

# GREAT BASIN COLLEGE ALUMNI

A production of Great Basin College • May, 2014



**Outstanding Alumnus**  
**Don Zumwalt**  
**SGA President Graduates**  
**Alex Porter**







## FROM THE PRESIDENT

GBC doing more of what it is already so good at!

Dear Alumni and Friends,

Welcome to the third issue of the Great Basin College Alumni magazine.

On campus today there is a lot of positive talk of the future. The central focus of that talk is a vision of growth that sees GBC doing more of what it already does so well: providing access and educational opportunities to the far reaches of rural Nevada. To that end, on March 7, the Nevada System of Higher Education Board of Regents unanimously approved the assigning of four additional counties to GBC's service area.



GBC is now responsible for providing post-secondary educational opportunities to the counties of Lincoln, Esmeralda, Mineral and Pershing. This is in addition to the counties we currently serve, Elko, Eureka, Lander, Humboldt, White Pine and Nye. Together, these ten counties make up an area equaling 86,514 square miles, an area larger than 37 states in the U.S.A. If you are looking for something to be proud of or a fun fact to spring on a friend, colleague or family member, tell them your alma mater is the largest college in the country.

Again this spring, we will be awarding well in excess of 400 certificates and degrees at the May 17 commencement ceremony. I know you will join me in welcoming this latest group of alumni as they join the ranks of nearly 6,000 other GBC graduates.

Sincerely,

Dr. Mark A. Curtis  
President  
[www.gbcnv.edu/president](http://www.gbcnv.edu/president)

## ALUMNI

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[www.gbcnv.edu/alumni](http://www.gbcnv.edu/alumni)

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# FEATURED

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## 2014 OUTSTANDING ALUMNUS

Don Zumwalt, Elko Chief of Police until 2013, was nominated and named GBC's Outstanding Alumnus for 2014. He received his Associate of Arts in Criminal Justice ('97) and Bachelor of Applied Science in Management ('03). He later earned his Masters degree from Kaplan University.

Zumwalt served on the Elko City Police Force for 22 years, rising through the ranks from Patrol Officer to Chief until his retirement last year.

He led the Elko police force through a period of great transition, and initiated several successful community policing programs, including the community's annual National Night Out. He coordinated security for the Elko Motorcycle Jamboree for many years as well.

In addition to his commitment to the health and safety of the Elko community, Mr. Zumwalt shared his talents with GBC. He has been an Adjunct Instructor in Criminal Justice for many years at GBC, and has provided real-world knowledge and experience to students studying criminal justice.

Zumwalt was nominated by Dan Mahlberg (AS, '98; AA, '01; BAS, '03).



