

THE VIEWER

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Photo by Carlos Serrao

Spring Break 2019 - Israel and Jordan

MVNU takes a leap of faith to the Holy Land

By Cierra Strawser

Have you ever dreamt of walking where Jesus walked or see historical Biblical sites in person? Well, I have great news for you! Your dreams can become a reality with the help of MVNU's Bible trips. These life-changing journeys allow students to experience cultures in many unique ways.

Carlos M. Serrao, director of web development and communications, and Dr. Jeanne Serrao, professor of Biblical literature, worked together and made preparations for this remarkable journey to take place. They made sure that students got the best out of their experience overseas in the Holy Land, and they

certainly did.

Carlos Serrao stated that, "MVNU's Bible trips are primarily Dr. C. Jeanne Serrao's vision and passion. She started them in 2006 and has since led or co-led 11 trips taking over 400 students, faculty, staff, alumni, board of trustee members and friends of MVNU to Europe and the Bible lands."

Over spring break, many students and friends of MVNU traveled to Israel for 11 days, spending two of those days in Jordan. Throughout the trip, they were able to visit The Sea of Galilee, Capernaum, Jerusalem, Petra and other Biblical sites, just to name a few.

Serrao mentioned that, "If you are going to understand the cul-

ture of the Old and New Testaments there is no better way to do it than to walk where Jesus, Paul, the prophets and the early church walked and take in the land, customs and sites where it all happened."

Victoria Stevens, a junior social work major, stated, "I think it's important for students to experience a different culture because it is so eye opening. It also helps students to better appreciate all of God's creation."

There are numerous benefits for everyone who is willing to take part in these journeys. For students, it is a good way to get credit for classes such as Crossing Cultures, Contemporary Concerns, Narrative of Scripture and others.

These wonderful trips also form strong bonds and friendships that will last a lifetime. Everyone who takes the leap of faith into these spiritual places can share life-experiences and support one another. It is through these incredible moments that they can truly become

closer to God and to His people. Caleb Dexter, a sophomore youth ministry major, said, "I decided to come on this trip so I could meet new people and to be able to see the places that we read about in the Bible and imagine being there in that time and place."

There is a large number of people in the United States who have never had the opportunity to venture to another country. Serrao said, "We also want to expose our students to a world that goes beyond the boundaries of our state and nation." These trips allow students to become well-rounded and more culturally diverse. Dexter mentioned, "My eyes are open to what the world has to offer, and now there are so many other places I want to travel to and explore."

When the trip is over, hopefully it will give an extra dimension to the students' appreciation and comprehension of the Bible. Serrao confessed that, "One of our greatest joys is to see students experience

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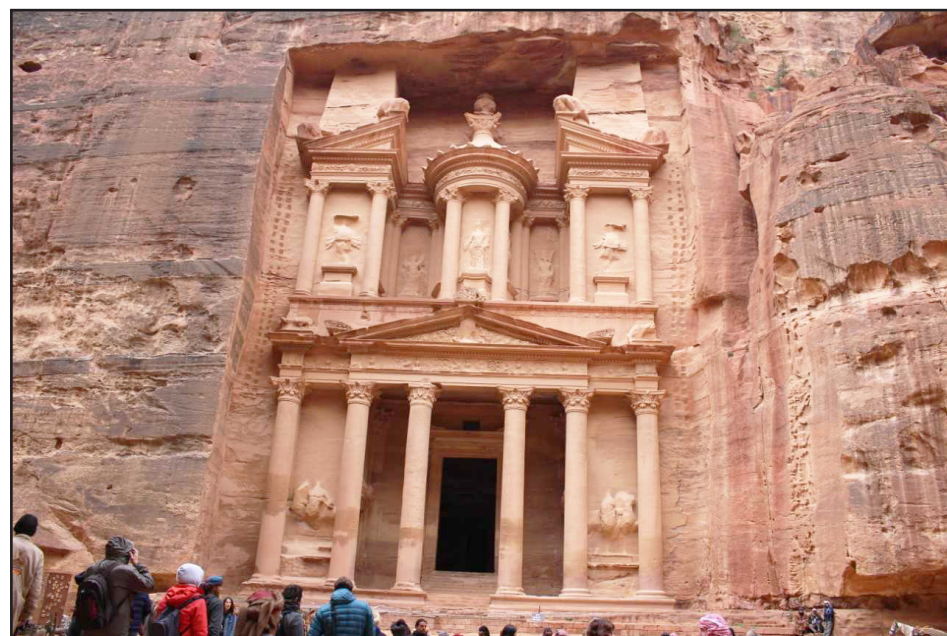
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MVNU students get a captivating view as they approach the agricultural structure known as the Treasury at Petra.

