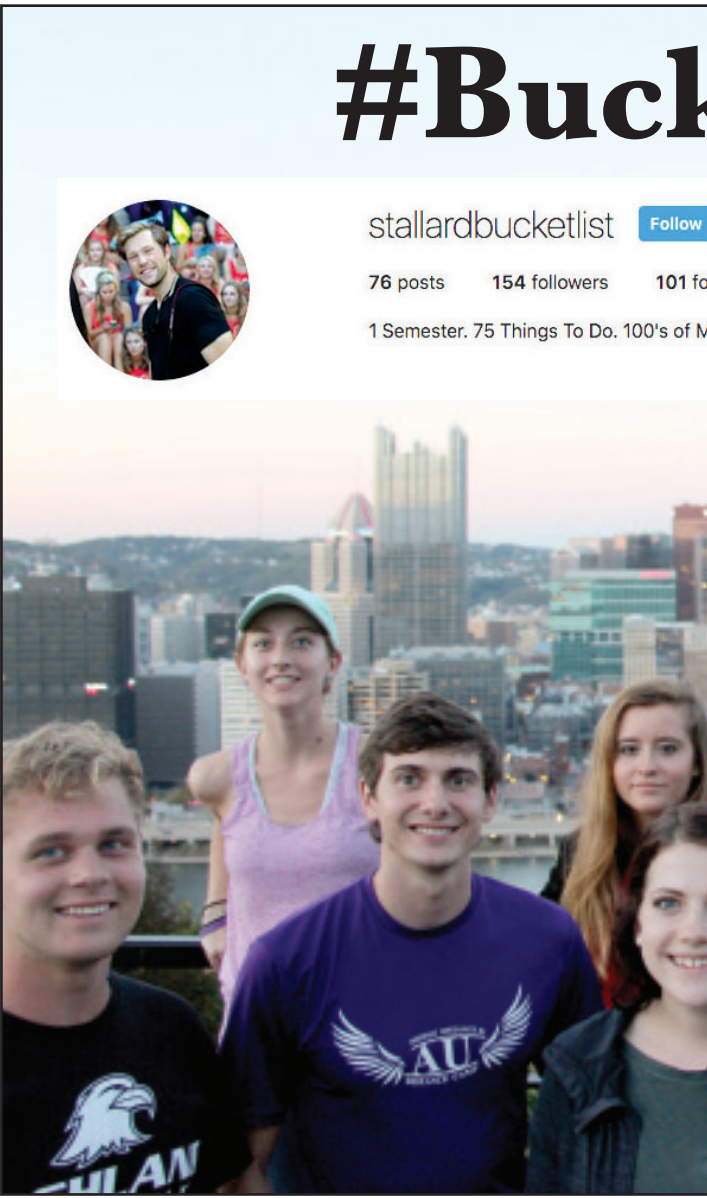




Stallard's graduation bucket list consisted of 75 things to do before leaving AU.



# The humble beginnings

NOAH CLOONAN  
@AUCollegian

College can be an amazing time to learn, have fun, meet new people and create memories that will last a lifetime.

Recent Ashland University graduate Derek Stallard did all of that and more: he took it upon himself to make his last semester his most interesting and memorable by creating a Bucket List.

A bucket list widely known as a list of new things and experiences a person wants to do before they “kick the bucket”. In this case , it is about doing these things before graduation.

Stallard said his bucket list was something that came together over a long period of time and culminated during his final semester in the fall of 2017.

“I talked about it for years like hey we need to just go crazy for our senior year and do all of the different things that we didn’t have the courage to do our freshman, sophomore and junior years,” Stallard said.

So he did just that.

Stallard created an Excel spreadsheet detailing 75 things that needed to be done to “complete” and round out his college experience.

“The reason I started my bucket list was so that I’d have a lot of fun things to do this semester and I was gonna maximize every mo-

ment that I have,” he said.

