque views of farms, the Black Angus cows, the rare sighting of an Appaloosa horse and its



Picture submitted by Amanda Hamm



Picture submitted by Kaitlyn Jablonski

colt. There were bales of golden hay piled halfway as high as the barn and stacks of dried firewood, precious resources

Continued on pg. 20

Lander Students, Faculty Travel to Selma, Montgomery

By Olivia Carbone

In early January, two buses rolled out of Greenwood carrying 107 college students, faculty, community members, and local high schoolers, heading toward Selma and Montgomery, Alabama. For Lander History Professor Kevin Witherspoon, the trip was the culmination of nearly a year of planning, and the continuation of a vision sparked years earlier: to place students face-to-face with history and ask them not just to learn it, but to feel it.

Of the 107 participants, 37 were from Lander University. The rest included community members and students from the Models Academy, making the trip a rare intergenerational experience. “It really was kind of a three-headed monster,” Witherspoon said, describing the coordination between the university, community organizers, and high school groups. “But that diversity was part of what made it powerful.”

The idea for the trip dates back to January 2022, when Witherspoon joined a similar journey organized by the Greenwood Community Remembrance Project. COVID-related cancellations unexpectedly opened spots, allowing him, his daughter, and two Lander students, who were Benjamin Mays interns, to attend. The impact lingered. “Everybody had a great experience. It was eye-opening,” he said. “We always talked about doing it again.”

That conversation became reality four years later.

For Witherspoon, who holds the Benjamin E. Mays Endowed Chair at Lander, the timing felt crucial. “African American history is often marginalized

or overlooked,” he said. “Trips like this help keep those stories alive.” Many students, he noted, were struck by how directly the experience spoke to their own lives, particularly the sacrifices made by civil rights activists whose actions still shape the present.

The first stop set the tone. After a seven-hour bus ride, the group arrived in Selma under gray skies and light rain. Walking across the Edmund Pettus Bridge, the site of the 1965 Bloody Sunday attack, silence overtook the

year, said the trip connected directly to what she had studied. “Everything we talked about in class was all there,” she said. “Seeing it in real life made it hit different.”

For Madalin Radcliffe, a senior double majoring in public history and political science, the experience was both familiar and new. Although she had visited Montgomery in 2022 as a Benjamin Mays intern, returning with the university again added a different dimension. “You can’t see everything in one trip,” she said. “And doing it with the school, with people you know, just felt different.”

Crossing the bridge in the rain was one of the most impactful moments for Radcliffe as well. “You don’t really understand Bloody Sunday until you’re there,” she said. “When you reach the top of the bridge, you realize they couldn’t see what was coming. They couldn’t turn around. It was completely blindsiding.”

From Selma, the group traveled to Montgomery, where visits to the Equal Justice Initiative’s (EJI) sites proved overwhelming in both scale and emotion. The Legacy Museum, which traces the history of racial injustice from slavery to mass incarceration, left a profound impression. Witherspoon described the museum’s immersive design, including rooms that simulate ocean waves during the Middle Passage and exhibits that physically surround visitors. “I don’t know how anybody could walk through the first room or two and not be moved almost to their knees,” he said.

Continued on pg. 13



Lander students at Montgomery, Alabama's Peace and Justice Memorial Center.

group. “There wasn’t a lot of chit-chatting,” Witherspoon said. “Everybody was really struck by that moment.”

Sophomore international studies major Amaiya Nichols said she felt that impact immediately. At the end of the bridge, she recalled meeting a woman who spoke passionately to the students despite the rain. “She was just happy to see so many young people there,” Nichols said. “She told us people suffered on that bridge for you to have opportunities today, so don’t let it go to waste.”

That message stayed with her.

Nichols, who took Witherspoon’s Benjamin Mays class during her first

January Bus Trip Provides Unique Window Into History

Continued from pg. 12

Radcliffe approached the museum through a design-focused lens, paying close attention to how the space guides visitors. This time, she was able to

watch the museum's films, something she had missed on her previous visit. "It was heavy. Thought-provoking," she said. "You can't say you enjoyed it, but it stays with you."

Equally powerful was the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, often called the lynching memorial.

Over 800 hanging steel monuments represent counties where documented lynchings occurred, each engraved with names. In total, more than 4,400 names are inscribed on the memorial. Witherspoon noted that Greenwood itself has participated in EJI's soil collection project, gathering soil from lynching sites to preserve the memory of victims. "Most of these people never had a proper burial," he said. "It's a very powerful process."

The sheer scale of the memorial stood out to Nichols. "Mississippi had name after name, like 20 to 30 of them," she said. "My hometown, Spartanburg, had like two. Honestly, Greenwood had a lot. And those are just a few monuments out of hundreds."

Inside the museum, the section on incarceration drew clear connections between past and present. Interactive exhibits allowed visitors to hear directly from incarcerated individuals and confront patterns of racial injustice. "There are a lot of comparisons as to how we used to be in slave chains; now we're in

handcuffs," Nichols said. "Like, slavery still exists. Just in a different way."

