

University Announces Van Vlerah as VP for Student Affairs

Noah Tong
Staff Writer

Situated in her office on the second floor of Calvin Ulrey Hall, new vice president for student affairs Abby Van Vlerah hopes her tenure at Manchester University leads to what she calls a “greater sense of community and Spartan spirit” on campus.

“I’m very excited to be at Manchester,” Van Vlerah said. “I love being on a small liberal arts college in the Midwest which I call home. It is such a caring place.

“My colleagues truly want to help all our students and genuinely want you all to succeed,” she continued. “I want to help be a part of this and ensure all students feel this sense of community and strength.”

Van Vlerah is no stranger to higher education. The first in her family to earn a bachelor’s degree, Van Vlerah graduated from Saint Mary’s College with a degree in humanistic studies. Due to her background, she “didn’t

even know that jobs in student affairs existed.”

“I fell in love with the college experience and essentially never left,” Van Vlerah said.

From there, she journeyed across the country obtaining graduate degrees from the University of Wyoming and Bowling Green State University. Van Vlerah has a wealth of experience throughout her professional career she intends to draw upon now.

“Through each of my positions, I’ve tried to gain as many experiences as possible and generally say ‘yes’ before I say ‘no,’” she explained. “This has led me to become a ‘Jane of all trades’ in higher education because I’ve taken time to expose myself to all areas of a university. Having held positions in student affairs, academic affairs, overseeing admissions and financial aid and teaching at each university, I’m fortunate to have seen the entire student life cycle from a variety of angles.”

Her extensive professional profile has seen her im-

prove the lives of students at numerous institutions including Mercy College and, most recently, Long Island University. Van Vlerah was responsible for creating and executing the LIU Promise and Mercy College PACT programs during her tenure.

“They were both holistic advising programs,” Van Vlerah said. “Each offered students one point of contact to everything at the university. The professional coaches or mentors assisted students with academics, financial aid, career services and being involved on campus. That mentor stays with each student for all four years that they’re at college.”

“It helped eliminate the guesswork about college and provided a road map to the university,” she continued. “These programs are particularly helpful for first-generation college students who may not be as familiar with college processes and procedures. I had a great support network from the student affairs team when I was in college, which helped me greatly, but not everyone finds that on their own. I

want to help provide that for you.” Van Vlerah, an Angola High School graduate, will be responsible for improving the retention rates and overall student experience. She will serve on the Cabinet and report directly to President Dave McFadden.

She will also serve as the Title IX Coordinator for the North Manchester and Fort Wayne campuses. Van Vlerah has received formal training in Title IX standards and will lead a team of deputy coordinators to help Manchester comply with all aspects of the law.

She may still be getting acclimated to a new university, but Van Vlerah is already open to offering a helping hand to the student body at Manchester.

“I encourage all students to come visit my office,” she said. “I want to meet you all and know what I can do to help improve your Manchester experience!”

In her spare time, Van Vlerah enjoys running, spending time on the lake and riding motorcycles. She also is enjoying the privilege of living near family again.



Photo by Manchester University.
Abby Van Vlerah, vice president for student affairs.

“Now that I am back home, I love spending time with my nieces and nephews,” Van Vlerah said.

Polar Plunge Showcases Student Service, Creates Discussion on Service Opportunities

Marcus Zwiebel
Staff Writer

A group of Manchester University individuals braved the cold and took a plunge to showcase their support for area Special Olympics.

Thirteen students and several staff and faculty members participated in a polar plunge event at Center Lake in Warsaw, Indiana, on Feb. 16. The campus group met in front of Calvin Ulrey Hall that morning and commuted to Warsaw for the service event. The polar plunge was considered a success by Ali Goetcheus, Manchester University’s director for Center for Service Opportunities.

Goetcheus explained that there were two principal goals for the event: to group fundraise \$1,000 and have 10 students attend the event. The collection was met and the number of individuals partaking in the plunge was greater than anticipated—along with students on-campus growing more interested and aware of the event. The polar plunge allowed students to give and donate as well as participate in something physical that benefits a community.

The polar plunge garnered enough interest that high schools in the area have been in contact with Manchester staff considering wider participation which would also include high school students and staff for next year’s event. There are hopes that next year’s polar plunge event will feature more students, staff and faculty and may even be hosted in the Eel River.

Center for Service Opportunities (CSO) at Manchester promotes unity and help to enhance student experience during their undergraduate career. “Service is a great way to expand your network in general, since there is a personal network and an outreach network through service,” Goetcheus said.

