The Whitworthian

THE VOICE OF WHITWORTH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS SINCE 1905

Vol. 112 Issue 6 March 2022 Spokane, WA

www.thewhitworthian.news

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The Whitworthian has served as the main source of news and sports coverage for the Whitworth community since 1905. The Whitworthian is an organization composed entirely of students which produces The Whitworthian monthly newspaper and thewhitworthian.news.

OUR MISSION

The Whitworthian staff is dedicated to presenting accurate and relevant information in an innovative manner. Our goal is to be accountable while informing, entertaining and providing a forum for expressing the interests of the Whitworth community.

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Cover:
Jalen Martin jumps off the starting line in the Men's 60 meter dash at The Podium, Saturday, Feb. 12, 2022, in Spokane, Wash. | Caleb Flegel/The Whitworthian

Editors' Note:

DEI Statement

It is time for a change.
We have done a lot of reflecting in light of our current political climate, the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing tragedy of racial violence in this country – particularly directed toward the Black community – that has been brought to light over the past year or so.
We recognize that, in the past, we have chosen the path of comfort and convenience. We assigned, interviewed, wrote, edited and published according to our usual practices and our normal routines. This is unacceptable.
The idea that journalists cannot take a stand against injustice without undermining their objectivity is a lie that not only keeps us from doing what is right but from doing what our job requires of us – to elevate the voices of every person in this community, especially those who are so often pushed to the margins.
We condemn the idea that good journalism must assume an air of false neutrality in situations in which we have a moral imperative to pick a side. The press is on the side of the oppressed. We exist for them – to give them a voice, to give them a chance of being heard. As such, we have a responsibility to make it clear what this newsroom stands for.
We are committed to actively fighting the systems that oppress BIPOC, women, the LGBTQ+ community, indigenous people, people with disabilities and other marginalized groups.
We are committed to including all people in our coverage, especially those that have historically been underrepresented by the work we have done.
We are committed to using diverse, equitable and inclusive practices in our work.
We are committed to honoring the input of those who tell us where we have fallen short and where we can do better. We know that accountability is the only way forward.
We are committed to using our work to make Whitworth a place where all people feel heard, seen, and valued.

This is the consensus of the ediorial board.

Our Qualms Aren't With McQuilkin

The news of President Scott McQuilkin's appointment was a disappointment to many students. To others, he felt like the obvious choice, or in some cases, students were unaware that he was an interim president rather than a permanent one.

While it is understandable that a university would hire someone who is familiar with the institution's functions and long-term goals, we feel that a bolder hiring choice would allow Whitworth to avoid stagnation and better serve the diverse student population for which it prides itself. Such a decision would allow the university to move forward and bring fresh ideas to the table rather than relying on the familiar.

This isn't to say that McQuilkin entered his position without concrete plans to cultivate a safe environment for students of diverse backgrounds at Whitworth.

During The Whitworthian's first interview with McQuilkin after his appointment, he said that we need to be "listening well to [minorities'] stories and experiences, to be partners on the path to justice, to be accountable for whatever failures that we have (and I know I will have them daily), to make this a place where students feel like they belong. That's true of faculty, staff and students."

To do so, he plans to meet in small groups with students of color, along with other groups of students from a variety of backgrounds, with different sexualities and beliefs.

However, this might not be enough.

Without the lived experience of being a person of color and/or a member of the LGBTQ+ community, McQuilkin is counting on people from those groups to fully recount their negative experiences in hopes that the administration can then address the environment on campus that contributed to those experiences.

A president with a diverse background might be better equipped to address these concerns with empathy. However, most institutions do not have the benefit of a president who can relate to their experiences firsthand. Despite minorities representing 39.9% of the U.S. population, the 2017 American College President Study from the American Council on Education found that 22.3% of public institutions were led by minority presidents, and only 10.6% of private institutions were.

In that same study, less than one third of university presidents were women. Yet women make up half of all undergraduate students and are also now earning the majority of Ph.D.s., according to The Chronicle.

