



CAPSTONE

UWL COLLEGE OF LIBERAL STUDIES NEWSLETTER

INSPIRING | ACHIEVING | UNITING

SPRING 2019



A DIVERSE WORLD

A liberal studies education prepares for the future



AN INTERNATIONAL LABORATORY

UWL participates in national study

To achieve UWL's strategic planning goal of expanding global and international learning opportunities for all UWL students, the university applied and was selected to join the 15th cohort of universities participating in the American Council on Education's (ACE) Internationalization Laboratory. The program has provided expertise that supports a systematic and collaborative approach to comprehensive internationalization.

Over the last 18 months, six different action teams, involving more than 30 UWL colleagues, have conducted a widespread review examining institutional commitment, curriculum, partnerships, education abroad, faculty development and international student recruitment and retention. The ACE Lab team will make recommendations to UWL administration and ACE this summer. Beginning fall 2019,

UWL will be launching its new internationalization strategic plan.

Jane Knight defines internationalization as, "...the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education." (2012). Recognizing the necessity to prepare our graduates with competencies and skills to navigate an increasingly connected and diverse world, the ACE Lab team is developing a framework and strategic plan to ensure all UWL students will have an opportunity for global learning during their academic career — on or off campus.

Several members of the College of Liberal Studies community have been involved throughout this process. Dr. Tim McAndrews, Archaeology & Anthropology; and Dr. Rose Brougham, Global Cultures and Languages, are both members

of the ACE Lab Steering Committee. Other committee members include Dr. Jennifer Butler Modaff, Communication Studies; Dr. Carol Miller, Sociology; Dr. James Szymalak and Dr. Adam VanLiere, both Political Science and Public Administration. ACE Lab team members have dedicated numerous hours in collecting data, conducting analysis and meeting with diverse stakeholders across campus.

For more information on the ACE Lab and to read the charges given by Provost Betsy Morgan, visit www.uwlax.edu/iznlab.

A handwritten signature in red ink, reading "Emelee Volden".

Emelee Volden

Director, International Education & Engagement

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THINK B4U PRINT: This online newsletter has many handy, direct links to videos and websites. Printed copies don't contain hyperlink information. You may download and print this publication through ISSUU.com.

Capstone is published biannually for UWL College of Liberal Studies alumni and friends. Send comments to Marie Moeller, UWL College of Liberal Studies at mmoeller@uwlax.edu.

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Cultural Competence



New dean



Women of color



All jazzed up

CLS DEPARTMENTS

Learn more about our departments and programs:

Archaeology/Anthropology

Art

Communication Studies

English

Environmental Studies

History

Ethnic & Racial Studies

Military Science

Global Cultures & Languages

Music

Philosophy

Political Science/Public Administration

Psychology

Sociology

Student Affairs Administration

Theatre Arts

Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies

PREPARING FOR A DIVERSE WORLD

CLS faculty create moments for students to pause, critically think, and gain greater cultural competence



A NOTE FROM THE DEAN



‘Cultural competence is crucial’

As Dean, I am quite proud of all the strong work done throughout our college; however, I am particularly honored in this issue to highlight how the College of Liberal Studies is dedicated to and drives a commitment to cultural competence on the UWL campus and far beyond.

Broadly speaking, cultural competency is the ability of an individual, institution, or community to successfully interact with people who differ from themselves. This would include being comfortable working with people of diverse cultural and social backgrounds and understanding how your own background and experiences influence your attitudes and behaviors.

Cultural competence is crucial in order to provide equitable educational experiences and workplaces for students, faculty, and staff at UWL. At UWL, the Achieving Excellence Through Equity and Diversity pillar of our strategic plan articulates how we as an institution strive to achieve an inclusive environment.

Coursework in disciplines from theatre to psychology, from philosophy to sociology,

Continued on page 7

You can’t earn a degree in it. There are no PhDs in cultural competence. Instead, learning to positively and effectively interact in a diverse world is an ongoing process developed throughout a lifetime.

The College of Liberal Studies is invested in engaging students in this process. In courses from French to history and music and more, CLS students are encouraged to observe and understand instead of judge, while questioning histories and studies that are not representative of diverse views. Simultaneously, they explore various cultural groups’ music, customs, history, geography and beliefs.

“As faculty we need to prepare our students to respond appropriately to diversity in our communities and recognize this is a fluid kind of thing — you can’t just have a canned response,” explains Charles Martin-Stanley, CLS associate dean. “Not all black people are the same. Not all Hmong people are the same.”

