

UWL COLLEGE OF ARTS, SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

# CAPSTONE



YOUR KEY TO GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP SPRING 2023



**DEDICATION**

**ACROSS BOUNDARIES**



## From the Dean's Desk

**W**elcome to the Spring 2023 Capstone, the alumni and friends publication for the College of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities. The theme of this edition is “dedication,” a word with several definitions reflected in the articles.

For example, this past Fall 2022 the Lowe Center for the Arts was dedicated to honor the career and lifetime contributions of Truman T. Lowe, a 1969 graduate of the UWL Art Department.

At the beginning of this academic year, the inaugural Isakson scholarships were awarded to increase diversity in the College. These awards were made possible by the very generous estate gift from Gary Isakson, a 1981 graduate of our History Department and another example of dedication to liberal studies education at UWL.

Other articles in this edition describe activities of current faculty, students and alumni demonstrating dedication to excellence. This work, along with many other examples

that cannot be included in a single volume of Capstone, exhibit strong dedication for the College of Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities at UWL.

We very much appreciate this dedication!

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "KARUNKEL". The signature is stylized and written in all caps.

**Karl R. Kunkel, Dean**

*College of Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities*

**YOUR KEY TO GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP**  
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**ON THE COVER:** The re-dedication of the Truman T. Lowe Center for the Arts highlights the dedication of faculty, staff students and alumni seen throughout the College of Arts, Social Studies and Humanities.



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## CASSH DEPARTMENTS

Learn more about our departments and programs:

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English	Psychology
Environmental Studies	Race, Gender and Sexuality Studies
Global Cultures and Languages	Sociology
History	Student Affairs Administration
Military Science	Theatre and Dance

DEDICATED



# A philosophical advantage

Dedicated to continuous learning: Turkish scholar visits campus

**U**W-La Crosse Assistant Professor of Philosophy Daniel Schneider has been captivated with the Dutch philosopher Benedictus de Spinoza since he first read Spinoza's "Ethics" while in high school.

"I did not understand Spinoza's ideas very much," Schneider explains. "But what I did understand, I found fascinating and compelling."

Nearly a decade after earning his doctorate at UW-Madison, Schneider continues to discover more about the 17th century Jewish philosopher who was an early thinker of enlightenment and modern biblical criticism. Spinoza is such an important historical figure in the Netherlands that his portrait was featured on Dutch money until the euro was introduced in 2002.

Now, Schneider has coordinated efforts to bring a Spinoza scholar from Turkey to campus to co-author a professional paper and help expand his and students' studies. Ayse (EYE-sha) Ambaroglu heads the History of Religion Department at Akdeniz University, a research institution in Antalya, a city in the

southwestern part of the country on the Mediterranean Sea. Ambaroglu plans to stay in the Coulee Region through the summer to continue her research on Spinoza.

Schneider has previously focused on the philosophical method that led to Spinoza's "heretical" conclusions. While Spinoza didn't call himself an atheist or non-religious, Schneider says he did transform religious thinking and his philosophy helped lead to the secularization of Europe. At the age of 23, Spinoza was excommunicated from a Jewish congregation in Amsterdam.

Schneider says Ambaroglu, with her Turkish background, approaches Spinoza with a different background. Ambaroglu is a scholar of religion, and has a theological background in Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

"We have different approaches of understanding him," notes Schneider. It's important to be challenged by those who view Spinoza differently, Schneider says, because it will improve how he approaches teaching his students and, in turn, what they learn.

The Turkish scholar says it's important to research with someone who will challenge her to think differently about Spinoza.

"I need to speak to someone who has a different set of questions about Spinoza," Ambaroglu explains. "These are aspects of Spinoza that I don't focus on."

Ambaroglu will spend time in class listening to lectures and participating as a scholar teacher. By the end of the spring semester, she and Schneider will complete a rough draft of a scholarly paper on Spinoza's influence on modern Judaism.

Schneider plans to invite other Spinoza scholars to attend an early summer workshop to review his and Ambaroglu's work. Schneider says the exchange will further benefit him and students in his philosophy courses.

 **Find out more about the UWL Philosophy Department**

Cover story continued on next page

DEDICATED

# A special synthesis

Truman Lowe artwork donated to inspire future generations



*Professor Brad Nichols, Art Department Chair, says Synthesis of Pattern IV" will serve as a constant reminder of Lowe's artistic skill and Ho-Chunk heritage, perhaps most importantly for the students who now follow in his footsteps.*

Eric Newhouse used to look at a picture on his wall, made by his late friend Truman Lowe, and remember the good times.

Then, one day, he thought of something better to do with it: give it away.

Newhouse and his wife, Susie, donated the picture – a mixed media piece titled "Synthesis of Pattern IV," 2011 – to UW-La Crosse, where they

hope it will spark new and greater appreciation for Lowe at his alma mater.

Lowe, '69, achieved widespread acclaim for his career as an artist, professor and art curator, and was recently memorialized through the dedication of UWL's Truman T. Lowe Center for the Arts.

"When the university named the building after him, I thought it was

important to give something that would represent Truman and his work," explains Newhouse, who befriended Lowe in the early 1960s, when the pair were working summer jobs in Wisconsin Dells. "Truman is the only friend of mine with a building named in his honor, and he certainly deserves it."

During his life, Lowe became widely known for his sculptures and large

art installations, one of which was selected for a yearlong exhibit at the White House in 1998.

But Lowe was a master of many art forms and often created smaller, more unassuming pieces such as “Synthesis of Pattern IV.”

In making the piece, Lowe was inspired by his mother’s traditional Ho-Chunk ribbonwork, also known as “appliqué.”

According to Jo Ortel, professor emerita of art history at Beloit College and author of “Woodland Reflections: The Art of Truman Lowe,” this technique was likely passed down by Woodland tribes beginning in the mid-18th century. Back then, it was used primarily to embellish women’s clothing with abstract images from nature.