The Freedom Monument Sculpture Park was the most powerful site for Radcliffe. A ferry ride along the Alabama

River, softly narrated with stories of enslaved people sold and transported through its waters, the park revealed itself slowly. Tucked away from the main path, an upside-down metal tree hanging by a rope caught Radcliffe's attention. "It had that slight creaking sound," she said. "I kind of lost it for a second. I teared up." Moments later, she came across a monument that

continued that feeling. About 50 feet tall, the monument is covered from top to bottom with the surnames of African Americans who survived slavery and were finally able to choose their own names. These names were recorded in the 1870 U.S. Census, the first to list formerly enslaved people, creating a tangible link to their ancestral history. "And you just stand there, and you're like, that's an entire generation of people," Radcliffe said. "That part was extremely impactful."

Beyond the historic sites, Witherspoon emphasized the conversations that unfolded throughout the trip. Faculty mentors led small-group discussions, and students

journalled, reflected, and shared insights during meals and evening sessions. "You didn't even have to encourage reflection with these students," Witherspoon said. "It just happened."

For Nichols, that reflection became personal. Inspired by the trip, she bought the children's book "Sulwe" by Lupita Nyong'o at the museum and read it to her seven-year-old brother. "It's about loving your skin color," she said. "I want the kids in my family to know who they are and be proud of their culture."

The sense of responsibility to remember, to teach, to continue the story – was echoed across the group.

Witherspoon said he hopes the experience doesn't end when the buses return. Some students are already working on photo essays, written reflections, and creative projects to be shared during the 15th anniversary celebration of the Benjamin Mays Historic Site this spring. More than that, he hopes the impact lasts internally. When asked to sum up the experience, Witherspoon chose one word: transformative. "We don't want students to just go through the motions and leave with a piece of paper," he said. "We want

experiences that change how they see the world, and themselves."

Radcliffe echoed that sentiment, noting how fortunate she feels to engage with this history. "Some people don't have a voice, and others ignore it," she said. "History gets rewritten every 100 years, but this is one of those things that should never be forgotten to time."

For those who made the journey to Selma and Montgomery, the story didn't stay on the page. The story unfolded beneath their feet, in their conversations, and in the responsibility they carried home.



The lynching memorial



Memorial of the formerly enslaved

Office of Workforce & Career Development

Upcoming Events

Spring 2026

FEB 17	Coffee & Connect Fueled by Coffee & Curiosity STEM Edition
FEB 23	Study Abroad Day Learn all enhance your career journey through studying abroad
FEB 24	AI Career Image Competition Create an original AI-generated image & enter to win prizes
FEB 23-27	HAAS Week Mock Interviews, Resume Workshops, Alumni Panels & More
MARCH 9	Dress for Success Day Get FREE professional clothing
MARCH 10	General Career Fair Come network with employers for internships and professional jobs
MARCH 11	Stamp & Start Nursing Licensure Notary Day
MARCH 24	Coffee & Connect Human Performance/Health Science Edition
APRIL 14	Coffee & Connect Media & Communication Edition
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By Evelyn Jones



By Casey Cline



By Raylyn Johnson




By Andre Gonzalez

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Never Fear, Lander's Speaking Lab is Here

By Armani Canty

Public speaking is often cited as the number one fear among people of all ages, and anyone can struggle with speaking in front of an audience.

Luckily for Lander students, the Speaking Lab is set to host a soft launch in early February 2026 for the College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, before officially launching in fall 2026.

The Speaking Lab is meant to help students prepare for public speaking in any setting. The lab will feature computers with PitchVantage, an AI speech-assisting software, to help pinpoint places of improvement.

There will also be enclosed private rooms for quiet practice and recording booths to prepare for voice acting, performances and reporting. The lab will operate much like Lander's well-known Writing Lab, with vetted student tutors to help alongside Professor Monique Sacay-Bagwell and the new director of the Speaking Lab, Professor Paul Cadenhead.

The Speaking Lab presents the oppor-

level where he taught multiple subjects before being drawn to higher education at Lander.

Cadenhead intends for the Speaking Lab to be a place of valuable instruction for any student, no matter where they are in their educational journey. Cadenhead said, "The Speaking Lab will be a place for students to seek help and support with anything related to their academics, including help with class presentations, conferences, lectures or any assignment."

Sacay-Bagwell said her 30 years of experience has continuously shown her the importance of public speaking in the professional world. The Speaking Lab is



Monique Sacay-Bagwell

meant to assist students in public speaking and speech courses at Lander, but also prepare them for the workforce. Recent studies have shown that good written and oral communication are often among the most sought-after skills for employers.

"The incentive to create the Speaking Lab is to show students the importance of how you present yourself and how you communicate," Sacay-Bagwell said. "[Lander's] administration is really working on enhancing this idea of communication being a vital part of education."

Sacay-Bagwell and Cadenhead have also spearheaded the creation of the new Speakeasy Society, a student organization meant to further prepare students for professional speaking in a fun and relaxed environment.

"By engaging with the Speakeasy Society, students will gain the needed

practice and experience to become leaders in public speaking and help grow the number one skill sought by potential employers," Cadenhead said.

