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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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#35 Julia Thomas and #10 Heather Menzer celebrate with #29 Maddy Thomas after her home-run during game #1 of an NCAA college softball doubleheader at Whitworth University against University of Puget Sound, Saturday, Mar. 19, 2022, in Spokane, Wash. | Cal

Editors' Note

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 editorial board.

Masking the Problem

As the United States enters its third year of the COVID-19 pandemic, COVID-19 relief funding has dwindled and states have started lifting mask mandates, including Washington state as of March 12. The consensus is that the country has entered an endemic, or as President Joe Biden stated during his COVID-19 debrief of March 30, "It does not mean that COVID-19 is over; it means that COVID-19 no longer controls our lives."

In accordance with that sentiment and state guidelines, institutions of higher education have lifted their own mask mandates, including Whitworth University.

While a relief to many, this is causing significant stress to some. A Rutgers article suggests that school closures, news of death and illness and conflicting COVID-19 guidance has traumatized the public, taking the insidious form of "everyday trauma." Now, another piece of contradictory COVID-19 guidance—the removal of masks—adds another layer of stress to the lives of college students.

With only one week to prepare for what campus would look like without masks, many were left reeling following the late announcement and the unclear language surrounding individual professors and classrooms. What constitutes an "indicated medical concern"? Why end the use of masks immediately prior to spring break?

It is true that across campus, COVID cases are in decline. Fortunately, since masks came off on March 12, the only positive case on campus was one off-campus undergraduate case through March 31. However, many questions remain for those who are severely immunocompromised. Without the entire campus being vaccinated, masks still pose the greatest protection against transmission of the virus. Yet for those who are still at risk, there is confusion and fear.

Other universities, like Central Washington University, chose to keep their mask mandates in place through the remainder of their winter quarter in efforts to keep some semblance of consistency leading up to the end of the term.

Along with the lack of policy continuity throughout the semester, there is no opportunity for those that are immunocompromised to continue classes online if they do not feel comfortable in person. Due to the lack of official accreditation for online classes as well as concerns about federal aid, WhitFLEX was discontinued for the 2021-2022 academic year. Zoom and Teams resources are still available as options in some classes short-term in cases of "medical necessity," according to Whitworth's 2022 Classroom Teaching Guide.

For those who feel uncomfortable with the new COVID-19 policy, there is not yet any evidence

to show whether masking was helpful or not on our campus following mass travel, since publicly accessible data on COVID-19 case counts is not updated on a daily basis.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention says that masks are effective when worn and fitted properly. But as many of us can attest, this doesn't always happen on a college campus.

So, many have turned their hopes to vaccines.

According to a recent study published in BMJ, a medical journal published by the British Medical Association, the efficiency of the COVID-19 vaccine is not as high for immunocompromised people (HIV-positive, organ-transplant recipients, those with autoimmune disorders, etcetera) as it is for immunocompetent people.

According to a study published in Transplantation, a medical journal covering transplant topics, organ-transplant recipients are 82 times more likely to get breakthrough infections, or infections that occur within the vaccinated population.

The CDC recommends a second booster to immunocompromised people, but even that might not reach full effectiveness.

Perhaps what this really suggests is that masks should become the new normal when it comes to major seasons of illness. Instead of looking out only for ourselves, perhaps we should start looking

out for one another as well. To be clear, we don't believe that anyone who chooses to not wear their mask is uncaring or ignorant of the needs of others. We want to respect those who might not feel comfortable with unmasking after being masked for two years, or those with concerns for themselves or their loved ones.

Whitworth has been both blessed and fortunate to have weathered the pandemic with minimal impact compared to other institutions nationwide and the administration has made several health-conscious decisions in attempts to keep everyone safe.

We believe that this should continue. We should all make the conscious effort to practice good handwashing and stay home when sick. If staying home isn't an option, then we should normalize mask-wearing for those with minor illnesses.