Multiple positions across campus are currently unfilled or occupied by a temporary member of the faculty or staff. In the months following former President Beck Taylor's announcement of resignation to become the President of Samford University, several other key people also moved on to new institutions or other positions outside of Whitworth.

Students rely on staff to provide structure and stability through their time at the university. Without consistent leaders, students lack that structure.

Now, there are multiple ways to pursue growth and consistency in an organization, and one of those might well be hiring the same types of people with the same types of backgrounds. That definitely seems to be the road that we see Whitworth going down.

Yes, this is an editorial focusing on the white maleness of a hired leader. But that doesn't mean it should be written off as anti-white male. What we hope to achieve here is a reframing of this "diversity call" we all keep hearing about.

Diversity isn't just about achieving the "right look" for an institution or fulfilling a particular quota. Diversity in the workplace is about making sure that those in power accurately reflect the population they serve. According to Diversity & Ability, a social enterprise advocating for inclusion, having a diverse workforce increases employee retention. 75% of employees feel they need to mask their differences in the workplace. More diversity limits that pressure.

Maybe if more employees felt less pressure to mask, more students would feel represented and safe being their authentic selves. How can anyone get a true education while experiencing the pressure to hide who they truly are?

The university has the opportunity to make bold decisions with the people it hires. These people will be shaping Whitworth and its community for potentially close to a decade - a timeframe in which thousands of students will graduate and enter the world.

We understand why Scott McQuilkin was chosen. But we hope that in the coming months, as the university seeks to fill open positions, they strive to place leaders in those positions that represent and relate to the diverse student body of Whitworth to better provide an education of mind and heart for all students.

This is the consensus of the editorial board.

What do indoor plants and inflation have in common?

Nicole Harris | Opinions Editor

Plants are the new pets. Pets are the new kids. Kids are for the wealthy.

According to a new study by Craft Jack, 61 percent of people under the age of 40 agree that "plants are the new pets." 1 in 3 young people (under age 40) call themselves "plant parents," some even naming their plants.

Now, this study goes on to suggest that this new obsession with plants has often been a side effect of pandemic life for young people, with 57 percent agreeing that their growing plant collection helped their mental health during the pandemic.

I say this as someone who grew up generationally impoverished. As someone who survived in poverty – as someone who still exists within that space.

According to Oxford English Dictionary, the cycle of poverty suggests that there are inequities within our society that prevent those raised in poverty from ever rising out of poverty. It becomes multi-generational.

While I think that these criticisms are correct regarding the "culture of poverty," mainly regarding the blame it places on the individual over the systems keeping them impoverished, I do think there is a kind of culture that exists around being poor.

At a certain point, the stress of not being able to provide basic necessities for yourself and those dependent on you causes you to think of money differently. Some may spend money faster, spending whatever they have simply because they have it. Some may still have expenditures, even at the cost of more pressing bills.

While it is easy to suggest that these people should better manage their money, there comes a point where it doesn't feel like there is money to be managed. In my personal experience, the more we consider money management a morality issue, the harder it is for us to create a healthy relationship with money.

> "There is so much more to our lives than what we do to pay the bills."

What I want to suggest here is that a culture of poverty and millennial culture are inextricably linked. A culture defined by "the hustle" and constantly feeling oppressed by Boomer logic holds the same basic principles as a culture that feels stuck in poverty.

As much as we'd like to think of ourselves as separated from Millennial culture, Gen Z is merely dealing with the aftermath of the same gig economy that has burnt out so many millennials.

According to financial expert Robin Henager-Greene, Ph.D., "There's research that has shown that students with some student loan debt are buying homes later [and] getting married later because they don't want to bring that financial burden on to a spouse."

Henager-Greene says that double income families have become the norm, making it more difficult for young couples to decide when to have children. One spouse might need to move down to part-time, or even leave their job, if they cannot find affordable childcare.

While it is still possible for young people to have children, it feels more difficult because of the financial pressures we face due to the housing market, rising cost of childcare and student loan debt.