When Lowe’s mother died in 1976, he set out to preserve her ribbonwork patterns by incorporating them into his own art, Ortel explains.

“Truman frequently returned to the ribbonwork designs over the course of his entire artistic career; some of his most exquisite works feature ribbonwork patterns,” Ortel says. “He loved those patterns – I think because it was a way to honor both his mother and the long history of Ho-Chunk creativity.”

“Synthesis of Pattern IV” appeared in an exhibit alongside other Lowe pieces at the Denver Botanic Gardens in 2011. Later, the piece was kept in Lowe’s art studio in Middleton, Wis. Then, like Newhouse would years later, Lowe thought of something better to do with it.

The pair had stayed in touch through the years, as each found success in their respective careers. Newhouse, now retired, was a

longtime reporter for the Great Falls (Mont.) Tribune, where he won a Pulitzer Prize for explanatory reporting in 2000.

“It was always like two old friends whenever we got together to talk,” Newhouse says. “He was a brother to me.

“One day, we were wandering through his studio, and he pulled out this mixed media artwork, already framed. He told me it was a pattern his mother loved, that he loved, and that he wanted me to have it. I was deeply touched.”

Through the piece, Newhouse hopes the UWL community will be inspired to learn more about Lowe and his art.

For now, Art Department faculty are considering the best place to display it.

Brad Nichols, department chair, says it will serve as a constant reminder of Lowe’s artistic skill and Ho-Chunk heritage, perhaps most importantly for the students who now follow in his footsteps.

“I think it’s important for a number of reasons,” Nichols says. “One is his Native American background, which is fantastic. Two, he’s an alum of the program. And three, he had this really successful career. For someone from his background to have so much success, and to have been an alum of UWL, it really shows our students that there are opportunities in the arts.”



***“One day, we were wandering through his studio, and he (Lowe) pulled out this mixed media artwork, already framed. He told me it was a pattern his mother loved, that he loved, and that he wanted me to have it. I was deeply touched.”***

**Eric Newhouse, Friend of Truman Lowe, on the mixed media piece titled “Synthesis of Pattern IV,” 2011, he donated to UWL**

*Cover story continued on next page*

# Grasping globally

## Isakson scholarships serving up experience, aspirations

History major Gary Jon Isakson, '81, left \$1.325 million to the UWL Foundation to create scholarships for CASSH students. Because of his dedication to UWL, awards of

more than \$50,000 are given annually. Here are some of the students benefitting from the first distributions of the endowment for study abroad.

### Ilariah McAnally

Archaeological studies major,  
history minor

Mauston

**In her own words:** I identify as a mixed-racial student, both Mexican and White. Both parents are divorced and remarried to other people, but I have lived with my mother and stepfather most of my life. We are also a retired military family. I am currently attending college to get the opportunity to put my potential and knowledge to good use. It has always been a goal of mine to get a good career to provide for myself and live well. I also hope to travel as well during my college career and/or as a requirement for my career that I plan to go into after I am done with college by May 2023. I am also attending college to make lifelong friends that support me along the way as I will for them. So far, I have found a small group of friends who have supported me in everything I do, and they are always there



for me even when times are tough. They also inspire me to be more confident in my work.

#### Her experience:

McAnally studied abroad on an island called Bornholm, just off the coast of Denmark from May 27-June 27, 2022.

McAnally says the scholarship helped her thoroughly finance the trip. The experience has only fueled her dream and passion to travel the world and experience other cultures – and more.

“It also helps me realize the different values a country has in comparison to our own,” McAnally says. “I did miss some creature comforts from home, but I still feel a bit homesick for a place I was only in for a month.”

*Ilariah McAnally studied abroad on an island off the coast of Denmark as part of her Isakson scholarship.*





On the "Isla Amantani" prepping a "Pachamama" meal with the local indigenous group (who speak Quechua).

## Susanna Hu

International business and Spanish majors

La Crosse

**In her own words:** I was adopted from Yangzhou, China, when I was 11 months old and grew up in St. Louis Park, Minnesota, with a mother, father and sister. I want to attend college to maximize my potential and learn as much as possible to be an independent and socially aware person to improve the economy and world for future generations. I have an interesting story as I attended the St. Louis Park school district beginning at Park Spanish Immersion, where I was immersed in Spanish since kindergarten. This school gave me an appreciation of languages and cultures worldwide as I was taught by teachers from countries such as Peru, Mexico, Spain, Chile, Bolivia and Argentina at an early age. I grew up celebrating the Chinese, as well as my grandparents, who are immigrants from China. Throughout my upbringing, school was always a priority, but also having a balanced life. Therefore, I participated in many organizations in high school, including tennis, cross country skiing, DECA, National Honors Society, puzzle club and chamber orchestra. On the musical side, I grew up playing piano, violin and a little bit of clarinet,

which allowed me to appreciate to partake in the Minnesota Youth Symphonies Orchestra for two years. I also attained a leadership position on the women's tennis team at my high school, which influenced me to play tennis in college at UWL. I continue my involvement in college, as I am a member of the women's tennis team, Spanish club, secretary for the Asian Student Organization, volunteer as a conversation partner, and a mentor for the Multicultural Business Scholar Organization. I am eager to continue my studies after college and have a passion for developing myself and others throughout my years.

### Her experience:

Hu studied abroad from May 19-Sept. 3, 2022, in Cusco, Peru.

Hu says receiving the Isakson scholarship allowed her to gain work experience and intern with a business called "Choco Museo," which has a presence in four different Spanish speaking countries.

"This experience let me compare and contrast business operations in Peru compared to the United States," she says. "For example, in my international human resources class at UWL, we learned that in Peru the 'American' definition of punctuality in the professional world does not exist. In Peru, time is flexible. Say a

business meeting is set at 8 a.m., 'cusqueña time' would be to meet at 8:30 a.m."

Hu says learning firsthand about another culture has only whet her appetite for traveling.