This is the consensus of the editorial board.

Stop Equating Freedom to Gas Prices

Nicole Harris | Opinions Editor

No one notices the price of gas until they go to fill their tank.

Then, it's the topic of every small talk conversation they engage in.

But, as senior Carolyn Quinn said, "What can you do? We have to drive still."

Since March of 2022, gas prices have continued to steadily climb toward an all-time high. According to Washington Post, prices rose 14% in March, shattering the previous record of \$4.10 set during the 2008 financial crisis.

Unlike bread, the price of hamburgers, or even the cost of cars, gasoline seems to be the gold standard for determining an economy's health for the average American.

It also happens to be the thing we like to complain about most when it comes to inflation.

According to The Atlantic, complaining to others helps us get sympathy and attention from others.

Complaining often leads us to blame specific figures for our misfortunes. In the case of high gas prices, we often blame the president, regardless of political affiliation. This happened during George Bush's presidency in the early aughts, during Barack Obama's presidency and now, during President Joe Biden's time in office.

The controversy surrounding blaming presidents for high inflation has also been around for quite some time with publications

like NPR reporting the blame's lack of importance back in 2012.

According to Associate Economics Professor Vange Ocasio Hochheimer, Ph.D., this is because "we are in oil dependent economy, and so when the price of oil increases, that is going to increase the cost of production."

Our inflation rate is the high-

"Gasoline seems to be the gold standard for determining an economy's health for the average American"

est it's been in four decades—at 7.9%—according to The Wall Street Journal. Ocasio explains that the Federal Reserve System, or Fed, is only comfortable with around a 2% rate.

There is no one root cause. According to Ocasio, while the recent trend has been to tie the rise in gas prices to the war in Ukraine, this is not as strong of a tie as we might think. There are a multiplicity of factors contributing to high gas prices, one of the most influential being the end of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It was a public health issue. So, although many people lost their jobs, there were many particularly wealthy, [or] wealth-

ier individuals [who] did not lose their jobs. In fact, they became even wealthier during the pandemic. So, what you see is a lot of that spending is starting to be unleashed," says Ocasio.

After being quarantined to their homes, people want to get out. People want to travel.

Ocasio says this is not unusual. "When historically you look at the pandemic, the [1918] Spanish flu, the economy expanded significantly right after."

This pent-up demand is driving up prices to such an extreme that the government is now tasked with stabilizing the market to prevent a crash.

Ocasio suggests that as the Fed raises interest rates, fewer people might be inclined to travel, thereby lowering the demand for oil, eventually lowering the price.

When something becomes more expensive, it discourages demand.

For example, to discourage

teenage smoking, we tax cigarettes. And it works, according to a 2011 study published in The Library of Medicine. The American Lung Association says that for every 10 percent raise of taxes, there was a reduction of consumption of around 4 percent in adults and 7 percent in youths.

While the Fed increases interest rates, the Biden admin-

istration plans to release more of our reserves, thus increasing the supply with the hope of the same effect. As supply increases, prices will lower.

The goal here is economic stabilization.

"There is another side of high price, the gas being more expensive... I think is going to allow for people to reflect and think about the fact that gas is a luxury that maybe we take for granted," says Ocasio.

But in examples like sugar taxes (taxes that raise the prices of sugar drinks by their sugar content), which use a similar theory to tobacco taxes, raising prices doesn't achieve the desired effect. Sugar taxes, according to a 2012 Cornell University study, often push soda drinkers to trade soda for beer, essentially trading one vice for another.

Even if we view gas as a luxury and attempt to use it less—fewer quick plane rides home, fewer cruises around town, etcetera—the need for gas won't completely go away.

As Quinn says, we still have to drive, regardless of the price of gasoline. So maybe this becomes the driving force that leads us to energy alternatives.

According to Professor of Physics Steven Zemke, Ph.D., "Those who study the energy field con-

clude that there is no silver bullet. Introduction of a single, magical and new technology will not meet the energy demand."