The polar plunge event in Warsaw is simply one of numerous opportunities for student service that Manchester offers. The autumn sees two main events: U Can Crush Hunger and Walk into my Future. Spring, however, generally sees more opportunities on and around campus, including We Challenge U, the 21st Century Scholar Project and the Empty Bowls Workshop.

CSO also extends beyond the limits of the campus. North Manchester’s thrift store is, as Goetcheus explains, a 360-concept and is run completely by volunteers. “Sometimes you’re so busy, you can’t get out of yourself and you just get stuck,” Goetcheus



Photo by Manchester CSO.
Manchester volunteers gather at the edge of Center Lake in Warsaw, Ind. The group raised \$1,000 dollars to support the Special Olympics in Northern Indiana.



Photo by Manchester CSO.
Volunteers for Polar Plunge gather together with the Manchester flag before jumping into the water.

said. “You often have to find ways to get outside of yourself personally, and if it’s around service, it’s even more beautiful.” Students can also learn more about service opportunities working with the in-town food pantry and two animal shelters in Wabash and War-

saw. “We do not want our university, or its service opportunities, to be exclusive,” Goetcheus said. “We want to get involved with and benefit our community, as well as get them to come to campus.”

Students interested in service opportunities on-campus

or in the area may contact Ali Goetcheus or the Center for Service Opportunities via email or phone (260-982-5721). The student office, opposite of Residential Life in Calvin Ulrey Hall, is also open 9 a.m.-5 p.m. for questions or inquiries from any indi-

viduals on campus. “It’s essentially the power of an hour,” Goetcheus said. “An hour is such a short time, but considering service, it can make all the difference.”

Pagans@Manchester: New Club on Campus

Marcus Zwiebel
Staff Writer

Manchester’s University newest student group, Pagans@Manchester, is a group dedicated to the enlightenment of alternative avenues of religion and a proponent of open-mindedness considering religious and spiritual differences. The group meets from 7:30-8:30 p.m. in the chapel lounge every Wednesday to discuss various topics. Past discussions have included leadership and flow of authority in the organization along with conversations on the politics of the club, which

began formally this semester. Discussions also include the topic of what the group hopes to achieve and relay to the university community. The club also discusses details of paganism and explores other related spiritualities, as well as methods of education and information facilitation to individuals on campus. January term saw the development of the club’s constitution and organization within its leadership, with Sebastian Kalmbach becoming the club president and the faculty advisor formally being announced as campus pastor Rebekah Houff. The club’s current intentions are to start

small with a few events on campus until they become comfortable. “The plan right now is to inform the community and find our feet,” Kalmbach said. “We’re still a newer club—specifically, a spiritual one—and we just are trying to have a solid start and explore and educate essentially.” Pagans@Manchester consists of generally 8 to 13 members and sometimes includes faculty, staff and other visitors. The group is also very socially engaged, and generally stays after the meeting for general discussion. Any individuals with even the slightest interest or smallest question are invited to attend a

meeting or reach out. Group members enthusiastically mentioned ideas of how to inform and educate the community of Pagans@Manchester, including the possibility of a tarot card reading event, a casual picnic event, as well as the development of a seminar series which will be furthered after spring break and have the purpose of educating people further on spirituality details and options. Considering the unique, new nature of the club, members want to reiterate that the club is not exclusive or frightening and instead focuses heavily on discussion, inclusion and open-mindedness, as well as sup-

port and assistance spiritually and personally. “We’re a very supportive and open-minded group,” Kalmbach said. “We won’t and don’t judge and as a group we seek to be constructive while expanding our minds and senses of spirituality—whatever form they may take.” Any individuals with questions or inquiries may contact Sebastian Kalmbach or the faculty advisor Rebekah “Bekah” Houff. Individuals may also attend the weekly Wednesday meetings to discuss, socialize and learn more about the club, as well as potential alternative spiritualities and details regarding those spiritualities.

Student-Led Play Hits Center Stage April 13, 14

Kaleigh Gabriel
Staff Writer

Spring Break isn’t the only thing for Manchester University students to look forward to this semester with the upcoming spring play! The Manchester University Theatre Society will be presenting “Why Did You Leave Me?”, which was written by Manchester student Andy Vance, a first-year performing arts administration major.

“Why Did You Leave Me?” is a story set in 1927 England that follows a young girl, Cecelia Hart, whose life is turned upside down when a ghost begins tormenting her. Cecelia must decipher the secrets of her life and find her true self throughout this dangerous ordeal in love, loss and life.

The play—written, directed, and performed by MU students—will be presented the weekend of April 13 in Cordier Auditorium. The opening show will be at 7 p.m. on April 13 followed by a 2:30 p.m. showing on April 14.

