PSU leadership in the NCAA grows

Pittsburg State University’s leadership voice in NCAA Division II continues to grow stronger. At the NCAA convention in Washington, D.C., this month, PSU President Steve Scott was selected vice chair of the NCAA DII President’s Council. At the same meeting, Deron Washington, a safety on the Gorilla football team, was one of two student athletes selected to serve on the NCAA DII Management Council. They are the first students ever to serve on the council in its 17-year history.

“The roles Deron and I will be playing offer a unique opportunity for Pittsburg State to impact Division II athletics at the national level,” Scott said. “As an institution, we have national prominence as a key part of our vision. These newly earned positions will allow us to participate and lead at that level. We’re both honored to have such an opportunity.”

As vice chair in 2015, Scott will serve as chair of the 16-member DII Planning and Finance Committee. Typically, the vice chair becomes chair of the council the following year.

Washington, an electronics engineering major from Raymore, Mo., attended the convention as the MIAA conference representative to the NCAA DII Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC). Washington was named to the SAAC in 2014.

Jim Johnson, director of Intercollegiate Athletics at PSU, said Washington is the first PSU student athlete to serve on the SAAC since its inception in 1997. His selection to the DII Management Council, along with that of Katie Mnichowicz, a softball player at Upper Iowa University, was made possible by a legislative change at this year’s convention that added SAAC representation to the body.

“Pittsburg State University is proud to be a member of the NCAA and of Division II,” said Johnson, who serves as a member of the NCAA DII Championships Committee and the DII Athletic Director’s Association Board of Directors. “To be able to provide leadership in the organization is a great responsibility and opportunity for the university. We’re fortunate to have people like President Scott and Deron who are willing to serve in these very important roles.”

Business Journals gives PSU high rankings

Pittsburg State University is the top-ranked regional university in Kansas and ahead of all other universities in the MIAA in the 2015 Business Journals ranking of the top 250 colleges and universities in the U.S.

In a release issued Wednesday, the Business Journals said they used a 19-point formula to “pinpoint the public universities and colleges that offer the best educational experiences to their students.” They used data from the National Center for Education Statistics and the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey to analyze 484 four-year public colleges.

Lee Young, PSU’s associate vice president for enrollment and student success, said the rankings are a reflection of PSU’s hard work to keep education high quality while maintaining affordability.

“Maintaining high quality programs while keeping costs down is a difficult balance, but one that Pittsburg State University works on every day,” said Young. “So much credit has to go to our faculty, who are dedicated both to the highest academic standards and to the needs of our students.”

The Business Journals said they gave the highest marks to “schools with highly selective admissions processes, strong retention and graduation rates, prestigious reputations, affordable tuition and housing costs, diverse faculties and student bodies, and economically robust communities.”
Students win top awards for research

Two Pittsburg State University undergraduate students have won top awards for their research.

Blaze Heckert, a senior in biology from Pittsburg, Kan., and Kalee Woody, a senior in biology from Bronaugh, Mo., were singled out for recognition with the Best Poster Award at the annual Kansas Institutional Development Award Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (K-INBRE) symposium in January in Topeka. The event showcases the work of students from 10 campuses in Kansas and northern Oklahoma.

Faculty advisers said the PSU students’ success won’t go unnoticed as they pursue their academic careers.

“Having awards such as these on their resumes helps undergraduate students immensely,” said Santimukul Santra, assistant professor in PSU’s Department of Chemistry and supervisor of the Nano-Bio-Tech Laboratory for targeted cancer therapy and infectious diseases where the students work. “It reflects their outstanding knowledge and expertise in research and brings them to the first line when competing with other top tier schools in academia. This is particularly very important for undergraduates.”

Heckert, who has already accepted early admission to the UMKC dental school, said the recognition confirmed for him that PSU students could compete with students from the big research universities in the state.

“I was really surprised when students and faculty from KU Med showed interest in my work,” Heckert said.

The students’ research can seem a little intimidating. Heckert, for example, presented a poster on his research on “Inhibitor-induced combination therapy of K-RAS driven NSCLC.” Woody's poster presentation was on “PSMA-receptor targeting magnetic nanoprobes: Novel nanotheranostics for the treatment of prostate carcinomas.”

In simpler terms, the students were looking into treatments for lung and prostate cancer.

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Internal auditing program receives grant

The Internal Auditing Education Partnership (IAEP) at Pittsburg State University recently received support from an international organization.