That’s difficult, he adds, because humans tend to be “cognitive misers,” a social psychology theory meaning the brain has a tendency to think and solve problems in simple, less effortful ways.

“Many individuals don’t like to think too much,” he continues. “They often like nice, simple explanations and ways of being. Yet we live in complex world.”

Continued next page



Gita V. Pai, associate professor of South Asian history, challenges students to use their critical-thinking skills.

Martin-Stanley and Gita V. Pai, associate professor of South Asian history, encourage students to use their critical thinking skills to uncover some of this complexity.

For example Pai shares a controversial book, “Mother India,” in her British Empire history course. “Mother India” was written by an American woman journalist in the late 1920s who was sent by the British government to document the situation of women in India. The piece paints a negative picture of life for women in India — where they are oppressed and must succumb to male patriarchy.

Pai encourages students to read the piece closely, questioning the historical context and reasons the author, who had little exposure to India, wrote it. In their studies, students learn that the book was written when people of India were rising up and demanding independence from British rule. In that context, the British

government sent the U.S.-based journalist to write a book opposing Indian independence, which served as propaganda for the British empire. “Mother India” promotes students’ understandings of other cultures even when available historical accounts are biased.

In his “Racism and Oppression” course, Martin-Stanley shares case studies representative of the diversity in society. These include individuals who are gay, individuals who are homeless, individuals of different races, and many other instances of diversity so that is complex and requires that they analyze and apply critical thinking skills, he says.

In addition to the above strategies, Martin-Stanley encourages students to question what they are learning. For instance, when reviewing a theoretical model developed 50 years ago or one based solely on middle class white norms, he challenges students to think about its relevancy.



Charles Martin-Stanley

Language learning — more than vocab and grammar

The antiquated perception of a foreign language class is teaching people simply important vocabulary words and phrases like “Hi” and “How are you?” or learning the language’s rules of grammar. But one cannot separate teaching culture from teaching language, says Virginie Cassidy, assistant professor of Global Cultures & Languages.

In her classes, like others in the UWL Global Cultures & Languages Department, the two are infused. In fact, students often don't realize that while writing an essay comparing and contrasting French and American movies based on the classic French fairy tale "Beauty and the Beast" or asking why there are so many French words to describe a vest, they are learning just as much about culture as language. Students are continually challenged to think about what a particular difference between their culture and another culture tells them.

For instance, in Cassidy's "French 300: Visual Encounters" class, students see how something as seemingly benign as a grocery store ad or a popular movie communicates cultural information.

Comparing fliers from a local Festival Foods and a grocery store in France, students learn what food tells people about a culture. Cassidy encourages students to describe what they see in the ad before deciding what it means. They describe differences such as the much larger font of prices in the U.S. and the attention to beautiful presentation of food in France. Cassidy says this describing first slows students down so they don't jump right into pre-conceived ideas about another culture.

"It is observing instead of judging," she says.

In all Global Cultures & Languages courses, students learn to identify products (like the grocery store ad), as well as practices and perspectives that compose a culture other than their own. They then compare them to their own culture and assess what that means, explains Cassidy.



Virginia Cassidy

Prior to class discussions, a student might decide they don't like a particular French movie version of Beauty and the Beast because the story line wasn't the classic Disney version they were expecting. However, after considering another perspective such as the intended audience and historical context of the French version, students can appreciate the difference.

"I advocate for language learning because this is not just about language," says Cassidy. "You can see the change in students as they progress through the courses."

Similarly, in classes related to the history of South Asia, Pai urges students not to have preconceived ideas about a particular culture or to maintain the assumption that their own culture shares common characteristics with that culture.

"I encourage students to be open to learning about other cultures, along with cultural practices, and forms of thinking which is beyond their frame of reference, often a set of experiences limited to life in small, rural Midwestern communities,"

and experiences—such as study abroad and study away—provide an essential framework for the mastery of skills such as openness, empathy, curiosity, cultural self-awareness, and growth in the knowledge and understanding of the many cultural frameworks around the world. Clearly, such mastery contributes to increased understandings and communicative possibilities; the opportunities of the human impact of such teaching are truly innumerable.

