

# Spirit

FACULTY & STAFF NEWSLETTER

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## Capturing the Zag Experience

### *The Making of Gonzaga's Latest Commercial*

*By Grace McElligott ('23, '25 M.A.)*

Students pack a small section of the Kennel, the camera rolls, and the energy is electric. But instead of the usual roaring cheers, students erupt into exaggerated, silent celebrations, arms flailing, dramatic expressions. The production team bites back laughter, struggling to keep the shot steady.

To me, moments like these - unscripted, authentic and uniquely Gonzaga - made the filming of the University's latest brand commercial both a challenge and a joy.

Amid a brand refresh, our marketing and communications department produced a commercial showcasing the authentic Zag experience using internal talent rather than an external agency or film company. Senior Director of Marketing Ashley Martin ('05) says, "I am so proud of our small but mighty team for creating such a high caliber brand asset that will inspire people to continue their story at Gonzaga."

Behind the camera was Zack Bagdon ('16), a Gonzaga broadcast journalism alumnus and a passionate storyteller. Managing the project was Assistant Director of Marketing Jessica Maiers.

This was not an easy task, but their dedication carried them through. "I think the main character was coffee. Lots and lots of coffee," jokes Maiers.

The process was years in the making – countless hours in coffee shops writing and rewriting scripts, ensuring authenticity and alignment with Gonzaga's brand messaging. After days of writers' block, inspiration for the script struck when former staff member Matt Edenfield emailed Bagdon about a conversation he had with a student facing a difficult decision. His simple yet powerful words stuck: "You Are Ready."



Zack Bagdon ('16)  
and Jessica Maiers

That phrase became the heartbeat of the commercial.

Bringing this vision to life required extensive stakeholder support and feedback from all corners of campus. Undergraduate, graduate and law enrollment, alumni, advancement, student affairs, mission integration, the provost, the president, and students weighed in to ensure the script and direction of the video accurately captured each of their areas. Scheduling people, time and locations required a myriad of emails and phone calls. Once filming started, the real magic was behind the scenes. Every person on screen and behind the camera is a Gonzaga student, alum or employee, making this commercial a true reflection of the community.

"For The Kennel scene, we reached out to GSBA and Kennel Club to recruit current students, and for the aerial shots on campus, my Zag alumni friends are in the spot, biking around," says Bagdon.

Each person featured has a poignant story to tell.

Maiers says, "There are students taking on really cool academic projects, alumni making a difference in the world."

I joined Bagdon to take behind-the-scenes footage and act as an assistant on set. We had the opportunity to fly down to sunny Los Angeles in the cold of Spokane winter to meet alum Mandi Price ('14) who showed us around Warner Brothers Studios, where she is leading the way as a Black woman producer in Hollywood.

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**Watch  
the video  
Here!**

Scan the QR code to watch, or visit [gonzaga.edu/LeadTheWay](http://gonzaga.edu/LeadTheWay) to learn more.

## Lead the Way

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The smaller moments were just as enjoyable.

Lucien Bourcier ('26) and Jenna Johnston ('26) appear walking down Centennial Trail in dialogue. After Bagdon yells, "Action!" Johnston asks some comical hard-hitting questions like "Do you dip your buffalo wings in blue cheese or ranch?" to ignite a genuine conversation for the spot.

Viewers see Jordy Jones ('26 M.A.), a working mother and her toddler, Everett, on her lap while she is taking online classes. What they don't see? The hilarious outtakes. "He was the sweetest, cutest little kid, but there's a ton of cuts that didn't make it in the commercial

of me trying to get Everett to run towards the camera and then jump into his mom's arms," says Bagdon. Everett had other plans.

And of course, there's Mia Torres ('24), the main character of the video. Just days before walking at graduation, she stayed up late filming, alongside the marketing and communications team to get the perfect shot.

"Mia was just an absolute champ," says Bagdon. "I think she had a final that day and still came to the six-hour shoot. She's a trooper."

In the end, Bagdon and Maiers want every person in the Zag family to see themselves in the commercial. For prospective students and families to want to visit campus, current students to feel inspired to pursue great

things, alumni to feel a sense of nostalgia, the local community to recognize iconic Spokane locations like the Spokane River, Rocks of Sharon and Minnehaha.

