

# Eagle Edge

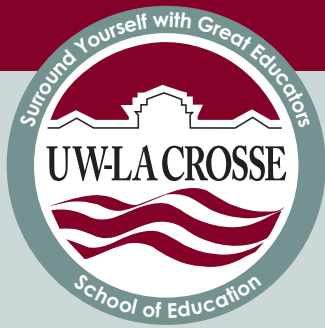
LEAD. EDUCATE.

COLLABORATE. INNOVATE.

## Words, truth and equity



Roi Kawai, Ph.D., assistant professor in the School of Education, and Meng Vang, graduate student in Student Affairs and Administration, co-facilitated the inaugural TEDxUWLacrosse salon.



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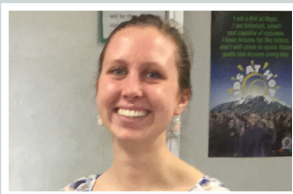
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# Eagle Edge

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## FROM THE DEAN



Marcie Wycoff-Horn, Ph.D.

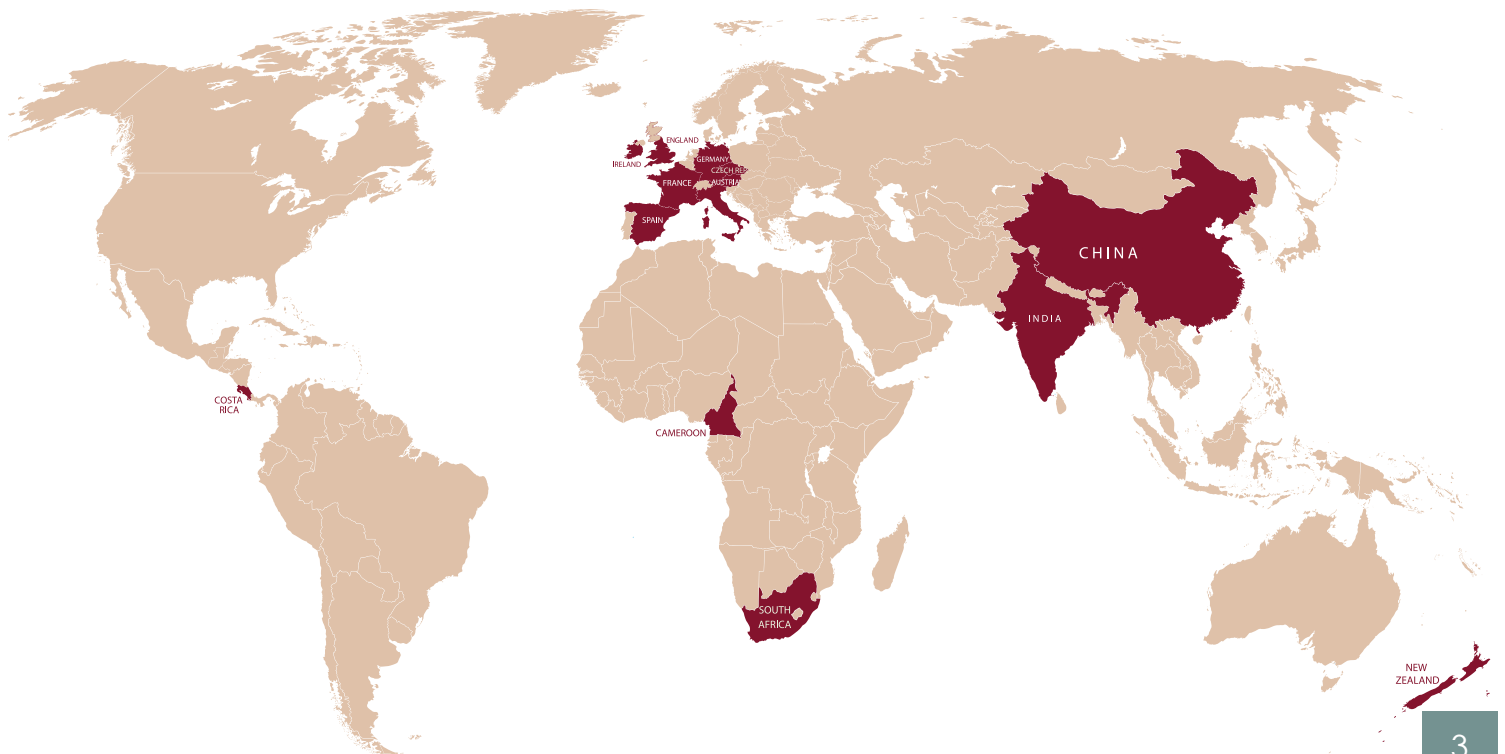
Greetings from the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and welcome to the spring edition of the Eagle Edge Newsletter. As we begin our new semester we reflect on the many significant accomplishments and contributions of our students, faculty, alumni and partners. Their commitment to lead, educate, innovate and collaborate to improve the quality of teacher preparation for our students and for those that matter most, the students we serve in our community, never ceases to amaze me.