"My time abroad, enhanced my cultural awareness and perception about the people, culture and traditions in Peru," she continues. "My experience reinforced my desire to travel the world and witness the different lifestyles that people have."



Hu visited the Amazon rainforest where she took a boat ride on the Amazon River and walked in the jungle to feed monkeys and see sloths, caimans, piranhas, macaws, tarantulas, and many native birds in their natural environment.

Cover story continued on next page



*Jack Cunningham, left, with his host family at the end of his stay in Costa Rica, the day before he left.*

## Jack Cunningham

International business major,  
Spanish minor  
Woodstock, Illinois

**In his own words:** I am the eldest of three brothers and the son of two parents from extremely different backgrounds. My mother is a first-generation Cuban American whose parents, my maternal grandparents, left Cuba toward the end of the 1960s to the U.S. My father is an immigrant from England who came to the U.S. in 1994 to work as a physical therapist. My younger brother, William, is a freshman at Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio. My youngest brother, Owen, is a freshman at Woodstock High School, where William and I both previously attended. A large portion of my maternal extended family

live here in the U.S, with a handful still residing in Cuba, while all of the extended family members on my paternal side are in the U.K. The reason I wanted to attend college was essentially to further my education. I am proud of my intelligence and my openness to learning new things, and I believe that the knowledge and increased intelligence I receive at college can be used in specific ways to help me through the path I chose to take after attending college.

### **His experience:**

Cunningham studied abroad in San José, Costa Rica from Sept. 3-Dec. 24, 2022.

Cunningham says receiving the scholarship allowed him to greatly reduce his personal cost

of going abroad.

"There are many things I learned and experiences I had that developed my education when I was abroad that I would not have been able to have here at UWL," he says.

Cunningham says he doesn't take the opportunity to live in a different culture for granted.

"I feel as though I have a much more global perspective now, and that the world has gotten so much bigger," he explains. "To experience a different culture for such an extended period of time allowed me to appreciate the differences across our globe, and how similar we all are to one another, even if it may not seem like it."



# Arts Fest

## Festival was the perfect remedy

The annual School of Visual and Performing Arts festival returned in late February with a new name.

Following multi-year success of Creative Imperatives, the school renamed it UWL ArtsFest. With the theme “A Beautiful Remedy for Today,” the event showcased the arts’ role in health and healing.

Along with faculty- and staff-led hands-on presentations, guest artists performed, and a portion of the National AIDS Memorial Quilt returned to campus after nearly three decades.



 Here's a look

# FANTASTIC FELLOWSHIP

Community Engaged Fellowships a win-win for students, nonprofits

**G**retta Kraus has diversified her skillset and aided the community along the way, thanks to UWL's new Community Engaged Fellowship program.

Kraus, a senior majoring in Spanish and psychology, interned with the La Crosse Community Foundation in the inaugural year of the program, which provides high-impact learning opportunities at local, nonprofit organizations.

During her internship – full time in summer 2022 and part time this academic year – Kraus was able to cross-train in data management, donor cultivation and engagement, and other fields critical to community fundraising.

"I love to learn new things, and this opportunity has taught me so much," says Kraus, of Waukesha. "I never knew about this realm of nonprofits or the fact that community foundations even existed until I applied for this fellowship. I have truly learned the importance and value of giving."

For one project, Kraus added a categorized nonprofit directory to the La Crosse Community Foundation website.

For another, she worked with two other Community Engaged Fellows – business students Avery Frankl and Samantha Meister – to create a local funder directory for La Crosse County. This tool increases transparency between funders and fund-seekers, while helping nonprofits identify and apply for grants that align with their mission.

"I never knew that there were so many nonprofits around the area all giving so much time and energy into benefiting people's lives in so many unique ways," notes Kraus, who hopes to work in a similar field after graduating this spring. "It is so uplifting and heartwarming to know there are so many people in the community that want to see La Crosse be the best it can be for everyone who lives here."

Among that group is Ron and Jane Rada, longtime La Crosse educators and UWL supporters. Their gift to the UWL Foundation led to the creation of the Community Engaged Fellowship program – which they hope will grow.

"We established the Community Engaged Fellowships as a philanthropic, pilot initiative to capitalize on

the strengths of both UWL and organizations within the region," the Radas explain. "This initiative aligns with UWL's strategic focus to strengthen community engagement and supports the Wisconsin Idea, which are important to us as educators and longtime residents of the state."

Leaders of local nonprofits are equally excited.

"Being chosen as one of the hosts for a UWL Community Engaged Fellowship is an incredible opportunity for the La Crosse Community Foundation," says Jamie Schloegel, the foundation's executive director. "Not only do we see the partnership as a tool to help entice quality talent to the nonprofit workforce, but it will also help us increase our own capacity to support area nonprofits in addition to our grantmaking programs."

"Advancing the success of our local nonprofits is a win not just for us," she adds, "but for our whole community."

 [Learn more about Community Engaged Fellowships](#)



*Gretta Krause, Waukesha, loves to learn new things and the fellowship taught her much. "I never knew about this realm of nonprofits or the fact that community foundations even existed until I applied for this fellowship" says Krause. "I have truly learned the importance and value of giving."*



# Determined degree-seeker

Kathryn Suwa navigated several obstacles – and thousands of miles – to receive her degree

Kathryn Suwa received her master's degree in student affairs administration at UWL's winter commencement in December. The ceremony had special significance to Suwa – she was visiting La Crosse for the first time from her native Nigeria.

**H**

undreds of students walked the La Crosse Center stage for winter commencement Dec. 18. But few had a longer road than Kathryn Suwa.

Suwa, who received her master's degree in student affairs administration, traveled from her native Nigeria to attend, and to see her classmates and instructors face-to-face for the first time.

But Suwa's journey cannot be measured by physical distance alone. She also overcame several logistical obstacles – including scrapping her original plans to take in-person courses – due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Commencement, she says, served “as the culmination of all of my efforts over the past two years. I expect to feel a sense of accomplishment, a connection with the university and the people, and a sense of belonging that comes with in-person learning and interaction.”