Students in the Speakeasy Society are not only gaining valuable skills, but they will also present at competitions and conferences. Sacay-Bagwell excitedly mentioned the upcoming activities for the society, such as the South Carolina Speech and Theatre Association and the Lander University Honors Symposium in the spring.

"The club is a way to help build a bridge between seeing what students are learning in class and how they can apply that outside of class."

--Sacay-Bagwell

The creation of the Speaking Lab and the Speakeasy Society provide Lander students with new opportunities to build their oral communication skills and stand out in the job market. While public speaking may make many people anxious, Lander students are fortunate to have the teachers and resources to build their public speaking confidence and make them better prepared for the workforce after they graduate.

For more information about the Speaking Lab, contact Prof. Paul Cadenhead at pcadenhead@lander.edu. To learn more about the Speakeasy Society contact Cadenhead or Prof. Monique Sacay-Bagwell at msacay@lander.edu

Armani Canty is a junior professional writing major at Lander University. She previously served as an editorial assistant for University Marketing and Communications, a news writer for the Forum, and is currently studying abroad. Canty wrote this article for the Bearcat Babble, a monthly column written by Lander students exclusively for the Index-Journal. Look for the Bearcat Babble every second Wednesday of the month.



Paul Cadenhead

tunity to welcome Cadenhead to Lander. His variety of work experience makes Cadenhead a well-prepared and effective addition. He received his undergraduate degree in communication and business before pursuing his master's in public relations. After working on Wall Street, Cadenhead decided to pursue education and graduated with a master's degree in teaching from Northeastern University. He began teaching at the high school

Lander's EYE Program Prepares Students for Careers

By Chloe Blackburn

program, which gives students a chance to apply what they've learned while building their resumes even before they graduate.

For many students, internships can feel intimidating at first. Some worry they are not qualified enough or don't know where to start. The EYE Program helps remove those barriers by guiding students through the process. From finding opportunities to earning academic credit, the program makes professional experience more accessible and less overwhelming.

Lander students in the EYE Program often find themselves working in profes-

sional environments. One example is Holly Tuggle, a Summer 2025 intern for WYFF News in Greenville, who says her experience has helped her discover what she wants to do long-term. "This experience has been amazing so far," Tuggle said. "I've gotten to create social graphics, write and publish my own news stories, and really dive into the digital side of media."

Internships are one of the most important steps in building a successful career. They allow students to explore what they truly enjoy, learn how a workplace operates, and develop

professional skills that can't always be taught in a classroom. Tuggle said the hands-on side of her internship has been especially valuable. "I've learned

so much and have found a real passion for this kind of work," she said.

The EYE program also supports Lander's mission to prepare students for life after college. Employers today want more than just good grades. They want experience, adaptability, and professionalism. The EYE Program helps bridge the gap between education and employment by giving students a chance to practice their skills before entering the workforce full time. Many Lander students who participate in internships say they feel more prepared and motivated in their classes.

According to Stevenson, "Students can review the preapproved list of activities for which they can earn EYE credit at lander.edu/eye." He added, "They can also check their 'EYE Credit' status at the bottom of their 'Student Highlights' menu on their myLander page." He added, "Students who earn at least 120 EYE credits will win the Golden EYE Award at their graduation from Lander."

Overall, Lander University's EYE Program plays a major role in shaping student success. It encourages students to take control of their education, explore career paths, and gain experience that will benefit them long after graduation. Instead of waiting until senior year to think about the future, the EYE Pro-



Holly Tuggle at WYFF News Internship

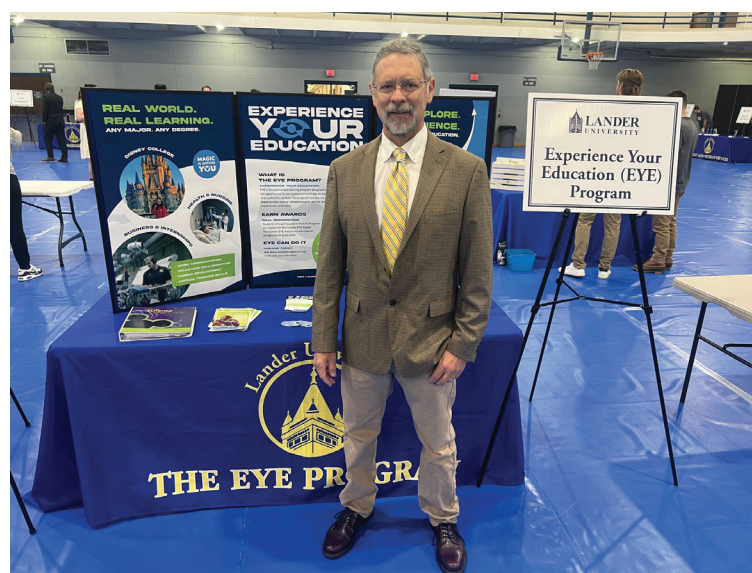
College is about more than just lectures and exams. It's about preparing for what comes after graduation. The EYE Program at Lander University, which stands for Experience Your Education, helps students do exactly that by connecting classroom learning with real-world internships and professional opportunities. The EYE Program is designed to encourage students to step outside the classroom and gain hands-

"Students who achieve at least 120 EYE credits are honored with the 'Golden EYE' Award at graduation."