Along with Vance, co-director first-year Brandon Egolf will be guiding this spring production, bringing his experience in directing to join Vance’s visions for “Why Did You Leave Me?”.

Egolf has previously produced a One Act at Manchester during the fall semester entitled “What The Sky Can Hold,” along with involvement in seven

other productions in his high school career. “[Vance] and I both have same visions and passions for the theatre that it seemed like the right choice to work together,” Egolf said. “As the president and vice president of Manchester Theatre Society, [Vance] and I see the spring play as a chance at reviving theatre for Manchester and drawing attention to the skills of students.”

Vance continued: “My passion for theatre comes from behind the curtain. I am a director and a technician at heart and nothing compares to the feeling of directing. I am extremely thankful to my cast for this production because without their hard work and dedication [Egolf] and I wouldn’t be able to put on this performance. Having a cast as amazing as this one is why I enjoy directing.”

The entire cast is excited for the upcoming production, but Vance is also apprehensive. “Seeing a production that you created come to life is an exhilarating moment,” Vance said. “For myself, this is the first time I have written my own real story, let alone turned it into a production! It is a bit nerve-racking to know audience members will see the snippets of my life, but I’m excited to promote the theatre arts on campus and to use my previous experience as a director to bring a stunning show to our stage this spring!”

The behind-the-scenes boss is producer and first-year, Anthony Harris. As a member of the A Capella Choir and a cast member of the fall production



Photo provided by Andy Vance.

Cast of “Why Did You Leave Me?” gathers on the stage in Cordier Auditorium.

of “Significant Other,” Harris is no stranger to the performance spotlight. However, with the spring production, he has taken on a more hidden role, directing finances and press releases. “The theatre has always been a big part of my life, but I’ve never had to do the behind-the-scenes work required to produce a show,” Harris said. “But I’ve decided to try new things and further explore my passion for the theatre by learning the role of a producer for the spring play.”

First-year Mary O’Neill will be starring as Cecelia Hart in her Manchester debut this spring. O’Neill was in many shows

throughout high school and most notably played the part of Ariel in “The Little Mermaid.” “I’m excited to bring my character to life,” O’Neill said. “She is different from the roles I’ve had in other plays and I love the suspense that Andy has incorporated into the show.” This is first-year Brooke Tomlinson’s first-ever theatre production at Manchester and her first production since middle school. Tomlinson is casted as Vivian, Cecelia’s mother and avid tea connoisseur. “So far, I’ve really loved getting to know all the backstage ‘magic’ that goes into a production on stage,” Tomlinson said. “I definitely think I will con-

tinue to be a part of the theatre department here at Manchester. Being part of this production has encouraged me to try writing my own script and possibly use it for a production! After working with [Egolf] and [Vance], I would love to have them help me direct a play because I really value their guidance.” After putting in weeks of three-to-five-hour practices each day, the team will be well-prepared for their Manchester debut. For now, they will continue running lines, blocking movements and fitting costumes until the theatrical visions of Vance and Egolf have become vividly alive.

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Photo provided by Andy Vance.

First-year co-directors, Bradon Egolf and Andy Vance, will each bring their expertise and experience to the opening of “Why Did You Leave Me?” on April 13 and 14.

Choir Performs ‘O Come Let Us Sing!’

Zoe Vorndran
Staff Writer

The stage was set and the lights were low. Manchester community members, students and families filled Cordier Auditorium to attend the “O Come Let Us Sing!” concert, which took place on Friday, March 8 at 7:30 p.m. The concert featured Manchester University’s Chamber Singers and A Cappella Choir, the top two auditioned choral ensembles on campus. It was conducted by Dr. Debra Lynn, professor of music, and was free and open to the public.

Throughout the concert, the choir sang a mixture of secular and spiritual songs, ranging from jazz to Scottish to Latin. The students had prepared most of the songs during spring semester. Since the repertoire varied significantly, each piece of music featured different elements of music.

The concert began with the Chamber Singers, which was comprised of 12 students. They began by singing “Easter Anthem,” which included call and response elements and straightforward harmonies. The song was written by William Billings, an American composer known for his anthems, hymns and psalms.

After the Chamber Singers finished their first tune, Lynn introduced the choir to the audience. She also prefaced the following two songs. The choir then sang “The Blue Bird,” which featured Shannon Lee as the soprano soloist. Unlike the upbeat, cheerful harmony and rhythm of their first song, “The Blue Bird” consisted of dynamic changes and complicated rhythms. Lee’s soprano clear voice pierced through the background voices of the other singers.

