PACIFIC PORTRAITS

The People Behind the Scenes at Pacific University

VOLUME THREE

BEE TREE
PACIFIC UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
Forest Grove, Oregon
Our treasure lies in the beehive of our knowledge. We are perpetually on the way thither, being by nature [...] honey gatherers of the mind.

Friedrich Nietzsche

The “Bee Tree”, an iconic ivy-covered tree that stood on the Pacific University campus for many years, was already old and hollow when pioneer Tabitha Brown arrived in Oregon in 1846. Mrs. Brown started a home for orphans that would grow into Pacific University. According to the Forest Grove News-Times, the tree was “said to have housed a swarm of bees who furnished the little old lady with honey which she sold to buy provisions for her orphan children.”
A series of emails is sometimes all students ever hear from administration, staff, and professors—another address ending in @paci/uc.edu and a serious headshot donning a computer screen. This is what I expected to find when contacting Katie Lardy, Student Services Manager for the School of Communication Sciences & Disorders. However, I was met with something different entirely: warmth.

After a couple mix-ups, a series of messages back and forth, and almost getting lost in the maze that is Berglund hall, Katie opened the door to room 230 with a bright smile on her face and an energy that immediately animated the air. Anyone could tell that Pacific is basically Katie’s second home as she sat down comfortably. She has, after all, spent almost two decades with the school in some capacity.

Katie started out as just another student here on campus, graduating in 2003 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in both integrated media and Spanish. “I didn’t always have plans to come back to Pacific. I don’t think any of this was scripted, it’s just the path life naturally followed,” Katie says about her return to campus in a new capacity.

After graduation Katie spent three years working for Intel, serving as a Marketing Coordinator for the company’s Intel Teach to the Future Program. “I played that sort of connecting role, helping teachers implement new technology into their classroom strategy through the company,” she says recalling the time she spent with the large corporate entity.

The dubious look on my face must have said it all, “I know it seems like quite the contrast working for such a large company and now being in such an intimate setting like Pacific,” she says in response. “I really appreciate all of my past work experience, though. Intel really allowed me to learn and experience the corporate
work ethic,” this she says is something that has served her well in the both of the positions she has held with Pacific.

Spending nine years in the Career Development Center as the Assistant Director and Pathways Coordinator while also coordinating the Advantage Scholars Program, Katie was ready to apply her skills to other areas. Now working alongside pre-health professions Katie is able to help students make the connections they need to and gain experience for their future field. “I have such a respect for their work,” Katie expresses while further explaining her gratitude for the dedicated students and faculty she works with on a daily basis.

While her work experience has provided her with innumerable opportunities and a list of skillsets that could rival the best, the most beneficial lessons Katie has learned come from a less professional place. It was here at Pacific where her core belief and skill of treating others with respect and understanding, “Treating humans as humans,” as she puts it, was reinforced as an undergraduate.

This idea of warmth and overall understanding of others is something Katie carries far beyond her desk at Pacific. Her two young daughters Bella and Bailey have been influenced through this same mentality. Katie laughs as I ask about potential hobbies or activities that she indulges in to wind down from such a demanding job, “Hobbies? My kids are my hobbies!” Though she admits her love for salsa dancing (discovered while on a study abroad trip via Pacific to Ecuador), Katie says life is more about enjoying precious time with her family these days.

“I’m always grateful for that little bit of time I can spend with my girls,” she says smiling. “Work can be demanding and I may not be able to do everything I want to, like missing volunteer opportunities that happen during my work day, but I make it work and find that balance.” Being a full-time working mother of two has its challenges but that does not stop Katie from thriving in the workplace and playing an active role in
her children’s lives—like being the “Small Ball Rep” on her daughter’s basketball team or reading bedtime stories every night.

Although I think she may disagree with me, it seems like Katie really does do everything.

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Just as our meeting was coming to a close, both sides of Katie—the loving mother and successful Pacific staff member—combined so clearly and bubbled to the surface one last time. Selflessly she asks about my studies, connected to media just as hers were during her time at Pacific, and offers me information and contacts she thinks I may be interested in. I am. I am also grateful.

Before I know it, another student is asking for Katie’s assistance, “Oh, I didn’t mean to interrupt, I can have so-and-so help me if you’re busy!” the young woman says. “No, no, no, I’ll be right there, it’s no problem!” Katie says coolly, jumping up from her chair, she is already off to provide her abundance of work and personal skills to someone else.

So maybe life is not always salsa dancing in foreign countries for Katie. Maybe sometimes it is hectic days at work, providing her unique skillset to the benefit of others. Maybe sometimes it is the peaceful nights spent at home reading bedtime stories to her kids. For Katie Lardy it is all about finding a balance.