--Dr. Robert F. Stevenson

on experience in their field.

According to EYE program director, Dr. Robert Stevenson, all Lander students can benefit from the EYE



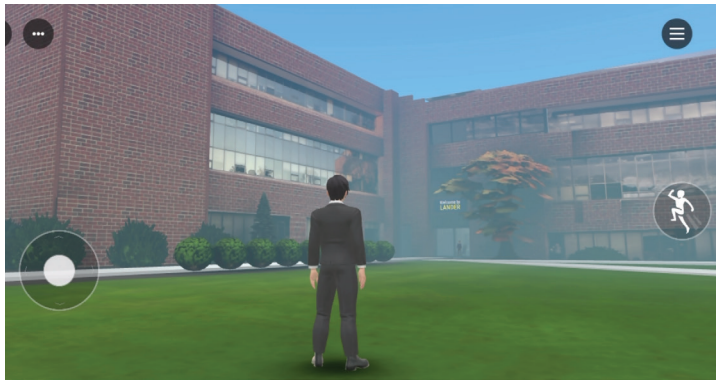
EYE Program Director Robert Stevenson at fall Open House

gram helps students start building it now. For students at Lander, internships are not just optional, they are an important step toward turning education into a career.

Explore Lander University in virtual reality

By Siera Bouffard

The future of campus tours is becoming a reality. Lander University students, guided by Dr. Walter Iriarte, professor of digital media and communication, are creating a virtual reality (VR) campus that promises immersive and interactive experiences. From exploring classrooms



to talking with AI guides, this project gives individuals the chance to explore campus with a link.

"The VR project is an online experience where my students and I recreate Lander buildings in virtual reality," Iriarte said.

The project began when Lander's president, Dr. Cosentino, encouraged faculty to incorporate more technology into their courses. "He's really into the MetaQuest goggles," Iriarte said. "So I asked if we could get some of them to use in my class for students to try out, which he agreed to."

Currently, the virtual campus features the Carnell Learning Center, with plans to expand to other buildings. "One of the main goals is to allow prospective students to visit campus without actually being on campus," Iriarte said.

The virtual space is designed with



high levels of detail to make visitors truly feel like they are there on campus. "It's very photorealistic. If you actually see the project, it feels very immersive when you put the goggles on," he said.

In addition to touring buildings, the VR campus includes interactive features with the help of artificial intelligence. Visitors can ask questions to different characters that represent different offices to obtain specialized help.

"We figured out how to create artificial intelligent characters, so that people who visit campus can talk to them. We made one for the financial aid office, for the front administration and are planning to add more," Iriarte said. "We wanted characters to help students and to tell people, 'Hey, this is what Lander is about.'"

The project also gives students who take Iriarte's emerging media class hands-on experience with technology and collaboration.

Students are responsible for designing specific parts of a building, taking care with details and making the experience as immersive as possible. The project uses Horizon Worlds software, which is free and allows students to build in virtual spaces without expensive equipment.

Creating even one building is time-intensive. "Just those rooms took a solid four weeks to complete," Iriarte said. "It's definitely time-consuming, and

it takes a lot of memory and storage."

Iriarte said he hopes to continue tackling other campus buildings, with the ultimate goal of creating a complete virtual campus that can be fully explored online.

The VR campus is accessible on multiple platforms, including phones, desktops and MetaQuest 3 headsets. This flexibility means that anyone can log on and check out the virtual campus anywhere, making the experience both practical and inclusive.

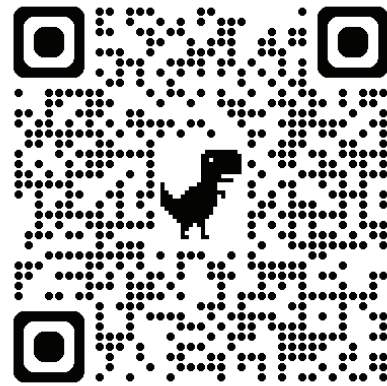
For those new to VR, Iriarte suggests starting with a simpler 360-degree photo experience and getting a feel for moving around or even experiencing a VR documentary to better understand how immersive the technology can be.



riencing a VR documentary to better understand how immersive the technology can be.

Iriarte said the most rewarding part of the project is the collaboration with his students. "I feel very much involved with my students and their projects. It's an awesome project, and I'm very thankful that we all can get something out of it," he said.

Those interested in exploring Lander virtually can visit the LC Horizon Worlds realm. Users can download the Horizon Worlds app and search for "Lander University." The VR campus is also available at https://horizon.meta.com/?intent_id=1445907120291581.



Lander's Annual Student Juried Art Exhibit



to submit their works to be judged by a juror from outside of Lander University.

Faculty Gallery Advisor and Professor of Art at Lander University, Jon Holloway stated, "It's probably one of my favorite exhibits of the year because it allows all the students to be involved in the process. It's just a testament to their creativity, and we're just so proud of our students."

