Provost Kopp Explores Living and Learning Communities, New Student Targets and Mission at Work

New Provost Sacha (SAH-shuh) Kopp came to Gonzaga in June following a career served at large, mostly public institutions, including University of Nebraska at Omaha, Syracuse University, University of Texas and State University of New York at Stony Brook. So why Gonzaga?

He answered that, gave a sense of his early days here on campus and explained some of his future thinking when he met with the University’s Regents via Zoom on July 21.

His dad taught 40 years at Catholic Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa. His kids attended Lutheran schools and he witnessed their formative experiences. His wife, Gretchen, is seeking ordination in the Lutheran Church and serves as Protestant chaplain at Creighton University.

“I am excited to be a part of a faith-based university at Gonzaga,” he said.

His early days here included meeting people, learning their perspectives and understanding their recent experiences. “I try to understand what we need to do to help people move past the impact of the pandemic.”

He has met all his deans and is impressed by their leadership. Several arrived in the midst of the pandemic and are learning how best to serve their staff and students on the fly. “I will support them however I can,” he told Regents.

Early Observations and Insights

He is aware of how quickly the campus, workforce and student body have grown in the last two decades but sees that Gonzaga may not have “scaled up” fast enough to support the growth. “How can we better support each other?” he asked.

“As we return to campus full time, there is a lot of thought as to what it means to be a residential campus in 2022,” Kopp said. “As a Jesuit university, attending to the whole student experience, what will we do different to bring students to this loving and learning community? We need to take a fresh look at our housing plan, not just buildings but where students will be living and what they will be learning while they are here.”

He noted great work being done in the academic sector to build on the solid liberal arts foundation of Gonzaga and develop compelling academic programs for the future. He toured biology labs and learned a lot about what some of his faculty are studying. Undergraduate research allows students to learn by doing. “This forms unique experiences of what students can do here,” he said.

In a broader campus conversation, he addressed President McCulloh’s desire to update the current goals of the University’s Strategic Plan, which were crafted in 2015. “The goals in the Strategic Plan include many that have since been accomplished,” he said. “Construction of the Bollier and Woldson centers, retention exceeding 90% (first-year to sophomore), ranking in the top 100 of all universities in the United States. With all those boxes being checked, it’s natural to ask what’s next. What aggressive goals will we seek and what will make us current in 2030 that we didn’t know in 2010?”

He talked about the importance of defining our potential audiences, saying there is no single approach. Gonzaga has little transfer population, but this presents opportunities. "Economic access will be key, providing a different set of support services for transfer students as our current system really caters to traditional students," he said. "Gonzaga must always strive to bring in a diverse array of students, recognizing the Jesuit mission to serve others. So, we have an opportunity to change our student body and it will change us and enrich our campus community."

“Serving students coming out of high school and off to a college campus is an important audience for us. But we need to think about extending the invitation to other audiences – adult learners and professionals. We are embarking on work life now that looks nothing like it did when I graduated from college,” he said. “The notion that we’ll learn everything for a career at age 21 and move on is outdated.

“The Center for Lifelong Learning and School of Leadership Studies are offering certification programs that are more needed now than ever,” Kopp continued. “The business community is doing it themselves. Microsoft and Amazon are developing learning certificate programs for their employees. Why not us?”
If first impressions are accurate, and both Jessie Mancilla and Jamie Bartlett believe they are, they have found a home at Gonzaga.

Mancilla is the new Unity Multicultural Educational Center (UMEC) director, and this is his first venture into life in the Pacific Northwest. Bartlett is the new Lincoln LGBTQ+ Resource Center chief and has spent the past year teaching at Eastern Washington University and making her home in Spokane. Both serve the Diversity, Inclusion, Community and Equity (DICE) office.

“I have found everyone here suspiciously nice,” Bartlett says, “and that impression has turned out to be genuine.”

“Yes, 100%,” Mancilla concurs. “This seems to be a special place.”

Mancilla was drawn to Gonzaga by the intersection of Ignatian Spirituality and social justice education. For Bartlett, she found all that was happening at Gonzaga intriguing. While the Lincoln Center is 15 years old, she says it doesn't have a large footprint on campus, and she is ready to help students, staff and faculty expand the breadth of outreach and understanding.

**Q&A with Mancilla and Bartlett**

Where is Gonzaga's best opportunity to improve the quality of campus life for our underrepresented populations?