Henager-Greene adds, "On a positive note, college graduates have a higher rate of homeownership than those with a high school diploma, but student loan debt complicates the situation. The percentage of college graduates with student loan debt who purchase a home is lower than those who graduate with no student debt."

This is not to mention the rising costs of renting within the United States.

Studies, such as this one published in the American Journal of Sociology in 2019, suggest that property values cannot be accurately assessed without considering the larger sociological picture. This particular study found that landlord profit margins within poor neighborhoods were significantly higher than those of non-poor neighborhoods. The reason for this is because the landlords of poorer neighborhoods supposedly take on more risk, allowing them to charge more but pay less in property fees and taxes.

In practice, rent in a poor neighborhood looks similar to that of a wealthier neighborhood, but the cost of managing that poor neighborhood property is significantly lower.

This doesn't even consider how inflation can quickly outprice tenants from their homes, while those with a 30-year-fixed mortgage not only receive equity in exchange for their payments, but often have a lower monthly housing expense.

But in order to own a home, you need to be able to save up for a down payment, which for some, comes much later in life than it used to because of student loan debt.

It can be easy to blame the cost of education for student debt. But Henager-Greene wants us to get away from the media's entanglement of student loans and the cost of education. She says that having student loans is not necessarily a bad thing.

You've invested in yourself, an investment Henager-Greene says is called "human capital", and according to "economic theory [it] pays off. It's an investment that brings a return. That is, you have more job opportunities and potential for higher pay."

And yet, even as we assert ourselves, ask for that raise, demand a higher starting pay and allow ourselves to put work aside when we leave the office, just like millennials, we can easily get stuck thinking about the financial struggles that cause us to start families later, if at all. We have a mentality of spending money, of treating ourselves, of living paycheck to paycheck.

Now, I firmly believe that shaming people who live paycheck to paycheck is not the way out of an impoverished state of mind. I think we have much bigger, systemic issues at play here that cause us to possibly not even recognize where our mindsets are coming from or the context in which we are living. Rent is too high. Cost of food is too high. Basic healthcare is often financially inaccessible. Our mental health is flailing.

> "Plants are the new pets. Pets are the new kids. Kids are for the wealthy."

Plant at Whitworth greenhouse in Spokane Wash. Wednesday, Feb. 23, 2022. Photo by Juan Rodriguez/The Whitworthian

Now, that doesn't mean we won't find pockets in which we can thrive. We just might not be having children at 22. And that is okay.

Henager-Greene's own family is having a similar experience. She says, "My oldest daughter got married a couple years ago… she and her new husband had a dog and lived in an apartment that would take dogs. But it was a small apartment; he was a bigger dog and they really wanted a yard. So, they started looking for a house with a yard. Once they found a house with a yard, they got a second dog. And they're happy with that."

She goes on to say that while children aren't in the picture for her daughter yet, they may be in the near future. Henager-Greene says, "I know why they're waiting. They've just paid off her car. They're working on paying off her student loans and making plans for more potential flexibility with their work in the future.

"So, it's a financial decision, unfortunately, but a lot of times families never feel ready, financially, to have kids. Sometimes you just have to jump in."

At the end of the day, work is just work. It shouldn't be soul draining, but it shouldn't be where you receive all of your fulfillment. There is so much more to our lives than what we do to pay the bills. We have families, partners, friends, hobbies and more.

As for our financial wellbeing, Henager-Greene says, "The first thing I tell young people they should do is have an emergency fund of $1,000 that relieves the pressure of using credit."

She says, "Saving now - you have time on your side. Because your money grows… even if it's $50 a month."

Life shouldn't be just about putting food on the table, and that is where Millennial/Gen Z culture gets it right. Money is meant to be spent and enjoyed. You can buy your plants guilt-free. We just need to make space in there to save a little too.

ASWU Bus Pass Program finds new source of funding through administration

Isaac Price | Staff Writer

The ASWU bus pass program, which began in fall of 2018 to fund bus passes for all full-time students will be removed from the ASWU budget and instead funded through a $25 increase to the parking pass fee.