Suwa works for EducationUSA, a network run by the U.S. State Department that promotes U.S. higher education in more than 175 countries and territories. She was drawn to UWL's Student Affairs Administration Program, she says, because of the high-quality faculty and robust curriculum.

Suwa wanted the complete UWL experience. She planned to live in La Crosse, take classes on campus and work in UWL's International Education & Engagement office as a graduate assistant.

But COVID-19 and delays in visa processing made travel from Nigeria to the U.S. nearly impossible.

Instead, Suwa took advantage of the program's online offering, which also had an asynchronous option allowing her to take classes on her own schedule.

That flexibility was key, she says. It not only mitigated the seven-hour time difference – it helped her juggle all the other priorities in her life, including raising two children and continuing to work full time.

"I refer to the last two years as the most challenging time of my life," Suwa says. "I realized during this time that balance must be looked at long-term because at every point, you prioritize one thing over another, and at that point, it's not balanced. It took a lot of discipline and adaptability because I kept refining my schedule until my final semester. I focused on school at night and everything else during the day."

Tori Svoboda, chair of the Student Affairs Administration Department, says Suwa "triumphed over several challenges these past few years," impressing her instructors along the way.

"Through it all, Kathryn remained incredibly positive, completing an online practicum with the International Education & Engagement office, as well as a terrific capstone paper on developing student services in higher education in Nigeria," Svoboda says.



Kathryn Suwa soaked in every moment of her inaugural trip to La Crosse to receive her diploma. The student affairs administration grad is also excited about what's next – working in the field of education.

Suwa soaked in every moment of her trip to La Crosse, but she's also excited about what's next.

Short term, she wants to gain experience working in higher education, so she can contextualize everything she learned in the program.

Long term, she hopes to bring the experiences students have in U.S. higher education to Nigerian universities.

"Education is the bedrock of society and the key to meaningful national development; this has proven true in every country with an excellent educational system," Suwa says. "Working in the field of education, I have the opportunity to contribute to building lives that will go on to build nations in a way that creates a never-ending ripple effect."

# Motivational mentor

Holland wins Outstanding Women of Color in Education Award





*Jazzma Holland, '15 & '21, held numerous positions at UWL. Among them: administrator of the COVE, director of Upward Bound and interim assistant director for student leadership in the Office of Multicultural Student Services. Earlier this year she took a job creating diversity, equity and inclusion programming in Madison.*

**J**azzma Holland grew personally and professionally during her time at UW-La Crosse.

She held a number of positions at the university – administrator of the COVE, director of Upward Bound and interim assistant director for student leadership in the Office of Multicultural Student Services – before leaving to become the assistant director of student diversity, equity and inclusion programming at Edgewood College in Madison.

For her efforts, Holland was recently selected as UWL's recipient of the UW System Outstanding Women of Color in Education Award. The award is given annually to faculty, staff, students or community members who have helped advance equity and inclusion for people of color in UW System, as well as in communities across the state.

"This is a true honor, and to be honest, a little shocking," says Holland, '15 & '21. "I do this work because I love our students and the work that we do. I don't do this work for recognition. The students and their success are what motivate me on a daily basis. They have so much to give and to show, and I love being their cheerleader, motivating them to keep going, because they deserve to meet their goals."

Holland, originally from Milwaukee, holds a bachelor's degree in

communication studies, with an emphasis in organizational and professional communication. She recently went back to earn her master's degree in student affairs administration.

Her experiences at UWL – as a student and employee – were deeply impactful.

"UWL has taught me how to share my voice with my community, whether that is on campus or in the community," she says. "This isn't just my journey – this is our journey. And we should be there to lift one another up and help where we can, however we can."

After her undergraduate studies, Holland returned to work at UWL and progressed to various leadership roles.

Last fall, she served as the interim assistant director for student leadership in OMSS, where she helped oversee and support UWL's eight multicultural student organizations.

"I enjoy seeing the students learn, grow and find their voice," she notes. "It is always exciting to see our students working hard to go after their goals. I love being an ear for them as well as advocate and an advisor."

Her work is rarely, if ever, easy. But Holland, who benefited from programs like Upward Bound when she was a student, says it's critical for young



*Jazzma Holland, '15 & '21*

people of color to have strong role models and support systems.

"Representation matters. When you see someone like you in a space where you are the minority, it matters. It shows you that you are not the only one and that you are not alone," she says. "That is why I enjoy having the opportunity to be on the ground, being able to speak directly to students. I get the chance to know them, and they get the chance to know me. Through that, we all realize that we are not much different, and we can offer each other the support that we need."



# Graduate school

## One student's journey

**G**raduate student Jesimiel Banjiram is from Nigeria. He came to UWL in 2016, earning an undergraduate degree and then continuing with UWL's master's program in Student Affairs Administration. He was initially attracted to campus because of its strong reputation as one of the best in Wisconsin.

"So, the first time I got here, I was very shy. I did not want to engage in the community or engage in any sort of activities that they had going on," says Banjiram. "But after my sophomore year, I started to get to know more people, get my different networks ... That really changed my trajectory, especially for what I would like to study."

In the two-year Student Affairs Administration graduate program, Banjiram learned skills in leadership, assessment and evaluation of student support programs. As part of the program, he's a graduate assistant in UWL's Office of International Education and Engagement, advising students who want to study abroad. He also assists with office activities

Jesimiel Banjiram came to UWL in 2016 from Nigeria and earned an undergraduate degree and continued with the master's program in student affairs administration.

 **Learn more about Jesimiel's journey.**

 **Learn more about graduate programs at UWL.**

such as organizing international student orientation and educating others about visas.

Professors have been interested in his development as a student and truly care for students, he says. "They're interested in your whole life, not just the academic piece of things," Banjiram says.

He calls UWL's campus a "friendly environment" where he feels comfortable to ask questions and get help finding the resources he needs.