**Bartlett:** “It’s a complex issue. A common image of Gonzaga is of a pretty homogenous group of people, faith-based and white. I don’t think that is always the case in our student population. We need to get the word out that Gonzaga is evolving. We’re trailing in our growth in faculty and staff, which probably should start to look more like our student body. Gonzaga recognizes that deficit and there are efforts afoot to attract a more diverse faculty and staff.”

**Mancilla:** “We need to continue improving the cultural competency of both staff and faculty. Students are willing to engage in what it means to be culturally competent. But Gonzaga can sometimes appear to be stuck in its old ways. But as Jamie says, it is going in the right direction.”

What key issues should Gonzaga address?

**Bartlett:** “There is a lot going on in our world, and sometimes we try to shelter our students. But we can’t do that. There are a lot of social justice issues our students care about and we should make sure the University cares about them as well. With the uptick in mental health issues, violence based on bigotry, homelessness and food insecurity, we are struggling with these things, and we need to address them.”

**Mancilla:** “Jesuits have always been on the front line and able to meet people where they are and to educate them. We must continue to be on the front lines and take initiative to help make this a better world.”

What about Gonzaga makes you think we have it in us to make this a more welcoming place for all people?

**Mancilla:** “It’s in our mission. If we don’t believe in our mission, what are we doing here? With our Catholic, Jesuit and humanistic perspective, being open to ideas and needs of others is so important. If something doesn’t align with our thinking, then we discuss it and learn from it.”

**UMECA advocates for underrepresented students and provides experiential learning opportunities for all students to create a community that integrates and values multiple perspectives and cultural narratives. UMEC’s 25th anniversary kicks off with a Block Party for the GU community on Sept. 9, 4-6 p.m. on Foley Lawn and Rosauer Courtyard with food trucks, games, music and more.**

Your previous work has focused on service to others, which is very Jesuit. Talk about that?

**Bartlett:** “It has been a big part of my life. I have collected degrees and could be making more money doing something else. But there’s no life in that for me. I was raised to be in service. Even if you don’t have money, you give something. I’m capable of building things, writing things, a gift to help others. I have a quote in my home that reads something like this: ‘Know more than you knew yesterday and lessen the suffering of others.’ By astronomer Neil deGrasse Tyson.”

**Mancilla:** “I don’t think about service to others, it just happens in my lived experiences. It comes naturally. I found joy in the mission work I was doing, engaging with Hispanic and Latino youth, recognizing my own privileges and having this desire to go deeper into helping others.”

New UMEC Director Jessie Mancilla and Lincoln LGBTQ+ Resource Center Director Jamie Bartlett share thoughts on GU.
GU’s Center for Lifelong Learning is expanding the University’s continuing education offerings by partnering with campus units to offer certificates, workshops, webinars and more to the public.

As part of the launch, CLL will be posting several stories recounting the experiences of some of its programs’ graduates. Keep an eye out at gonzaga.edu.

Already, six local organizations’ leaders who either themselves or whose employees have taken – and continue to take – the certificate programs describe how the experience has influenced their workforce and culture: Spokane Airports, Jubilant HollisterStier, Delta Dental of Washington, Sonderen Packaging, Washington State Department of Transportation – Eastern Region, and Aging & Long-Term Care of Eastern Washington.

On the individual level, here’s a taste of three stories:

**Anngie Zepeda**

was a program manager for a nonprofit organization serving the Latino community when a friend suggested she consider taking Gonzaga’s Certificate in Design Thinking.

She remembers wondering if pursuing the program would help her decide whether she was capable of going back to school for a degree.

“It changed my life’s vision,” Zepeda said of her Gonzaga experience. “I realized that everything can be solved if you go right to the main problem.”

“As a program manager, my days were full of problems and stress. Learning about Design Thinking definitely made my job easier in all ways and changed my mindset.”

**Kim Hanna**

will become the first woman to serve as president of the International Cotton Association next year, and while the Texan is CEO of her own Dallas-based business and has never set foot on Gonzaga’s campus, Hanna credits Gonzaga for helping her navigate the big step that’s coming up.

Taking the Certificate in Women’s Leadership program in 2021 “was an experience that helped change my leadership paradigm,” said Hanna, of TransGlobal Inspection Services.

“It wasn’t long after the program began – I had just finished reading ‘How Women Rise’ – when I was nominated for second vice president of the International Cotton Association. What I learned throughout the program helped give me tools and the confidence needed to navigate the journey.”

