

GRAD: Galant-LaPorte an advocate for student involvement

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students who have already demonstrated a capacity for leadership and large-scale problem-solving.”

Galant-LaPorte’s involvement in the community of Walla Walla is shown by her commitment to an organization called SCORE (Summer Community Outreach Engagements).

“I was involved in SCORE my first semester at Whitman. Basically, it is an outreach program that strives to connect students with their surrounding community,” said Galant-LaPorte.

She continued to be an advocate for the program into her second year at Whitman College and works with the offices of student affairs to make the program free for students to be involved in. She believes strongly in the mission of SCORE to connect students to their community during the summer months and into the school year.

Galant-LaPorte is currently a head coordinator for SCORE. Last year, she attended a conference in Houston with other universities and programs similar to SCORE where she was able to connect with other leaders and create a curriculum to teach students about the importance of involvement and engagement.

She also served as a resident assistant for the community service resident hall in her second year.

“I really strive to change the narrative from being about students serving their community to students being a part of and involved in their community,” she said.

Galant-LaPorte believes that engagement is not the same as service and sees that service can become a part of being engaged.

“I think it’s important for students to be intentional about becoming involved in the community where they go to university... it’s kind

of like staying in someone’s house for four years; you want to help out and support the existing structure, but not try and change it. That has been my intention here in Walla Walla since the beginning,” she said.

For Galant-LaPorte, the passion and drive for community involvement comes from how and where she was raised. Galant-LaPorte was raised and went to school in the community of Sisters. Her family lives near Redmond, and she attended school in Redmond, but spent five years in Sisters schools from 8th through 12th grade.

“Coming from a small town, I was taught the narrative that you are a part of a community. The relationship of the school and the community was also so strong, there was never any disconnect and that is what I was used to,” she said.

Galant-LaPorte was involved in student government and leadership during her time at SHS and recognized she was learning by doing things for the school and community — such as being a part of Mr. SHS, a community fundraiser pageant for the Family Access Network. She was also an intern for the IEE class where she was taught that so much education can happen outside of the classroom.

“I remember in IEE (teacher Rand) Runco telling his stories about community members and connecting with Sisters by learning outside of the classroom and learning how to protect

our community and our resources,” she said.

Galant-LaPorte wanted to bring that community-school connection with her when she moved to the small rural town of Walla Walla, Washington.

“There are way more outsiders that come into Walla Walla to attend the university here, and that creates a disconnect between students and the community that they are in,” she said.

She believes that any community you are in is a school and those who enter a new community have to take the time to understand that.

“I believe that education has always been a secret change-maker and I think it’s important to be intentional and thoughtful and willing to learn when you enter a new community as a student,” she said.

Galant-LaPorte plans to continue her work with SCORE as the lead coordinator. Next year, she will also be taking on a position with the city of Walla Walla as coordinator of neighborhood engagement. She has already been talking with the current coordinator in the wake of COVID-19 about mutual aid systems and how a rural community is impacted by something like COVID-19.

Current events are also relating directly to what she is studying at Whitman. Galant-LaPorte is majoring in sociology and is hoping to go into an emphasis on public and community health in rural areas.

“I think now more than

ever communities need to band together to take care of each other and work together and if people start to make a change to better a community, we can create a reality that we want every day,” she said.

Next year, being a recipient of the Newman Civic Fellowship, she will be attending a conference in Boston, Massachusetts, where she will get to meet and communicate with other recipients from other universities about bettering community engagement. In addition to training and resources, Campus Compact provides significant learning and networking opportunities, including a national conference in partnership with the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Zidane Galant-LaPorte recently received the Newman Civic Fellowship for her work at Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington.

“I am incredibly grateful and humbled by receiving this award. I wasn’t expecting it and I am honored to be surrounded by so many people doing so many awesome things,” she said. “If anything, this award allows me to have a larger platform to spread my message,” she said.

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SUDOKU SOLUTION

for puzzle on page 18

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1	2	7	5	4	3	9	6	8
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4	5	2	9	1	7	3	8	6
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8	9	1	4	3	6	2	7	5

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