"I've been able to develop a lot of connections – a lot of networks. I've met my best friends here, so just having that support group is really nice."

He calls UWL his second home.

"So looking back, I'll just be thankful for the experiences, the friends I was able to make, the networks I was able to establish, and knowing that these people would always reach out to me and make sure that – wherever I am in 10 years – I'm doing great."



## About UWL Graduate Studies

UWL offers more than 20 graduate programs, including online, blended and on-campus programs in the areas of business and management; higher education; K-12 education; science, engineering and math; clinical fields; and health and wellness. In CASSH, these include School Psychology and Student Affairs Administration.

### Student Affairs Administration

The Student Affairs Administration program offers online or blended cohorts for the master's program and an online cohort with no residency requirement for the doctorate program.

Master's cohorts take at least two years to complete with a requirement to work at least half-time in student or academic affairs in higher education while enrolled. Admission priority deadline is Feb. 1, with applications accepted until cohorts are filled.

The doctorate cohort takes at least three years, which includes completing a dissertation. The admission priority deadline is Dec. 15.

### School Psychology

An innovative and traditional cohort program since 1969, it includes early entrance to school settings, a collaborative atmosphere and training grounded in a practitioner-scientist model. On-campus courses utilize primarily face-to-face and some blended formats to enhance student learning experiences.

The program is proud of its students working to become future professionals in schools, its alumni who make a difference with students every day, and its nationally accredited program that ensures its standards are aligned with important outcomes for educating school psychologists. Job placement of UWL School Psychology graduates is 100%. The on-campus program accepts a new cohort every fall. **See more.**

**See more about each program.**

*“Contrary to what some people think, writing is an inherently collaborative process – in other words, nobody writes alone. The myth of the solitary genius who cranks out perfect prose in their room by themselves is just that, a myth. The truth is that we all need feedback on our writing. This can take place in a number of ways, including sharing your work with less familiar audiences.”*

**English Professor Darci Thoune**

# Not *just* a Gen Ed

Students build collaboration, confidence, writing skills through First-Year Writing Program

**F**or some students, English 110 is one of those classes you ‘just have to get through.’

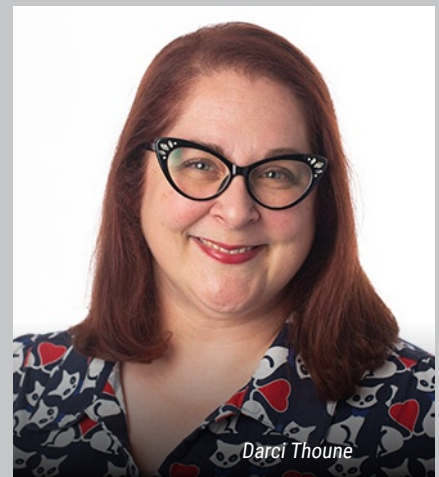
For others, this General Education class – required of all first-year students – is the class you must take before you get to “the good stuff” later on as they focus in on their major, explains UWL English Professor Darci Thoune.

Thoune is working to combat those perceptions, giving students a lot to look forward to in this general education class with a chance to showcase their writing talents on a large platform.

“I want to provide students and faculty with spaces where they can feel proud of their labor and where they can receive some well-deserved accolades,” she says.

Two of the main activities in the program for showcasing written work include The First-Year Writing Program Showcase and the College Writing Symposium.

Students who develop skills in collaboration and writing through the class are often not only developing better and more thoughtful writing projects, they’re also working on skills



Darci Thoune

that employers are seeking in future employees, what UWL calls the Eagle Advantage skills, notes Thoune.


## Excerpt from a First-Year Writing Program Showcase Winner Anika Oplanic's literacy narrative, "The Language I Never Spoke"

*"There are two things that do not exist in the Philippines: winter and bad food. The hovering humid, boiling air that always felt like a hug that lasted too long, the layer of sweat that never left your body. The fruits that tasted like the gods' ambrosia, sweet Manila mangoes that melted in your mouth like butter, sour mangosteens that made your lips quiver, learning the careful skill to peel away the skin of the rambutan fruits, sipping on young coconut milk (it was here I learned that I am coconut-intoler-*

*ant). The wafting aromas from the grilled fish and steamed rice inciting a wave of nostalgia for my Lola's after-school snack when I was in elementary school. For a place I had never seen, had never been to, never smelled its air until then—I sure felt like I'd lived there all my life.*

*But even still, there was a barrier. The road signs were in English, as well as the brochures and books, menus, and receipts. But the people spoke Tagalog, they spoke Bisaya—they told stories of old times, how the harvested*

*fruits turned out this morning, how the air was still hot, and the days were still long. Sure, the people of this Pacific archipelago knew English, but their true culture was found in Tagalog and their dialects. My heart ached to learn the language, to know the mythology, to learn the culture, to finally feel like a true part of it."*

 **To read the rest of Oplanic's piece and other showcase winners, visit the FWYP's blog: [Write Here, Write Now.](#)**



2021 College Writing Symposium

### **What is the College Writing Symposium?**

The College Writing Symposium, held every fall at UWL, is an opportunity for students enrolled in the First-Year Writing Program to showcase their written work. Students from ENG 100/110/112 submit proposals to present and share pieces of writing from their classes with audiences of fellow students in the day-long celebration. In panels moderated by English professors, ENG 110 students present work they've developed during the fall semester.

### **What is the First-Year Writing Program Showcase?**

This annual spring event highlights the best of the diverse writing projects students are creating in ENG 110 classes. ENG 110 instructors submit one piece of exemplary student writing in any genre from each of their sections of ENG 110. Then, a small ad hoc committee of first-year writing instructors blind-review and rank the pieces. The committee then chooses five final pieces that are recognized with a small celebration in the English Department at the end of the semester.