Photo by Cierra Strawser

MVNU celebrates the art of theatre at SETC Convention

By Ellie Parker

KNOXVILLE, TN – The Southeastern Theatre Conference annual convention brings together theatre lovers – actors, singers, dancers, designers, technicians, stage managers, directors, playwrights and more – to celebrate the art of theatre. MVNU students and faculty made up just seven out of over 4,000 convention attendees from Feb. 27 – March 3 in Knoxville, TN. Attendees could participate in workshops, performance festivals, auditions, job interviews, keynotes, seminars and panel discussions.

One of the most popular workshops throughout the conference was “Creating Worlds *Lord of the Rings* Style,” hosted by presenter Frank Marquette of Troy University. Theatre designers and fantasy fans packed into the space to hear from the creators who worked on the Helm’s Deep set for *The Fel-*

lowship of the Ring. Marquette outlined the process of building mammoth structures almost exclusively out of foam and how that can be translated to the stage. He also pushed the idea that, “If you’re a nice person and a professional, you’ve got a career.”

Stage combat also became a fast favorite with conference-goers. Through “Unarmed in the Round” and “How to Fight a Bear,” attendees learned some beginner stage combat techniques from certified choreographers with the Society of American Fight Directors – Caitlyn Herzlinger, Paul Pharris, and Andrew Ray – and how to incorporate character choices and traits into combat choreography.

The founders of Theatrical Intimacy Education – Chelsea Pace and Laura Rikard – shared about how theatre creators can make sure that intimate choreography is both safe and consensual. Liberty

University Theatre Arts chair Linda Cooper taught acting students how to analyze lyrics through the Chekhov method and how different pieces of a song can be internal, binary or for the entire audience. R. Cliff Thompson of Freed-Hardeman University hosted a discussion on “Theatrical Imagination in the Bible: Acting Before the Greeks,”



and the ways in which the Old and New Testaments describe situations that resemble traditional forms of western theatre.

Ryan Long, assistant professor of theatre at MVNU, believes that “the SETC annual convention is a great place for networking and learning,” and is an opportunity to “try out new areas of theatre or to find new things that might not be available in your area.”

Freshman Daniel Carpenter said the conference “reinvigorated [his] passion for theatre and learning” and inspired him to reach out to a local community theatre. Junior Rachel Rinehart agreed that it reminded her of her love for acting and that she added skills to her tool belt that she will use to become a better actress. Long said that, “It was so exciting to get to take all the theatre majors this year and see what new things they discovered and new connections they made.”

Holy Land trip

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something that takes them out of their comfort zone and into a new level of learning and understanding the Bible. Once you have taken a Bible Trip you will never be able to read the Bible the same way.”

These trips will be continued. The next opportunity for an unforgettable experience will be spring break of 2020 when MVNU will travel to Turkey and Greece. For more information and to register visit <https://www.mvnu.edu/bibletrips>. What are you waiting for? Take that leap of faith today.

Esports bringing new teams to MVNU

By Eddie Dilts

“Esports is identified as a very quickly growing sport,” according to Justin Nowicki, Mount Vernon Nazarene University Director of Development and new head coach of the Esports program. Nowicki and Tony Stemen, MVNU alumnus and assistant coach, brought research to the senior leadership team surrounding Esports which led to it being included in the expansion of athletics.

MVNU’s Esports program will include the games Fortnite, League of Legends, Overwatch, Rocket League and Hearthstone. Each of these teams may not be fielded in year one, depending on which games the recruits play. Super

Smash Bros. Ultimate is also being considered as a sixth option.

As head coach, Nowicki is responsible for recruiting, marketing, planning schedules, training students, and helping the campus understand how Esports can be an active, healthy part of the campus community. Nowicki was asked to be head coach due to his interest in video games.