In addition to the broad humanistic impacts of a commitment to cultural competency, our students themselves also benefit from being culturally competent. For example, research from the AAC&U (2018) has shown that employers seek employees who have strong ability to analyze and solve problems with people from multiple backgrounds and cultures that differ from their own. Over 73 percent of surveyed employers state that this skill is one of the most imperative skills they seek in both new employees and employees they are looking to promote.

Our college provides multiple avenues for students to build those skills and our alums take those skills with them to our larger schools and organizations, communities and countries. We are so pleased to highlight some of the work being done in our college focused on cultural competency, and look forward to continuing to increase that work in years to come.

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Kim Vogt".

Kim Vogt
InterimDean,
College of Liberal Studies



Left: Music Professor Soojin Ritterling and students warm up prior to drumming during a master class with a guest artists from South Korea during the 2018 Korean Wave performance series. Ritterling is grateful for financial support to establish UWL Korean Percussion Ensembles and a CLS grant to support the Korean Wave performance series. With additional support from the Office of International Education & Engagement and Foundation, the Music Department has been hosting “Korean Wave” Korean Traditional Music Performance series on campus since 2016. The fourth annual event was April 6.

The diverse languages of music

Cultural competency study happens throughout CLS, as evidenced by cultural work in departments such as Music. Students learn through the language of music how diverse music is and how it’s tied to culture, says Soojin Ritterling, professor of music.

“By performing diverse music repertoires through solo recitals, small ensembles, and/or in large ensembles, students understand that there are many different but equally logical and valid ways of making music,” she says.

Furthermore, listening to diverse cultural music in world music classes helps students experience and appreciate a wide range of musical sounds.

Ritterling’s research is on developing effective and accessible

music teaching methods with a primary focus on multicultural music education. In her music classrooms, she emphasizes folk dances and children’s play songs and games from various countries including the U.S.

“While exploring world music, students explore a people’s customs, history, geography and beliefs,” she says. “At the same time, students become aware of their own culture and expand the cultural awareness of students from different backgrounds.”

Ritterling also uses Korean percussion instruments to ignite the desire to learn music. She established both UWL Korean Percussion Ensembles and a Korean Wave performance series on campus.

Translingual, transcultural competency

A 2007 report from Modern Language Association, a professional language association, calls for developing translingual and transcultural competency. Global Cultures & Languages aims for translingual and transcultural competence, which is understanding others from within and seeing oneself from the perspective of others, explains Cassidy.

What is cultural competence?

Cultural competence puts together cultural knowledge, awareness and sensitivity into practice, explains Pai.

Cultural knowledge — means attempting to understand the values, history, and beliefs of others’ cultural and ethnic groups.

Cultural awareness — involves standing back from ourselves and to being open to understanding other groups.

Cultural sensitivity — entails realizing that differences exist between cultures and not assigning values to those differences.



College of Liberal Studies

The benefits are limitless

It is no secret that the era of the specialist is rapidly changing to the era of the multifaceted human being - knowledgeable, creative, and globally competent. As the world becomes increasingly complex we need to:

- Be able to learn quickly, think clearly, and communicate effectively.
- Have intellectual depth to use knowledge to attain goals and solve problems.
- Have historical perspective and cultural understanding to adapt to constant global change.

It is not enough to absorb information; we must interact dynamically with it. Dynamic interaction is at the heart of the 56 undergraduate and five graduate degree programs in the humanities, social sciences, arts and communication, education and interdisciplinary programs that comprise the College of Liberal Studies.

A lifetime of learning and discovery is possible through the College of Liberal Studies.

4 OF 5

employers agree that all students should acquire broad knowledge in the liberal arts and sciences

(AAC&U, 2014).

93%

of employers say that learning to think critically, communicate clearly, and solve complex problems is more important than a student's major

(AAC&U, 2014).

3 OF 4

employers would encourage young people to pursue a liberal arts education for career success in today's global economy

(AAC&U, 2013).

96%

of employers want ethical judgment and integrity as well as the ability to work with people from diverse backgrounds in their future employees

(AAC&U, 2013).



Karl Kunkel is new dean

Sociologist to head the college July 1

Karl Kunkel, of Southeast Missouri State University, becomes dean of the College of Liberal Studies starting July 1. By then, the college's new name — College of Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities (CASSH) — will be in place.

"I look forward to joining the leadership team and working collaboratively with the high quality, student-centered, and obviously very dedicated faculty and staff in the college," Kunkel says. "CASSH has a well-developed strategic plan, particularly in relationship to advocating for the liberal arts, advancing inclusive excellence, and fostering partnerships."