In this edition of the newsletter, we take a look at the exciting new opportunities for our teacher candidates and the important work of our faculty and how it is shaping our programs and experiences for students. We are also featuring one of our outstanding alumni, so you can see and learn how her education at UWL and experience is helping to shape the lives of today's youth.

I am pleased to share another important change to the School of Education that took place this past fall, the incorporation of Continuing Education and Extension (CEE) into the School of Education. As you may be aware, the Department of Educational Studies as well as the Institute for Professional Studies in Education have been housed in the School of Education for some time. With the addition of CEE the level of service and expertise we can lend our programs is second to none. With this new addition, the School of Education is now titled The School of Education, Professional and Continuing Education. Please join me in welcoming CEE.

I sincerely hope you enjoy hearing more about the School of Education here at UWL. Please share this newsletter with those you know will benefit from reading it. Please visit us at [www.uwlax.edu/soe](http://www.uwlax.edu/soe) to view an electronic version of our newsletter.

## UWL STUDENT TEACHERS AROUND THE WORLD



COVER STORY

# Words, truth and



Roi Kawai, Ph.D., right, assistant professor in the School of Education, and Meng Vang, graduate student in Student Affairs Administration, co-facilitating the inaugural TEDxUWLacrosse salon.



Participants engaging in discussion.

In November 2015, Roi Kawai, Ph.D., assistant professor in the School of Education, and Meng Vang, graduate student in Student Affairs Administration, co-facilitated the inaugural TEDxUWLacrosse salon. TEDx salons promote critical, public dialogue in response to existing TED videos that speak to pressing issues on campus and the surrounding community. An audience of approximately 110 UWL students, faculty, staff and community members gathered at the Institute for Campus Excellence in Murphy Library to discuss anti-Asian racism.

“Many people believe the myth that anti-Asian racism in America is a diminishing or eradicated injustice,” Kawai said. “Discussions about historic or current racism against Asians — in our schools, universities, and everyday lives — are too often silenced,” he further commented, “which makes it all the more imperative to address head on.”

# d equity



The salon was anchored in the power of story. Kawai opened the night with an original spoken word poem, “At My Dictation.” As a former middle school teacher, he originally wrote the poem to share his story of anti-Asian racism with his eighth grade students. Kawai and Vang then showed three TED clips to provoke discussion: Lee Mun Wah’s “The Secret to Changing the World”; George Takei’s “Why I Love the Country that Once Betrayed Me;” and “Kao Kalia Yang’s “The Power in Sharing our Stories.” Wah, Takei, and Yang told personal stories of historical and current struggles against anti-Asian racism.

In small groups, the audience reflected on how they saw themselves in Yang, Takei, or Wah’s stories. Next, Vang and Kawai asked the audience to collectively consider two framing questions: (1) Why are Asian voices so often silenced in discussions of racism? (2) How can

Asians, Asian-Americans and allies unite in the struggle for racial justice? They asked these questions particularly in light of the historic and current anti-Hmong sentiments in La Crosse, to highlight the beauty in diversity among Asians, and to urge solidarity across the La Crosse community to join the struggle against racism. In the process, Vang and Kawai argued that we must disrupt notions of the model minority myth, the illusion that Asians and Asian-Americans have “made it” in America and are therefore no longer targets of oppression. The group further discussed how anti-Asian racism is not a construction of isolated discriminatory remarks or acts against Asians, rather, a deeply embedded institutional and systemic problem. The evening ended with a large group discussion about possibilities for future action. Who should take responsibility to dismantle institutional racism? And what makes real social change?