Bucket list items ranged from spending a night in the lobby of a dorm to eating a piece of pie at Lynway.

“There were some things that I wanted to do just because I had never done them before,” Stallard said. “The potentials were endless.”

To formulate which items to include on his list, Stallard did his fair share of research. He looked at lists from other colleges senior bucket lists, but did not find them

*“Something that I did during my last day at AU was the Legacy I was given. I am not afraid to try things I didn’t want to do.”*

- Derek Stallard

beneficial.

So instead of copying a generic list, he began to ask around and what he found was that there were so many things to do in Ashland that other students had done but he had yet to try.

“I was thinking about things that I could do that incorporated things I hadn’t done, things that were traditions of the university... just all sorts of great things that would make the time matter and last,” Stallard said.

He found most of his ideas by just asking people what he needed to do in Ashland before graduating.

“[Recreating] the “Friends” open was something I saw a friend do my freshman year and said that is sweet, I would love to do that, but you don’t have the courage to do it and then senior year I was just like I don’t care, this is the time, this is the place,” Stallard said.

Stallard was not the only one who benefited from the bucket list, he says his peers did as well.

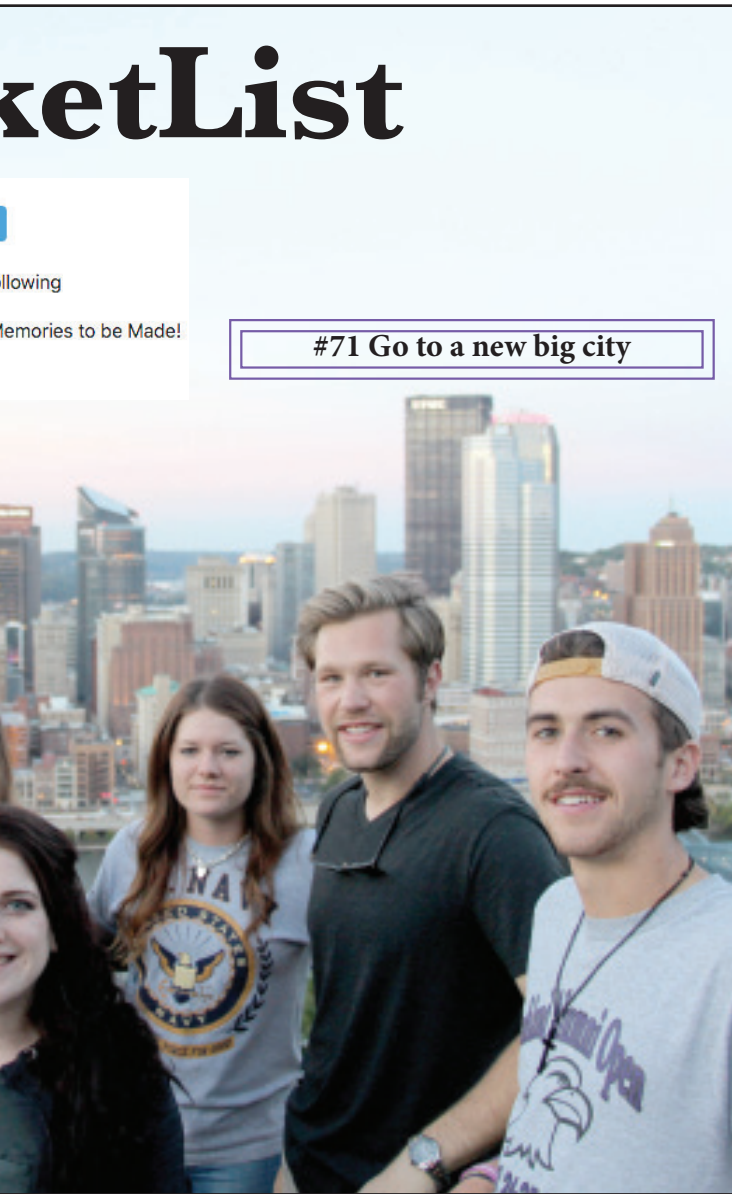
Grace Ecenbarger, a senior, was one of dozens of people that participated in many of the different events in the bucket list.