None of this even begins to get into the ethical issues with current marketing of all-electric vehicles.

Though marketed as this perfect utopian solution to our energy crisis, electric vehicles might not be the cure-all we think it is.

"You can go out and look at a Nissan LEAF you'll notice that a tagline says zero emissions. But generating electricity does not have zero emissions. A Nissan LEAF may have zero tailpipe emissions. But once you manufacture, well generate, the electricity, it has environmental impacts," says Zemke.

Besides the environmental impact of these cars, smaller than internal combustion engines or not, we lack the necessary infrastructure to support a widespread rollout. We need more charging stations and batteries the size of houses in order to support them according to Zemke.

Zemke says it might be 10 years before we see the necessary infrastructure and technological advances that would make buying an all-electric vehicle make sense for most Americans. Unfortunately for most, electric vehicles have too many limitations: they frequently need to be charged, they cannot go long distances and they are often too small.

Even with an increased demand for these types of products, we won't be able to see them come into fruition on a massive scale without gov-



Electric cars charge in the Baldwin-Jenkins parking lot at Whitworth University, Spokane Wash. Friday, Apr. 8, 2022 | Katie Chilcote/The Whitworthian

ernment subsidies. The gap in our infrastructure is too large. Yet, as Ocasio points out, "a lot of times... we almost look at policy from a place of privilege."

We might all agree that certain things are necessary for human fulfillment, but in creating policy, we lack the perspective to see the potential barriers for impoverished and marginalized communities.

The pandemic exposed many inequities within our society: lack of equitable healthcare, education, clean water, internet and many other basic resources. Its impact is not over. We are still in a moment of crisis with many immune compromised persons still unable to reenter the world in any meaningful way as

we shift into an endemic stage. I'm not going to suggest we stop primarily focusing on only what directly affects us. I think at some point we have to turn off the TV and start considering more localized issues. But maybe this localized issue of gas prices could finally force us to think twice about the decisions we make every day.

Zemke reminds me that the world has come to energy crises before. He says, "before the widespread use of coal in Europe, a lot of Europe was deforested. People needed fuel. What do you do? You cut down trees. Big environmental impact. It looked like, as humanity in Europe, it looked like we were going to run out of energy. And then people discovered coal and started mining coal. And

that energy crisis was solved." With each crisis, some new technology was formed, relegating the demand for new energy sources. The difference, as Zemke puts it, is that this time we can identify all the available sources of energy.

I would love to see this rise in gas prices lead to more electric cars and less driving. But cars are a way of American life. People take so much pride in what they drive, where they drive and who they drive with. There would need to be a significant cultural shift in order to move away from gasoline and toward a cleaner alternative.

We just haven't seen the crisis that will prompt that yet.

Sleepless nights, isolated days: The pandemic's effects on mental health at Whitworth

Grace Uppendahl | Staff Writer



(Left to right) Chad Hamasaki, Molly DeWalt, Maja LeBon, Emily Soucinek, Sophia Miller, pose for a photograph in front of Schumacher Hall - Health Center at Whitworth University, Tuesday, Sept. 7, 2021, in Spokane, Wash. | Photo by Kat Wagner

Student mental health has been a growing concern on college campuses for years. However, the pandemic seems to have exacerbated the problem. Since the beginning of the pandemic, mental health issues have worsened considerably nationwide, particularly among college students.

Hannah Higgins, a Whitworth senior who was previously a Baldwin-Jenkins senator and the Associated Students of Whitworth (ASWU) executive vice president, was not only personally affected by the pandemic but also saw the effects across campus.

Higgins was a sophomore at

Whitworth when the pandemic first hit and students were sent to live at home. "You lose a community when you go home, and the stability that was lost from that definitely affected people's mental health," she said.

"You lose a community when you go home, and the stability that was lost from that definitely affected people's mental health."

