

ADVANCE WORK

BY THE NUMBERS

Recipe for Success

How the mighty fruitcake helps students pay for an education

AT THE COLLEGE OF THE OZARKS, every student pays tuition the same way: by working on campus. Nicknamed “Hard Work U,” the college, which has more than 100 campus workstations, encourages students to graduate debt-free and eschews loans of any kind. And with its mix of traditional and mouthwatering smells, the Fruitcake and Jelly Kitchen is the site of one of the college’s most popular jobs. Under the watchful eye of Fruitcake Supervisor Carolyn Crisp, (that’s her real name, honest) the year-round operation, based in Missouri, contributes a substantial part of the student-industry revenue. Some key numbers:

1933

Year that home economics teacher Annabelle McMaster and her students baked six fruitcakes in a kerosene oven for some of the institution’s donors. The college has sold fruitcakes every year since 1934 and via mail order since 1950.



Most are sold at campus outlets, and more than 4,000 are given annually to donors. (They’re also included in gift baskets for campus guests.) “People are fascinated by the tradition. It evokes memories for students, alumni, and visitors,” says Valorie Coleman, public relations director. “Everyone has a fruitcake story.”

\$28.50

Price of a two-pound fruitcake, up from \$3 in 1955. The kitchen has shipped fruitcakes to all 50 states, as well as the U.K., Japan, and Australia.

25,000

Number of fruitcakes produced in 2017.

100

Pounds of fruitcake made per day in two ovens. Each cake is hand-decorated, wrapped in cellophane, and boxed in a custom tin. Most spend six to nine months in cold storage.



20,000

Average number of tourists who visit the fruitcake kitchen annually. Fall is the busiest selling season: Up to nine motor coaches a day bring visitors for free campus tours, which include visits to the dairy farm and grist mill.

19,200

Number of eggs used per year. Bakers also use 2,400 pounds each of flour, sugar, cherries, and raisins; 1,600 pounds each of pecans, dates, pineapple, and candied lemon



and orange rinds; 800 pounds of Missouri-grown black walnuts; and 400 pounds of candied papaya.

25

Number of students employed in the kitchen during the school year, each working 15 hours per week. In the summer, 10 students work 40-hour weeks. Up to 100 students apply for the coveted positions.

2

Number of years a fruitcake stays fresh if refrigerated. A frozen one is good for four years.

LAURA DAILY

FRUITS OF LABOR:
A College of the Ozarks student pays tuition by making fruitcakes.



MEG WHITE AND JIM LERSCH



Fired Up

A pregraduation competition pits alumni against student firefighters

ALUMNI-STUDENT COMPETITIONS can get heated, but that's the point at Utah Valley University's Firefighter Recruit Academy's Fire Games. Twice a year—in April and December—alumni firefighters return to the institution's 5-acre drill ground to compete against the current class before the evening's graduation ceremony. Family, friends, prospective students, and university officials are invited to cheer on both teams.

"We never have to look hard for people to make up the alumni team," says Donna Cotterell, administrative coordinator. "Our former students love to come back. They truly miss the school and are competitive."

The winning team gets bragging rights, and their names engraved on a plaque. The win tally since the games began in 2011: Students 8, Alumni 4. More important, the games create a sense of camaraderie. Veterans and rookies could soon be working together since 70 percent of graduates stay in state. "You trust co-workers with your life," Cotterell says. "Fire service is not just a job—it's a family." LD

Head-to-Head Events:

- Pulling a fire engine—filled with 800 gallons of water—the length of a garage
- Putting on 60 pounds of gear as fast as possible
- Doing pull-ups (with chin fully above the bar—the record is 49)
- Chopping a telephone pole in half
- Playing tug-of-war with—what else?—a fire hose

Virtual Toastmaster

Social media and the good old telephone reunite alumni one night a year

EACH YEAR, ON DEC. 31, more than 900 alumni of Pacifica Graduate Institute say "Happy New Year"—regardless of where they live. Using Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Instagram, Google+, and even the telephone, alumni share their hopes for the coming year through a virtual event—A Toast Heard 'Round the World. The brainchild of Dianne Travis-Teague, director of alumni relations, the "toast" launches at noon on New Year's Eve on Pacifica's California campus. Travis-Teague sets up a quasi mission control in a board room so that her team can respond to incoming toasts on different platforms. The

room is filled with phone banks, computers, food, and beverages for the 150 to 200 students, staff members, and alumni who come by. Large screens livestream incoming missives and photos.