The Internal Auditing Academic Advancement Fund, part of the international Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA), recently approved a request from Pitt State for a $2,000 grant to support the university’s IAEP program.

Pittsburg State is one of only 46 universities in the world that feature an IAEP program, which prepares students with the skills and knowledge to help them conduct basic internal audits immediately upon hire, as well as provide a foundation to begin preparing for the Certified Internal Auditor examination.

Schools with an IAEP program teach an internal auditing curriculum within a degree program endorsed by the IIA.

“Students who earn an IAEP certification graduate with a tremendous advantage as they enter the workforce,” said Becky Casey, IAEP faculty co-coordinator at Pitt State. “It’s an incredible asset for the students and the university to be able to offer this within the Kelce College of Business.”

The grant will help support the purchase and implementation of IIA curriculum and professional development at Pitt State.

Established in 2006 to promote the IIA’s educational strategies, the Internal Auditing Academic Advancement Fund mission is “to carry out the educational and charitable purposes for internal audit education” of the IIA.

Casey, a member of the PSU faculty since 2002, recently earned her Certified Internal Auditor certification.

“That was always a personal goal of mine to earn the CIA certification,” said Casey, who earned her MBA from Pittsburg State.
PSU wins numerous ADDY awards

Pittsburgh State University and PSU students were big winners in the American Advertising Federation – Joplin Awards Ceremony on Saturday, Feb. 7. At the end of the ceremony, PSU’s Office of Marketing and Communication collected six silver and two gold ADDYS, the Department of Graphics and Imaging Technologies earned one gold and the students had 15 silver and eight gold.

“It was a great night for Pittsburg State University,” said Chris Kelly, PSU’s associate vice president for marketing and communication. “It was especially nice to see so many talented students recognized for their hard work in a room filled with some of the top professionals in the area.”

The Office of Marketing and Communication received gold awards for its digital/social media campaign, “Spring Break 2014 - #BEAGORILLA,” and for the video, “Honor, Courage, Champion – Capturing the Spirit of a Gorilla.” The office received silver ADDYS for the Arts Schedule Magnet; the

“Congratulations Class of 2014;” “#6 inches from Rio,” and “Pitt State Football #CODERED” videos and the spring and fall issues of the PittState Magazine.”

The Department of Graphics and Imaging Technologies also received a gold award for its Paint the Town Red window graphic.

Among the student awards, “Naturale,” a packaging design by Haily Ayres, won a Judge’s Choice Award and “Last Call of CTHULHU,” a packaging design by Kevin Cochran, was named Best in Show. All of the gold award winners advance to regional competition.

Student winners:


Inside Story Headline

This story can fit 75-125 words.

Selecting pictures or graphics is an important part of adding content to your newsletter.

Think about your article and ask yourself if the picture supports or enhances the message you’re trying to convey. Avoid selecting images that appear to be out of context.

Microsoft Publisher includes thousands of clip art images from which you can choose and import into your newsletter. There are also several tools you can use to draw shapes and symbols.

Once you have chosen an image, place it close to the article. Be sure to place the caption of the image near the image.
Students build houses for local dogs

Four local dogs will receive new homes in more ways than one this year, thanks to students in Pittsburg State’s College of Technology.

Students in Mike Neden’s Construction Systems course this week met the four dogs for which they will soon begin building new dog houses. The project, dubbed Habitat for Hounds, is in its 10th year at PSU.

“We love this project for many reasons,” said Neden, assistant professor of technology studies. “Not only does it help our students learn basic construction concepts, it also warms our hearts to help out area pets in this way.”

The four dogs are currently at the SEK Humane Society. Once they are adopted, the owners will receive the new dog houses, which are to be completed by the end of the spring semester. If the dogs are adopted before the houses are complete, the houses will be delivered to the owners upon completion. Students said they enjoy being a part of the annual project.

“It’s beneficial for us because it’s real-world application inside the classroom,” said senior Aldo Cillers. Junior Aaron White said the project “teaches us basic concepts in construction,” and junior Don Floro said it helps the students “learn to work together.”

Neden said it also promotes community service.

“It’s nice to be able to give back in this way,” he said. “The students are learning, which is the main priority, but they’re also helping the dogs and their future owners.”

Neden also said many of the supplies for the project come through a partnership with Home Depot.

“Our local Home Depot store gives us a bit of a price break on these materials, which really helps make projects like this possible,” he said. “We’re grateful for their support and involvement.”