The Chamber Singers also sang “Te Deum,” a 12-minute composition by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Before singing the song, Lynn had compared Billings’s “Easter Anthem” to Mozart’s “Te Deum” in order to demonstrate the different genres. Rather than Billings’s patriotic, colonial tune, “Te Deum” represented classical music. The song was broken into four parts varying in length and string instruments were added to the ensemble. Elizabeth Smith and Linda Kummernuss played the violin, Robert Lynn played the cello and Alan Cham-

bers played the organ.

In an interview before the concert, Lynn discussed songs that she thought would be the highlights of the concert. “I would say one of the highlights will definitely be the Chamber Singers’ performance of “Te Deum” by Mozart since it is an extended work and includes string and organ accompaniment,” she said. “It takes a bit of extra time and effort to learn and put together.”

Following “Te Deum,” the A Cappella Choir joined on stage. Their vast numbers filled the metal stands on the stage to its capacity. While the choir was preparing, Lynn introduced their first three songs which were religious. Lynn found it appropriate to include religious music since Lent had just begun.

The first song, “Crucifixus,” by Antonio Lotti, was divided into eight parts, despite it originally being divided into four parts. Lynn asked the members of the audience to imagine they were sitting in the pews of a high, gothic Cathedral in Italy with balconies. On the balconies were the singers singing down on the peasants to imitate heavenly voices from above reigning down onto the laity.

For Bryan Bathke, a sophomore accounting and business management double major, “Crucifixus” was his favorite song. “I enjoy the piece because despite its difficulty, it is a very cool piece since the song has some interesting chord changes.” Bathke sang the tenor II part and had joined the choir due to his passion for singing and the music community at Manchester.

Following “Crucifixus,” the A Cappella Choir sang “Ubi Caritas” – a song featuring the alto section. The short Gregorian chant sung in Latin included good harmonies and long, drawn-out notes.

The last religious piece the choir sang was “O Come Let Us Sing unto the Lord.” The song featured a complex piano accompaniment played by Chambers. The song included elements of call and response throughout the piece.

No stranger to church music, Jonah Lechlitner, a sophomore music major with an emphasis in instrumental, enjoyed “O Come Let Us Sing unto the Lord” the most. Lechlitner has sung for his church his whole life;

however, A Cappella Choir is the first organized vocal group Lechlitner has participated in. He prefers instrumental ensembles, but is part of the A Cappella Choir due to his major. He is also a part of Manchester University’s Symphonic Band, Jazz Ensemble and Orchestra.

Lynn also highlighted “O Come Let Us Sing unto the Lord” before the concert. The song is special because it was written by Emma Lou Diemer, an American composer from Kansas City, Missouri. Since the choir will be touring in Kansas City at the end of May, Lynn stated: “It seems fitting to perform a piece by a composer from that area.”

After the song, Lynn thanked the audience for supporting the choral ensembles. She also introduced the final songs since they were secular.

“Skylark” was the first secular song they sang and it was a jazz song. Lynn prefaced the song by stating that jazz is more difficult to sing than it sounds. Daniel Baker, a junior exercise major and physics and mathematics minor, concurred and he said that he likes the song even though it is the most difficult to perform due to the “several syncopated rhythms and accidental notes.” Despite the difficulty, Baker loves singing jazz songs. As Baker was a singer in high school, he wanted to continue singing while in college. In addition to singing as an A Cappella Choir member, he also sings in the school’s opera productions.

The A Cappella Choir finished with three Scottish tunes. All three of the tunes had two pianists accompany them: Elizabeth Smith and Chambers. Before the choir and pianists performed the songs, Lynn warned the audience that the pianists often would sound as if they were playing in the wrong meter and always sound off key. She assured the audience that “if it sounds wrong, its right.” With giggles from the audience, the choir began to sing. The first piece was lullaby-like and the choir members swayed ever so slightly. The second piece featured the alto section and was a slow, haunting piece. Then lastly, the choir ended with a fast, staccato, upbeat Scottish song. The night ended with a generous applause from the audience. The concert was the first of performances that the choir performs in the spring semester.



**Spring
Break
Plans**

Photo provided by Destinee Boutwell.
Caylie Ganser is going back home to Cleveland, spending time with her family and going to her brother’s soccer game.



Photo provided by Destinee Boutwell.
Ben Sendo is going home to Fort Wayne and plans on taking a much-needed nap after studying for his biology-chemistry senior comprehensive exam.



Photo provided by Destinee Boutwell.
Garrett Hartman is going to Chicago for a weekend, working at a fireworks warehouse and getting a haircut.

Empty Bowls Save the Date

APRIL 6, 11 AM - 1 PM

Jean Childs Young Intercultural Center

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faculty/staff/community members.