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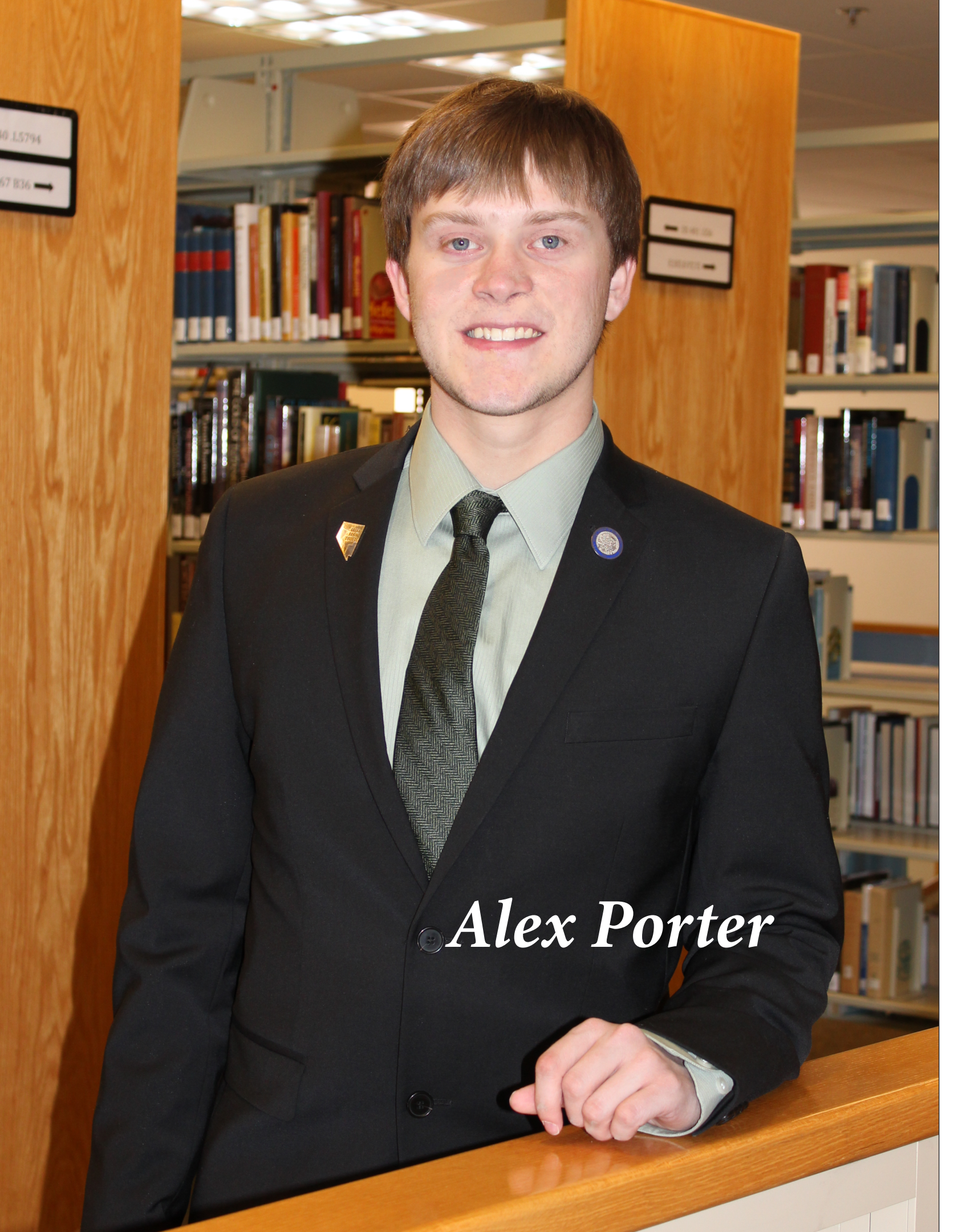


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*Alex Porter*



# GRADUATE FEATURE

Alex Porter has made a mark on the landscape of higher education in a variety of ways. As the President of the Great Basin College Student Government Association, he has helped provide support for students throughout the college's vast 87,000 square mile service area. More recently, he was elected by his student government peers at all of the Nevada System of Higher Education institutions to serve as the President of the Nevada Student Alliance. In that capacity, he speaks for tens of thousands of students enrolled in the eight colleges and universities in the state. But before he could achieve that status, he had to be a student. It is in that role he shows how very important his college education has been.

Porter graduates this spring in GBC's Bachelor of Arts in Integrated Studies program, with an emphasis in Social Sciences. "As a senior in my first semester, I had to do an internship." He worked with his professors to find a suitable spot. "I made a few calls, and I finally contacted staff at the Northeast Nevada Regional Development Authority," the economic development agency for Elko County. He suggested his academic background might provide some benefit to the organization.

They seized the opportunity. "I met with NNRDA staff, and Rick Magness", the Planning Director for the City of Elko. Together they did some brainstorming. Magness oversees the city's Redevelopment District Authority (RDA.) "The RDA was just starting its advisory committee and they had a lot of questions."

Porter was directed to do research on other redevelopment projects in cities like Elko around the country. "I found cities of the same size, with similar economies, to see what they had done with their down towns," he said. He looked for trends to indicate the successes or failures of other RDA's. "We didn't want to reinvent the wheel," he said. Nor did they want to design one that wouldn't roll.

Porter did most of his work over the summer, "which was good," he said. It gave him time to focus on the project without having to worry about his other responsibilities. His work was independent. "I used an office at GBC and I would check in with Rick [Magness] a few times each month to report on my progress and get direction."

"Rick worked with me a lot. He kept me on track, gave me oversight. It was nice." The partnership between NNRDA and the city was mutually beneficial. Porter received the experience he was looking for and fulfilled part of his academic requirements. The City and NNRDA received valuable information they may not have been able to obtain without him.

