



CAPSTONE

UWL COLLEGE OF LIBERAL STUDIES NEWSLETTER

INSPIRING | ACHIEVING | UNITING

FALL 2016



CLS Connection

STUDENTS TAKE ON INTERNSHIPS FOR COMMUNITY GROWTH | PAGE 4 »

FROM THE DEAN: JULIA JOHNSON



CLS Committed to Applied Learning and Community Relationships

Faculty across all departments in the CLS have long valued learning that offers students opportunities to “apply what they are learning in real-world settings and reflect in a classroom setting.” We promote applied learning experiences because students learn how to solve complex problems, engage in ethical decision-making, and give back to the community. Applied learning prepares students for “citizenship, work, and life.”¹

APPLIED LEARNING TAKES MANY FORMS

Internships allow our students to learn from professionals in specific fields. Through service-learning experiences, students work with community partners to solve problems in order to better peoples’ lives. Undergraduate research

experiences assist students in developing thinking and writing skills and provides them with direct mentoring with faculty outside the regular classroom. We support student learning through study abroad experiences, where they become more culturally competent and, thus, better at sustaining relationships with others and more professionally marketable.

APPLIED LEARNING BENEFITS STUDENTS

Our faculty relish the opportunity to help students learn in these ways. Sometimes, people believe that faculty only teach a limited number of hours per week; however, faculty teaching extends far beyond the physical boundaries of a classroom. Faculty spend significant time with students working on student- and faculty-designed

research projects, advising students, working at field sites, creating faculty-led study abroad experiences, leading students in rehearsals, and so much more.

As one of our alums, Natasha Musalem-Perez, explained about her time studying Archaeology/Anthropology: “... I had the opportunity to gain experience beyond the ordinary through research and hands-on work that today proves to be useful in this competitive economy.”

The college is happy to support these types of applied learning and other opportunities to help grow our community.

Julia Johnson,
Dean of the College of Liberal Studies

¹Quotations are taken from the American Association of Colleges and Universities document titled “High Impact Practices.”

POINT OF VIEW: LINDSAY STEINER



Internships Develop Community Partnerships

Internships are integral to students and their professional development — such experience offers opportunities for students to apply their work and knowledge from the classroom. The internship/capstone course for UWL's Professional Writing Minor is one of my favorite courses to teach, because I get to see and hear first-hand how internships help students grow as professionals.

In addition, such internships connect the university with the larger communities, make an impact on our local/regional/state economies, builds a student's portfolio, and provides evidence during their job

search. Such reciprocal relationships don't go unnoticed. According to a student in my spring 2016 Professional Writing Practicum class, relationship-building is both built upon and builds upon her education in liberal studies:

Over the course of my internship I learned that building relationships and growing a network is the result of using a number of different skills. Strong communication, problem solving, and critical thinking are all necessary skills that I had to work to develop during my internship in order to build positive relationships. However, I also think that building positive relationships helps foster better communication, critical

thinking, and problem solving skills. It is a cycle that will continuously build my network even after I stop working at my internship.

I am grateful to area organizations who employ our students, as well as to our students themselves, for the opportunities to connect with our larger communities. Seeing our students succeed, and knowing that it has been a mutually-beneficial community partnership, is well-worth the time and effort.

Lindsay Steiner,
Assistant Professor, English

CLS VISION STATEMENT

Championing the enduring values of the liberal arts and positioning them as key to transforming people, ideas and the world.

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local non-profit GROW La Crosse because she loves the organization's mission.
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CLS Connection

STUDENTS TAKE ON INTERNSHIPS FOR COMMUNITY GROWTH

Every time UWL senior Mackenzie Jones walks in the door to her internship at the La Crosse YMCA, at least one kid yells her name and runs across the room to greet her. It's a pattern that keeps her coming back to work.

"That's a great way to start your day," she says.

The majority of College of

Liberal Studies students in non-profit internships are motivated to do the work because they're earning valuable experience and contributing to a cause they believe in.

Jones, a volunteer intern at the La Crosse Area Family YMCA's youth engagement program, helps provide a safe and supportive place for community at-risk youth to go. Although

her job can be stressful, she's motivated by the strong connection she is making with area kids. The job is affirmation that she's on the right path as she pursues a psychology major and an at-risk child and youth minor. Jones aims to one day become a school psychologist.