The organization will be 182 years old when Hanna becomes president in November 2023.

“I’m so grateful the program’s resources are still available to me as I still find myself going back to refer to them,” she said.

**Tienaya Sigmund-Godes**

A letter published in the local newspaper during a 2018 congressional campaign served as a catalyst for Tienaya Sigmund-Godes.

She had been asked to write the letter supporting a candidate but, not confident in her writing, thought she could dodge it. The request kept coming. Finally, she took a deep breath and wrote.

Seeing it in the newspaper was one thing, but hearing it read at a Head Start meeting she attended? It bolstered her confidence.

“Before that I was really quiet, very much a homebody” and raising six children, said Sigmund-Godes, who has lived in the same house – with no air conditioning – in northeast Spokane for 13 years.

As she took on various advocacy roles, Gonzaga’s Certificate in Women’s Leadership landed on her radar. She had completed the Essential Skills program through ZoNE, a community initiative that’s part of Gonzaga’s outreach to northeast Spokane, and wanted more.

She got into the leadership class with a little help from Rachelle Strawther, who oversees GU’s certificate programs.

“It was one of the best decisions I ever made,” Sigmund-Godes gushed, pointing out the bonus of it being the first in-person session after being offered virtually. “I had an amazing cohort of women. It forced me to look deeper inside myself. What we read and listened to gave me a new lens, a different perspective.

“It was more than my usual self-reflection. It pushed into who you are, your basic beliefs instilled as a child, unconscious biases.”

It also led to a full-time job.

For more information, go to gonzaga.edu/lifelonglearning.
HOLOCAUST EXHIBIT MAKES ENCORE APPEARANCE, OF Sorts

Gonzaga was one of the first American universities scheduled to host the “Americans and the Holocaust” traveling exhibition in March 2020, just as COVID-19 shut down activities everywhere.

The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum exhibit is back, on display in the Cowles Rare Book Room on the third floor of Foley Center through Oct. 7.

The exhibit examines the motives, pressures and fears that shaped America’s response to Nazism, war and genocide, presented in pictures, factoids and video.

In addition, Gonzaga student Amelia Skiles, under the supervision of History Associate Professor Veta Schlimgen, created an exhibit also on display in the Cowles Rare Book Room on “Hate in the Northwest.”

EXHIBIT POSES FOUR QUESTIONS

“The main exhibit asks visitors to consider four questions about the Holocaust,” says Site Manager Brad Matthies, associate dean at Foley Library.

1. **What did Americans know?**

Reproductions of newspapers from the 1940s and an interactive newspaper map feature accounts of the rise of Nazism, genocide and war. Many of the newspapers included were discovered by “citizen historians” – teachers, students, librarians and history buffs who voluntarily searched local newspapers and submitted articles to the Holocaust Museum’s online database.

2. **Did Americans help Jewish refugees?**

An “Immigration Restricted” panel compiled from reports submitted to the State Department from the U.S. consulate in Berlin chronicles the number and types of visas issued to immigrants born in Germany. Although there were no special visas for Jews, U.S. diplomats reported that by the late 1930s, most immigrants were Jewish. And, in fact, Jewish immigrants made up more than 50% of all immigration to the United States in 1939.

3. **Why did Americans go to war?**

Most Americans did not want to go to war after having endured the losses incurred during World War I. However, the U.S. government was becoming increasingly aware of the Nazi-inflicted genocide on Jewish citizens throughout Europe, Germany’s violation of its pledge to suspend submarine warfare in the North Atlantic and Mediterranean Sea, and its attempts to persuade Mexico into an alliance against the U.S.

4. **How did Americans respond to the Holocaust?**

Americans first learned of the plan by Nazi Germany and its collaborators to murder all European Jews in November 1942. Often, the history of the Holocaust is told separately from the history of World War II. This exhibition – particularly the film in this section of the exhibition – places the timeline of these two events together (as they were experienced at the same time by people who lived through this period).

HATE IN THE PNW

Matthies says a collection of materials from the Foley archives on hate in the Pacific Northwest suggests that many of the conditions that allowed the Holocaust to happen are still around today.

Skiles’ exhibit supports that suggestion. Her exhibit focuses on the basic beliefs of the Christian Identity movement, documented by the Aryan Nations, newspaper accounts and other sources.