"It makes me emotional towards the end, especially when Mia says, 'You Are Ready' and invites people to lead the way," says Maiers.

For Bagdon, it's a reflection on his own journey.

"I grew up in Spokane. Gonzaga has always been a part of my life – being born here, going to school here, and then working here. So, it's been a cool experience getting the opportunity to put together this type of video so other people can get a taste of the Gonzaga experience I had."



WELCOMING GONZAGA'S  
27TH PRESIDENT-ELECT

**KATIA PASSERINI, PH.D.**

Dr. McCulloh and the Presidential Transition Committee invite you to a special event:

- Dr. Passerini will offer brief comments, followed by a Q&A session and informal introductions.
- Light refreshments will be served.

**STAFF RECEPTION**  
Tuesday, Apr. 15  
9-10:30 a.m.  
Cataldo Globe Room

**FACULTY RECEPTION**  
Wednesday, Apr. 16  
12-1:30 p.m.  
Hemmingson Ballroom

Please RSVP and include any questions you would like considered for the Q&A through [this form](#) by April 9.

PLEASE ATTEND THE RECEPTION FOR THE GROUP  
YOU AFFILIATE WITH MOST.



# After 50 Years...

## *A look at the lasting legacies of two iconic professors*

By Dale Goodwin ('86 M.A.T.)

Two venerable professors. Political science professor Blaine Garvin's diminishing hairline and rather diminutive stature resembles Richard Dreyfus' teacher character in "Mr. Holland's Opus." Business law's Don Hackney more resembles John Houseman's portrayal of the rather wry-witted law professor Charles Kingsfield in "The Paper Chase."

Both have taught Gonzaga students for 50 years or more, becoming hallmarks of this esteemed University academy. Garvin doesn't subscribe to religious beliefs. Hackney is a devout Catholic. But both are intrinsically drawn to GU's Jesuit mission and ideology.

Garvin retires in May following 54 years teaching students how to be outstanding lawyers, business and civic leaders, teachers, public servants and masters at their crafts. Hackney is finishing his 50th year teaching basically one class, business law, to nearly every student seeking a business degree from Gonzaga. He's not ready to hang up his "second career" quite yet.

These two men have this in common: They love their students. They cherish the give-and-take in the classroom, encourage students to ask questions, and they, in turn, ask them questions right back. It's how they skillfully engage their students in robust conversations.

Neither imagined a lifetime of teaching at Gonzaga when they signed up. Garvin was fresh out of doctoral school at University of California-Berkeley in 1971, and soon found it comfortable being among students who yearned to learn what he could teach them.

Hackney, a 1969 Gonzaga undergrad, graduated in 1974 from GU Law School



Hackney (left) celebrated 50 years with Gonzaga this year and isn't quite ready to close this chapter.



Garvin (right) will retire in May after 54 years of teaching Gonzaga students.

and began his vocation as an attorney and his avocation as an adjunct teacher. By 2006, both his law practice and teaching schedule grew to a point that he had to decide on one over the other.

"I was running out of me," says Hackney, whose students call him Law Dog.

"I think Don enjoys the study of law more than the practice of it," colleague Andrew Brajcich observes. It shows.

Hackney walks daily 3.5 miles around his property saying the rosary every morning, and then again later around campus, engaging students along the way.

In his later years – until this year – Garvin found refuge in the Hemmingson Center, sitting in a rocking chair in the Hearth Lounge for his quad espresso and pumpkin bread. "This gave me a chance to ruminate and plan the day," he says.

In the last year, particularly, Garvin's sight has diminished. A few falls and bloody knees have relegated him to his office, classroom and other frequent stops inside College Hall. His friends in Campus

Printing now have a cup of coffee from the lounge ready for his morning visits.

Stepping away from teaching is a possibility Garvin never imagined before his eyesight began to fail. In addition, wife Susan has health issues and Garvin knows his place now is in their home.

Political science Chair Joe Gardner and his colleagues will miss Garvin immensely. "His teaching style has a way of being both sophisticated and lucid, integrating complex ideas into his highly developed stories, all in a way that is both clear and engaging to his students."

This comes from his skill as a storyteller, a defining element of his teaching, as it is for Hackney.

Garvin once said to a colleague, "If I was walking in the woods and found a huge diamond I wouldn't throw it back." He has found his treasure here. "I've had the best job in the best place in the world."