The showcase aims to make the work of first-year writing (and General Education more broadly) visible to the UWL community and create occasions to celebrate students' hard work. In addition to celebrating student writing, another goal of the showcase is to create an archive that both students and FYWP instructors can use as points of inspiration, as models, and a time capsule that captures UWL student interests and values over the years.

 **View the writing archive at: [uwlab.edu/english/write-here-write-now](http://uwlab.edu/english/write-here-write-now)**

# Emerging leader

## Panzer recognized for campus, community leadership

**M**iranda Panzer knows how much one moment can change a person's life.

During her sophomore year at UWL, Panzer, '10 & '12, was given the opportunity to study abroad in Frankfurt, Germany.

"I was terrified," she remembers. "I had really no desire to leave Wisconsin, but when talking to my dad about it, he kept saying, 'Why not?' I took his advice and took a leap of faith."

Panzer's time in Germany exposed her to challenges and experiences she would never have found at home. It also served as a springboard for her career as a student and scholar advisor for UWL International Education & Engagement (IEE).

"Working with UWL's international students and scholars, I am able to be there from the beginning of their journey to the moment they depart the United States," she says. "One of my favorite parts of what I do is being able to be a small part of someone's life, as others have been for me."

For that work and the example she sets in the community, Panzer received the 2023 Emerging Leader Award from the La Crosse Area Chamber of

Commerce Young Professional Group. She and other emerging leaders were recognized Jan. 19.

"When I found out that I was selected for such an honor, I was stunned," she says. "I am beyond humbled to have been selected for this award."

At UWL, Panzer helps coordinate IEE programming, along with helping international students transition to a community and culture that may be entirely foreign to them.

One of her favorite projects has been serving on the committee for Global Initiatives Week, an annual, weeklong celebration of the Coulee Region's global connections. She joined the committee when the celebration was created in 2013 and served as chair from 2017-21.

While supporting international students is her primary objective, Panzer's worldview is also enriched.

"Being able to get to know someone – and I mean truly get to know someone – with a different perspective has immeasurable benefits," she explains. "I encourage each and every one of you to get to know someone from a different background and to not take those small moments for granted."

Panzer learned that firsthand in Germany, where she spent a full academic year at Goethe University. The trip was so transformative that she changed her major to German Studies and decided to pursue a master's in Student Affairs Administration.

"It truly changed my outlook on life," she notes. "It was during this period of time that I was truly challenged to think about who I was and what I believed in. I became more independent, confident and open-minded. I now hunger for new experiences and the opportunity to look at the world with a new perspective."

Karolyn Bald, '97 & '99, director of IEE, says Panzer carries her enthusiasm for new and diverse perspectives into everything she does.

"In today's interconnected world, it is more important than ever to have a greater understanding of different cultures, traditions and languages," Bald says. "Miranda has worked hard to inspire global curiosity locally as more individuals find a desire to see and understand more of the world around us. Her programs, involvement and students help us all open our eyes and minds as we realize we are all citizens of the world."



*Miranda Panzer, '10 & '12, received the 2023 Emerging Leader Award from the La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce Young Professionals Group.*



# Home away from home

Spark Lim shares how UWL has shaped, inspired him

## Spark Lim

**Major:** Marketing, psychology

**Home:** People I trust are those whom I call home because they make me feel safe, even when I am far away from my family.

**Previous college:** American Degree Transfer Program offered by INTI International College Penang in Malaysia

**Q:** What has been your experience in higher education?

**A:** I started college as a first-generation student and didn't have any expectations for higher education. But my parents always encouraged me as they view higher education as a pathway that I could be successful one day. So, I started my research and decided to study abroad to explore my potential.

**Q:** Why did you choose UWL?

**A:** The affordable tuition fee convinced me to choose UWL, but the more important question is why I decided to stay. The reason is that the resources here, such as the Office of Multicultural Student Services (OMSS), continue to support me. A group of students in the Multicultural Student Organizations (MSO) shares the same resilience and continues to humble and inspire me, especially in a predominantly white institution.

**Q:** What advice do you have for transfer students? What advice would you give a first-year transfer student?

**A:** Stay connected with campus resources and never shy away from opportunities.

**Q:** What has surprised you here?

**A:** UWL is a prominently white institution compared to other UW schools, which becomes a culture shock, especially in the classroom where I am mostly the only student of color.

**Q:** Who has helped you in your transition to UWL?

**A:** International Education & Engagement, OMSS and MSO have enhanced my experiences and provided the support I need here.

**Q:** What would you like to do with your degree after you graduate?

**A:** I would like to pursue my master's and doctoral degrees in psychology.

**Q:** Anything else to share?

**A:** I would like to use this opportunity to express gratitude and honor to the people I have met here at UWL. I deeply appreciate every moment they share their experiences, resilience and stories that continue to humble and have made an extraordinary impact on me.

*Editor's note: Senior Spark Lim was featured in an online series highlighting transfer students in October.*



*Andrew Jones, '20, made his inaugural call as the Screaming Eagles' voice during a Moon Tunes concert in Riverside Park Sept. 1 that featured the marching band.*



# ENCORE CALL

## Alum steps up to the mic for the band

Two years ago, you could see him up front, leading the UWL Screaming Eagles Marching Band. Last fall, he led the 150-member band behind the microphone.

Former drum major Andrew Jones picked up the mic in September to become the voice of the Screaming Eagles Marching Band. It was the first time in 50 years that a Wirkus didn't call the pre-game and half-time performances for the UWL band.

Terry Wirkus, '79 & '88, retired at the end of the '21 season after 25 years with the band. The 25 years before that, his dad, Tom Wirkus, a former communication studies professor, made the call.

Jones, a native of Winona, Minnesota, who now lives in Holmen, has always been passionate about bringing music and joy to those around him. He credits his love for music to the outstanding music educators he had growing up.

Jones brought that passion to UWL, earning a music education degree in 2020. He was an active member of a variety of UWL's music ensembles: Wind Ensemble, Concert Band, Jazz Orchestra and, of course, the Screaming Eagles. During his four years marching, he played saxophone for two and spent the last two as a drum major.