“Those beliefs justify their white supremacy, racism and antisemitism through claims that white Christians in the U.S. and Northern and Western Europe are the true chosen children of God,” Skiles says. "Their interpretations of Bible verses uplift white Christians while demeaning and vilifying people of color and Jews.”

Why the Inland Northwest? Sparse population, demographics and political climate left people feeling they could openly express their hate and bigotry, Skiles asserts.

For more information about “Americans and the Holocaust,” visit [www.gonzaga.edu/holocaustexhibit](http://www.gonzaga.edu/holocaustexhibit) for free tickets to the public presentation, exhibit hours and tours.
It’s been two years without a reunion celebration of Zag alumni, so Gonzaga is bringing back the Zagapalooza All-Class Reunion, Oct. 14-16 on campus. Live and in person.

After COVID-19 struck down the past two reunions, Alumni Relations has invited alumni from all class years back for this three-day event and are expecting more than 800 alumni and guests to return.

“Gonzaga has become a second home for so many of our faculty, staff and alumni, and we cannot wait to celebrate with everyone during these events,” said Kara Hertz, Assistant Vice President, Alumni & External Relations.

The weekend festivities begin with a free pre-Zagapalooza event Oct. 13, 4 p.m. in the Hemmingson Ballroom featuring alumnus and Indigenous human rights lawyer Julian Aguon ('04) talking about resistance, resilience and collective power, themes of his collection of essays entitled “No Country for Eight-Spot Butterflies.” Appetizers will be served.

A happy hour welcome reception is Oct. 14 at 6 p.m. in the Hemmingson Ballroom, followed by class socials for those celebrating their 40th, 30th, 25th, 20th, 15th, 10th, 5th and 1st reunions, at various Spokane sites. Anyone from other class years may plan a class social as well, by notifying the Alumni Office, which is set to assist with the planning. Check www.gonzaga.edu/zagapalooza for details.

Various activities take place on Saturday, Oct. 15, including campus tours, an Admission panel for parents of future Zags at 10 a.m., a "Business and Bubbles" brunch hosted by the School of Business Administration at 10:30 a.m., a University Update and Q&A with University leadership at 12:30 p.m., a School of Engineering open house at 2 p.m. at the Bollier Center for Integrated Science and Engineering, and the women’s basketball FanFest at 4 p.m. in McCarthey Athletic Center. The Unity Multicultural Education Center (UMEC) celebrates 25 years and will be honored throughout the weekend events.

The evening culminates with an all-class Bulldog Blast at the Spokane Convention Center, 6-9 p.m. with live music, dancing, heavy hors d’oeuvres and beverages. The Gonzaga cheer squad and pep band will be there to rally the troops. Suspicion is that alumni will continue the festivities well into the night at other area locations.

A Mass will be celebrated Oct. 16, 10:30 a.m. in the University Chapel.

Faculty, staff and administration are invited to attend. A discount of $50 is available by using the promo code ZAG-STAFF when registering. The weekend registration fee includes a Zag Swag welcome gift, special Zag Shop discounts, and food and drinks at most of the events.

Registration is open for this all-Zag weekend. For questions, contact the Alumni Office at gonzagareunions@gonzaga.edu.
What’s a GOOB? Certainly nothing you’d expect coming from the offices of Mission & Ministry.

But wait. As it turns out, Gonzaga Out of Bounds (GOOB) is the most popular pre-Orientation program at Gonzaga, with 25 trip leaders and a waitlist for the 75 first-year student slots.

Since 2000, run by GU Outdoors, this program has provided outdoor adventures for incoming students. The five-day GU outdoor orientation adventure takes campers to northern Montana to hike the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, bike the Hiawatha Trail, raft the Clark Fork River and learn about adjusting to college life at Gonzaga.

But this year, it was unclear if GOOB was good to go or would be short on personnel. “With changes in staffing [in GU Outdoors],” including Matt Edenfield’s new role as director of outdoor partnerships and collaborations, “we didn’t know if we could run GOOB without ‘capital A adults’ as pro staff,” explained senior Nelly Alger, computer science major and GOOB coordinator.

Dean of Student Development Matt Lamsma contacted Luke Lavin, co-director of Mission and Ministry, for support. Given Mission and Ministry’s growing programs connecting spirituality and the outdoors, a history of partnering with GU Outdoors on Men’s Retreat, and the Jesuits’ emphasis on “collaboration in the care of our Common Home,” Lavin said yes. Campus Ministers Candace Williams and Ben Chu, who have outdoor training and experience, agreed to serve as the professional staff for GOOB. Mission and Ministry canceled its pre-orientation program, Embark, and invited those participants and leaders to be a part of GOOB. A marriage of two outstanding programs emerged.