“We are actively recruiting players of all skill levels for each of the teams. We are still looking for additional players for fall of 2019,” said Nowicki. According to him, one of the biggest difficulties for the program has been getting the word out about the team. “There is no OHSA equivalent for Esports. I can’t just go watch a high school

team’s practice or attend a tournament because they just don’t exist yet. It’s an emerging sport. Many high schools are in the process of adding it to their athletic offerings, and so I think recruiting will get easier as time passes.”

There are many other hurdles, including the perception of Esports and the timing for the program’s addition. “Many people have an outdated, stigmatized view of who video gamers are and what kind of content the games include,” Nowicki said. “There’s also a timing challenge. I’ve heard from students that they think the addition of new sports, including Esports, is somehow to blame for the reductions in academic programs that have taken

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Safety concerns lead to snow days at MVNU

By Jehane Hoagland

MVNU has canceled classes and closed campus three days this semester due to extreme winter weather.

Main campus was closed this semester on Jan 21, 30 and Feb 20 and was delayed opening on Jan 31.

Dr. Barney Cochran, vice president for academic affairs, is the man behind the decision to close down main campus. Rev. Eric Stetler, vice president for Graduate and Professional Studies (GPS) and dean of the school of GPS, decides to close for GPS classes. They often work with each other and MVNU President Dr. Henry Spaulding to make these decisions.

When bad weather hits the area, Dr. Cochran has to decide if campus needs to close.

"I pose myself the question, 'Is it reasonably safe for students, faculty and staff to travel to campus at this time under these conditions?'" said Cochran. "I say 'reasonably safe,' because in truth we take risks every time we get in a car or hit the sidewalk, but we learn to manage those risks for ourselves. I try to provide a reasonable second layer of risk management for those who travel to and across our campus. A secondary question I have learned to ask myself is informed by my station in life as a parent of sons who recently went off to college. I find it useful to wonder, 'Would I want my sons driving to school today under these conditions?'"

Cochran does not work alone in making his decision to close campus. He is in communication with Tony Edwards, director of facilities operations.

"Our practice is to make decisions about opening the school day by 6 a.m.," said Cochran. "Sometime around 5:20 a.m., I call or text my colleague Tony Edwards, unless

he calls me first. Tony directs facilities operations; it is his responsibility to keep our streets, sidewalks and steps clear and safe as we travel about. Usually by 5:20 a.m., he is already at work or else he is driving around east of campus. He is always listening to the local reports and knows if we have a level I-III snow emergency in the county. He tells me what he is seeing on the roads and how the team on campus is doing getting campus ready. He generally gives me a recommendation based on his team's work and his driving experience."

Cochran drives on the roads himself before making the final decision to close school for the

closed, but Cochran believes it happened a lot less in the past.

"My recollection from the early days of my tenure here some 20 years ago is that we rarely closed," said Cochran. "It seems like it took a minor blizzard or something not far from it. I'm told that during President (Dan) Martin's tenure (2007-2012), his method for making the call involved driving to work. If he arrived without incident, we stayed open."

Part of the reason for the increase in cancellations is a change in the makeup of the student body.

"Back in the day, we framed our identity as a traditional residential program very much like our neigh-

"I know my thinking has been shaped by events," said Cochran. "We lost a student in a tragic accident a few years ago, and we have had some other close calls. Those experiences have shaped my approach to managing the risks. President Spaulding has been articulate about our commitment to student safety, and the father in me particularly appreciates that emphasis. Our mission involves shaping students' lives for lifelong service. For that we need to stay open so we can have class, but we also need to keep students safe. Some days these relative goods are in conflict. When I have been in doubt, I have tended to land on the side of student safety."

Students are appreciative of the concern for their safety. One of these students is Samantha Langer, a junior psychology major.

"I am a part-time student but also a part of the Pioneer College Caterers staff," said Langer. "I also commute from Newark every day, so having the snow days on both days I had classes and days I didn't allowed me to make sure I made it to work safely. With the limited hours, my coworkers and I all could leave earlier than usual, and I was even told not to even come in one day. It was nice knowing that the school and my employers care a lot about my safety."

Cochran believes the weather itself may just be worse than it has been in the past.

"It may be that we are experiencing more days with challenging weather than before," said Cochran. "I don't recall our having to deal with -30 or below temperatures or wind chill so much in the past. In recent years 'polar vortex' has entered our vocabulary; from what I have read, these breakdowns of the polar vortex are happening more frequently."