"This is a showcase that can really celebrate what they're creating while they're at Lander," said Holloway. The Student Juried Art Exhibit is a very competitive showcase, and students work extremely hard on their submissions. But most of all the exhibit is a celebration of creativity, and it is one of the most significant events for the art department. Student Gallery Worker and Junior 2D Art Major Ashton Reid stated "Everybody gets to come together, it's like the highlight of the year; its super fun"

The Student Juried Art Exhibit is an opportunity for all students and a chance to see some unique creative works from fellow Lander students.

By Ashley Potter

Lander's Annual Student Juried Art Exhibit is an opportunity for any Lander student, regardless of major, to submit their works to be judged and potentially

displayed in Lander's Art Gallery. The categories of the exhibit feature ceramics, computer graphics, drawing, painting, photography, printmaking, and sculpture. This event is an opportunity for artists

New Campus Club to Strengthen Community

By Brady Burton

A new student organization is working to build community and opportunity for computer science majors at Lander University.

Lander University Computer Science, Cyber Security, CIS Society 3 (LUCS3) was founded in fall 2025 by students who saw a need for stronger connections among those studying in technology related fields. The club is led by President Avery Kuenzi and Vice President Nolan Clark, who said the goal is to bring together students across all computer science-based programs offered at the university.

LUCS3 aims to provide academic support, networking opportunities, and a sense of belonging for students in a rapidly growing field.

Kuenzi explained that many students in technical majors often focus heavily on

coursework but have limited opportunities to collaborate outside the classroom.

"There wasn't a computer science club, and I felt like we needed one," Clark said.

The club plans to host meetings, collaborative projects, and events designed to help students build skills beyond lectures and labs. Organizers also hope LUCS3 will connect students with faculty, alumni and industry professionals to better prepare them for careers after graduation.

By creating a centralized space for students interested in programming, cybersecurity, data science and related disciplines, LUCS3 leaders hope to strengthen both academic success and peer support within Lander's com-

puter science community.

For more information, contact club president - Aver.Kuenzi@lander.edu -Avery Kuenzi or club secretary - olivia.emerson@lander.edu -Olivia Emerson



Nolan Clark at a recent tech. competition

Walk for Peace Comes to South Carolina

Continued from pg. 11

prepared for future wintry days. The pace of modern life makes quiet moments rare, and it is often hard for us to stop and rest and catch our breath. We are “stressed,” and sometimes other people and situations frustrate us. We are rushing; it is hard to feel peaceful in a chaotic world.

At the town square, the monks sat outside on blankets under an ancient magnolia tree. They rested and had a meal that had been lovingly prepared by the community. It was a beautiful, simple occasion that united people.

The group could have been a group of priests, nuns, rabbis, ministers, or other individuals who were gathered to honor peace, but this time, it was a group of monks who turned our attention to the shared values of peace and unity. The Walk for Peace is an example of something intentional and meaningful. Many of us gravitate toward the simple beauties of everyday life. Such scenes remind us of something peaceful that some-

times eludes us, quiet moments where we can remember the eternal that lies beyond this physical reality.

What is Sacred?

The philosopher and sociol-

ogist Mircea Eliade defined the Sacred as something in the “realm of the extraordinary or the eternal,” something that endures beyond time and

space. Sometimes the Sacred manifests itself as something that “brings order and meaning” to life. For me, I find the Sacred in places from churches to nature to works of art, literature, or music. Sometimes the Sacred is glimpsed in our loved ones and in others who help us see the face of God more clearly.

The Sacred is not worldly or mundane, and different experiences inspire the feeling of the Sacred. Sometimes the sounds of children laughing is a Sacred sound; the beauty of newborns is Sacred or the wrinkled faces of wise elders. There is something Sacred about bright red cardinals on winter trees or the Canada Geese that slowly make their way across the frozen pond. And have you ever noticed the majesty of green daffodil stems emerging bravely in the snow? Miracles of life and nature turn our attention to the Beyond, to the world of the spirit and the Sacred.

In contrast to the Sacred, Eliade described “the Profane,”

“inherent meaning or connection to the divine.” The concept of the Profane and the Sacred are opposites in Eliade’s views. Eliade is not saying that everyday life is without beauty, but some facets of the modern world lack meaning or inspiration.

For instance, in my high school years, I remember a popular t-shirt worn by many teenagers that read, “The one who dies with the most toys wins.” This t-shirt made an impression on me. At the time, I wanted the t-shirt because “everyone else had one.” In my immature mind, this shirt seemed a marker of acceptance, but my family could not afford name-brand clothing. Later, the “ugliness” of the shirt occurred to me: the shirt was the incarnation of a disturbing, shallow theme in some circles, the idea that life is a race, and winning the race requires having the most possessions.

The realm of the Profane would be a mindset focused more on materials and superficial values, a focus on the “me” rather than on the “we.” Somehow when we

have glimpses of the Sacred, examples of the Profane seem clearer.

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do



Picture submitted by Renee Love



Picture submitted by Renee Love

which is not something evil or bad, as something common, mundane, as part of “the world of ordinary, secular, everyday life,” a world that often lacks

that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.” Martin Luther King, Jr.