Professor Kawai , far left, with participants.



Participants were able to ask questions and share stories.

## EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES



Kelly Logemann and Sarah Sufferling at the Grand Canyon.

# UWL joins the “Fowler Family” in Arizona

## **FACULTY FRAMEWORK**

More and more of UWL’s education majors are interested in the TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) minor due to a strong desire to be well-prepared to teach all of their students, including the increased number of English language learners (ELLs) in local public schools. By adding the TESOL minor, any education major can receive certification to also teach ELLs. This additional certification is attractive to area school districts that are experiencing growth in ELL populations.

To help supplement student teaching placements for the TESOL minor, about a year ago the idea was hatched to partner the UWL TESOL program with the Fowler Elementary School District in Phoenix, Arizona. The UWL School of Education and the Fowler Elementary School District have had a partnership for several years already. Each January, the Office of Field Placements offers an “educational experience” trip to the school district for one week for interested education majors. Students have the opportunity to interact with teachers and students, see how the district operates and work with one or two Fowler teachers in their classroom during one, intensive week. The trip has been very popular and this year almost 20 UWL students traveled to Fowler in January.

In fall of 2015, the UWL School of Education, the TESOL minor program and the Office of Field Placements expanded their partnership with the Fowler Elementary School District to include student teaching opportunities for TESOL minors. While Arizona has seven percent English language learners statewide (compared to five percent here in Wisconsin), almost 18 percent of students in the Fowler district are English language learners. This diversity offers UWL students many opportunities to put their TESOL minor skills into practice.

## STUDENTS' STORY

UWL education student Kelly Logemann sat in a TESOL class taught by Heather Linville, Ph.D., last year when she decided she wanted to student teach at Fowler School District in Phoenix. After seeing pictures from the UWL students' winter trip down to Phoenix, she knew she wanted to be a part of the teaching community in an urban, primarily Hispanic, school district. Logemann leaned over to friend and fellow teacher candidate, Sarah Sufferling, and together they decided to embark on the student teaching experience in Phoenix. As TESOL minors, both felt prepared for what they were about to face. After finishing their placements teaching high school Spanish, both

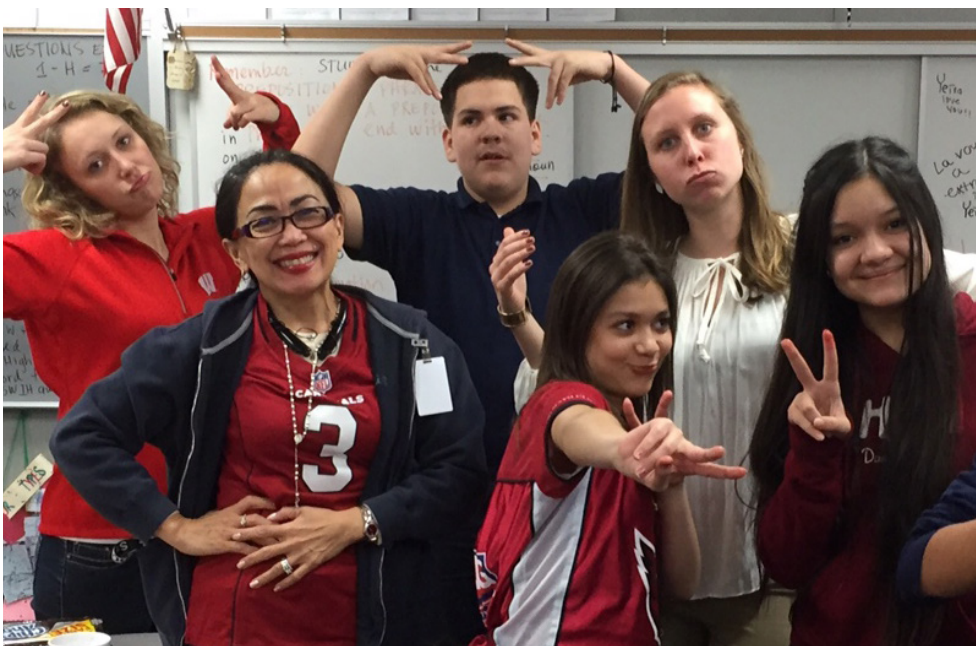
were excited to begin working with a population of students they knew would be primarily native-Spanish speakers. Thus, a few days before Halloween the journey began with a 28-hour trek from snowy La Crosse to sunny Phoenix.