A sociologist by training, Kunkel has experience as a dean at Pittsburg State University in Kansas, as well as senior administrative duties at Southeast Missouri State.

At UWL, Kunkel will provide leadership and coordination of academic programs in the college, and work with departments and programs in ongoing planning.

Kunkel is "thrilled and honored" to have been selected. His strength of administrative experience, his knowledge regarding UWL, and his desire to be a dean for a college of liberal arts made him stand out in the national search, says UWL Provost Betsy Morgan.

Meet Dean Karl Kunkel

- Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Pittsburg State since July 2011, Kunkel oversaw 12 academic departments spanning the fine arts, humanities, social and natural sciences, along with the Irene Ransom Bradley School of Nursing.
- While faculty in February 2003, named department head of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminology at Missouri State University.
- Completed a doctorate in sociology with specialization in social control, deviance, and crime from the University of Missouri-Columbia in 1989.
- Specializes in criminal justice policy, criminal courts and law, along with social justice issues in criminology.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

College of Liberal Studies will change to the College of Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities July 1

CLS name and a structural changes take effect this summer.

The changes come from strategic planning work within the college and were recommended to better convey the program array of the units, says Marie Moeller, interim associate dean in the college. The changes have been endorsed by Faculty Senate and Chancellor Joe Gow, as well as the UW System regents.

Along with the college name change to CASSH, The School of Arts and Communication (SAC) will become the School of Visual and Performing Arts (VPA). The change

includes moving the Department of Communication Studies to their social science colleagues within the college. The departments of Art, Music and Theatre remain with VPA.

Having the school of VPA serves as a way for visual and performing arts to promote their rich cultural, visual and performing artistic endeavors as a collective, says Moeller. And it provides strength in recruitment and programming.

CASSH and VPA more clearly represent the disciplines and activities housed within those structures. That has been on the college's docket for

some time, says Moeller. Several CLS/CASSH faculty members served on the renaming committee: Dave Anderson, Archaeology & Anthropology; Joe Anderson, Theatre; and Nici Ploeger-Lyons, Communication Studies.

Along with research on peer and aspirant institutions and national research on branding in higher education, the committee also surveyed CLS faculty. A total of 171 responded and 94 percent of respondents ranked CASSH as their first or second name selection.

Brendan Kinsella says though poetry, playing piano and spoken word, he aims to get people thinking about music and performance in a different way.



Pianist Brendan Kinsella recited poetry and played piano, while exploring what freedom meant to three composers. Artist Sawsan AISaraf, an expatriate Iraqi, shared her own sense of freedom that she finds creating art.

UWL's sixth annual Creative Imperatives Festival, March 3-5, was all about freedom. Themed "Freedom Unbound: The Power of the Arts,"

the three-day event included exhibits, performances, workshops, and presentations that demonstrated how the visual and performing arts can be used to showcase marginalized populations, champion causes and generate ideas.

AISaraf, one of several featured guests at the festival, has moved between the Middle East and North America since 1977. During an artist

talk, AISaraf reflected on 42 years living in diaspora and its impact on her artistic and personal identity.

"The challenges I face with every new movement in my journey empowered my creative self," says AISaraf. "It gives me the ability to liberate myself from any physical or psychological burden. Only with my artwork can I reach this freedom."

UNBOUND FREEDOM

Sixth annual Creative Imperatives Festival explores expressions of freedom



Freedom at the keys

During a lecture and demonstration, Kinsella explored what freedom meant to composers Robert Schumann, Kurt Schwitters and Frederic Rzewski.

American Composer Rzewski, for instance, wrote a piece called “De Profundis” in 1992, based on a love letter written in the late 19th Century by Oscar Wilde who had been

persecuted for his sexuality. Wilde wrote the emotional letter from his prison cell after the details of his affair with a British aristocrat were made public.

Society has seen many changes since Rzewski originally wrote his work, explained Kinsella. Changes such as the #MeToo movement and marriage equality, have opened up new points of discussion and

new meaning for performers and audiences.

In his performance, Kinsella aimed to help the audience see music and performance in a different light.

Above: Artist Sawzan AlSaraf explored displacement, home, identity, belonging, abandonment and more through her artwork and research during Creative Imperatives.



Sarah Daentl worked with an interactive art exhibit during this year's Creative Impressions.



FREE — LIKE A BIRD

During Creative Imperatives, a wall outside the gallery in Center for the Arts was decorated with paper black birds. Some flew freely away from a cage while others were confined within it.