And for Hackney, "There isn't a subject I talk about in class that I didn't do. I'm

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# Garvin & Hackney

*Continued from pg. 3*

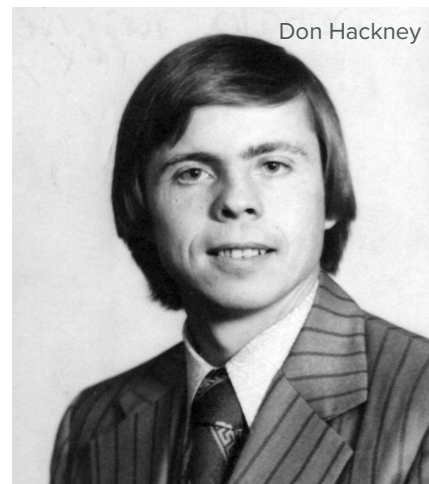
profoundly blessed to have been associated with Gonzaga for so long.”

Both professors agree the commitment to Jesuit values here is much stronger than when they arrived. The teaching and community spirit is better, too.

Thanks, gentlemen, for your service to Gonzaga for a combined 104 years.



Did you know Garvin ran for state representative in 1974? Photos from the University Archives and Special Collections.



On the evening of April 10, several hundred people will enter McCarthy Athletic Center ... and they will *not* look like they're headed to a Gonzaga basketball game. They will have shed their blue and red sweatshirts for suits and cocktail dresses, because the event taking place is the Ignatian Gala.

The University began the Ignatian Gala in 2008 as a way to celebrate the generosity that has shaped Gonzaga for generations. The event, organized by University Advancement, took place annually through 2017, then once again in 2019 marking the close of the most recent fundraising campaign. Post-COVID, the 2022 event celebrated the centennial of the School of Business Administration.

The Ignatian Spirit Award, one of the University's highest honors, is a significant part of each gala, honoring individuals and families whose generosity, leadership and commitment reflect the values of Jesuit education. Recipients have made an impact through their philanthropy, advocacy and service.

"The Ignatian Gala is one of those nights that reminds us why Gonzaga is so special: It's about community, gratitude and the incredible impact of generosity," says Joe Poss, vice president of University Advancement. "The Ignatian Spirit Award shines a light on those who live out *cura personalis*, *Magis*, and leadership, inspiring all of us to do the same. These two uniquely Gonzaga traditions are about honoring the past and celebrating what's possible when we come together in support of the mission."

This year, the gala and the award honor Julie and Thayne McCulloh for their combined six decades of leadership, but in the way the McCullohs would expect: A celebration recognizing that Gonzaga's accomplishments are the result of a shared calling to the Mission by the Boards of Trustees and Regents, faculty and staff, amazing student leaders and community partners.

"This year's Ignatian Gala is so much more than a tradition, it's a heartfelt 'thank you' to

Thayne and Julie," says Poss. "My hope is that this evening shows them how much they mean to the Gonzaga family while also sparking even more generosity, connection and commitment to carrying their legacy forward as catalysts for change in this world."

This year's Gala expenses are covered entirely by community sponsors and ticket sales.

Stay tuned for photos and videos in the weeks ahead!

## Mark Your Calendars!

A campus community celebration with Julie and Thayne McCulloh will take place on Monday, May 5, 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Watch for more details to come!



Tune in to hear Dr. McCulloh share his experiences as a student, staff member and ultimately as GU's first lay president for the past 16 years. [gonzaga.edu/podcasts](https://gonzaga.edu/podcasts)

# Honoring Anniversarians

*26 faculty, staff and administrators honored for decades of service*

President Thayne McCulloh, on behalf of Gonzaga, honored 26 members of the University community in February who embody the spirit of St. Ignatius every day through their exemplary partnership, dedication and commitment to fulfill our Mission.

These colleagues have contributed 25, 30, 35, 40, 45 and 55 years to their work here at Gonzaga.