The program was designed to serve sectors of the student population who could not otherwise access transportation. It historically took up a large portion of the ASWU budget each year, costing around $17,000 to $20,000 annually.

Each spring, an ASWU committee proposes a new budget for the next academic year. Last April, the initial budget proposal for 2021-2022 eliminated the bus pass program when there was not enough of a surplus in the budget to cover the costs of the program.

However, after much pushback from the student body over the proposed cut, the ASWU team re-instated the bus pass program into the budget and instead cut funding to the U-Rec intramurals, salaries and other programs across campus. Bus passes would continue for a year, but the long-term issue of how to fund the program was only postponed.

In the summer of 2021, the incoming ASWU team was set on finding a way to keep the program while alleviating the funding concern for good. Current ASWU President Rachel Ayres helped form a committee to resolve the issue of funding, but also with an eye toward sustainability and the environment.

"The committee broke into three groups [to explore different solutions]: (1) One Pine Day was an option, which was a short-term fix, and we were looking for a long-term solution; (2) talking to admin, which gave us the parking pass idea; and (3) talking directly to funders and institutional advancement," Ayres said.

> "The energy in the room was unanimously in support of continuing the program."

Eventually, the committee decided raising the parking pass fee was the best option to pursue.

"A couple of our committee members, Maya Marakillie and Tristy Osbon, had some research that they conducted which they wanted to present to admin. . . . We decided to just get a meeting with admin and find a way to fund bus passes with parking passes," Ayres said.

Rachel Ayres and Chris Clay, Whitworth's ASWU president and vice president, lead the ASWU meeting at Whitworth University, on Wednesday, Feb. 23, 2022 | Hannah Loesch/The Whitworthian

Larry Probus, Vice President of Finance and Administration, met with the committee and heard their concerns. With the financial challenges to the university from the pandemic and declining enrollment numbers, he decided to attend an ASWU meeting on December 8 to hear more about the importance of prioritizing administration funding for this program.

"My main question was how would students feel about that increased cost? I was invited to an ASWU meeting last fall, and it was well attended. As I recall, we introduced this whole concept to those in attendance," Probus said.

The energy in the room was unanimously in support of continuing the program, Probus said. With a couple minor concerns raised, members were strongly in favor of increasing the parking fee to fund it.

In a strong show of representation, many ASWU members spoke to the importance of the program for transportation equity across the student body, according to the December 8, 2021 meeting minutes.

Students raised concerns about the populations who couldn't afford a car on campus, like international students and students from Hawaii, for whom it is often prohibitively expensive to ship a car to the mainland United States. Marketing and PR coordinator Aeron Sugui, for example, spoke from the perspective of the Hawaii population. According to the December 8 meeting minutes, "We need to be inclusive of the Hawaii community because the buses are how we can get around and explore Spokane," Sugui said.

Tristy Osbon, sustainability coordinator and bus pass committee member, spoke on behalf of a self-described low-income, first-generation constituent who could not have completed her degree without the program due to being unable to independently afford the cost of transportation.

The stories, feedback and voices represented at this December 8 meeting showed how essential the program was.

Probus confirmed, "I took that proposal to our cabinet and board, and they agreed to support it as well, and that is where we ended up."

Regarding what the $25 increase to parking passes will cover, Probus said, "Parking passes will now cover bus passes entirely. The cost of the bus pass program is adjusted based on the usage, and because of the pandemic it's been very volatile, but this [increase in parking passes] should provide enough funding to pay for the entire bus pass program for students."

To Ayres and the ASWU team, this change is huge.

"ASWU will no longer have bus passes in our budget. We hope that this will continue for years and years, and . . . that this will be a long-term solution," Ayres said.

The extra funds freed up by the handing off of the program allow ASWU to do more with the money they are given, keeping pace with the rising costs of university expenses while keeping bus passes fully funded.

"Last year we had to cut some amazing programs because of it, and now . . . we will be able to pour money back into other places so that programming and full representation will really flourish," Ayres said.