MVNU administration has recently been forced to make decisions on closing campus on snow days for purposes of personal safety.

Photo courtesy of Gerod Harder

day. The decision often requires some discussion between multiple people before deciding what to do.

"Sometimes, there are multiple communications between myself and Tony and also with Krista (Krista Hadsell is Cochran's office manager)," said Cochran. "We discuss and try to reach a consensus as to what is best, but the responsibility rests with me. I then inform the president of the plan; or if I need more input, the president and I have a conversation."

No official records are kept as to how often the school has been

closed, but Cochran believes it happened a lot less in the past. "As I understand it, Kenyon requires its students to live on campus and participate in its residential program. Consequently, Kenyon rarely closes for bad weather. We, on the other hand, have always had a portion of commuter students in our traditional program, and in recent years that portion has grown. I think I am more cognizant of that portion of our student body than I was at the beginning."

Cochran believes in the importance of student safety.

Em releases debut music project

By Mark Wesley

Colors can mean many different things for various individuals; and on her debut EP entitled *Colorblind*, MVNU student Emily Rahe (Em) dove into her interpretation of them and how colors can express a number of different things. She recorded and produced *Colorblind* during a semester at the Contemporary Music Center (CMC) in Nashville, Tenn.

"It was new, and I was learning as I went each day," Em said when asked about her first experience in the studio. "I am so thankful to have had a wonderful team that walked with me through this process, contributing their knowledge, critiques and ideation."

The title of the EP, *Colorblind*, comes from her emotions during the recording process.

Collaboration played a big role during the creation process. Em mentioned that she recieved help from her friends who assisted with adding some instruments and the mixing of the record.

While this is Em's first project, her songwriting and vocal delivery compares to an artist deep into



"Em" embraces a dear friend in the rain. Photo by Gerod Harder

their career. The lyrical content is achingly mature, and yet, still contains a distinct sense of relatability. Upon being asked about her creative process, Em responded that she gains that energy from both internal and external means.

"I process my experiences and emotions through writing music," Em said, "My environment plays a big part in my creative energy as well. I'm often inspired by where

I am and who I am with." She also mentioned that her inspirations come from many different artists. Using those influences, she was able to craft a body of work that is ostensibly her own and will inevitably stand out.

Colorblind is equally a visual experience as an auditory one. The project references various aspects of color, which equates to a myriad of different emotions. On the track

titled "Blue," for instance, there are lyrics alluding to a relation deteriorating and how since colors are often associated with feelings, Em describes this individual as "every hue."

"I saw and felt things very differently, and the primary colors represented different things once the relationship ended," Em replied, when questioned about the song. "Color blindness is a deficiency in the way you see and distinguish colors, specifically red, yellow, blue and green. In an emotional sense, that is what I am dealing with throughout the EP."

Visual art is an important component to Em's music. From the album cover to the tracklisting, there is an undeniable attention to detail regarding the visuals and how it relates to the music. "My music would not be what it is without it," she said when asked about the visual medium. "I owe so much to good friends that create and capture visually. I love to create visually, but music is my favorite way to communicate."

Colorblind was released in December and can be streamed on Spotify and Apple Music.

Busting moves for Belize

By Nathan Parker

A chance to have fun while dancing and helping send students in Belize to school took place earlier this semester with a dance off hosted by M2540.

"We had hosted 'Above The Music' for several years to raise money and bring musicians on campus, but it wasn't very well attended for the amount of time, energy and money put into it," said Catie Hayes, director of community and international ministries. "Above

the Music" was a concert which took place in Foster Hall during the spring semester.

"So, we tried to think of a new way to bring people together around music to sponsor kids in Belize to go to school, and that's how the idea was born," said Hayes. The dance off was in the intramural gym inside the PSU. On the night of the event, decorations and groovy jams filled up the walls along with people ready to dance.

Everyone who wanted to participate would pay \$2 at the door in

order to be a part; then they would step into the balloon-filled ring of other contestants. Desmond Rapp, a former student, described it as a "chill atmosphere." Once the music started playing, all of the contestants would dance their heart out until either they were tapped out by a judge or they made it to the final three.

Once the last three were chosen, people in the audience could vote for who their favorite dancer was by putting money in a box with that dancer's name on it. Then the

dancers would dance to one last song, and the winners would be announced.