On the first day, two things stood out to them immediately. All of the students wore uniforms and they changed classes by walking outside to different buildings. In this district, all students wear uniforms and ID badges every day. After researching, they found that this is very common in urban areas as supporters say that uniforms put the focus at school on academics and level the playing field among students. The students change classes by walking outside, much like

at a university, as Arizona experiences mild enough weather year-round. They also noticed class sizes of 25-30 students, which were large compared to the sizes in rural Wisconsin. The exceptional teachers and staff that Sufferling and Logemann worked with at Santa Maria Middle School have shown them how to meet the needs of these students in their classroom. "They are dedicated, passionate and work incredibly hard to make sure that their students are receiving the best education possible," Logemann shares.

For those teacher candidates interested in participating in an experience like this, Sufferling and Logemann encourage teacher candidates to come open-minded to what they might learn. They have found support networks of co-workers and intentional self-reflection to be two essential components of their success.

Throughout the three-month experience teaching in Fowler School District, both have faced challenges and celebrated successes. Teaching there has taught them the imperative nature of classroom management, the broad creativity involved in differentiation of instruction, and ultimately, the amazing rewards of teaching. "As a teacher, you may leave school some days feeling defeated. Other days, you feel as if students walked away having learned exactly what you had hoped. No matter what, though, you know at the end of the day that you have touched a child's life, and that is precisely why we are here."



Student Teachers Sarah Sufferling, back left, and Kelly Longman, second from right, with their class at Santa Maria Middle School in Arizona.

**INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE? [WWW.FESD.ORG/HOME](http://WWW.FESD.ORG/HOME)**

## EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES



# Partnering to promote health education

The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse School Health Education Program and Pre-College Tutoring Programs collaborate to make a difference in the lives of students. Teacher candidates in the School Health Education (SHE) Program enroll in an introductory class that helps them to develop instructional techniques and skills for delivering effective health practices to become a best-practice health teacher. The SHE program has collaborated with UWL's pre-college tutoring program over the last three semesters to work together to put their teaching skills into practice, and work with learners who will benefit from gaining health instruction and skill sets outside of the school day.

The Pre-College Tutoring Program is sponsored by the Office of Multicultural Student Services. They are committed to supporting ethnic communities and low-income families in the La Crosse area. The

program is under the directorship of Monica Yang. Yang, university students and staff members serve as role models and mentors for the youth enrolled in the program.



Monica Yang

The School Health Education teacher candidates prepare skill-based health education lessons to share with the children and youth who are enrolled in the after school pre-college tutoring program. School Health Educators can make a difference in the quality of health and starting a children's life off strong. The teacher candidates collaborate with Yang to identify health topic areas that will bolster and enrich the lives of the children in the mentoring program. They then teach their skill-based health lessons weekly over the course of the

semester to the children enrolled in the program.

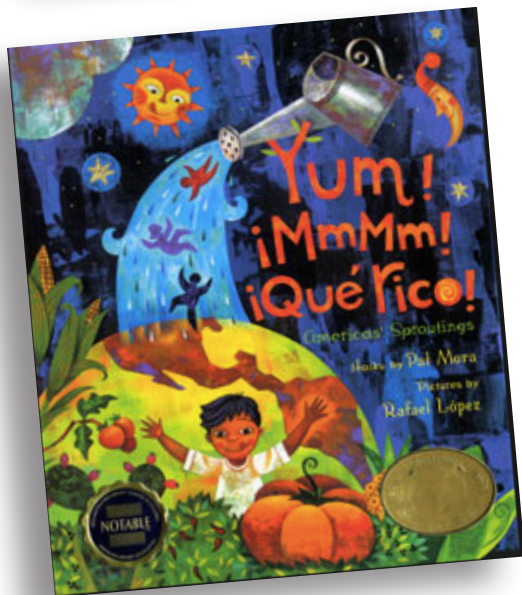
The collaboration of these two programs allows for instructional planning and the teaching of life skills to young learners. These 21st century skills are essential for children and adolescents to be successful in work and life. Partnerships forged through these two programs offer students a way to achieve academically, socially, emotionally, vocationally, and physically. The benefits are many for both the teacher candidates and the students.