She said that she enjoyed participating so much that she wanted to create a list of her own as she starts her final year.

“I wanted to keep myself focused on documenting my senior year and thought this would be a fun way to keep me on track,” Ecenbarger said. “ I wanted to make memories with my friends before we graduate.”

PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY DEREK STALLARD





## of the AU Bucket List

As far as constructing her bucket list, Ecenbarger said she took a few items from the original list but she also edited it to fit her goals for senior year.

“I took a few of his ideas and added my own twist,” Ecenbarger said. “I also added items of my own that I’ve always wanted to do but haven’t gotten to yet.”

Beyond just students asking for the list, Stallard was approached by a few people from the university as well about using the bucket list.

*thought about a lot of things of undergrad was going to leave behind. I said to say that I would not be forgotten.”*  
Derek Stallard

Janel Molnar, director of recreational services, caught wind of Stallard’s list and immediately became intrigued.

“What Derek did with his bucket list came up and [the Campus leaders] started talking about that and what a great idea that is, so we just thought that was something that we needed on campus and that students would love,” Molnar said.

Molnar coordinated with Stallard to develop a three minute video that described some of the items on the bucket list and gave a closer look on what it actually was.

“I absolutely love it,” Stallard said. “The whole idea of me doing the list was for me and my friends originally, but since it has blown up a little bit I am absolutely thrilled. If we can get people doing things and making memories those memories are the ones you will cherish once you graduate.”

Molnar worked with her recreational services staff to design a T-shirt to give to incoming freshman upon their arrival to campus.

“I love Ashland and I want other people to love Ashland as much as I do and I think that the community, even in the past year, has grown,” Molnar said. “There are so many hidden treasures.”

Many of those hidden treasures can be found on the bucket list T-shirts, such as eating pie at Lynway, getting wings from Linder’s and stopping by Vines Bakery to treat yourself.

AU decided to use a T-shirt be-

cause it would allow for students to check things off as they go on something that would stay with them throughout their four years.

Molnar said she received tremendous feedback about the shirts and that many students have asked about getting a shirt of their own. This feedback came mainly from upperclassmen, so Molnar decided to organize a raffle to give students an opportunity to win one of the extra shirts.

She said the response was great, as 173 people submitted their names to be placed in the raffle.

From here on out, Molnar will be monitoring the use of the hashtag #aubucketlist. Students who post pictures of themselves participating in parts of the list will be randomly selected to be represented on various advertisements across campus.

“I think it’s great that we are encouraging students to experience what Ashland has to offer,” Ecenbarger said. “I know Derek is very proud of the legacy he left behind.”

Four years is enough time to make a mark, even a small one. All it takes is that first step.

“My advice to anyone coming to AU for the first time is get involved,” Stallard said. “Find some people who like the same things as you, find some people who don’t like the same things as you just try to find a group of people that give you life.”



derek\_stall • Follow

derek\_stall 1 Semester. 75 Things To Do. 100's of Memories to be Made! •• That was the motto I had all last semester!! Honestly my senior "semester" was jam packed with so many "firsts" that it was kinda wild!! The main reason I loved having a Senior Bucket List is that I got to do so many things with so many of my favorite people!! I found my friends and I joking that I should "put it on the list" or challenging ourselves to do random things that might not be the most normal but were iconic memories we will cherish! Honestly I just want to thank all my dear friends who were willing to do almost any scheme I asked of them!! •• So friends who are graduating in May. You have 85 days. Go out and live!!! Get some of your closest friends and make the moments matter. Trust me. It's worth it.



158 likes

FEBRUARY 9

Log in to like or comment.