So, what did he find? "First and foremost, how unique Elko is." It was difficult to find a peer community that could provide relevant comparisons. Ultimately, he was able to identify Manhattan, Kansas, and Le Grand, Oregon, as communities of similar size and with similarly based economies. "I was surprised at the businesses those towns were able to bring to their down towns."

Le Grande, in eastern Oregon, provided similarities. "Eastern Oregon University is there. It's similar to GBC. That drew my attention right away." Its economy is similarly based as well, by natural resources. It is dependent on agriculture and logging.

Manhattan, Kansas provided information for direction on how Elko can deal with some its redevelopment challenges. "Manhattan was able to bring bigger businesses to its downtown, both retail and industry." Manhattan also dealt with railroad lands, similar to the challenges presented to Elko throughout much of the redevelopment district.

The Redevelopment Advisory Committee had lots of questions. "They are eager to know more," he said. Porter would like to do further research and go back to report more.

"These towns had nearly identical qualities. I think we're doing a good job. Now, motivation and figuring out ways to kick start more projects. But we're on the right track.

So, what's next for Porter? "My research evolving into my capstone project. I'm working with Professor Laurie Walsh on that."

According to Porter, GBC's Bachelor of Integrated Studies provides an excellent mix of political science, history, anthropology and psychology. "Graduation is next, and I'm on track for it. I'm interested in talking to GBC alum and see what they've done. I can do a lot with this." He's confident his background will be attractive to employers. The program has a broad base and I've learned a ton of things. This semester, especially, has taken me out of my shell. I've learned way more than I ever thought I would by being in such a broad program than in being in a more focused applied program. It's not what I expected." And he certainly seems pleased.



Alex Porter with SGA Vice President Isaac Duran and 2014-15 SGA President Elect DeMarynee Saili

## Alumni Organizing Committee

At the request of GBC President Mark A. Curtis, Steve Houk, Dan Mahlberg and Margo Teague have agreed to serve as the organizing committee for the Great Basin College Alumni organization. They represent the broad spectrum of successful GBC alumni. If you are interested in working with them on this exciting project, please contact them at [alumni@gbcnv.edu](mailto:alumni@gbcnv.edu).

## Great Basin College Distinguished Alumni Award

In 2007, Great Basin College began honoring its Outstanding Alumni. Since that time, several alumni have been recognized for their contributions to their communities and their professions, as well as their own individual accomplishments.

Great Basin College is proud of its alumni and how they continue to contribute to and enhance the quality of life in rural Nevada and beyond. If you know of an alumnus you believe deserves to be nominated, please contact us at [alumni@gbcnv.edu](mailto:alumni@gbcnv.edu). All nominees must have graduated at least five years ago.

Below is a list of some of the other alumni recognized for their outstanding achievements.

**Jean Sloan**  
2007

**Casey Guttry**  
2008

**Teri Beasley Bunker**  
2010

**Dan Mahlberg**  
2011

**Faye Cavender**  
2012

**Margo Teague**  
2013

**Don Zumwalt**  
2014

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*Alumnus Matt McCarty*



Photo courtesy of  
Heather Kennison  
EDFP Staff Writer



# ALUMNUS IN THE NEWS

Great Basin College alumnus Matt McCarty (AS, '07; BAS, '13) doesn't like to wait. After accepting his diploma at GBC's commencement last May, he immediately joined his colleagues on the College's Presidential Advisory Board (which he currently chairs) on stage to congratulate his classmates as they too had their degrees conferred.

It was not atypical of McCarty. He has a record of professional accomplishments and community service.

He was recently distinguished from among his peers in the hospitality industry. McCarty has worked in several Elko hotels, and has managed the Marriott Towne Place Suites for three years. He was named the General Manager of the Year for that brand, which has 225 properties throughout the United States and Canada.

In addition, McCarty was elected to serve on the Elko Convention and Visitors authority, which oversees operations of the Elko Convention Center and promotes tourism throughout Elko County, and much of northern Nevada.

A self-professed “political junkie,” he also chairs the Elko Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs committee. The committee's main objective is to convene twice-monthly lunch meetings with representatives from local, state and federal government organizations for updates on projects and priorities. During legislative years, the committee meets weekly and often takes action to advise the Nevada legislature on issues of importance to the community. And, as if that weren't enough, he facilitates several candidate forums at every level of government during election years.