Overall, M2540, at the end of the event, raised enough money to fully support two studentss in Belize for a year of education.

"It was a great atmosphere! I personally did not dance, but I enjoyed watching friends have fun," said Katie Ponsart, a junior here on campus. The M2540 committee is planning on having this event once per semester and has seen good results from it so far.

Men's track and field team striving for success

By Matt Harden

Success in any athletic program is something that both coaches and athletes strive for. The 2018-19 men's and women's track and field team here at MVNU are no different.

MVNU track and field was something that head coach Chip Wilson "knew" would be immediately successful and isn't surprised by the teams' performances. "Our first few seasons, we have competed at a high level, sending at least one representative to the NAIA Nationals each season since we began," Wilson said.

He continued saying, "Our national qualifying team members reached their peak last season, when we had 10 student athletes earn this opportunity, and among those qualifiers we have had three NAIA All Americans in our first four seasons, and we look to add to that number this year." One of those qualifiers who enjoys competing is national runner-up in throws, senior Mitchell Soviak.

"My favorite part of being on the track team is definitely competing and the atmosphere at high-level meets such as nationals," Soviak said. Another one of those quali-



Members of the MVNU men's track and field team are, front row, left to right: Zeke Emmett, Matt McKenzie, Tyler Brown, Justis Paul, Alexander Workman and Gerrard Williams. Second row -- Dan Sharp, Austin Miller, Kyler Dickey, Owen Adkins, Nick Weiss, Noah Nordquist, Joseph Joe, Jake Smith, Jayson Mitchell, Jonah Barnett and head coach Chip Wilson. Back row -- Marvell Conner, Hunter Yoder, Noah Menez, Jacob Lofton, Tagg Edgell, Joey McDonald, Mitchell Soviak, De-Andre Steward, Luke Couchman and Connor Whitaker.

fiers is senior Rachel Gerber who enjoys the competitive team nature of track and field.

"I like having the opportunity to compete and train with those of similar age, at a competitive level within a sport," Gerber said. That same competitive team level is something sophomore Kasey Keith also enjoys.

"What I love best about competing on this track team is not only the people and coaches that are a part of the team, but we all have the same goal, and that is being under the mentality that in everything we do, we do it for the glory of God," Keith said. Sophomore Emily Weber shares Keith's views on the team and coaches.

"The thing that I like best about running track is the team and coaches that I get to be around each day," Weber said. Having teammates on the team that cheer you on is very important, and that is something that Keith loves.

"It truly is amazing when an athlete is doing their event and they can hear the roar of the rest of the team cheering them on with support," Keith said. She continued saying, "The chemistry also is very good because we generally practice at the same time."

The team encouragement is something Soviak sees as well. "I would say everybody on the team does a good job encouraging each other," Soviak said.

The team's encouragement is another aspect Weber enjoys. "We have a great relationship that makes it feel like we are one big family, and it doesn't matter how busy a track meet is, the whole team is doing their best to be around to watch and support every single one of their teammates," Weber said.

To get such a family-like atmosphere and a high-level competitive team built in only a handful of years isn't that common. "We started our track program in the 2014-15 school year to help enhance the athletic programs offered by MVNU," Wilson said.

He continued saying, "It seemed to be a natural fit as we have com-

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Mitchell Soviak

Lady tracksters looking to bright future

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peted in cross country since 2006.”
That fit has indeed been natural
and has led to an abundance of
success.

To achieve the amount of success
that this team has achieved this
quickly isn’t common and creates
big expectations for a future that
looks very bright. The future is
something that Gerber knows will
continue to be successful.

“I see great things for the track
team in the future, and the coaches
have continued doing a good job
recruiting, and bringing in good
athletes who help strengthen the
program and returning athletes
continue to strive to be better year
after year,” Gerber said. Weber
agrees there is a positive future
ahead for MVNU.