Consider these scenes.

I noticed that as the monks walked down the street, one of them reached out and gave a woman flowers. The woman took the flowers but without saying thank you and without making eye contact. She was talking on her phone and was miles away, present only in body.

Later, while the monks ate their lunch, the tranquility of the afternoon was disturbed by someone shouting on a loudspeaker. While we are all entitled to voice opinions, why had this person on the loudspeaker chosen this day to put on a demonstration when there are 355 other days of the year? The shouting was unwelcome, and I recalled something that

Continued on pg. 20

Peace Walk: A Metaphor For The Universal Journey

Continued from pg. 20

I used to say to my children when they argued and bickered with each other: “Is what you’re saying right now better than the sound of silence?”

While the monks rested under the outstretched magnolia, a crowd gathered. We all wanted to see the visitors even for a few moments. But it was difficult for most of us to see anything because the viewers who were closest to the monks did not offer to “take turns” or “share” the view. Most of the crowd who occupied the best vantage points had no awareness that they were blocking others’ views.

I tapped several spectators on the shoulder and asked if I could briefly change positions so that I could see. With only one exception, people happily agreed to trade places with me for a minute. Many of the people monopolizing the view were on their phones – oblivious to the line of people waiting behind them who were hoping to see the monks and “Aloka” even for a moment.

One woman told me that she couldn’t trade places with me because she was taking a video of a monk while he was re-wrapping his robe. I felt embarrassed somehow that even the monks’ smallest gestures, like wrapping a garment, were being filmed as if the moment were part of a performance.

These actions had nothing to do with me, and I knew that no one was trying to be insensitive. Still, I found myself feeling annoyed by other people’s behaviors (i.e. the woman who did not say thank you, the man yelling on the loudspeaker, the people monopolizing the front

I am reminded of a quotation that a friend texted me recently when I was feeling annoyed by something silly: “Do not get upset with people or situations; both are powerless without your reaction. Peace begins where reaction ends” (From Buddha’s Teaching on Facebook).

Many spiritual traditions express similar ideas, encouraging us to focus on matters of spirit and to guard our peace of mind. In the Bible, readers are told “Do not be anxious about anything” because “the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds” (Philippians 4:6-7).

In Native American traditions, there is beautiful Cheyenne prayer that emphasizes the need for being at peace within ourselves and with Nature: “For as long as the moon shall rise, / For as long as the rivers shall flow, / For as long as the sun shall shine, / For as long as the grass shall grow, / Let us know peace.” Likewise, the shaman Black Elk, of the Oglala Sioux, is reported to have said, “Peace . . . comes within the souls of men when they realize their

relationship, their oneness with the Universe and all its powers, and when they realize that the center of the Universe . . . is within each of us.”

The point is that every spiritual tradition encourages peace and unity: we must find a path for being at peace with ourselves, with other people, and with the world. To have peace, we must begin internally, inside our minds.

When I felt frustrated by other people’s behaviors during the monks’ visit, I was allowing other people to destroy my peace of mind. But I have no control over other people’s behaviors: I can only change my thoughts, and our thoughts influence our behaviors and our experience of peace.

“Do not let the behavior of others destroy your inner peace.” – The Dalai Lama

Why should we care about the Peace Walk or about the Sacred?

The Peace Walk is not just a literal walk that a group of monks are making. Perhaps the walk resonates with many of us because it is also a metaphor of the universal journey that each one of us takes in life – and our longing to find peace and unity in a chaotic world.

The Sacred could be experienced more often than we realize – if we practice being mindful and intentional, if we choose timeless values over superficial ones, if we value peace and unity and love our neighbors. Like other important journeys in life, the most important steps begin within.

“If you are depressed, you are living in the past. If you are anxious, you are living in the future. If you are at peace, you are living in the present.” – Lao Tzu



Picture submitted by Amanda Hamm

row, and so on).

Ironically, nothing that happened disrupted the monks’ peace of mind. I thought about how even when someone caused one of the monks to have his leg amputated, his peace of mind remained undisturbed: this remarkable person could turn his thoughts toward forgiveness and gratitude, viewing the amputation as a sacrifice toward the cause of peace.

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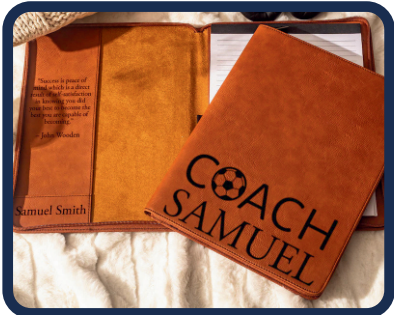
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Kimberly Chitwood, your positive attitude sets you apart from others. You are always willing to lend a helping hand with no complaint. You always share your knowledge, and support your colleagues in any way needed



As a reminder, Nomination Forms are located on the HR Forms site and should be delivered to Human Resources no later than the last day of the month for consideration for the following month's award.

Workforce Development's Spring Internship Stipend Recipients

"We are proud of every student who applied and demonstrated a commitment to professional development and experiential learning."