> "[The bus pass] is a ticket to independence."

Even with the $25 increase, a $125 fee for Whitworth parking passes will still be significantly cheaper than other regional universities. Boise State averages $388 per year for a single designated spot. Gonzaga and WSU also charge more, with varying costs based on which lot is selected.

Sustainable transportation was another important issue in the discussion, and bus passes help meet that demand, according to Probus.

"In our sustainability efforts, we want to encourage students who can to not bring cars and use the bus system. Having an increased cost to the parking fee might contribute to that," Probus said.

More importantly, the bus pass resolution helps the university continue to equitably serve the student body. Aguilar, who now serves as outreach coordinator for ASWU and has made accessibility a focus of his service, believes bus passes are an important part of that.

"For people that aren't able to drive their own vehicle, having access to public transportation is super important. With ASWU being an inclusive space and recognizing all economic circumstances, not all students can afford cars; so, to make sure we're recognizing them well, we need to equip them well," Aguilar said.

Emilie Browning, a current senior, says she has benefited from using the program all four years. "I used it . . . to get off campus my first two years and to get to and from school my junior and senior years now, and I also use it to work during the summers. The fact that it doesn't end with the school year is very important to me, because I don't have a car... I wouldn't be able to work during the summer, and therefore couldn't afford school without that summer work. [The bus pass] is a ticket to independence," Browning said.

Finally, the resolution of this issue falls in accordance with the university's mission and values.

"As a Christian institution, we recognize the importance of bearing each other's burdens. The people using bus passes don't have access to a car, and as a community, this allows us to support them in that," Ayres said.

Aguilar added, "It's important to think about how we are helping our neighbor, our planet and our low-income and first-generation college students. We want to promote everyone being welcome here, and I hope people don't see that parking pass increase as something to be frustrated about, but rather as a way of blessing people in our community."

ASWU is planning to eliminate the bus pass from its budget this spring, and then it will be up to the administration to raise the cost of parking passes and begin servicing the program at the beginning of the next academic year.

Representation at Whitworth:

What more could we be doing?

Hannah Foster | Staff Writer

Lyss Gorman (she/her) discusses key aspects of developing healthy LGBTQ+ relationships in the Intercultural Student Center at Whitworth University, Thursday, Feb. 10, 2022, in Spokane, Wash. | Thomas Peach/The Whitworthian

The recent presidential change has prompted Whitworth faculty and students to reevaluate the current climate on-campus for students with diverse identities. In an interview with the Whitworthian, Scott McQuilkin said he planned to hold focus groups with POC students so that they may voice their concerns and share their experiences, but many wonder what else will be done.

The webpage for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Ministries explains Whitworth's commitment to create and foster a diverse and healthy education environment. They list tangible goals for how to uphold this promise, such as implementing rigorous intercultural competency training for professional development, in order "for faculty and staff to promote a safe, affirming and welcoming campus environment."

Students and faculty alike have thoughts about how well Whitworth is living up to this promise.

DEI director Ayaka Dohi reflected on Whitworth's efforts to promote inclusivity on-campus, saying, "The university has made some admirable goals towards diversity, equity and inclusion to ensure that students coming from diverse backgrounds have access to a quality education, and they feel supported in the community."

Dohi does much of her work in Hendrick Hall, which serves as Whitworth's DEI office on-campus. Dohi describes Hendrick Hall as a communal space where students came to study, as well as hold meetings prior to COVID-19.

Dohi feels creating these spaces for students helps connect people of similar backgrounds, saying, "It's about relationship building. Students feel known and feel validated."

Many of the events surrounding diversity and inclusivity at Whitworth are ones that cultivate community and safe spaces for LGBTQ+ and BIPOC students. These events range from "Developing Healthy Relationships and Gender Diverse LGTBQ+ Community Conversations" to Whitworth's Black Student Union's (BSU) Harlem Renaissance Ball. Students also anticipate Whitworth's Diversity Monologues, which provide an opportunity for students from a variety of backgrounds to share their life experiences through a poetry medium.