Sarah Daentl, a student coordinator of Creative Imperatives, helped spread the word about this interactive art exhibit that encouraged people to write what made them feel free or not free. The “free” birds were displayed away from the cage and the “not free” birds were posted inside. Daentl wrote “adventure” and

“traveling” make her feel free. “Rules” make her feel trapped. Others expressed how “rehearsal,” “art,” “knowledge,” “love,” and “the outdoors” make them feel free. “Hate,” “my health,” “calculus,” “racism” and the “glass ceiling,” make them feel trapped.

“I learned a lot about what freedom means,” says Daentl. “One person’s definition might strongly differ from my own, and their experience of freedom might be different from my own. This festival helped remind me of this.”

Other Festival Artists

Right: UWL senior Michaela Bromberek, a psychology major, participates in open studio ceramics during the Creative Imperatives Festival.

2nd Row, Left: Art Education student Ellie DeMuth led an interactive workshop, "Protesting through Art." The event focused on the way art and artists are affected by society and culture and how art can be harnessed as a means of communicating personal messages for others to hear.

2nd Row, Right: Alydia Downs, an archaeology major, participates in a metalsmithing and blacksmithing studio during Creative Imperatives.



Women of Color Collective

Group creates community, support for women of color on campus



Three attended the Faculty Women of Color in Academia National Conference as part of a CLS grant. The faculty included, from left, Uttara Manohar, Communication Studies; Gita Pai, History; and Sara Docan-Morgan, Communication Studies.

The Women of Color Collective is open to all UWL faculty, staff and graduate students who identify as women of color. They meet in a casual setting the first Friday of every month.

“It has been great to meet other people outside of our departments and realize that, regardless of our field of study, there is so much we share,” says Docan-Morgan.

Women of color must negotiate multiple marginality in academia: gender, sex, sexual orientation, color, race, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, age, motherhood, and more, explains Pai, UWL associate professor of history and program director of the international studies minor.

Pai, who grew up in more racially diverse areas of the country, describes standing in front of an

Sara Docan-Morgan recalls meeting new people early in her teaching career at UWL. When a white colleague introduced her to another white faculty member, the response was: “We have one of those, but ours is from China.”

“Women of color have to decide all the time, ‘Do I address this or do I ignore it and let it perpetuate?’” explains Docan-Morgan, associate professor of Communication

Studies. “It creates a mental and emotional burden that doesn’t exist for other people.”

Challenges like this gave Docan-Morgan the idea of creating a welcoming and supportive group for women of color on campus. Docan-Morgan, along with two other faculty, Gita V. Pai and Uttara Manohar, have led the way in creating this space to bond, share struggles and support one another.



The Women of Color Collective aims to develop an expansive network of women of color on campus that will foster a sense of community for women of color outside of their home department. Those at a March meeting included, from left, Graciela Egen, Institutional Research; Mahruq Khan, Women's Gender & Sexuality Studies; Erica Srinivasan, Psychology; and Naghmeh Gheidi, Exercise and Sport Science.



UWL staff member Lee Xiong gives a watercoloring lesson during the March meeting of the Women of Color Collective.

all-white classroom at UWL for the first time as “culture shock.” She has also wrestled with a constant need to explain her Indian-American identity.

“I can stand there and tell them — ‘I’m as American as you,’” she says. “Yet, all they see is this person of color. They don’t see the American part of my identity.”

Women of color can also experience daily slights, popularly known as microaggressions. For instance, because of their dual status as a

woman and person of color, they have to work harder at establishing their credibility and competence inside and outside the classroom.

When Manohar started teaching at UWL in fall 2017, she experienced work environment challenges like these. The seemingly subtle and ambiguous nature of these incidents led to questions such as, “Did this just happen? Is it okay to feel angry about this? Do I pursue an emotionally-charged conversation or just let it go?”

The group has been a great source of support for coping with these common stressors, she says.

Docan-Morgan says she never wants someone to leave UWL because they feel alone as a woman of color. “If we don’t support them, we are going to lose them,” she says.

One of the most rewarding parts of starting the group has been helping women of color find connections that help them feel more grounded here, she adds.

To learn more about the Women of Color Collective contact Sara Docan-Morgan at 608.785.6711 or sdocan-morgan@uwlax.edu or join the Facebook group Women of Color at UWL.