"This gives me an opportunity to practice good listening skills and how to talk to kids in

Chai Yang, a UWL political science major, took an internship at Big Brothers, Big Sisters of the 7 Rivers Region.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the 7 Rivers Region





UWL senior Mackenzie Jones, a psychology major and at-risk child and youth minor, at her internship at the La Crosse YMCA where she helps provide a safe and supportive place for at-risk youth to go.

a way that they'll respond to," she says.

UWL Senior Chai Yang also likes helping at-risk kids. He took an internship at Big Brothers Big Sisters of the 7 Rivers Region, which is dedicated to helping area at-risk kids find role models.

"I wanted to get some experience working for a non-profit program, especially when the focus is on helping out a younger generation," he says.

Yang, who does communication and community outreach for the organization, aims to pursue graduate school and a career in social work. The political science major says experience with a non-profit will help him stand out.

UWL Senior Laura Berry fell in love with the mission of the non-profit GROW La Crosse while volunteering at its Fall Festival on the Farm. Afterward, she did some online research to learn more about the organization that runs school gardens and farm camps to connect kids to healthy food and nature.

Berry, an exercise and sports science major and professional writing minor, contacted the organization to see how she could be of service. She ended up creating her own internship centered around gaining writing experience for her professional writing minor.

Berry doesn't get a check, but that's OK, she says. Serving a non-profit means all of



Laura Berry, an exercise and sports science major and professional writing minor, landed a non-profit internship at GROW La Crosse. Her roles range from teaching students in the garden and managing media, to digging in the dirt.

her time and energy benefit the kids they serve, not someone's pocketbook. Meanwhile, she's



Karolyn Bald, '97 and '99, earned degrees in political science and public administration and student affairs administration from UWL. She's worked in UWL Career Services for 16 years.

learned new skills such as blogging and photography. She hopes the strong communication experience helps her stand out among physical therapy graduates applying for graduate school.

Berry is grateful for Karolyn Bald, in UWL Career Services,

who helped her rework her resume to land the GROW La Crosse internship.

THE CAREER SERVICES CONNECTION

For more than two decades, Bald has helped CLS students with resumes, job searches and establishing internship credit. Jones, Yang and Berry all earned academic credit with help from Career Services.

UWL Career Services works with students, faculty and employers to coordinate between 800-900 internships annually. About half are from the College of Liberal Studies.

While any work or volunteer experience is valuable, an internship provides a more structured experience that is educational in nature and ties back to academics, says Bald, '97 and '99.

“It helps students process what they are doing and what it means academically,” she says.

During an internship for a congressman as a UWL student, Bald realized that although she loved politics, working in a political office was not for her. She also learned skillsets needed to improve professionally.

“It took a long time to realize that I didn't waste a semester,” she says. “I figured out a lot of things I wouldn't have if I hadn't had that experience.”

She urges students to get as much diverse experience as they can during college.

“The sooner you do it and the more you do it, the better decisions you'll be able to make when you take the next step after college,” she says.

ARE YOU SEEKING INTERNS? **CLICK HERE**

Employers can post internship and job opportunities for free directly on the Career Services website by clicking on “Employers.”



Fighting Disparities

UWL Latina group helps high school girls focus on college, careers



During their time at UWL, students Jamie Capetillo and Stephanie Citali Bohman watched a lot of their Latina classmates go home every weekend. Students missed home-cooked meals, speaking Spanish and other parts of their culture. Some didn't stay to finish their degrees. Capetillo and Bohman decided Latinas at UWL needed to come together and support one another, so they formed the student group, *Mujeres Orgullosas* — “Proud Women.”

Thanks to collaboration with two College of Liberal Studies faculty members, *Mujeres Orgullosas* is now taking its support network to area high school Latinas. The student group traveled to Arcadia, Wisconsin eight times spring semester to talk to a group of Latina girls about attending college, their experiences at a primarily white university, and how to achieve their goals through higher education.

UWL students in Mujeres Orgullosas meet with Latinas at Arcadia High School during spring semester for an outreach program.



Jamie Capetillo is a Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies major and also co-founder of the student group Mujeres Orgullosas.

The outreach program, Latina Outreach Mentoring Program, was funded by a College of Liberal Studies small grant. CLS faculty members Victor Macías-González and Omar Granados applied for the grant to support the program.