BSU co-president Ibrahim Diop gave his perspective on diversity and inclusivity initiatives at Whitworth, speaking fondly of Whitworth's International Festival, as well as the Diversity Monologues. "Reflecting on my own time here, [inclusivity] has grown a lot but still needs to grow."

As for representation of different identities within Whitworth's faculty, Diop adds, "I think it's slowly growing but it definitely needs to be worked on," he says. "It would be a lot better if it would also come down to those who aren't of color - our typical white staff and faculty - growing their cultural competency and that genuinely coming from them wanting to do it."

"I am not a token; tokenization is a big problem across our society. One problem I've noticed in pockets at Whitworth is the tokenization of BIPOC students," Diop says. "This has been very dangerous. It makes a boundary between what people really want to do and what they think should be done. It is a deep issue to unpack."

> "I want our students of color and marginalized students to feel proud of who they are and feel safe on our campus."

Sophomore Bryan Acevedo-Prado is the Public Relations officer for Pride Club. Like Diop, he wishes for more events on-campus that celebrate students with various identities. He said, "I think that although there aren't as many events as I would like, the fact that we have a pride club at all, and other clubs for the different cultures within Whitworth, is a great way to feel included."

When asked about what the university could do to promote a greater sense of inclusivity on campus, Acevedo-Prado says, "One great way would be to see faculty or professors that are BIPOC or part of the LGBTQ+ community, as well as a week of celebrating different cultures through sharing food, music or other forms of culture people want to share."

Acevedo-Prado mentions how representation is important to making LGBTQ+ and BIPOC students feel safe. "I want our students of color and marginalized students to feel proud of who they are and feel safe on our campus. There should be a place for them to feel safe bringing up issues to the university."

From the students' perspectives, there seems to be the consensus that the current diversity initiatives on campus are a good start, but there is more that can be done to cultivate community.

Professor of political science Katherine Lee, Ph.D., is a member of the LGBTQ+ community. As she rounds out her 11th year at Whitworth, she reflects on the climate for LGBTQ+ individuals here. "Whitworth has made some progress," she says. "We had a panel discussion about this last Monday, and it was very encouraging." Lee explains that the panel centered around how faculty are incorporating topics related to the LGBTQ+ community in their classrooms, as well as providing a forum for discussion.

> "As a small Christian university, we have an ethical imperative to respond to those needs."

Lee talked about the hiring policy for employees and faculty, mentioning the lack of clarity about protections for LGBTQ+ individuals. "We're in this kind of murky place," Lee says. "We have a non-discrimination hiring policy that doesn't include gender or sexual identity."

Aiden Sanders (they/them) discusses key aspects of developing healthy LGBTQ+ relationships in the Intercultural Student Center at Whitworth University, Thursday, Feb. 10, 2022, in Spokane, Wash. | Thomas Peach/The Whitworthian

Lee echoes the concerns of Acevedo-Prado, saying, "One of the best ways for LGBTQ+ students to feel included is to see themselves represented in the faculty."

She adds that her hope is to one day see an openly queer person preach in chapel because "students would see themselves in this significant place."

The common thread linking faculty and student beliefs is that Whitworth has made strides toward promoting inclusivity on-campus through faculty training, as well as events, but progress cannot stop here.

"There's so much we could be doing," Dohi says. "I hope students continue to voice what they want to see from the university. As a small Christian university, we have an ethical imperative to respond to those needs."

Maddy Thomas: A League of Her Own

Urvashi Lalwani | Staff Writer

Maddy "Tommy" Thomas (29) returns to Whitworth's Marks Field from a winning streak in Redlands, California. Marks Field, Whitworth University, Spokane WA, Thursday 24 2022 | Ben Gallaway/ The Whitworthian

Senior softball catcher Maddy Thomas has cemented her name in the Whitworth history books. She started playing baseball when she was five years old until she moved to Walla Walla three years later, where her focus shifted to softball.

Thomas had a list of high school awards and achievements even before she committed to being a Pirate: Max Preps Small School All-American and Eastern Washington Athletic Conference Player of the Year.