CLS grant funds conference attendance – book group

A College of Liberal Studies grant, as well as additional funding from the Communication Studies and History departments, has allowed the three leaders of the Women of Color Collective to expand their knowledge and connections to effectively advocate for women of color. The three attended a Faculty Women of Color in Academia National Conference, April 11-13, at Virginia Tech. The funds will also support a book club. The first book selection is, “Counternarratives from Women of Color Academics.”

Sharing the voice of Native Americans



Alum receives state's
MLK Heritage Award

Growing up and attending grade school in Wisconsin, Patty Loew learned little to nothing about Native Americans.

“I vaguely remember something about Paleolithic hunters ... Native Americans being involved in the fur trade, and then, they disappeared from history,” she recalls. “There was a huge gap.”

Loew, '74, an award-winning author, educator, documentarian and journalist, has dedicated much her career to fill that gap. And her contributions as leader and change

maker haven't gone unnoticed. Loew received Wisconsin's 2019 MLK Heritage Award in January.

Loew's books have become foundational texts for public educators to guide instruction of the First Nations of Wisconsin, a state mandate for K-12 educators, explains Aaron Bird Bear, assistant dean of Student Diversity Programs for UW-Madison's School of Education.

Two of Loew's books — “Native Peoples of Wisconsin” and “Indian Nations of Wisconsin: Histories of Endurance and Renewal” — are



HONORS

the first two books the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and The American Indian Curriculum Services unit in UW-Madison's School of Education recommend to educators, adds Bird Bear.

"They are the first comprehensive textbooks developed in collaboration with the First Nations of Wisconsin," he says. "Patty went to each of the first nations and consulted with elders and leaders. I think that is an amazing innovation ... I think that's what makes them so special."

Loew, a member of the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe, says her work as an author began because of the lack of histories written by Native people. The histories she found were written by explorers, traders and others who intersected with Native Americans and were more reflective of the histories of those groups.

Loew's books share Native American history the way Native Americans share it. They rely on historical perspectives from native people. She reconstructs the past through pictographs, song, dance and stories. Instead of telling history based on time (from beginning to end), the stories she shares are based on place such as a sacred stone or a rice bed.

Loew has also increased awareness about Native American history, culture,

treaty rights, values of environmental protection beyond books. She had an extensive career as a host and anchor at Wisconsin Public Television, producing numerous documentaries, including the award-winning "Way of the Warrior," which aired nationally on PBS in 2007 and 2011.

After her journalist career, she transitioned into higher education — first as a UW-Madison professor and today at Northwestern University. She is also director of the university's Center for Native American and Indigenous Research.

The Patty Loew file

- Director of Native American and Indigenous Research at Northwestern University; professor in the Medill School of Journalism.
- Former broadcast journalist in public and commercial TV.
- Author of "Indian Nations of Wisconsin: Histories of Endurance and Renewal" and "Native People of Wisconsin."
- Member of the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe.
- UWL Maurice O. Graff Distinguished Alumnus Award, 2011.
- 1974 graduate in mass communications.



Spivey receives MLK award

Shaundel Spivey, '12, who has a passion for creating social change, received La Crosse's 2019 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Leadership Award in January. Spivey, a political science major, is currently the college connections manager at Western Technical College in La Crosse.

Patty Loew earned a bachelor's in mass communications from UWL in 1974 and a master's and doctorate from UW-Madison. She is a highly-regarded filmmaker, journalist, educator and award-winning author.

‘Hear, Here’ still being heard

A unique class project continues to give a voice to community spots.

The project provided a great example of how UWL faculty and students are engaging in the community during the UW System Board of Regents meeting on campus in December.

The collection of audio recordings of oral histories in downtown La Crosse can be accessed by dialing a toll-free number at orange street signs. It’s also online at: www.hearherelacrosse.org

UWL Associate Professor of History Ariel Beaujot and her students started the Hear, Here project with 28 stories in 2015. It has since branched out to include many more stories, poetry and partnerships with other UWL departments, K-12 education and community organizations.

“They [students] are creating something that has become a national-award-winning project,” note Beaujot. “So, while they are also writing term papers and taking exams and all of the things they do, they are also creating this thing that will affect and change the community.”



See the video





Abigail Becker, an English writing and rhetoric major, graduates this spring with a Peace Corps certificate.

Thumbs up to a new program promoting the Peace Corps on campus. Nearly a dozen students have taken steps to graduate with the Peace Corps Prep Certificate — a “non-official concentration” to their existing academic program.