Taylor Gut, a staff member of the tutoring program had this to share about Kala Lindley, one of the school health teacher candidates from last semester. "I think Kala is on a great path to becoming an excellent educator. She also knows how to read her audience and catered to the needs of the children with her activities."



## EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

# Bilingual books benefit elementary schools



Name an award bestowed upon authors of children's literature, and the odds are Pat Mora has received it. Mora, as she prefers to be called, is a celebrated children's author who has received accolades for 23 of her children's titles and four of her books for adults. With success comes a busy schedule, so the School of Education at UWL was fortunate to find an opening in her schedule for a two-day visit.



Pat Mora

On the morning of Tuesday, May 3, Mora will join second and third grade students and their teachers from Emerson Elementary School in the Cleary Alumni & Friends Center to share her love of reading, writing and the creative process. In the afternoon, the fourth and fifth graders from Emerson will meet with Mora for a similar experience. On Wednesday, May 4, the same process will occur at Northside Elementary School in La Crosse. In addition to time with the author, Emerson children will rotate through learning stations developed by School of Education teacher candidates from UWL Associate Professor Jenni McCool, Ph.D., EDS, field experience course. On May 4, the Northside students will experience learning stations related to Mora's books created by UWL Assistant Professor Alyssa Boardman, Ph.D., EDS, field teacher candidates.

Children from Emerson and Northside will read Mora's books and learn about her work as author before her arrival. The two schools will share book kits purchased by the School of Education prior to the author's visit.

The former teacher and principal turned author now divides her time between writing and visiting schools to motivate young readers and present teacher workshops on bringing the creative process into the classroom. Mora is especially famous for her unique ability to create bilingual stories that are loved by students and teachers alike.

ALUMNI PROFILE



# Karen Wrolson

As a graduate of UWL for both her undergraduate and graduate degrees, Karen Wrolson is putting her education to work as she continues to impact “the world — one child at a time.” Wrolson shares her experiences at UWL and how they have shaped her rewarding and influential career serving at-risk youth in La Crosse and throughout the country.

## HER STORY:

My trail to higher education was longer than most people. I dropped out of high school after my junior year. When I was 23 years old I got my GED, (high school equivalent diploma). It wasn't until I was 27 years old that I began my undergraduate studies. I consider myself very fortunate that UWL accepted me as my skills were quite rusty and my testing scores were not very high. UWL accepting me truly changed my life! I was given a great deal of support from professors and other academic resources to bring me up to speed. It was an exciting time. Following completion of an undergraduate degree, I earned my first master's degree, which was in counseling. After I was employed at a public school, I realized the world of education could do a better job with at-risk teenagers, (as I had been myself). I decided to pursue a master's degree from UWL in education. After completing that, I worked diligently to modify schooling for at-risk adolescents. In fact, the School District of La Crosse was progressive enough to see the need for this and began a charter school for at-risk adolescent, and I was the lead coordinator. This school, La Crossroads, is now in place at both the Central and Logan High School campuses and has helped hundreds of youth become successful.

“I encourage others to consider a career in education. It truly impacts the world — one child at a time.”

— Karen Wrolson

## **INFLUENTIAL COURSES:**

My undergraduate education at UWL helped give me a greater acceptance of diversity. This has impacted my entire life, and I am now an active advocate for the GLBTQ community. The classes I took in development from the Psychology Department have been of great assistance to me in my work with a variety of clients. All of my speech classes have been of immense benefit to me as I have spent the last 30 years speaking as a professional on a variety of topics.