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## RICK MACKAY

*Mackay says he's a  
"face-to-face guy"*

**Contrast seems to lead to connections** in the life of Rick Mackay. The head of the Great Basin College Criminal Justice Program grew up near the beach in southern California, and wound up in the high desert of northern Nevada. He spent a year in Pakistan, a society rooted in an ancient caste system, working to model the form of justice found in the free American society. He was a long way from the beach, a long way from the high desert of the Great Basin, but on the doorstep of knowing just how important the privileges of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights are to the way of life in the United States.

Thirty-one years of experience as a police officer formed the basis of his new career in academia. "About five or six years before I was to retire, I started to think about life after police work. My father was in education, my wife taught in high school for 25 years, and my daughter taught English, and now works as a counselor in higher education," he said. It was evident to him that he had some sort of congenital condition that was leading him to teaching.

He enrolled in a master's degree program in [criminal justice] at Cal State Domingus. With his degree in hand, he started teaching at Mount San Antonio College in Walnut, California. It was a very large school, with 32,000 students. It was from there he took the position with the Department of Justice in Pakistan. "It was a program of the Department's to help countries build democratic police forces. We worked with military generals and police chiefs."

It was an eye-opening experience for him. "Watching people live from hand to mouth and day-to-day gave me a great appreciation of our country." The whole experience of looking at how justice is served internationally gave him a unique perspective on domestic law enforcement. "We have rights and protections that are the foundation of our country," he said, and it is those two values that are at the heart of the GBC Criminal Justice Program.

"The program has two areas of emphasis: Law Enforcement and Corrections." Students in both programs have identical experiences in the first year of the Associate Degree program. In the second year, students move into more specialized course work. The program is taught using GBC's effective hybrid method of teaching, integrating the traditional classroom with online coursework.

Mackay says he's a "face to face guy. Law enforcement is a public service job. You can't beat a face to face experience." But his department has taken a unique approach to the online portion of its curriculum, assuring a personalized experience, even on line. "We bring our personalities to the table."



# DARIUS COOPER



**Dr. Darius Cooper** learned at a relatively early age that he would need to provide himself with a multitude of skills in order to advance in life. Raised by well informed and educated parents in South Carolina, they encouraged him to immerse himself in an education. He heeded the advice. Now the Director of the Human Services Program at Great Basin College, he is using his wide background in Social Services to provide a multitude of opportunities for Great Basin College students.

Cooper talked about the progression of his career. “My interests evolved. Back in the 1990’s I worked as a probation investigator and security supervisor in New Jersey.” It was a position that reflected his undergraduate education at Hampton University, in Virginia, where he earned a degree in [Criminal Justice]. Hampton University is one of a number of well-respected American Historical Black Colleges. “The ironic thing about Hampton, even as a Historical Black College, half of the student body was from around the world,” he said. It is one of the more diverse institutions he knows.

His work in probation and security led him back to Virginia where he worked in the state’s Department of Corrections. He enrolled in a Master’s degree program at Raffert College and studied Human Services. “I worked in adult prisons and juvenile corrections facilities,” again, showing the diversity of options presented to him as a human services professional. Later, an opportunity opened for him in Atlanta, where he worked as a pretrial officer. “I screened detainees.” The screening was part of a process to manage the growing prison population. Just as is being experienced in Elko County, jails were being filled beyond capacity. “We screened detainees and looked at what alternative programs were possible.” Since the jails were full, some offenders might be directed to social services programs that would attempt to remediate whatever was causing them to offend.

While in Atlanta, he also had the opportunity to work in psychiatric hospitals. And, once again, paralleling his professional experience, he went back to school to earn his PhD at Capella University. “All of the time I was in school, I was in the field as well,” he said. And then he began to teach. His work focused on mental health, and he split his time between the academic and professional practice worlds, with an interesting sidetrack. One of his colleagues worked in Player Development with the NFL. Cooper took an interest in the field, and over time he developed a program and pitched it to the NFL League in New York. Ultimately, he became an “on-call” crisis counselor for the Denver Broncos. “We dealt with behavioral and cultural issues,” he said. It was more than just creating policies to deter bad behavior. It was often about dealing with a cultural history of behavior and accountability. Which is what he says is really what Human Services is all about. “Human Services is an umbrella that covers all of human behaviors. Whether a person is an offender or a victim, human services professionals work with both.” His work is about making a good life for everyone.