Kimberly Duclos,
Good Times Brewing,
Graphic Design major

Clark Sinclair,
The Greenwood Museum,
History major

Caroline Myrick,
Greenwood Chamber of
Commerce, Interdisciplinary
Studies major

Kamaria Curry,
Erskine College Athletic
Training Exercise Science
major

Elana Raines,
Spartanburg Regional
Cardiac Rehab
Exercise Science major

Ashton Reid
The Arts Center of Green-
wood, Visual Art 2D major

Lander February Events Continued

<p><i>Continued from pg. 24</i></p> <p>Women's Tennis, 2 - 5 PM Bearcats @ Newberry</p> <p>Intramural - 6v6 Floor Hockey 7 - 10 PM</p> <p>February 20 Baseball, 5 - 8 PM Bearcats @ North Georgia</p> <p>Acrobatics & Tumbling 6 - 9 PM Bearcats vs. Francis Marion</p> <p>February 21 Equestrian Team IHSA Show</p> <p>Softball, 1 - 6 PM Bearcats vs. Newberry</p> <p>Women's Tennis, 1 - 4 PM Bearcats vs. USC Sumter</p> <p>Women's Basketball 1:30 - 3:30 PM Bearcats @ USC Aiken</p> <p>Baseball, 3 - 6 PM</p>	<p>Bearcats @ North Georgia</p> <p>Men's Basketball 3:30 - 6:30 PM Bearcats @ USC Aiken</p> <p>Men's Lacrosse 7 - 10 PM Bearcats vs. Young Harris</p> <p>February 22 Track & Field Peach Belt Conference Indoor Track and Field Championships</p> <p>Equestrian Team IHSA Show</p> <p>Women's Lacrosse 1 - 4 PM, Bearcats @ Wingate</p> <p>Baseball, 2 - 5 PM Bearcats @ North Georgia</p> <p>Men's Tennis, 2 - 5 PM Bearcats @ Converse</p> <p>February 23 Men's Golf, Oldfield Classic Kelley Pettibone: Peace by Pieces</p>	<p>February 23-March 24 Men's Golf Oldfield Classic</p> <p>February 24 SGA Townhall & Senate Meeting 3:30 - 5 PM</p> <p>Wind Ensemble 7 - 9 PM,</p> <p>February 25 Softball, 2 - 7 PM Bearcats vs. Francis Marion</p> <p>Women's Lacrosse 3 - 6 PM Bearcats vs. Mount Olive</p> <p>Women's Basketball 5:30 - 7:30 PM Bearcats vs. Georgia College</p> <p>Pathfinders - Education 6 - 7 PM</p> <p>Men's Lacrosse, 7 - 10 PM Bearcats @ Anderson</p> <p>Men's Basketball 7:30 - 10:30 PM Bearcats vs. Georgia College</p>	<p>February 26 Women's Tennis, 2 - 5 PM Bearcats @ Francis Marion</p> <p>Men's Tennis, 2 - 5 PM Bearcats @ North Greenville</p> <p>Piano Ensemble, 7 - 9 PM</p> <p>February 27 Baseball, 5 - 8 PM Bearcats vs. Clafflin</p> <p>Acrobatics & Tumbling 6 - 9 PM, Tri-Meet</p> <p>February 28 Baseball, 1 - 7:30 PM Bearcats vs. Clafflin</p> <p>Women's Basketball 1:30 - 3:30 PM Bearcats @ Middle Georgia State</p> <p>Men's Tennis, 2 - 5 PM Bearcats vs. USC Sumter</p> <p>Men's Basketball 3:30 - 6:30 PM Bearcats @ Middle Georgia State</p>
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Lander Calendar of Events - February