## 25 Years

**Natalie Borek**, Registrars Office  
**Theodore Di Maria**, Philosophy  
**Sara Ganzerli**, Civil Engineering  
**Robert Gray**, Intercollegiate Men's Golf  
**Rob Joyce**, Service Management  
**Tod Marshall**, English  
**Ann Price**, Center for Global Engagement  
**Michael Pringle**, English  
**Carie Weeks**, Admission

## 30 Years

**Mary Beth Charleboix**, Student Accounts  
**Daniel Gehn**, Men's Crew  
**Sara Ganzerli**, Civil Engineering  
**Heather Gores**, Athletics

**Kevin Hekmatpanah**, Music

**Carol Huston**, Registrars Office

**Molly Kretchmar-Hendricks**, College of Arts and Sciences, Dean's Office

**Joanne Shiosaki**, Student Publications

**Heather Teshome**, Registrars Office

## 35 Years

**Mark Alfino**, Philosophy  
**David Calhoun**, Philosophy  
**Gina Thomas**, Provost

## 40 Years

**Allen Albano**, Plant Services  
**Keith Gauthier**, Plant Services

## 45 Years

**Robert Lyons**, Mission and Ministry  
**Kai Uahinui**, Integrations Operations

## 55 Years

**Ken Sammons**, Plant Services







# Exemplifying Gonzaga's Mission

The Work Values recognition honors those who fulfill the University Mission in their daily work. Congrats to the champions named from October to February!



## October

**Jessie Mancilla**, director, Unity Multicultural Education Center

**Chris Almgren** (not pictured), facilities coordinator I, Auxiliary Enterprises



## November & December

**Melkam Tesfaye**, assistant director, Student Conduct and Conflict

**Laura Hutton**, manager, Foley Library User Services

## Human Resources Recognized for Retirement Plan Transition

Gonzaga's HR benefits team received a first-place award from industry publication Pensions & Investments for work accomplished last year to transition to a target date retirement fund. Entries for this recognition are evaluated by a panel of industry experts, plan sponsors, writers and editors who selected Gonzaga for the HR team's commitment to increasing employees' knowledge of retirement plan options.

Lisa Schwartzburg, assistant vice president of HR, commented, "It is exciting to be recognized at a national level for the work our team does. Caring for our employees is at the core of who we are as a university as we strive to offer benefits that care for the whole person."

**Congrats!**



## January

**Ayaka Dohi**, director, Payne Center for Leadership Development

**Yu-Kyung Kang**, associate professor of English

**Alex Giffin**, academic advisor, School of Health Sciences

**Mandy Baird**, program manager, School of Leadership Studies



## February

**Dante Jester**, climate resilience program manager, Institute for Climate, Water and the Environment

**Juliane Mora**, associate professor of communications studies

**Angela Velasco-Early**, mental health counselor, Health and Counseling Services



## *Dessert of the Month*

# Neapolitan Sugar Cookies

These are a bit more complex, but still pretty manageable, and the color and flavor make them the perfect addition to any Easter brunch spread!

*\*Recipe adapted from the Vanilla Bean Blog by Sarah Kieffer*

### INGREDIENTS

2 1/2 cups plus 1 tablespoon [364 g] all-purpose flour  
3/4 teaspoon baking soda  
3/4 teaspoon salt  
1/2 cup of freeze-dried strawberries, which equals 8 grams (measured before pulsing)  
1 cup [2 sticks | 227 g] unsalted butter room temperature  
1 3/4 cup [350 g] granulated sugar  
1 large egg plus 1 large yolk  
2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract  
2 or 3 drops red food coloring optional  
2 tablespoons Dutch-process cocoa powder  
Sprinkles or granulated sugar for rolling

### INSTRUCTIONS

**Step 1** Preheat the oven to 350F. Line a baking sheets with parchment paper.

**Step 2** In a medium bowl, combine the flour, baking soda, and salt.

**Step 3** In the bowl of a food processor fitted with a blade or in a blender, pulverize the strawberries into a powder.

**Step 4** In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle, beat the butter on medium speed until creamy, about 1 minute. Add the sugar and beat on medium speed until light and fluffy, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the egg, yolk, and vanilla, and beat on medium speed until combined. Add the flour mixture and beat on low speed until just combined.

**Step 5** Dump the dough out onto the counter and divide it into three equal portions. Put one-third of the dough back into the mixer and add the powdered strawberries and food coloring, if using. Mix on low speed until totally combined, then remove the dough and wipe out the bowl of the mixer. Add another third of dough to the mixer. Add the cocoa powder and mix on low speed until totally combined.