Great Basin College students can expect the same diverse and satisfying opportunities as Dr. Cooper takes the helm of the College’s Human Services Program. “I am planning to expand in other directions, to provide students with as many choices as possible.” Cooper’s own experience is evidence of the variety of paths a student might follow. “Whether a student is enrolled in a two year program or a four year program, there are many opportunities.”

His parents’ advice was good. Before Cooper joined the faculty at Great Basin College he worked in private practice, for government agencies, for the NFL, and as an advisor on health care panels and to insurance providers. It was a broad spectrum of inter-related disciplines, all aimed at making people’s lives better. Employers are certainly interested in people with skills, and often it is technical skills that are given a high value. Cooper says, “Anything we do, in order to perform fully we have to have some emotional substance to deal with the day to day matters in the work place.” People skills.



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# 20 YEARS OF GBC THEATRE

## *Who We are and What We Do!*

The Great Basin College Theater Program has been transforming the American Theatre Experience since 1996. As part of the Great Basin College Arts and Letters Department, students and faculty join together for enlightened experiences of fine arts, humanities, English, foreign language and communication. The programs are critical components of every academic and training degree program offered by the college.

Specifically, GBC Theatre offers courses in acting, oral interpretation, stage voice, movement for the stage and more. Special Topic courses are added to the schedule regularly, generally taking advantage of the specific skills GBC Theatre's many guest artists and instructors can provide. In the past, courses in playwrighting, armature, effects makeup, Suzuki Movement Training, stage combat and comedy improv have been offered. Planning is underway to expand with more offerings in vocal and instrumental music and dance.

As Great Basin College Theatre approaches its 20th season, it is important to note a number of accomplishments. Silver Stage Players, Nevada's oldest continuously operating community theatre christened the stage early in 1996 with a production of Neil Simon's *THE ODD COUPLE*. That fall, GBC welcomed John Patrick Rice, who will soon begin his 20th year as the Director of the GBC Theatre Program. Under his leadership, the college has produced over fifty productions, ranging from William Shakespeare, to Rogers and Hammerstien to Sam Shepherd, with a few grand operas, several original plays and just plain silliness thrown in for variety.

In the meantime, the college has welcomed several other local and regional performance groups to its seasons. Along with Silver State Players came Blue Yeti Productions, offering more contemporary theatre fare. The Elko and Spring Creek High Schools have often graced the stage with their excellent work. The more recently established Elko Overland Stage has brought to these boards terrific musicals and family oriented shows. In other parts of the community, Hang Man Productions and now Ghost Light Productions depend on the talent pool of all of these organizations to bring their innovative and original work to Elko audiences. In short: theatre begets theatre, and there is no finer example of that than Great Basin College and Elko.

As the mission of Great Basin College has expanded, so has its service area. The college recently added Lincoln, Esmerelda, Mineral and Pershing counties to the original Elko, Eureka, Humboldt, Lander and White Pine Counties. Our service area now covers nearly 87,000 square miles with nearly 150,000 inhabitants. It's a big state, and Great Basin College intends to educate it. Using state of the art distance learning technologies, now students in even the furthest reaches of rural Nevada will have equitable access to the opportunities higher education has been providing to their urban counterparts for decades. It is a tremendous step for the college and a tremendous opportunity for the entire state of Nevada.

Next year, for the first time, GBC theatre will offer acting classes using distance-learning technologies. For the first time, classes will be offered via interactive video to Battle Mountain, Ely and Winnemucca. A minimum number of students will be required in each site in order for the classes to be feasible. By combining traditional theatre teaching techniques with advanced technologies, students are accessing a learning experience with seasoned theatre professionals that heretofore had not even been conceived. Added to other fine arts and humanities courses already offered with distance technologies, and it is easy understand why Great Basin College is recognized as one of the most efficient and innovative colleges in the state.

## *Can you believe it's been twenty years?*

Just over twenty years ago, a visionary group of people in Elko, including GBC's President Ron Remington and Jeanne Blach, the Executive Director of Great Basin College Foundation, decided to build a theatre on campus. You're sitting in the results of their efforts. Joined by members of Silver Stage Players and other committed individuals, funds were raised to build what was then about a \$3.5 million facility. No small feat in a small town.