<p>February 1 Softball, 1 - 6 PM Bearcats vs. Lenoir-Rhyne</p> <p>February 2 Homecoming Week Feb. 2-7</p> <p>Homecoming - Flag Decorating, 9 AM - 3 PM</p> <p>Intramural - 5v5 Women's Basketball, 7 - 10 PM</p> <p>Intramural - 5v5 Men's Basketball, 7 - 10 PM</p> <p>Homecoming - Banner Reveal & Opening Ceremony, 7 - 9 PM</p> <p>Wrestling, 7 - 10 PM Bearcats @ Montevallo</p> <p>February 3 Baseball, 4 - 7 PM Bearcats @ Newberry</p> <p>Homecoming - Mr. & Mrs. Bearcat Vow Renewal 5 - 6 PM</p> <p>Community Lecture Series 5:30 - 7:30 PM, Presenter: Brian Pitman Reception: 5:30 p.m. Presenta- tion: 6:00 p.m.</p> <p>Intramural - 6v6 Volleyball 7 - 10 PM</p> <p>Homecoming - Dodgeball Game, 7 - 9 PM</p> <p>February 4 Softball, 1 - 6 PM Bearcats @ Wingate</p> <p>Homecoming - Bring Your Own Big Wheels 5 - 7 PM</p> <p>Intramural - Handball, 7 - 10 PM</p> <p>Homecoming - Showcase, 8 - 10 PM</p> <p>February 5 Women's Tennis, 2 - 5 PM Bearcats @ Emmanuel</p> <p>SC Chief Justice John Kittredge to Speak 5:30 - 8 PM</p> <p>Intramural - 6v6 Floor Hockey 7 - 10 PM</p>	<p>Homecoming - Trivia Night 7:30 - 10 PM</p> <p>February 6 Alumni Awards Luncheon 11 AM - 1 PM</p> <p>Men's Tennis, 2 - 5 PM Bearcats @ Emmanuel</p> <p>Baseball, 4 - 7 PM Bearcats vs. Mount Olive</p> <p>Homecoming - Polar Plunge 5 - 6 PM</p> <p>Homecoming - Mascot Burn 8 - 9 PM</p> <p>February 7 Equestrian Team All Day, +IHSA Show</p> <p>Homecoming - Tailgating 10 AM - 1 PM</p> <p>Baseball, 12 - 6:30 PM Bearcats vs. Mount Olive</p> <p>Softball, 12 - 5 PM Bearcats vs. Catawba</p> <p>Women's Tennis, 1 - 4 PM Bearcats vs. Mount Olive</p> <p>Men's Tennis, 1 - 4 PM Bearcats vs. Mount Olive</p> <p>Women's Basketball 1:30 - 3:30 PM Bearcats vs. North Georgia</p> <p>Men's Lacrosse, 2 - 5 PM Bearcats vs. Coker</p> <p>Men's Basketball 3:30 - 6:30 PM Bearcats vs. North Georgia</p> <p>February 8 Equestrian Team All Day, IHSA Show</p> <p>February 9 Women's Golf, All Day 2026 World Golf Invitational</p> <p>Men's Golf, All Day Spring Kick-Off</p> <p>Intramural - 5v5 Women's Basketball 7 - 10 PM</p> <p>Intramural - 5v5 Men's Basketball 7 - 10 PM</p>	<p>February 10 Women's Golf, All Day 2026 World Golf Invitational</p> <p>Men's Golf, All Day Spring Kick-Off</p> <p>Softball, 1 - 6 PM Bearcats @ North Greenville</p> <p>Baseball, 5 - 8 PM Bearcats vs. Belmont Abbey</p> <p>Intramural - 6v6 Volleyball 7 - 10 PM</p> <p>February 11 Bearcat for a Day, 9 AM - 2 PM</p> <p>Women's Tennis, 2 - 5 PM Bearcats vs. Coker</p> <p>Men's Tennis, 2 - 5 PM Bearcats vs. Coker</p> <p>Women's Lacrosse 4 - 7 PM Bearcats vs. Anderson</p> <p>Women's Basketball 5:30 - 7:30 PM Bearcats @ Augusta</p> <p>Intramural - Handball 7 - 10 PM</p> <p>Men's Basketball 7:30 - 10:30 PM Bearcats @ Augusta</p> <p>February 12 Founder's Day - Giving Day</p> <p>Acrobatics & Tumbling 6 - 9 PM, Bearcats vs. Wingate</p> <p>Intramural - 6v6 Floor Hockey 7 - 10 PM</p> <p>February 13 Track & Field Tryon Mid-Winter Invitational</p> <p>Softball Brianna Surrento Kickoff Classic</p> <p>Women's Tennis, 3:30 - 6:30 PM Bearcats @ Converse</p> <p>Baseball, 5 - 8 PM Bearcats vs. Middle Georgia</p> <p>Softball Brianna Surrento Kickoff Classic</p>	<p>Women's Basketball 1:30 - 3:30 PM Bearcats vs. Flagler</p> <p>Baseball; 2 - 5 PM Bearcats vs. Middle Georgia</p> <p>Men's Lacrosse, 2 - 5 PM Bearcats vs. Lincoln Memorial</p> <p>Men's Basketball, 3:30 - 6:30 PM Bearcats vs. Flagler</p> <p>February 15 Women's Lacrosse 11 AM - 2 PM Bearcats vs. Embry-Riddle</p> <p>Baseball, 1 - 4 PM Bearcats vs. Middle Georgia</p> <p>February 16 Intramural - 5v5 Women's Basketball, 7 - 10 PM</p> <p>Intramural - 5v5 Men's Basketball 7 - 10 PM</p> <p>February 17 Women's Tennis, 1 - 4 PM Bearcats vs. Erskine</p> <p>Men's Tennis, 2 - 5 PM Bearcats @ Newberry</p> <p>Baseball, 4 - 7 PM Bearcats @ Francis Marion</p> <p>Intramural - 6v6 Volleyball 7 - 10 PM</p> <p>February 18 Women's Lacrosse, 4 - 7 PM Bearcats vs. Newberry</p> <p>Men's Lacrosse, 5 - 8 PM Bearcats @ Emmanuel</p> <p>Women's Basketball 5:30 - 7:30 PM Bearcats vs. Georgia Southwest- ern</p> <p>Intramural - Handball 7 - 10 PM</p> <p>Men's Basketball 7:30 - 10:30 PM Bearcats vs. Georgia Southwestern</p> <p>February 19 Women's Tennis, 2 - 5 PM Bearcats @ Newberry</p>
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Continued on pg. 23