Alger has enjoyed working with Chu and Williams, grateful that they are “serving the trip leaders” as the “trip leaders are serving the students.”

Chu sees the collaboration as “mutually life-giving and beneficial,” as he can help run GOOB while also getting connected “to some of our best-trained outdoor student leaders on campus.”

On day two of the six-day training, Chu said he was already getting to know several trip leaders who are interested in spirituality and the outdoors. Some of these trip leaders participated in the spring 2022 Wilderness Retreat, led by Williams. She already knew several trip leaders because she was their classmate in Gonzaga’s Outdoor Leadership Class (taught by Edenfield) or in Wilderness First Aid. Williams was most looking forward to time with incoming first-year students, especially since her ministry is focused on outreach, retreats and small groups for them.

Alger explained that for the first-year students, “This is their first college experience. They’re going to college, but first, they’re going to GOOB.” She couldn’t wait to see the impact the trip leaders and these outdoor adventures have on them, especially for those who have never been camping, hiking, biking or rafting. She believes “The outdoors are for everyone” and is glad to be part of making another GOOB possible.

GOOB is orchestrated to help new students build relationships, ease into the transition of life away from home, and experience an adventure.
Around Campus

The annual Mass of the Holy Spirit is Sept. 13, 10 a.m., at St. Aloysius Church with lunch following in the Cataldo Courtyard. This Mass gives all a chance to ask blessings and guidance of the Holy Spirit during our academic year and to gather with joy as a Gonzaga community. Only classes conflicting with Mass and lunch are canceled.

“The Fentanyl Crisis: How to Keep Loved Ones Safe,” will be discussed by Dr. Caleb Banta-Green, acting professor in Psychiatry and Behavioral Health Sciences at the UW School of Medicine, Sept. 13, 6 p.m., Hemmingson Ballroom. Other doctors will join him in a Q&A session following the speech.

“Thayne McCulloh’s Fall President’s Address,” will take place Sept. 14, noon-1:30 p.m., in the Hemmingson Ballroom. Lunch will be provided for those who plan to attend in person. Click here by Sept. 6 to RSVP for lunch. A livestream option of the presentation will be available. Advance registration is required for this free event.

The Environmental Protection Agency has looked kindly on Gonzaga, awarding: the Climate Center $100,000 to further its work with regional schools and assist five local organizations with their own environmental education efforts; and a cross-disciplinary team of Gonzaga students and professors $24,982 to develop a sustainable filtration material to treat contaminated water.

President McCulloh has asked faculty and staff to provide feedback on the goals of the Gonzaga University Strategic Plan. He wants to know what goals you like or do not like, which goals should be kept, discarded, or modified, and why. Please complete this survey by Sept. 15 to share your input on the current strategic plan.

Accounting Professor Sara Kern has been appointed associate dean of Gonzaga’s undergraduate business programs. Management Associate Professor Rebecca Bull-Schaefer is the new director of GU’s M.B.A. programs.

Gonzaga student-athletes led the West Coast Conference with 255 Zags named to the 20th annual WCC Commissioner’s Honor Roll. Next closest was LMU with 226.

Zag Dining rebranded The Marketplace Iggy’s Market – affectionately named after St. Ignatius, and an homage to its former Iggy’s Pizza location. Iggy’s Market includes all of the HandCrafted menu’s sandwiches under the name Iggy’s Sandwiches. Meanwhile, Qdoba has taken over Handcrafted’s former space, adjacent to Starbucks.

GU and Carroll College have created an accelerated pathway to law school for undergrad Carroll students. The dual-degree program offers students three years at Carroll and three at GU Law. Gonzaga has a similar program with EWU.

Gonzaga Welcomes New ACT SIX SCHOLARS

Gonzaga welcomes eight new Act Six Scholars from the Spokane and Seattle-Tacoma areas as part of the incoming class of 2026.

Selected through a rigorous three-month competition, these urban and community leaders will receive full-tuition, full-need, four-year scholarships as members of the latest Act Six cohort.

The diverse student leaders were chosen for their commitment to serving on campus and in their communities, their passion for learning, eagerness to foster intercultural relationships, and willingness to step out of their comfort zones.