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## **Cat tracks**

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# WildX encourages crucial conversation

By Maddie Loverich '22

Only days after the death of George Floyd and a subsequent protest movement that began to sweep the country in May 2020, staff members in Linfield's athletic department came together to create a way for students to process and discuss what was going on in the world. With that, WildXchange, or WildX, was born.

"Initially, WildX started because we wanted to have a space where students and staff could come together and talk through what had happened," Associate Director of Athletics Jane Samuels said.

The weekly Zoom event rapidly evolved to include guest speakers, panelists and various advocacy groups on campus, including Linfield Pride, LatinX Adelante and the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. The athletic department also collaborated closely with Linfield's Office of Inclusion, Access and Diversity to manage the event.

Conversations at WildX centered on race and social justice. Speakers included McMinnville Chief of Police Matt Scales and Jen Fry, an activist focused on educating student-athletes on issues of inclusion, diversity and equity.

"We talk through various aspects of the challenges that we're facing right now across the country, and then specifically try to bring it back to our Linfield community," Samuels

said. "What are we seeing here? What do we want to see? What culture do we live in, what culture do we want to live in? And how do we make that happen?"

Keaton Wood '21, a football player and decathlete, regularly attended WildX and ended up leading the final one with Andy Starkel '22 to speak on the topic of masculinity and its role in athletics.

"WildX creates the unique opportunity to have engaging and thoughtful conversations about topics that people aren't always willing to have," Wood said. "It's been an unbelievable learning experience for Linfield, as the community has been able to grow in ways that it never has before. Personally, WildX helped me become a better listener and realize that constantly challenging and re-evaluating your own views is one of the most important tools for growth."

Samuels said she and her colleagues will look to continue providing the platform to encourage meaningful conversation and elevate student voices on campus in the upcoming academic year.

"This event was started by athletics, but really it's not exclusive to athletics," she said. "It's open to anyone across campus, and we really appreciate that it's a community conversation."



### Swanson selected as CoSIDA Academic All-American

The College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA) named Linfield defensive lineman Travis Swanson '21 to the Academic All-America Division III Football team. Swanson is among 51 honorees, and the only one from a Division III college or university on the West Coast.

Swanson earned a GPA of 3.88. A native of Hailey, Idaho, and graduate of Wood River High School, he is a psychology major and plans on attending medical school after this fall.

Swanson is only the 21st Linfield student-athlete to achieve CoSIDA Academic All-America status since 2004 and the fifth Linfield football student-athlete. Wyatt Smith '22 (football) and Sydney Kuehn '20 (women's soccer) were the last honorees in 2019.

### Track and field athletes place in national championships

Meg Angier '21 and Matt Metcalf '22 earned All-America honors by being top finishers at the NCAA Division III Outdoor Track and Field Championships in May.

Angier, an environmental policy major from Beaverton, placed fourth overall in the women's pole vault with a jump of 12 feet, 3 1/2 inches. She is the fourth NCAA All-American from Linfield in the women's pole vault, joining national champions Catherine Street '12 (2012) and Olivia McDaniel '18 (2019), as well as eighth-place finisher Misty Corwin '12 (2011-12).

Metcalf, a management major from



Eugene, produced a toss of 194 feet, 11 3/4 inches to earn a fifth-place finish in javelin.

### 177 named NWC Scholar-Athletes

The Northwest Conference announced its Scholar-Athletes in July, among them 177 Wildcats, up from 163 a year ago. To be eligible, a student-athlete must have achieved a cumulative grade point average of 3.50 or higher at the end of the 2020-21 academic year and must have participated throughout the entire varsity season.

## Soccer and lacrosse teams break in new turf



When men's and women's soccer and women's lacrosse teams returned to campus in January, they were welcomed back with 10,000 square feet of new FieldTurf™. It marked the most significant upgrade in the history of the Linfield soccer/lacrosse field.

The improvements to the field – including updating the drainage, adding storage facilities and installing the new artificial turf – is the first phase of a \$1.55 million renovation project. The second phase includes replacement of the aging spectator seating area and construction of a new press box, team dressing rooms and restrooms. Phase two will get underway once funding is finalized.

Converting the natural grass to FieldTurf provides Linfield teams an ideal year-round practice and playing surface, while reducing maintenance and game setup costs.



A new 8-ton video display at Maxwell Field is nearly 13 times larger than the previous video screen. With 15-millimeter LED resolution, the visual clarity is also 35% greater than the older version.

## Seeing the big picture

Six buses. Forty-two king-size beds. Four two-car garages. A Starbucks. A lot, it turns out, can fit into 1,800 square feet, the footprint of Linfield's new digital display board at Maxwell Field.

The screen, measuring 60 feet by 30 feet, is the second largest in NCAA Division III athletics. Located at the northeast corner of the field, it has already enhanced the experience at spring track meets and been used for campus-wide events.

In addition to showing essential scoreboard information on gamedays, the display is capable of presenting live video and replays, real-time statistics, sponsor messages and fan-favorite features. At track meets, the display shows live attempt-by-attempt results for field events as well as instant results at the completion of timed races. The board will be used during home tennis events to show live scoring, providing the men's and women's tennis programs their first electronic scoreboard.

The display board was funded entirely through private contributions, the largest of which came from Jim and Sondra Wright. Farnham Electric, led by CEO and former Linfield football player Mike Davis '96, made significant in-kind contributions to the project by providing electrical and fiber connectivity.

From community movie nights to youth sports competitions, rivalry games to Cat Camp, the uses for the new video board are as big as the display itself.

"It really is a game changer for us," said Garry Killgore, Linfield's athletic director. "That's true for athletic events, of course. But it's more than that. This will become a centerpiece for a whole lot of non-athletic events on campus, as well.

"I'm thinking of it as a physical manifestation of Linfield's bright – and ambitious – future."

– Kelly Bird