The Silver Stage Players opened the new theatre with a production of Neil Simon's *THE ODD COUPLE*. A year later, GBC hired its first theatre professor, John Patrick Rice. Rice brought a broad background in professional theatre, television and film experience, along with several years of college teaching to the college. And thus was born The Great Basin College Theatre Program.

During Rice's first tenure as the theatre program's artistic leader, the program grew tremendously. Starting with just eight students, by the time he was invited to join the GBC administration, nearly 400 students were involved in various aspects of classes and productions, and 4,000 audience members came to campus each year.

Now, after several years, Rice returns to rebuild the theatre program to the level for which it was intended.

To celebrate 20 years of Theatre at GBC, the college is proud to announce the 2014-2015 Theatre Season. Starting in the fall with William Shakespeare's *MACBETH*, it is bloody story of ambition and betrayal. Before there were Francis and Claire Underwood in *House of Cards*, there were Lord and Lady Macbeth. It's a terrifically accessible play for young and old audiences alike. An added bonus is, *Macbeth* is often used to christen a theatre. We thought the 20th season was a good time to renew our commitment to theatre in this space.

Then, just in time for the holidays, *A CHRISTMAS CAROL*, a short version of the timely classic by Charles Dickens that will tickle your funny bone and give you pause to consider just what indeed forms the Spirit of Christmas.

And in the spring, perhaps the most ambitious production the GBC Theatre Program has ever produced: *LES MISERABLES*, directed on Broadway and in the more recent film by Cameron Mackintosh and based on the late nineteenth century historical novel by Victor Hugo, it is a story of passion, loyalty, perseverance and destruction like no other. It will be an event that cannot be missed.

And rounding out the season on a lighter fair, a series of children's plays designed to give the young and the young at heart something to enjoy and to think about that cannot be found on any sort of screen... large, small or pocket sized.

So, are you ready? WE ARE! Please help us to begin the celebration in the fall. Students interested in learning more should contact John Patrick Rice at 775.753.2240, or [john.rice@gbcnv.edu](mailto:john.rice@gbcnv.edu).



# GBC FOUNDATION

## *\$15 million and counting!*

In 2010, Great Basin College President Carl Diekhans challenged the board of trustees of GBC Foundation to raise \$15 million to support students and programs at the institution. After an extensive feasibility study throughout the college's 87,000 square mile service area, speaking with dozens of stakeholders and community leaders, the trustees began their work on VISION 2020.

The aim was to raise funding to support four initiatives: Scholarships, Health Sciences, Emerging Opportunities and Institutional Sustainability.

This spring, the Trustees, led by President Dr. Mark A. Curtis, reached that goal, and more! Now standing at over \$15 million in alternative funding and still counting, the Foundation has successfully completed the most ambitious fund raising effort in its history.

A few projects stand out. Barrick Gold North America contributed \$1.2 million in support of Career and Technical Education programs at GBC. The college also wrote a successful Challenge Grant application to the National Endowment for the Arts, receiving \$500,000. Trustees are currently working on fulfilling a \$1 million match, and are already on schedule to complete that task. Their efforts have been supported by a number of private donors.

In addition, the college was successful in a grant to the Department of Labor in winning \$8.5 million for workforce development through the Trade Adjustment Act. The funding enables the expansion of career and technical education on the Elko campus and throughout the college service area.

At the Ely Center in White Pine County, GBC Foundation received a \$500,000 gift from Pattern Energy to create and sustain science, technology, engineering and math programming at the Ely Center. Pattern Energy recently brought a 152 megawatt wind farm online in Spring Valley, south east of Ely, producing enough clean energy to electrify 30,000 households annually.

It is indeed an exciting time for Great Basin College Foundation.



Great Basin College's Foundation Dinner Dance Committee includes, from left, GBC Foundation Board Chair Melanie Lawson, Barrick Gold; GBC Foundation Services Coordinator Carolyn Trainor; Committee Member Hope Cripps Northeastern Nevada Regional Hospital; and GBC Foundation Trustee Lisa Becker.

## GREAT BASIN COLLEGE FOUNDATION



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