When Whitworth opened back up, Higgins was a part of the first group quarantined on campus in August of 2020. Quarantining has affected many people's mental health, and Higgins said she was affected as well.

Higgins said, "When I got out, I had so much anxiety, even going to the grocery store for the first time, just because it didn't feel like it was a safe space." This is just one example of the anxieties that arose from the pandemic.

Over the pandemic, mental health issues became a nation-wide problem. According

to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "During August 2020 – February 2021, the percentage of adults with recent symptoms of an anxiety or depressive disorder increased from 36.4% to 41.5%."

The CDC has also named suicide as the third leading cause of death in young adults aged 15-24. Mental health has always been a serious issue and the pandemic has only made it more pressing that institutions set up systems to address poor student mental health and well-being.

Vice President of Student Life Rhosetta Rhodes has seen this problem grow in the past four years. Rhodes has seen mental health not only affect individuals, but the Whitworth campus as a whole. This problem has been ongoing for years, yet COVID seemed to make things worse. Mental health was still an issue on campus, but not as severe as now.

Rhodes said, "COVID exacerbated it, so it created what was termed a mental health pandemic." This term has been tossed around since numbers started rising.

"[Whitworth's] number one mental health issue is anxiety," but it was depression a couple years ago.

Whitworth's experience reflects that of youth mental health

issues generally. According to data from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services published in April of 2022, "More than one in three high school students (37.1%) experienced poor mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, 44.2% of students experienced persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, almost 20% seriously considered suicide, and 9.0% attempted suicide during the 12 months before the survey."

Reentering the world after being isolated has caused social anxiety, something Rhodes has seen since the return of students to campus. She said, "Students report that there are aspects of socialization that cause anxiety, which manifests in not being able to engage in ways that they would want to engage with other students."

Additionally, there are new arising anxieties following the new mask policies. "I do know that there are students who are very anxious about their health and wellbeing as a result of not having masks anymore. You still have students who are immunocompromised, you still

have folks living with younger family members who aren't even able to be vaccinated."

Rhodes said, "Trying to help students with their overall wellbeing is huge for [the Student Life office]. And... all the departments within Student Life are doing the best we can and concentrating on finding that solution."

In the meantime, Rhodes encourages those who are struggling to reach out to the facilities offered by the counseling center.

However, Rhodes is not the only one who has seen this trend from an administrative point of view. Annika Bjornson is a senior at Whitworth who has previously worked as a resident assistant (RA) and is currently the assistant area coordinator (AAC) of Arend and Baldwin Jenkins.

Bjornson has seen mental health issues on campus even before the pandemic when she was an RA. But she has noticed some increases in issues since the pandemic began.

Bjornson said, "Mental health

was still definitely a challenge before the pandemic, but it affected people in different ways than it does now." Bjornson said that she has seen an underlying sense of anxiety across campus that was not present pre-pandemic.

As an AAC, Bjornson said she handles these issues less one-on-one and more on an administrative level. "As an AAC, I'm seeing a lot more of the... overall trends and how people are affected. [I'm] trying to help other RAs or other student leaders learn how to

have those conversations," she said.

Bjornson is not the only one who has noticed trends in mental health on campus. Molly DeWalt, the director of the counseling center here at Whitworth as well as a licensed counselor, has seen similar trends.

DeWalt said she has also noticed an increase in anxiety on campus. "We've seen more students who are feeling anxious about being around other people, especially in the fall, like they hadn't [before]. It's almost

overstimulating to be around people after trying to physically distance for so long," she said.

Yet, there are some other mental health disorders that are apparent on Whitworth's campus. DeWalt said that eating disorders on campus have increased. However, she said, "I think [eating disorders] have more to do with the increased anxiety that we're seeing."

In line with national trends, DeWalt said the counseling center is also seeing more people opening up about their depression and suicidal ideation.