“The Peace Corps Prep program was designed to bring together coursework and experiences that students may have already had or anticipate taking in a future semester,” explains Karolyn Bald, assistant director of the UWL Advising Center and Career Services.

The program started last fall and two students plan to graduate with the certificate in May. Program leaders

Bald and Adam Van Liere, Political Science/Public Administration, hope the semester finishes with around 20 students.

“This far exceeded our expectations for the first year,” notes Bald. “We have a very diverse group of students from all academic colleges and disciplines.”

The certificate doesn’t guarantee Peace Corps placement, but it certainly helps, says Bald. In 2018, UWL had the most Peace Corps students of all in the UW System: 10. Peace Corps has been popular on campus for decades. Since 1961, UWL has had more than 275 Peace Corps volunteers.

Passport to Peace Corps

CERTIFICATE PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES

Unique photos

Prof shares work from sabbatical

Associate Professor of Art Linda Levinson shared her unique artwork of photographs captured without using a camera. Levinson's works perfected during a sabbatical in spring 2018 were hung in the University Art Gallery in early February.

For her sabbatical, Levinson received two artist residences: Yaddo Artist Fellowship in Saratoga Springs, New York, and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts Fellowship in Amherst, Virginia. She was assigned a living space and work studio with uninterrupted time to focus on art.

"The community at these residencies pushes each other to refine and improve their work," explains Levinson. "Fellows in other disciplines provided invaluable feedback on my art."

During the sabbatical Levinson had an exhibition from her series, "Hidden Souls of Books," at the Madison Central Library. Since, she has produced works on paper that utilize photographic ephemera and made the final prints of a series of black and white photograms — photographs made without a camera — of books, for a new series, "Incidents of Light." To make the photograms, she placed a book on the surface of photo-sensitive paper, exposed it to light and developed it.

"Incidents of Light" differed from her Madison exhibit in that the way that the image is not as dependent on what one might infer from its title. Both bodies of her work were exhibited in the University Art Gallery.

Levinson says she approached her sabbatical not only to create unique art, but as a way to improve student-learning opportunities.

"The photography courses I teach are enriched with content from my experiences at the residences by teaching students the importance of focus and concentration while working on an extended project, setting up an artist studio in a site specific location, editing, sequencing and producing final photographs for exhibition," she notes.



An Oktoberfest butterfly

Student's mural at Southside Fest Grounds

Baley Murphy mixed her family's tradition with Oktoberfest's into a beautiful metamorphosis.

The senior—who is majoring in art and minoring in psychology—painted a mural for the Southside Fest Grounds during a class with Art Professor Jennifer Williams last fall. Murphy settled on a butterfly because of the insect's prominence to the region, as well as a special family meaning.

"I was ecstatic to have the chance to design this because, in my family when we see a butterfly, it is a symbol for my grandmother which has a special place in my heart," says Murphy.

The wings are the color of the German flag and her signature at the bottom is surrounded by an edelweiss flower to capture German heritage. It also includes a depiction of the Fest's 2018 button. Across

the top is the message, "You are Gemütlichkeit!" — German for friendliness and good cheer.

"It is such an honor to have my art displayed at such an iconic area in my hometown and I hope everyone can enjoy the interactive nature of my artwork," she says.

The mural joins another by UWL students that debuted on the grounds in 2016.



Senior Baley Murphy, left, who's majoring in art and minoring in psychology, mixed her family's tradition with Oktoberfest's to create a new mural unveiled last fall on the Southside Fest Grounds. She's pictured in front of her work with Art Professor Jennifer Williams.

ALL jazzed UP

CLS alum getting noticed in NYC

Jim Piela took a chance — a big chance. After studying music performance and performing in the area, Piela, '08, headed for New York City's big city lights. And he is finding success.

After continuing studies at New York University, Piela earned a jazz performance master's degree. Now, his Jim Piela Group is a modern jazz quartet that emphasizes melody, groove and inventive improvisation, without the use of chordal instrument, such as piano or guitar. This presents a particular set of creative challenges to the improvisers — most prominently finding clever ways to present harmony in the form of melody.

Piela credits CLS faculty mentors, along with many music classes, for his success. "Greg Balfany, Chris Frye and Karyn Quinn were essential to my education and growing into the musician I am today," says Piela. "I ended up playing with all of them quite a bit after graduation in various bands and situations."