Thomas received first-team all-conference honors four times as a high-school catcher and helped DeSales Catholic High School make four straight state tournament appearances.

As a first-year Pirate, Thomas had a massive impact on the softball team with 12 home runs and 21 RBIs. She hit .293 and threw out 11 of 36 base-stealers from behind the dish. Thomas earned the title of second-team All-Northwest Conference that year.

Maddy's accomplishments were on a solid rise the following year in the 2020 season when she hit .385. She had nine RBIs in the 14 games that were played before COVID-19 shut down the season.

"Former head coach Brown and current coach Castle have pushed me to be a player I could have only imagined to be," Thomas said.

The 2021 season was Thomas' best yet. She had 40 hits and a .345 average, and broke Whitworth's single-season slugging percentage record with .828. She also broke her own single-season home run record with 13.

"It's not something I ever thought of; it just kind of happened. I try not to think about it too much, but I also understand that I need to be a threat in more ways than one on the offensive side of the field," she said.

"Maddy, affectionately known as Tommy, is a true leader in every sense of the word, from how she prepares herself to how she helps and inspires others," second-year head coach Bob Castle said. "Rarely does a game go by where an opposing coach does not come to me to express their appreciation for her as a player and leader in a game," Castle said.

Thomas has grown to master her game and is constantly seeking new ways to improve. "I have elevated my visualization strategies with offense and defense. Throughout the off-season working on my pre-pitch approaches was huge, along with focusing on a certain team every practice, imaging their field and past games," Thomas said.

Coach Castle expressed his pride in Maddy, saying, "She continues to set school records that she has broken despite losing an entire season of conference games. I will always wonder just how high she could have set the bar for future Whitworth softball players."

Maddy was recently featured in an article by FloSoftball recognizing her as one of the returning heavy hitters to watch for all of NCAA Division III softball.

> "She continues to set school records that she has broken despite losing an entire season of conference games."

"It was an honor to see my name next to so many talented women. I had no idea about the article until one of my former teammates sent it to me," Thomas said.

However, she did not expect to be recognized for her hitting.

"To see my name on that list of "heavy hitters" honestly made me chuckle because I would have never thought I would make national headlines for my hitting. All jokes aside, it is a pretty cool honor, but at the same time, articles only mean so much."

Despite all the recognition and praise she has received, Maddy's primary focus is to seek success with her team.

"Work still needs to be done and games still need to be won. More than anything, I am excited to see my team make national headlines [instead of] my personal accolades."

Some of her proudest moments playing Whitworth softball were when the team won the semifinal game against George Fox last year.

"The preparation and skill that went into winning that game was something you only see a couple of times in a career. It was so special to be a part of," Thomas said.

Thomas is known for the phrase, "It takes a tribe". She said, "My parents, teammates and coaches (current and former). I could not have gotten to Whitworth without the support of others, just like I could not have been as successful as I am without the support of others."

Thomas hopes to carry her current successes into higher levels of softball in the future, saying, "I definitely want to coach someday, but in the near future, I am looking forward to graduating and starting my rookie season on a hotshot crew."

> "More than anything, I am excited to see my team make national headlines."

Whitworth softball is already off to an 11-5 start this season. Thomas has hit .341, seven home runs and 22 RBI in sixteen games so far.

Pictured: Maddy Thomas tags out a Linfield opponent at a home game at Marks Field, Whitworth University, 4/18/21 | Ben Gallaway/ The Whitworthian

#0 Jake Holtz. Mario Gonzalez/The Whitworthian

#11 JT McDermott. Caleb Flegel/The Whitworthian

#11 JT McDermott.
Thomas Peach/The Whitworthian

#20 Liam Fitzgerald. Caleb Flegel/The Whitworthian

Men's basketball dominates at the Division III Northwest Conference to move forward to Nationals.

#10 Garrett Paxton. Mario Gonzalez/The Whitworthian

#22 Jerry Twenge. Thomas Peach/The Whitworthian