On a graduate level, my preparation in education included studies in issues and trends in education, understanding diverse learners and how to teach thinking skills. I have taken that knowledge and the resulting skills, not only to schools in La Crosse, but also to Foshan and Luoyang, China where I taught English to middle school Chinese students for two years.

## **INSPIRING PEOPLE:**

My undergraduate years were the most influential for me. I was a non-traditional student with a newborn at home. At first I felt out of place with the other students who were about 10 years younger than me. However, my teachers encouraged me to participate in class, which helped validate my thoughts and opinions. They also took the time to write supportive comments on my papers, which further contributed to my confidence. I remember once in class when I was bold enough to challenge a statement the professor had made. Although we ended up agreeing to disagree, the respectful and serious way she responded to me taught me that debate can be healthy and contribute to greater

understanding. Another time a professor began the first class with his expectations, including timeliness to class, strict attention, along with his policy of “no late work.” I can still hear some of the other students groaning as they realized he was going to be a tough teacher. I simply thought, “I can do all of that and I will.” It was a good feeling to have a teacher I earned respect from.

Overall, the teachers who had the greatest influence on me were: Tom Wirkus, Kara Chell, Kent Koppleman and Lynn Valiquette.

## **IMPACTFUL EXPERIENCES:**

My time at UWL was very rewarding. I found all educators were up-to-date on current research and able to help students apply knowledge. Their doors were open for questions or a lively exchange of opinions. I felt welcome, appreciated and cared for. Although I was older with a family, I was encouraged to become part of the extra activities at UWL. I became the director of Women’s Affairs through the Student Senate and a Vanguard, among other things. This really helped round out my education, taught me additional skills and formed a greater connection to UWL.

## **WORDS OF ADVICE:**

I encourage others to consider a career in education. It truly impacts the world — one child at a time. Although it is a demanding field, those with real passion for it remain strong and earn overwhelming rewards. It is a wonderful profession for those who like to make a difference.

DIVERSITY

# Multicultural Education at UWL



Each semester the School of Education strives to provide several professional development opportunities for education students, particularly for under-represented and racially diverse students. The annual Come Take A Look: School of Education Day held in April is just one of many events aimed at the recruitment and retention of students from culturally diverse backgrounds. This event is an opportunity to attract and recruit local high school students into the teaching profession. Approximately 50 high school students from La Crosse and surrounding areas attended to learn more about what the UWL School of Education has to offer.

The School of Education once again partnered with the Hmoob Cultural and Community Agency to host the 12 annual Widening the Circle Native American and Hmong Indigenous Education Conference. The conference provides a culturally responsive model of multicultural and Indigenous education aimed at assisting all teachers and education students in developing a critical consciousness. *Responsive Pedagogy: Understanding Indigenous Identities & Positive Imagery* was the themes for this year's conference.

Another significant opportunity for all education students in Wisconsin is the annual Student

Development Conference. Sponsored by a UW System grant, the traveling conference was hosted this year by UW-Stout. The event is designed to recruit and retain teachers from under-represented and diverse populations and is an opportunity for students to learn more about the teaching profession and the classroom as a professional workplace. Students also develop an increased understanding of different strategies to serve a diverse group of students in the classroom.

Lastly, Bethany Brent, Ph.D., was one of the award recipients from La Crosse Public Education Foundation. The foundation award matched the School District of La Crosse. All award recipients were recognized at the La Crosse Public Education Foundation Luncheon held on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. The funds awarded will support efforts to start the Grow Our Own Teacher Diversity (GOO-TD) program.