Using the hashtag #ToastPacifica, Australian alumni are typically the first to check in. The messages—such as "I'm grateful my dissertation is done!" or "I'm in Rwanda completing fieldwork"—pick up as the hours tick by, culminating with a midnight (Pacific Standard Time) toast of sparkling cider by the 100 or so revelers celebrating on campus. In 2016, alumni participated from New Zealand and

China to Switzerland and Brazil. There was a shoutout from Japan and from a group of two dozen alumni in Santa Fe, New Mexico. A group in New York City's Times Square (hello, Ryan Seacrest!) sent selfies holding Pacifica banners. For those who phone in, volunteers post their wishes online.

"I wanted a vehicle to bring alumni together," says Travis-Teague, who calls the "toast" one of PGI's most successful campaigns. "Even if they're busy the rest of the year, everyone has a few minutes on New Year's Eve to acknowledge recent accomplishments and toast the future." LD



WHAT'S THE IDEA?

Paper Trail

In a digital age, how do you respond when alumni keep asking for a printed directory?

For North Carolina's Davidson College, the solution was simple: Print one—at no cost to the school. In fall 2016, Davidson outsourced the directory project to Publishing Concepts Inc., a Texas-based printer that works with institutions to produce print/digital directories. The college didn't shoulder any costs, except some staff time. Davidson sent postcards and emails to graduates asking them to send their information to PCI. The response rate was 50 percent, and Davidson received not only basic contact info but data on family, marital status, children, career, other institutions attended, and more.

"The directory is a strategy to update data," says Cat Niekro, associate vice president for advancement operations. "It's almost impossible to keep up with people through life and career changes." That's why the college switched to a digital-only directory in 2005—but it still received weekly requests for a printed version.

Some 1,500 paper directories (\$99.95 each—going to the publishing company) will be delivered to alumni in March 2018. Alumni may not have to wait another 13 years for the next one, but it won't be an annual directory, either: The next version will likely be published in 2023. LD



A STROLL BEFORE THE SPREAD: An international student at Smith College spent Thanksgiving 2016 with a college employee and her husband.

Matchmaking Feast

No one eats home alone on this all-American holiday

FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS sitting in deserted dorms, Thanksgiving in the U.S. can be a turkey-size bummer. But at Smith College in Massachusetts, local families—faculty, staff, or alumni—welcome stuck-on-campus students into their homes for the traditional feast.

"Hosts want to share their traditions, and international students want to experience them," says Jan Morris, the founder and coordinator of Thanksgiving Match, which paired 30 students with 20 hosts in 2016. "Thanksgiving is the perfect family-oriented holiday, allowing students to become part of a family, even if just for a day."

To create the perfect turkey day match, hosts and students answer questions, from "Do you have pets?" (for hosts) to "Do you like animals?" (for students) to "How do you feel about discussing politics?" Morris then plays matchmaker, placing students with a family, which receives a profile that includes a photo of each guest.

After Thanksgiving, Morris sends follow-up questions to students and hosts. Most students said they appreciated the chance to learn about American traditions—and to represent their own country. "My host family is really interested in me!" wrote one student from South Korea. "I needed to give responses about intriguing international issues that I used to ignore. The table conversation made me think about my country."

Hosts were equally happy. "The highlight of dinner was introducing the students to everyone," one host wrote, "and knowing that two Smithies who did not know each other before coming to Thanksgiving dinner have gained a friend on campus." LD

Yule Remember This

THE EVENT: A yule log ceremony, hosted at Virginia's College of William & Mary since the 1950s. Up to 2,000 people gather in the Wren Building courtyard for holiday festivities.

MERRIEST MOMENTS: After some holiday tunes, vice president for student affairs Ginger Ambler reads "Twas the Night After Finals," filled with timely references to campus events. The university president, decked out in full Santa regalia, reads "How the Grinch Stole Christmas."

MOST LASTING GIFT: Campus faith and cultural groups each share their diverse religious customs.

HOTTEST TRADITION: Groups of students place logs into a roaring fireplace inside the college's great hall. Everyone receives a sprig of holly to toss into the yule log flames and symbolically banish their woes. To avoid a logjam while waiting their turn, students enjoy hot cider, sugar cookies, and gingerbread, and admire trees adorned with 400 paper doves hand-decorated by students.

BEST PRESENT: Organized by two student honor societies, the lighthearted ceremony not only provides a welcome break from finals but also raises up to \$1,000 annually for charities. ■ LD