"We had an idea and they had the academic background and drive to write the grant and make it actually come true," says Capetillo.

UWL senior Sonia Garcia, an interpersonal communications and Spanish major, says the group was successful in starting a dialogue about college.

"A lot of them [high school girls] were scared about the idea of moving away from family," she says. "We were able to show them the experience we had and how we've developed support systems here at UWL."

Through the mentoring program the UWL students hope to have

sparked curiosity about college and demystified the process, says Macías-González. "Omar and I worked on this because we both have the experience of being immigrants and first-generation college students," he says. "We see this as an opportunity to give back to our community and to make a difference."

More outreach efforts are needed for Wisconsin's growing Latina/o

population, which makes up 6.3 percent of the state's population and nearly 10 percent of all school-aged children, says Macías-González. In the La Crosse region, Latinas/os make up anywhere from two to 25 percent of school-age population, depending on location. Arcadia, Norwalk-Ontario-Wilton and Sparta have large Latina/o populations.

The students and faculty hope to expand outreach efforts to other communities. It has been gratifying to see the difference they've made, says Capetillo.

"Those girls light up when you say that their future dreams could become a reality," she says. "If we are able to get at least one more Latina in college, we've done our job."

A HISTORY OF OUTREACH IN ARCADIA

UWL Latin American Studies faculty became aware of an opportunity to develop outreach opportunities in Arcadia in the early 2000s when a large Latina/o population established themselves in the Trempealeau County, notes Macías-González,



Victor Macías-González

who was director of UWL's Institute for Latina/o and Latin American Studies from 2001-13. He laid the

foundation for many outreach efforts there and throughout the La Crosse area, including a workshop for parents, volunteering, student research, coordinating visiting scholars and a regional conference.



Omar Granados

UWL's Latina/o student population has nearly tripled since 2000, from 110 to more

than 300 students in 2016. This expanding student population is building on the foundation started by Macías-González, notes Granados, who is current director of the Institute for Latina/o and Latin American Studies.

GLOBAL EXPERIENCE, LOCAL IMPACT

Fulbright scholars prepare for worldly projects

Three from UWL have earned prestigious Fulbright U.S. Scholarships. They're among more than 1,200 U.S. citizens who will travel across the world during 2016-17 to help solve global challenges related to communication, culture, history and transnational crime.

- » **Gita Pai**, assistant professor of history, will travel to India to study popular sculptural symbols.
- » **Sara Docan-Morgan**, associate professor of communication studies, will teach communication classes in South Korea.
- » **Erik Reitan**, '15, will be a teaching assistant in Germany. ([See story page 24](#))



Sara Docan-Morgan, Communication Studies, received the Fulbright U.S. Scholar Award to South Korea for a visiting lectureship at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in Seoul.

DOCAN-MORGAN'S VISITING LECTURESHIP IN SOUTH KOREA

Docan-Morgan aims to increase international understand-

ing of communication in the U.S. while teaching at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in Seoul.

Understanding of U.S. culture is increasingly seen as a marketable skill for Korean students, she says. She hopes her Korean



Gita Pai, History, earned the Fulbright-Nehru Academic & Professional Excellence Award to conduct research in the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

and American background will shine a light on the complexity of identity for Americans.

“Korea is such a monoracial country,” she says. “I want my students to see there is not one definition of what it means to be Korean or American because I see myself as both.”

Docan-Morgan was adopted from South Korea at four months. She says the trip will lend to her scholarly work on Korean adoption. She’ll also be able to use Korean adoption as a platform in her classes to discuss broader topics such as family, economics, culture, identity and race.

Docan-Morgan says the trip will also be meaningful personally. It has been her lifelong goal to live in Korea and spend time with her biological family there.

PAI GOES TO INDIA

Pai received a Fulbright fellowship to do research in India for her doctoral dissertation as a graduate student, so she didn’t expect to earn another.

Pai speculates her proposal may have been strengthened by a book project she is working on that has connections to the research she plans to do.

Pai received a Fulbright award to explore 9-12th century bronze depictions of the Hindu god, Shiva Nataraja, in the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu. The sculpture is an important part of India’s history and culture, yet the theft of Shiva Nataraja and other Hindu artifacts has become a serious problem in Tamil Nadu.