Bethany Brent

*The School of Education provides ongoing support for students who need assistance with the Praxis Core. Students seeking assistance are encouraged to contact Bethany Brent for more information.*

CAMPUS UPDATE



# BEHIND THE SCENES

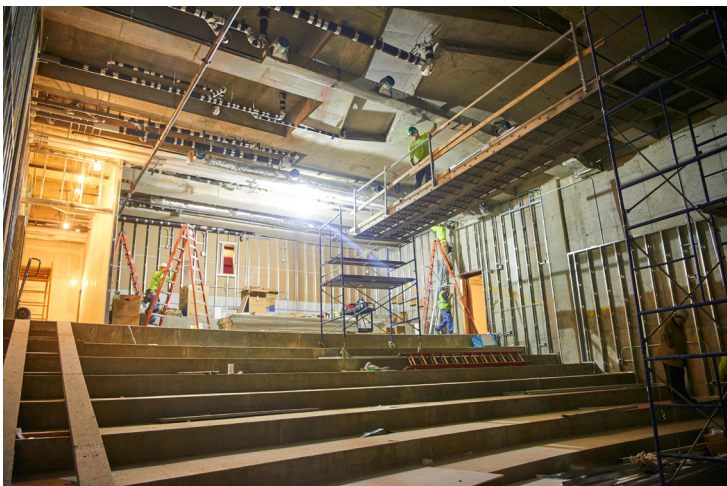
*New student center construction — completion by spring 2017*



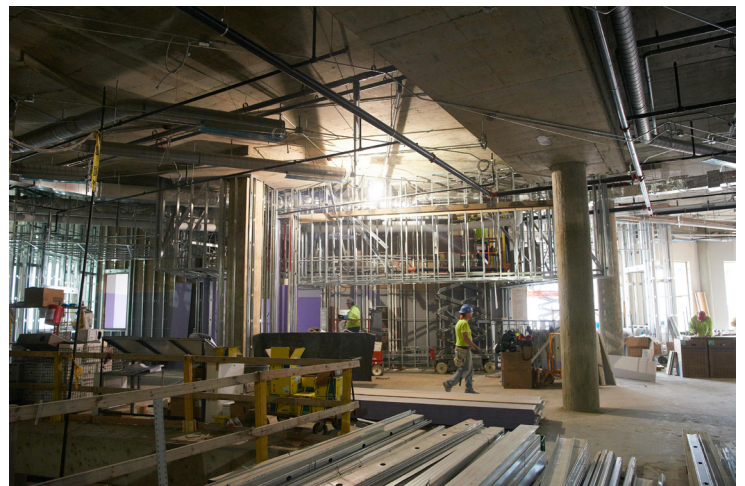
Contractors work on the south entrance of the student center. The edifice is designed to emulate Grandad Bluff.



Workers place insulation on the roof of the student center. The building will incorporate a sustainable design strategy with the goal of achieving Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold Certification.



Contractors finish up HVAC and electrical in the movie theater.



The main floor will mimic the convergence of the three rivers in La Crosse with three main entrances converging upon an information desk and central gathering place.

IPSE EVENT

## IPSE November Conference: Culturally responsive teaching opened eyes and minds

“The speakers were incredible and the breakout sessions were thought-provoking on so many levels!”

— Event participant

“I love leaving (the conference) with ideas I can use in my classroom the next day!”

— Event participant



Over 160 area teachers and administrators gathered on Nov. 7-8 for the Institute for Professional Studies in Education’s (IPSE) 18th Annual November Conference on Culturally Responsive Teaching. Valhalla in Cartwright Center served as the gathering zone and the keynote location for the conference. Keynote presenter was Sharroky Hollie, Ph.D., California State University at Dominguez Hills; co-founder of the Culture and Language Academy of Success in Los Angeles, California; executive director for the Center for Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning and author of “Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning: Classroom Practices for Student Success.”

ME-PD Learning Community scholars highlighted their work through breakout sessions on a plethora of related topics, including “Respecting Religious and Cultural Differences within the Classroom;” “TRANS-Forming Education: Embracing Gender Diversity;” and “Making a Connection: Opening the Doors on Family Diversity.”

UWL faculty and staff who also presented related sessions included Will Van Roosenbeek, UWL director of LGBTQ services and programs, with “Transgender, Trans, Non-Binary;” Barbara Stewart, UWL associate dean of Diversity and Inclusion, with “Let’s Talk: Real Conversations about Race in a ‘Post Racial’ World;” Pat Marko, Ph.D., director of IPSE on “The Impact of Mental Health Issues on Children,” and Quincey Daniels, Ph.D., and Markos sharing their session on “The Color Gradient.”