“Over the past year, I have seen
an extreme amount of growth, and
I think that it is going to continue
to grow strictly because of the posi-
tive attitude that we are surrounded
by at all times and the amount of
encouragement we get for our track
family through everything, even
situations that don’t have anything
to do with track,” Weber said. Keith



Members of the MVNU women’s track and field team are, front row, left to right: Isabelle DiTullio, Alyssa Gaines, MaKenzie McKirgan, Rachel Gerber, Amy Kifer, Elyse Osborne and Lindsay Goehring. Second row -- Kaylin Shackelford, Kasey Keith, Kaitlin Meade, Ashley Brown, Lora Current, Mady Utley, Morgan Forney and assistant coach Taryn Chapman. Back row -- Cassady Thrapp, Ellie Ruby, Emily Weber, Cassandra Vaughn, Alexa Smitherman, Missy Emery, Katie Kearns and Vivienne Cutrupi.

agrees that family atmosphere will
lead to a bright future for MVNU

track and field.
“There is definitely a bright future

ahead for MVNU track and field;
our coaching staff goes above and
beyond for us and not only coaches
us on our events but helps us de-
velop character and coaches us to
be in the real world as followers of
Christ,” Keith said. Future program
success is important to Wilson and
“means a lot” to him.

“The expectations for the future
are to continue growing our pro-
gram with the same type of quality
student-athletes that make up our
current roster,” Wilson said.

Wilson continued, “We have built
a culture of excellence in this pro-
gram, and I can’t say enough how
proud I am of all of our current and
former student-athletes who have
helped develop this track and field
program from the ground up.”



Kasey Keith



Emily Weber



Rachel Gerber

Season comes to an end for Lady Cougars

By Matt McKenzie

The women of Mount Vernon Nazarene University basketball have wrapped another season. This was the fourth year the Lady Cougars were coached by Amanda Short.

The Lady Cougars finished the season 13-18 and 6-12 in the extremely-tough Crossroads League. The team had many bright spots on the season, though. One of them being sophomore Taylor Gregory, finishing second team All-Crossroads League. Gregory had an outstanding season, averaging 16.5 points per game and 10.2 rebounds per game.

Coach Short was very impressed with Gregory receiving second-team honors.

“Our Conference is very strong, and it’s a great honor to receive any type of honor with so many great players,” Short said. “For Taylor to get second team as a sophomore is impressive, and I am happy for her.”

Another bright spot this season was seeing the return of senior Rachel Parks after she dealt with an injury that sidelined her all of last season. Parks was excited to finally be back on the floor this season.

“It was great to finally be back on the court. It was hard to have to sit out and watch, but I’m glad I had the opportunity to come back and play again,” Parks said.

Cassady Cain and Parks were the two seniors on the women’s basketball team this year.

Cain was a vital part of the women’s season as she started 23 of the 27 games she played in this year. Along with playing basketball, Cain is also a member of the women’s softball team here at MVNU.

The team had many other important contributors this season, and those ladies include freshmen

Maggie Coblentz and Kayla Hovorka, sophomores Elizabeth Fee and Rachel Perry, and juniors Dani Ellerbrock and Madison Near.

Ellerbrock and Gregory were the only two ladies on the roster that played and started all 31 games this year for the Lady Cougars.

During this season, the ladies had warm-up shirts with the saying “Do More Say Less” on them. According to Parks, it was based off a book they read during the preseason.

“Our motto, ‘Do More Say Less,’ basically means to not say we were going to work really hard or spend

time in the gym but rather put action to it,” Parks said.

This season had its ups and downs; but through it all, Coach Short’s main goals were for the girls to put everything they had out on the court and to have confidence in themselves.

Esports

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place. That simply isn’t the case. It’s just unfortunate timing.”

The university also had to consider the culture of video games, which do contain violence. According to Nowicki, they are addressing this issue by “not playing any game with graphic violence” as well as “not playing any game rated higher than ‘T- Teen’ by the Entertainment Software Rating Board.” Nowicki added that, “Video games and gaming culture are not new to MVNU. Since the days of early PC games like Command and Conquer and Starcraft, as well as Halo on the original Xbox, MVNU has had a pretty active group of gamers who enjoyed the camaraderie and community that can come from playing together. We recognize the stigma that tends to exist around gaming, particularly the notion that playing video games is an isolating, solitary experience. We are excited to give gamers a platform on this campus and to help generate a healthy community around playing video games together. The team-building, communication, and strategic thinking skills that athletes gain from participating in a team sport are present in Esports, too. Gaming can be a force for good, and we’re excited to show that to MVNU.”



MVNU sophomore Taylor Gregory goes high for two points against a Taylor University defender in recent Lady Cougar basketball action.

Photo by Gerod Harder