To those who are struggling with mental health issues, DeWalt said, "Reach out to friends. Reach out to Area Coordinators, any supportive adult and to the counseling center, if they're interested in that. I mean, not everybody has to be in counseling, but it certainly is here to help."

Rhodes also said, "Don't try to deal with everything by yourself. If you're struggling, please reach out and let us help you."

Higgins said she would tell students that, when considering their mental health, "You're a human first and then you're a student."

"If you're struggling, please reach out and let us help you."

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Healthcare Inequities: The impasse between empathy and privilege

Hannah Rainford | Staff Writer

The venerated Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once insisted, “Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in healthcare is the most shocking and inhumane.” A truism that, while often overlooked, can continue to be seen within modern society to this day.

According to a 2017 study conducted by the American Center for Progress, 10.6% of Black Americans were uninsured compared to 5.9% of non-Hispanic whites, with 12.1% of Black Americans under the age of 65 reporting no health insurance coverage.

80% of Black American women are overweight or obese compared to 64.8% of non-Hispanic white women, and in 2018, 8.7% of Black American adults received mental health services compared with 18.6% of non-Hispanic white adults.

Over half of the United States population must navigate the inequities that spring from this obvious and disquieting gap. “It’s a question of how much is somebody’s life worth to everybody else when it comes to health care? What should everybody have equal access to? Or not? And

I think we’re not very good at answering that question,” said biology professor Aaron Putzke, Ph.D. “Everybody deserves health care - the ability to walk in knowing that they have a shot at getting healthy without having to worry about the bill.”

Putzke went on to emphasize that privilege interferes with empathy. “Many of us come from a position of privilege where we don’t get into that [situation]

because we have coverage, we have good insurance, and that’s great,” he said. “But I think what it does is allow us to push an issue behind us and say, ‘Well, it’s not affecting me and I don’t see it right in front of me, so I’m not going to spend time thinking about it.’”

The injustice of inequitable healthcare was recently brought to the forefront of the Whitworth’s community’s minds through a bioethics symposium entitled, “Achieving Health Equity: This Too is Our Lane,” presented by Rachel Issaka, M.D., M.A.S., on March 10.

While reflecting on the bioethics symposium, Putzke shared that Issaka emphasized the importance of striving toward

healthcare equity and addressing misconceptions about healthcare.

Putzke said, “Just because we think things are good, or things are better, doesn’t mean that they are for everyone,” he said. “This view is one acknowledging that there are inequities everywhere, but health care inequity is even worse than others because it keeps people from being healthy on a basic human level.”

Issaka is a gastroenterologist, assistant professor and the

Kathryn Surace-Smith Endowed Chair in Health Equity Research at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center (FHCRC) at the University of Washington. She is the director of the FHCRC/UW Medicine Population

Health Colorectal Cancer Screening Program.

According to Issaka’s website, her research focuses on decreasing colorectal cancer mortality through increased screening in medically underserved popula-

“Healthcare inequities are as grave as they are broad.”

Dr. Aaron Putzke introduces Dr. Issaka, the speaker at the Bioethics Symposium in the Robinson Teaching Theater at Whitworth University, Thursday, March 10, 2022, in Spokane, Wash. | Thomas Peach/The Whitworthian



Students attend a lecture in the Robinson teaching theater at Whitworth University. Dec. 9, 2021, Spokane Wash. | Photo by Ben Gallaway/The Whitworthian.

tions. Her work has been funded by the National Institute of Health, as well as the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

Issaka has also contributed to national medical practice guidelines for the Centers for Disease Control, the National Comprehensive Cancer Network and the National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable. In 2020, she was selected to serve on an expert panel advising the President’s Cancer Panel and the COVID-19 Prevention Network, a group formed to provide oversight for National Institute of Health’s COVID-19 vaccine trials.

Of anyone, Issaka has undoubtedly witnessed the reality of inequities existing within U.S. healthcare through a variety of avenues, prompting her to advocate for how to better combat these issues.