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SPARTAN SPORTS

MU Welcomes New Sports Information Director

Tiffany Williams
Staff Writer

Dillon Bender was hired as the new sports information director at Manchester University and he started December 3, 2018.

As a sports information director, Bender will direct the media coverage and publicity of Manchester's 21 varsity athletic programs as well as coordinate in-game coverage, statistical intake, graphic design support, coordination of the school's social media accounts, website writing, photo archiving and game-day management.

Before getting his Master's degree in sport management from Indiana State University in 2018, Bender completed a Bachelor's degree in history and political science.

Bender has an extensive athletic background and because his dad was a Division III basketball coach, he has seen athletics and how it functions for a lot of his life. He is a 2016 graduate of Mount Aloysius College located in Cresson, Pennsylvania. While there, he was a standout basketball player for the Mounties, where he concluded his career as the school's number eight all-time leading scorer with 1,185 points.

He earned Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference All-Conference honors and was named the AMCC Male Scholar Athlete of the Year as well as being named one of the ten finalists for the coveted Josten's Trophy awarded to the most outstanding student athlete in NCAA Division III basketball. He also became the first CoSIDA Academic All-American in Mount Aloysius College history garnering second team honors as a senior in 2016.

He knew he wanted to give back to athletics somehow, but did not want to be a coach, for basketball or another sport. His cousin, a former Di-

vision II basketball coach, mentioned sports information. This sparked Bender's interest in the career and he realized he understood a lot about the process and that this is what he wanted to do in the future.

In 2016, before Bender started his career in sports information, he served as the Graduate Assistant for Sports Information at Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology located in Terre Haute, Indiana. While there, he helped with sports information operations such as in-game coverage, graphic design support, social media updates, website writing, photo archiving and game-day management for the institute's 20 sports.

Recently, Bender worked as the first-ever full-time Assistant Sports Information Director at Penn State Behrend in Erie, Pennsylvania. He assisted with the coverage and publicity of the university's 24 varsity sports by greatly expanding the school's social media presence, creating the sports information department's first Instagram account. He also enhanced the sports information efforts with increasing website writing, statistical intake and the introduction of graphics from BoxOut Sports.

After working for four months at Penn State Behrend, Bender was contacted by Rick Espeset after the departure of Mark Adkins, the previous sports information director. He spoke with the people from Penn State Behrend and they gave him the green light to come to Manchester for an interview. On his campus visit, he met some of the coaches and recognized others and felt calmed by the familiarity. At Penn State Behrend, he didn't have that familiarity, as he only got to work with the people around him.

While being at Manchester, Bender wanted to immediately change the social media graphics so they would be



Photo by Chloe Arndt.

New sports information director Dillon Bender stands in his new workplace home: the PERC.

more on par with NCAA Division I, II and III, that generally makes his work easier. However, having started his position in the middle of the year, it is hard to make any other changes until the summer.

Bender likes to keep up with his father's basketball team, as well as being a fan of most Pittsburgh sports. He sometimes plays basketball, but mostly keeps up with running every day.

Outside of sports, he likes to read things like the Na-

tional Geographic and watch "Game of Thrones." He enjoys the balance of having a Sunday to rest and recharge, when there aren't any athletic activities that day, to be ready for the start of the week.

"I have really been impressed with the Manchester community and the people here at the institution," Bender said. "I've enjoyed my time here getting to know our student athletes and other people across the campus."

Spring Softball Schedule

March

18 Bethel (Minn.)
18 Macalester
19 Trinity (Conn.)
19 Clarkson
21 St. Lawrence
21 D'Youville
22 New Paltz
22 Ripon
23 Thomas (Maine)
26 St. Mary's (Ind.)
29 vs. Hope
30 vs. Transylvania

April

03 @ Bluffton
06 @ Hanover
09 Alma
11 Anderson
13 Kalamazoo
15 @ Calvin
17 Defiance
20 @ Franklin
24 @ Rose-Hulman
27 Mt. St. Joseph



Photo by Bridget Nash.

In a close battle against the Depauw Tigers, Michael Pinarski completes his run to home plate after a double hit from Braxton Riley. The Spartans scored twice during the third inning, the second run from Riley as well.



Photo by Bridget Nash.

Senior Jordan Hilyard opens the game from the mound at an away game against DePauw University. Hilyard opened and pitched for four and two-thirds of the game.

Celebrating Softball Seniors



Krystal Sellers
Position: OF



Sydney Thompson
Position: C/1B



Miranda Boggs
Position: SS



Photo by Manchester Athletics.

MU softball team gathers in a huddle around pitcher's mound.



Katelynn Skeens
Position: 3B