Metal representations of this god have appeared in south Indian temples since the 9th century. Over the years it has become one of India’s most

UWL FULBRIGHT SCHOLARS 2009-14:

- » Robert Jecklin, Health Education and Health Promotion, 2013-14
- » Carol Miller, Sociology, 2010-11
- » Heidi Morrison, History, 2013-14
- » Soojin Ritterling, Music, 2009-10

popular sculptural symbols. Pai’s project examines Shiva Nataraja as art, a ritual and devotional object, and the embodiment of Indian culture in international museums. She also will study how it has been bought, sold and sometimes stolen commodity on global markets.

Pai, who teaches the history of South Asia and World History at UWL, says the project will also be useful back on campus. It incorporates worldly topics such as transnational crime, international museums with Asian collections and the global art market.

Top Prof

Eagle Teaching Excellence Award winners

Two CLS faculty members were selected for the 2016 Eagle Teaching Excellence Award, previously called the Provost's Teaching Award. The award recognizes excellence in teaching, with nominations coming directly from students.



Years at UWL: 7

Teaches: Primarily research methods courses including: Experimental Psychology, Advanced Research Methods, Psychology Measurement, Cognitive Psychology and occasionally Introduction to Psychology. She just started teaching Honors Seminar.

History: Earned a doctoral degree from Washington Univer-

sity in St. Louis in 2009. Prior to teaching at UWL, she taught classes at Washington University and Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. Originally from Germany, she has lived in the U.S. for 16 years.

Favorite part of teaching: “[I enjoy] seeing students excited about material they didn’t think could be exciting. Research methods courses often scare students. But, watching them

go from being uncertain to confidently and proudly presenting their final research projects makes me happy every semester.”

Professors

s announced



KATE PARKER, ENGLISH

Years at UWL: 4

Teaches: General education courses in writing, early British Literature (origins to 1800), sexuality studies and literature and compassion. She also teaches upper-level courses in 18th century British literature and feminism and sexuality. She has taught a “Foundations in English Studies” course for two years, and co-teaches a class on poetry and contemplation with Bryan Kopp, English.

History: Parker received her doctorate in English and comparative literature from Washington University in St. Louis, where she also taught for six years. Prior to coming to UWL, she was a faculty member of Bucknell University’s English Department.

Favorite part of teaching: “My students are some of the most intriguing, compassionate and inquisitive folks I know, and they bring so much energy to the classroom. The privilege of teaching humanities at the

college level is that faculty and students are all invited to work together to pose richer and more complex questions, to try and find creative solutions to problems, and to reflect on the ethical and moral implications of our proposed solutions. Such a model ensures that I am always learning alongside and with my students. Getting to know my students as thinkers, as readers, as writers, as people — this is without a doubt the best part of teaching.”

‘DON’T BOX YOURSELF IN’

CLS alumna launches successful, multi-million-dollar company, sells it at age 34



By age 34, Alumna Rachel Wixson had launched a multi-million-dollar company and sold it, a story recently featured on Forbes.com.

“It’s not about the exact degree you have, but the overarching experience.”

RACHEL WIXSON

After graduation, Rachel Wixson, '02, wanted to use her German degree to work abroad. So when family pointed out a job opening at an electronic software company in her hometown of Verona, Wisconsin, she was underwhelmed. “I was not go-

ing to work in Verona and I hated computers,” she recalls.

She’s glad she did. She joined Epic as the electronic software industry was booming due to new federal regulations on electronic record keeping. Eventually, Wixson

Read about Rachel Wixson in Forbes:
CLICK HERE



RACHEL WIXSON'S ADVICE FOR RECENT UWL GRADS

In addition to not “putting yourself in a box” career-wise, Wixson encourages networking. “It’s more important than you think,” she says. “I’ve come to realize how important it is to stay in touch with people. I block off specific time in the week to catch up with people.”

Wixson also believes in mentorship. Throughout her career she has looked for people in positions she wanted or for people with qualities she wanted to acquire and would reach out to them for advice.

was selling Epic software worldwide and eventually launched her own healthcare IT consulting firm, Cipe.

By age 34, Wixson had turned Cipe into a multi-million-dollar company and sold it. Her story was featured on Forbes.com.

Wixson didn’t start off living her international dream on day one, but today, being a partner at a major healthcare IT consulting firm, she has can work from anywhere in the world.