Once the symposium concluded, Putzke approached Issaka and asked her, “What can we do at the college level to be better at this?”

She answered, “Talk about it. Talk about it in your classes. Make people more aware.”

In Putzke and Issaka’s conversation, she revealed that she hadn’t been informed of healthcare inequities until she entered medical school, but she believed this conversation should have begun much earlier in her collegiate career.

Because healthcare inequities are as grave as they are broad, they can appear overwhelming and even impossible to solve, but the first step to combatting this injustice is beginning the conversation around these issues in one’s own

concentrated life and community.

“Honestly, I think the best thing we can do is to check ourselves - think about how so often so many of us are lucky to have health insurance. We don’t think about what we don’t have to pay for ourselves,” Putzke said.

Putzke affirmed the importance of recognizing the Christian conviction behind achieving healthcare equity. “As a Christian, I think that causes us to think of others and put others before ourselves. In this day and age, it’s a really hard thing to do because society is telling us to do the opposite,” he said. “I think, now more than ever, leaning into God’s call

to really put others before ourselves is key and [thinking] about healthcare from that perspective. I think God wants everybody to have access to healthcare.”

As a Christian liberal arts institution, Whitworth looks to the example set by Jesus throughout His life and ministry as a guide for life. How can one of the essential aspects of His outreach - curing and caring for the sick - be ignored? To be concerned with the physical and mental well-being of those around us is to emulate on a small scale the grand, miraculous outpourings of healing that marked Jesus’ years on earth.

“The first step to combatting this injustice is beginning the conversation in one’s own concentrated life and community.”

Cutting the net: Whitworth Men's Basketball wins NWC Championship

Taylor Jones | Staff Writer

The Whitworth men's basketball team ended their season with their fourteenth Northwest Conference Championship in program history. Whitworth has won the NWC in 1996, 2003, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2018 and now 2022. Head coach Damion Jablonski stated that the season was a huge success. At the end of the championship game on February 26, 2022, the men's basketball team followed the tradition of cutting down one of

the nets from the basketball hoop. "The feeling was incredible and something I will never forget for the rest of my life," senior JT McDermott said. Whitworth and Whitman, school rivals, played against each other for the NWC Championship. The Pirates won 85-59. McDermott scored 23 points, Miguel Lopez 21, Jake Holtz 20 and Garrett Paxton nine. "The best moment of the season was beating Whitman for the championship by 20+ points. It was everything our team had

worked for and seeing it come true was awesome!" McDermott said. By beating the Blues, Whitworth broke the 1-1 tie from the regular season. In their first matchup in December, the Pirates beat Whitman 82-71 at home. The Blues countered on their home court by winning 71-69 in January. "Of the four years that I have been here, this was the first time that we had beaten Whitman in a conference tournament game. Whitworth versus Whitman is going to be a battle no matter what gym or who is on the team,"

senior Liam Fitzgerald said. The Whitworth Pirates also cut down the basketball net after their game on February 24, 2022, when the team made it into the NWC semifinals. "This was the first time in my four years that we got to cut down two nets and make it to the NCAA tournament... it is an amazing accomplishment. Very few people get to experience this in their lives," Fitzgerald said. For head coach Jablonski, the net cutting celebration with the Whitworth community felt like they were going back to normal living conditions.

The Whitworth Pirates were undefeated on their home court during the 2021-22 Northwest Conference Championship. "We have amazing fans and the best attendance in the conference so playing at home was a lot easier than playing on the road. Evident by our undefeated season at home," senior Rowan Anderson said. The Whitworth student section was packed at the last two games of the NWC Basketball Tournament. "Whitworth has an awesome home crowd which makes playing there so fun! This season we were undefeated at home—it is definitely a huge advantage! Being on the road there are a lot of challenges, whether it be a