Piela still refers to class and lesson materials. In fact, recently he was working on an exercise Balfany had given him in a jazz improvisation

class. "Sometimes I think it takes years for the lessons you learn to sink in, or to really get the context or depth of a concept," he notes. "Hopefully one of these days it'll all start clicking."

While the music classes were key to his NYC prosperity, Piela points to other classes — ones he thought he was taking as an easier class schedule — for who he became. And, for thriving in the Big Apple.

Piela opted for an "open minor," thinking he'd take easier classes. So, he ended up taking African American literature, LGBTQ literature, logic, metaphysics, aesthetics, history of Middle East/U.S. relations and creative writing.

But his little act of "defiance and laziness" turned out to be a critical turning point in his perspective of the world.

"Learning about and reading the important thinkers on each of these subjects were crucial, but the most powerful takeaway was how deeply I considered and thought through these subjects, and realizing how little I knew about the world," he explains. "These classes also really piqued my interest in philosophy, minority

studies and history, all of which I've subsequently dug deeper into after my time at UWL."

Piela can't be more thankful to the professors who didn't give up on an apathetic, uninterested student. "As an artist in a city as diverse as New York, it's important to be able to really listen, connect, and empathize with people outside of your own cultural experience."

Since his album "Out of Orbit" was released earlier this year, Piela has been somewhat overwhelmed how peers have received it.

"It's really inspiring to get messages or texts from old friends you haven't seen in a while and musicians and saxophonists I look up to," he explains. "It drives me to keep pushing, keep trying to improve, and continue to expand and develop my voice and craft."



Take a listen

Catch him: Jimpiela.com/events



Jim Piela, '08, is making it in New York City. His most recent album, "Out of Orbit," has caught the attention of Big Apple peers.



FRENCH FILM FEST FILLS THE BILL

A rich cultural opportunity brought together UWL and the La Crosse community around French cinema. The UWL French Film Festival held in February featured six free films, with

English subtitles, on and off campus. The festival partnered with the Pump House Regional Arts Center for the first screening, and also showed a film at the Rivoli Main Theatre.

The selection reflected diversity and richness of French cinema through fiction and documentary from France, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Niger, says Assistant Professor of French Anna Keefe, Global Cultures and Languages. The department received an Office of the Dean of the College of Liberal Studies small grant and a Tournées Film Festival Grant from the FACE Foundation.

“The festival was a wonderful opportunity for students and La Crosse area residents to watch and discuss these high quality, thought-provoking films, a somewhat rare experience in the age of digital streaming,” says Keefe.

She hopes to make the festival a permanent event to unite the campus and community. “I feel that film is uniquely suited to inspire us, through exploring another culture, to become more tolerant, more curious, and more available to others,” Keefe says.



History prof earns grant viewing cinema as historical text

Gita Pai, UWL associate professor of history, received a CLS equipment and technology grant to support, “Cinematic Asias,” in fall 2018. It encourages students to view cinema as historical text in HIS 250: Survey of Asia. “The most valuable use of historical film is not only as documents about the events, but also as documents about the significance of the events for the culture that made the films,” explains Pai.



SPEEDY SENIORS

CLASS GARNERS NATIONAL ATTENTION

Speed-dating for senior citizens on campus in November generated national buzz — along with new relationships. Coverage was picked up by U.S. News & World Report, the Minneapolis Star Tribune, Wisconsin Public Radio, as well as in Los Angeles, New Orleans and Biloxi, Mississippi.

Students in UWL Associate Professor Dawn Norris' Sociology of Generations & Age class planned, advertised and conducted "Senior Speed Dating for Companionship 65+," modeling it after the "Age of Love" documentary.

"Older adults want love and companionship in their lives, but there is rarely a central place for them to gather devoted to this," explains Norris. "Social isolation is a common problem for older adults, so these events serve as a place for them to get out and have fun, meet new friends and possibly begin a romantic relationship."

The NYC-based director of the film, who Norris had talked to by phone to help arrange the event, saw the TV coverage. He called Norris and they are working to develop a lessons for universities nationwide, aiding faculty to set up similar events.

Center infuses culture, languages

On the third floor of Graff Main Hall, students converse in Spanish, Chinese and French. They are practicing language and culture learning at the newly remodeled Global Cultures and Languages Language Resource Center.

But the Language Resource Center (LRC) isn't just a room to acquire and experience languages. It's where students can see how language and culture are infused in every area of study.



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