Attendees of the annual conference

**“I thought the presenters and speakers at the November Conference shared valuable and applicable ideas that can be used in the La Crosse School District where I teach.”**

**— Event participant**

Conference participants also explored issues of poverty and learning with Tom Roy, Ph.D., and Stephen West, Ph.D., superintendent, Winona School District.

The two-day conference opened many conversations with region’s educators, and helped to foster ongoing dialogue between educators in local communities. An example was an opportunity for one area superintendent to work through issues related to a controversy within her school community. She was able to access UWL faculty and staff and their valuable resources and support to assist her in developing open, supportive policies to serve all students in her schools.

The conference also highlighted the experiences and expertise of a powerful panel of UWL faculty and staff,

including; Mohamed Elhindi, Ph.D., Bee Lo, Ph.D., Omar Granados, Ph.D., Victor Macias-Gonzalez, Ph.D., Qiongyi Tang, Ph.D. and Hongying Xu, Ph.D., as they discussed the ongoing need to prepare culturally responsive educators for local classrooms. Lo called for educators to go beyond learning a few words and recognizing a few holidays to fully embracing the cultures of community in a far more structured and educated way.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!** Planning is underway for the next IPSE Annual November Conference, Nov. 5-6, 2016. All IPSE learners, SOE faculty, staff, and student teachers, as well as first and second year teachers and their school administrations in the La Crosse area are invited to attend. The event is free.

## SCHOLARSHIP

# Clearing the pathway to success

“The scholarship came during my student teaching semester — the pinnacle of any prospective teacher’s education. This is a time when everything we have learned up until this point starts to become our own ... and we begin to discover our own style of teaching. This scholarship took away many of the worries and stressors the semester presents, allowing me to focus on my education ...”

— Sarah Sufferling, 2015 Rusche Scholarship Recipient.

With his mother’s memory and the belief in supporting teacher candidates in mind, Joe Rusche established the Rusche Scholarship in December of 2012 through a contribution he received from the Wedum Foundation in Minneapolis. A “La Crosse kid,” Rusche was eager to support the university and the teacher candidates during one of their most challenging semesters — student teaching. Rusche’s concern stemmed from the reality that student teachers face a semester of full-time teaching with little to no income, the need to pay tuition and ultimately leaving college with a lot of debt. This reality, and the impact of the scholarship, is evident considering one of the recipients. UWL education student Sara Sufferling says the scholarship has played an enormous role in decreasing the financial burden for the end of her college career. “I was expecting to have to find a way to pay tuition with no income,” she says. “The scholarship gave me the ability to focus solely on my education as I finished my training to be a teacher.”

The financial burden of college is a difficulty that this scholarship helps ease, but the benefits are far reaching. “I feel extremely honored that [donors] believe in me as an educator. It has been a huge encouragement to know that so many people are rooting for me as I continue this journey. It has increased my confidence ... and allowed me to reach an even higher potential,” she says.

“This boost in confidence in turn effects the lives of those the recipient touches as well. As an educator, I have daily interaction with students and therefore the ability to make a daily impact on their education. I know from my experience how powerful that can be,” she says.

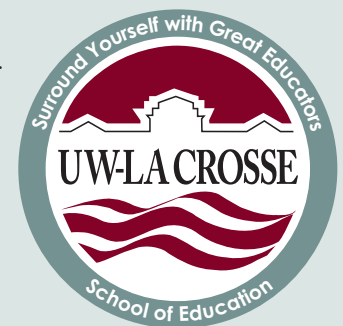


Sarah Sufferling with scholarship donors, Joe & Joanne Rusche

Public schools are one of the communities’ most valuable resources and one that effects every child, says Marcie Wycoff-Horn, Ph.D., dean of the School of Education. “We know that it is through the gifts of generous donors that many of our teacher candidates are able to commit the time and effort necessary to become successful educators who will contribute and impact the children and communities they serve,” shares Wycoff-Horn.

To help support UWL School of Education provide hands-on authentic experiences, resources and tools for students to become highly-effective teachers consider a donation of any size. For more information on how to give visit

[www.uwlax.edu/soe](http://www.uwlax.edu/soe).



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