different gym, unexpected circumstances, different balls or a jeering crowd. All these things make it more challenging to win on the road," Paxton said. The Whitworth men's basketball team had the same pregame rituals before every game this season. "Before each game we say the Lord's prayer together and someone dances and gets us hype," Paxton said. Before each game, the team gets into a circle where the team dances and yells to get 'pumped' up for the game," McDermott said. The Whitworth basketball team traveled to Texas for the NCAA Division III Men's Basketball Tournament. Their first game of

champs, conference tournament champs and making the national tournament," Anderson said. "By no means was this season a failure because we did not go as far as we had hoped to. We shared a conference season championship and won two conference tournament games. We beat Whitman in a conference tournament championship game which has not been done for a handful of years, so that is a huge accomplishment," Fitzgerald said. The Pirates expressed their excitement for their successful season but were clear that they didn't succeed without overcoming struggles along the way. "I'm so proud of the guys'

"This was the first time in my four years that we got to cut down two nets and make it to the NCAA tournament."

the tournament was on March 4, 2022, against Trinity University. The Tigers jumped out to an early 8-0 lead and never trailed. Whitworth lost 52-77. Anderson scored 13 points, Paxton scored 11, McDermott scored 10 and Lopez scored six. Even though Whitworth lost their first game in the NCAA Division III Tournament, the team agreed that they had an overall successful season. "This season was awesome! We worked really hard together," Paxton said. "I thought the season was a great success! We overcame a lot of adversity and reached our goals of regular season

ability to fight through all of the adversities of the last 18 months and finish the season 22-5 while capturing both the regular season and conference tournament championships and advancing to the NCAA tournament," Jablonski said. "There were ups and downs with games, but I feel like we always bounced back from them," Fitzgerald said. "I think the hardest part of the season was having Jordan [Lester] go down with injury. He was such an integral part of our team and made all of us better. It was hard adjusting to playing without him," Anderson said. Paxton said he struggled with



Northwest Conference championships game. Saturday, Feb. 26, 2022, in Spokane Washington. | Mario Gonzalez/The Whitworthian

conditioning and maintaining his performance level due to injuries throughout the season. "I suffered several injuries (back, elbow, thumb, quad, foot) and also got COVID. I overcame this with the help of our awesome athletic trainer Matt [Buckner]," Paxton said. Whitworth Pirates men's basketball team shared their gratitude for each other. The team worked together through injuries and losses throughout their season. They uplifted each other on and off the court this year. "I very much looked up to the other seniors in my class: Pax, Liam, JT, Miguel, and Jordan. Each of us played different leadership roles and it was awesome to see all of our hard work over the years pay off," Anderson said. "JT has dealt with a lot of adversity during his Whitworth basketball career, so watching him work so hard and earn first team all-conference was

so special for me," Paxton said. Seniors McDermott and Anderson will be back on the court next year. "[My] goals for next season are to win the conference outright and not tie during the regular season. Also, to make it further in the NCAA tournament is another goal of mine," McDermott said. Whitworth men's basketball had a great season, and they have big aspirations and goals for next year. Although the season was cut short in the NCAA tournament, 2021-2022 Whitworth men's basketball team will keep their name in the school history books for their great season this year.

"We have amazing fans and the best attendance in the conference."



Garrett Paxton cuts the net after winning the Northwest Conference Championships. Saturday, Feb. 26, 2022, in Spokane Wash. | Mario Gonzalez/The Whitworthian



#11 Brenden Duncan. Mario Gonzalez/The Whitworthian



Sprinter Samson Irish-Lodgen. Mario Gonzalez/The Whitworthian



Junior, Ethan Violette. Mario Gonzalez/The Whitworthian



#35 Julia Dillon, #25 Taylor Hofheins, #29 Maddy Thomas, #22 Jazz Johnson. Caleb Flagel/The Whitworthian



#35 Julia Dillon. Caleb Flegel/TheWhitworthian



Sophomore, Nathan Tjelle. Thomas Peach/The Whitworthian