Jones started his second year in the Holmen School District last fall as the assistant band director at Holmen High School. He co-directs the Marching Vikings and directs the Symphonic Band and Jazz Band.

Jones says being back with the Screaming Eagles is a way to give back to the people and community that gave him wonderful memories and friendships he cherishes so much.

# WALL OF FAME

A former student-athlete and a current Athletics Department staff member were the two CASSH alums in the UWL Wall of Fame Class of 2022.

Honorees were recognized Oct. 22. The wall tributes former athletes, coaches and staff for exceptional ability and school tradition.



## ANGIE RIEDEL (2003-07)

Named to the WIAC All-Time Women's Tennis Team, Riedel was a four-year letter winner. She went 94-18 (.839) in singles and 86-25 (.775) in doubles, finishing 180-43 (.807) overall. Riedel won three WIAC titles at No. 1 singles (2004-06), one of two players in league history to capture at least three crowns in singles. She finished second at No. 1 singles at the 2003 WIAC Championships.

Riedel won two conference championships at No. 1 doubles. She finished second at No. 1 doubles at the 2003 and 2004 WIAC championships. Riedel was the WIAC Singles Player of the Week six times while being a four-time WIAC Doubles Team of the Week selection.

She was a member of three (2003, 2005-06) conference championship teams. The 2007 squad earned a NCAA III championship bid. The Eagles advanced to the second round of the national championships in 2007.

A two-time team captain, Riedel was ranked in the Intercollegiate Tennis Association Central Region in singles and doubles. She also earned UWL's Team MVP. Selected the 2006 WIAC Judy Kruckman Scholar-Athlete, Riedel was a four-year member of the WIAC Scholastic Honor Roll and on UWL's dean's list.

Riedel earned a bachelor's in German studies and communication studies with an emphasis in public relations and organizational communication in 2008. She earned her master's degree in cultural studies at Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, Germany, in 2013. Riedel lives in her hometown of Wauwatosa and works as a manufacturers' representative.

## DAVID JOHNSON (2000-PRESENT)

Johnson is in his 23rd year at UWL, including his eighth as assistant athletic director for media relations. Previously, he was sports information director for 13 years.

Johnson is responsible for every aspect of the athletic program's media relations strategy. He maintains team statistics and records and is responsible for forwarding relevant information to the NCAA and WIAC, and other governing organizations.

Johnson has served as media coordinator at several national championship events on campus. He has also served as the media host for numerous games in the NCAA III football playoffs, matches for the NCAA III soccer and volleyball tournament, and for several WIAC championships. He manages the athletic program's website ([uwlatletics.com](http://uwlatletics.com)) and social media accounts.

Johnson serves as chair of the WIAC Sports Information Directors Committee and is a member of the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA) Division III Board.

Prior to returning to UWL, Johnson was sports information director at Millikin University (Ill.). He has also worked at Minnesota State University, Mankato; The College of William & Mary (Va.) and Northern Iowa University.

The La Crosse native earned a bachelor's in mass communications in 1992. He and his wife, Tina, have four children.

 [Read more about the 2022 Wall of Fame honorees](#)

Associate Professor Ashley Edwards was named inclusive teaching specialist in UWL's Center for Advancing Teaching and Learning.



# INCLUSIVE TEACHING

Communication Studies professor leads campus-wide efforts

Associate Professor Ashley Edwards strives to continuously improve her teaching – and others across campus.

Edwards, Communication Studies, became the inclusive teaching specialist in UWL's Center for Advancing Teaching and Learning (CATL) early this year. She says building community is her top priority in the role.

"Inclusive teaching is a collective, collaborative practice: What you do in your classroom impacts what works – or doesn't – in mine," Edwards explains. "When instructors are connected to one another, we can share resources, ideas and collaborate to develop more inclusive learning spaces."

The landscape of higher education shifts each day, says Edwards. Supporting faculty to adapt their teaching to meet the contemporary needs of all students is critical to the university's mission, not only individual improvement. That mission is "providing a challenging, dynamic and diverse learning environment in which the entire university community is fully engaged in supporting student success," she paraphrases.

"Trust your students," says Edwards. "One of the most foundational parts of inclusive teaching is recognizing the

value and agency students bring to your classroom and shaping your teaching practice accordingly."

Edwards says learning about the inclusive teaching practices other instructors utilize is one of her favorite parts of her new role.


"Often, I'm inspired to make adjustments to my classes when a colleague shares what's working for them," she says. "I'm also grateful for the new ways I'm able to understand the broader UWL student experience and what students might need or be challenged by in my class."

Edwards says during a January 2023 Inclusive Teaching Institute, she and a cohort of other faculty spent a week in the community studying inclusive practices and revising courses.

"I am fortunate to work with so many faculty and staff dedicated to inclusive teaching," she says.

Edwards encourages colleagues to read CATL Weekly for opportunities to connect with colleagues and receive support.

"Inclusive teaching is most effective as a collective effort," she says.

A portrait of Elizabeth Peacock, an Associate Professor in Archaeology & Anthropology. She is a woman with long, wavy brown hair, wearing glasses with a tortoiseshell pattern and a teal-colored button-down top with a purple and blue patterned scarf. She is smiling and looking directly at the camera. The background is a blurred indoor setting with warm lighting.

*Archaeology & Anthropology  
Associate Professor  
Elizabeth Peacock*

# Connecting amid conflict

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## Elizabeth Peacock explores war in Ukraine with anthropology students

**A**rchaeology & Anthropology Associate Professor Elizabeth Peacock is using her real-world connections and experiences to educate students about Ukraine and its ongoing military conflict with Russia.

Ukraine has been a focal point of Peacock's research since her first visit to the country as a graduate student in 2003. Over the past 20 years, Peacock has expanded her knowledge of Ukrainian history and culture. She has maintained relationships with many friends and acquaintances in the region.