**Step 6** Pinch a small portion (about 1/2 oz [15 g]) of each of the three doughs, and press them gently together, so they adhere to each other, but keep their unique colors. Gently roll into a ball, then roll the ball into granulated sugar. Place 6 or 7 cookies on each sheet pan. Bake the cookies one pan at a time, rotating halfway through baking. Bake until the sides are set, and the cookies are puffed in the middle, about 10 to 11 minutes.

**Step 7** Transfer the sheet pan to a wire rack and let the cookies cool for 5 to 10 minutes on the pan, then remove them and let them cool completely on the wire rack.

*Happy baking!*



# Around Campus

## *Events, celebrations and lectures of note this month*

**April 5, 2 p.m., 7:30 p.m.** Don't miss five actors from one of the oldest Shakespeare touring theater companies in the world take the stage to perform Hamlet | Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center

**April 9, 7:30-9 p.m.** Brown University chemistry professor Sarah Delaney will discuss her work in DNA research and human disease at the annual Timothy J. O'Leary, S.J. Public Lecture hosted by the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry | Wolff Auditorium

**April 11-12, 7 p.m.** Enjoy a variety of work presented by the student choreography class of spring 2025, boundless dance classes and more | Magnuson Theatre

**April 12, 7:30-9 p.m.** The Gonzaga Music Department is hosting a gala including performances by the Gonzaga choirs, the wind ensemble, the symphony orchestra and the jazz ensemble | Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center

**April 13, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.** Join the annual Zag alumni and friends for an Easter egg hunt | Herak Quad

**April 15, 6 p.m.** Attend another installation of the "Our Common Home" lecture series, this time Anna Johnson with the Laudato Si Movement will discuss divesting from fossil fuels | Hemmingson Auditorium

**April 25, 4-6 p.m.** Check out the Honors Senior Research Showcase to see a range of interdisciplinary projects | Bollier Center

**April 25-26, 7:30 p.m.** Attend the Spring Dance Concert featuring works by Gonzaga Dance faculty ahead of dance program director Suzanne Ostersmith's retirement | Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center

**May 1, 12-5 p.m.** Attend the 2nd annual Office of Inclusive Excellence Symposium on finding solidarity through diversity.

# Noteworthy

## *New Hires*

**Amanda Zulas**, data scientist, Institute for Informatics & Applied Technology; **Anne McCulloh**, student financial services counselor, Student Financial Services; **Christopher Lopes**, AI engineer, Institute for Informatics & Applied Technology; **Esther Paul**, gift accounting assistant, University Advancement; **Jackie Smith**, academic program coordinator, School of Leadership Studies; **James Garces**, assistant men's soccer coach, Athletics; **Jennifer Brown**, academic advisor, Center for Student Academic Success; **Jesus Montesino Serpa**, custodian, Plant; **Julia Boyle**, study abroad advisor, Center for Global Engagement; **Klaire Mitchell**, assistant volleyball coach and director of volleyball operations, Athletics; **Kyla Parkins**, partnership coordinator, CCE; **Madeline Gatewood**, outreach and engagement coordinator, CCE; **Mckenzie Brewer**, assistant volleyball coach, Athletics; **Nicholas Cemenenkoff**, AI engineer, Institute for Informatics & Applied Technology; **Rachel Clark**, facilities coordinator I, Auxiliary Enterprises; **Shelby Hurn**, benefits specialist II, Human Resources; **Tatum Gary**, assistant volleyball coach, Athletics

## *Position Changes/Promotions*

**Alan Tripp**, IT technician II, ITS; **Elizabeth Duke**, program assistant III, Plant; **Erick Stubbins**, working maintenance supervisor, Plant; **Mary Hunt**, administrative assistant to the Chief Financial Officer; **Melissa Waite**, finance systems administrator, Controller's Office; **Nesiba Besic**, manager of custodial and special services, Plant; **Ruby Holschen**, security officer, Campus Public Safety and Security; **Russell Wood**, working maintenance supervisor, Plant; **Ty McGee**, manager of grounds and solid waste, Plant

## *Goodbyes*

**Michiko Tra**, enterprise application developer III, ITS

## *Anniversaries*

**35** **Julia Bjordahl**, director of operations, President's Office

**15** **Jane Button**, senior budget director, Budget and Financial Analysis

**10** **Matthew Trimble**, assistant system administrator, HECC; **Tere Graham**, program manager for social justice, UMEC