For the 2022 spring semester, Peacock worked with a colleague in Ukraine to establish Collaborative Online International Learning between their two classrooms.

But their plan was flipped on its head when Russia invaded Ukraine a few weeks into the semester.

Air raid sirens could be heard during some calls, and attendance among the Ukrainian students was unpredictable as many fled for safety.

"We had to accept that the class was going to look different, and we couldn't

worry about our original goals," Peacock explains. "Just engaging with the Ukrainian class could be enough. Any interaction with our students would be good in context."

Peacock was particularly struck by a response to a question she asked of the Ukrainian class one day: When leaving home, what is one thing you would want to bring with you?

"Some put on a blank face and gave a protective answer, like, 'I'd bring my family,'" Peacock says, noting that a pragmatic response is largely in keeping with Ukrainian culture. "But a couple students opened up, and one said she would bring a stuffed animal that she had grown up with. And she pulled it out. She was staying in Germany or something, away from her family, and her mom had mailed it to her."

While Peacock and her students wished conditions would have allowed for more consistent engagement throughout the semester, the course was still an enriching experience, they say.

Peacock also found creative ways to discuss the conflict with students in her introduction to anthropology course. She

used the sunflower – Ukraine's national flower and a global symbol for peace – to explore different branches of anthropology.

"We can understand anthropology by looking at sunflowers from different angles," Peacock explains. "How do we use sunflowers? Where do they come from? What do we think about them? And in addition to all of that, they're a symbol of Ukrainian endurance."

Peacock hopes to continue finding new and innovative ways to bring Ukrainian history and culture to life for her students.

If conditions allow, she would be open to returning to Ukraine to continue her research. But that future is very much in doubt.

"Neither side is going to give up," Peacock says. "Ukraine doesn't want to lose its independence and move under (Russian President Vladimir) Putin, and Putin can't give up because it will mean he can't just take what he wants. This is going to go on for a while."



Mollie Fredrickson, '22, found a clearer career path while volunteering at Gundersen Health System.

# Valiant volunteer

## Student finding service valuable for careers

**A** CASSH student was among two UWL students recognized at Gundersen Health System in late 2022.

Psychology student Mollie Fredrickson found a clearer career path while volunteering. She started volunteering at the Hospital Gift Shop in high school.

Fredrickson knew she wanted to work in healthcare and thought the setting would give her a bird's-eye view. After a pandemic pause, she returned as a college student volunteer.

"I started volunteering in pediatrics," Fredrickson says, adding that she got to know the child life specialists at Gundersen – a team that works with kids and their families to help them cope with hospitalization, illness and disabilities. "Gundersen has helped me grow and discover what I want to do next."

Erica Borde, program coordinator in Volunteer Services at Gundersen, says it's not uncommon for student volunteers to return to Gundersen as an employee.

"Many of our student volunteers return to Gundersen as employees in their future careers, so we feel lucky to be part of their journey into healthcare," Borde says.

Fredrickson, a December '22 graduate, plans to become a child life specialist. One Thursday, the psychology major with an at-risk child/youth care minor was able to make the life of a teenager – and patient – just a little bit better.

"I was able to take her to the OT playroom where we played Jenga. Each wooden piece had a question on it, so we got to know each other better," Fredrickson says. "She told me that she was missing school and her friends and appreciated connecting with someone and having fun."



Dr. Shuma Iwai teaches in the Race, Gender and Sexuality Studies Department. Its program takes an intersectional approach – combining the insights of scholars in different fields regarding inequalities related to race, gender and sexuality, and class.

# Learning and living social justice

New courses reflect on society's 'hidden histories,' how students can make change

**T**he youngest generations are advocating for change. They want to see action to address issues that have plagued society for centuries from racial inequality to the oppression of women. A new UWL department provides foundational knowledge for social justice work like this.

The new Race, Gender and Sexuality Studies Department (RGSS) is a merger of two UWL departments: Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and Ethnic & Racial Studies. Course offerings have been blended and updated to give students an interdisciplinary view of social justice issues. Students begin to understand the enormous diversity of the U.S. and a globalizing world, and the structures of inequality based on race, gender, sexuality and social class that shape it.

For instance, students learn about:

- Unequal power distributions in society.
- The struggle of women, people of color, and sexual and gender minorities to attain equal rights.
- Racial and gender stereotypes in the media.
- The role of institutions in shaping inequality.

"We are focused on empowering students to think critically about the systems that shape their lives and

providing them with tools to address inequalities," says Jodi Vandenberg-Daves, chair of the new department.

The program sheds light on hidden histories all over the world.

"History provides that broader perspective of how structures have evolved or continued and how people have struggled to make change and build coalitions," says Vandenberg-Daves. "Others throughout history have tried to find answers, and we can learn from other generations."

The program is committed to helping students understand how skills transfer to career opportunities, and it builds on the work of generations of UWL people dating back to the Ethnic and Racial Studies Department and Women's Studies Department, founded in the 1960s and 70s, says Vandenberg-Daves.

## **The program includes:**

- Race, Gender and Sexuality Studies major and minor
- Social Justice minor
- Hmong American Studies Certificate Program
- The Self Sufficiency Program: a free, pre-college program to explore college



Luke Achterberg, '04

# SNAP

## 'CONVOLUTIONS'

### Metals making the mark

Metal artist Luke Achterberg, '04, returned to campus last fall to share his works in "Convolutions": sculptures celebrating visual aesthetics of automotive customizing and other skills honed on the street, in body shops and through garages. Achterberg acquired a welding diploma from Western Technical College after graduating from UWL. After working as a certified welder at a custom job shop, he attended graduate school at the University of Kentucky to complete a Master of Fine Arts. Since then, the La Crosse-based artist has received kudos from the International Sculpture Center in New Jersey and Art-St-Urban in Switzerland, among others. He was awarded several commissions and was included in the Wisconsin Artists Biennial 2022.