“That’s a message I tell graduates: Don’t box yourself in,” she says.

Wixson, now a partner at Cumberland Consulting Group, says she excelled at Epic, not because of her specific training in German, but because of the broad skills she’d developed in college from critically thinking to communication.

“It’s not about the exact degree you have, but the overarching experience,” she says.

Wixson was driven to become an entrepreneur because she wanted more control over her schedule to make time for family and friends. At the same time, she saw a need for consultants to guide people through the emerging medical software industry.

Wixson had the confidence to leave her stable position at Epic for the more-risky road of entrepreneurship because of sound financial planning. That came with help from another UWL graduate, Jessica Schock, '01, a wealth management

Learn more
about
Rachel
Wixson

CLICK HERE



advisor with Northwestern Mutual Management Co., who became Wixson’s financial advisor while she worked at Epic. The money Wixson put away over the years with advice from Schock gave her freedom to know she didn’t need to make money on day one launching Cipe.

Schock nominated Wixson to be featured in Forbes because of her work ethic, vision and drive — all enhanced by her liberal studies education.

“It’s not hard to recognize that Rachel Wixson is on the path to even greater success than she’s already had,” says Schock. “She is a rising star. I don’t think she’s even scratched the surface of what her potential is.”

WRITE ON

Student pens winning essay on the value of a liberal education

UWL history major Avery Wehrs earned honorable mention in the annual UW System Liberal Arts Essay Scholarship Competition.

Wehrs' essay, "The measure of an education," was among the top six cited in the 11th year of the competition to support and promote student learning and liberal education throughout the UW.

This year's competition invited students to write a letter to the editor of their hometown paper that articulates and defends the student's position on the purpose and value of a liberal arts education. The annual competition is part of the UW System's Liberal Education Initiative, which seeks to make the goals and outcomes of liberal arts education accessible and valuable to all UW students.

"Students from 12 UW institutions took up the challenge to write essays for this year's competition, and the results highlight for all of us the thoughtful and insightful students we are privileged to have at our institutions," says UW System President Ray Cross. "The winning essays make



History major Avery Wehrs earned honorable mention for her essay "The measure of an education" in a UW System competition.

CLICK HERE
to read Wehrs'
complete essay.



a compelling case for how well the diverse and practical liberal education we seek to provide

students in the UW System can prepare them to be active and engaged citizens."

Hear Diverse Voices

New web-based project shares experiences
of people of color at UWL, beyond



"I think cooperation with multicultural organizations should be encouraged to all students even if they do not share the heritage of an organization," writes this second-year student on Diverse Voices of UWL. Names of students, faculty and staff are not shared on the website.

A new website amplifies diverse voices on campus. On the "Diverse Voices of UWL" website, people can read about the immigrant experience, international student experience and experiences surrounding tolerance, diversity or lack thereof.

More than 30 people from UWL and the surrounding community shared experiences surrounding diversity, inclusion and tolerance on the website that went live at the end of spring semester at diversevoicesofuwl.tumblr.com.

The College of Liberal Studies grant-funded project includes testimonials and photos similar to "Humans of New York," a popular blog with photos and captions of people on the streets of New York City.

"The project promotes greater awareness among the campus community about people of color in terms of the concrete experiences of those affected by not being part of the white majority,"



Gita Pai

says Gita Pai, History, who co-founded "Diverse Voices of UWL. "Our project seeks to address the palpable absence

of diverse faces and voices on campus."

Radhika Agarwal, '10, a University of Illinois, Chicago (UIC) graduate student, was also a lead investigator on the grant.

"I'm passionate about raising awareness around diversity, inclusion and tolerance," says Agarwal. "It is my way of giving back to my undergrad institution, UWL, and also to the greater La Crosse community. I felt that this project was needed given my experiences and the experiences of other people I knew in La Crosse."

PHILOSOPHY FOR ALL

Faculty member encourages more females to continue in the field

“All human beings by nature desire to know.” The Aristotle quote resonates with faculty member Mary Krizan so much that she recently had it tattooed on her arm.

Human beings have a yearning that other species don't — to understand, explore and investigate what the senses perceive, she explains.

Krizan, a UWL assistant professor of philosophy, remembers that desire to know intensifying during her undergraduate years at Michigan State University. She was just discovering philosophy and reading chapters from people who lived thousands of years

before her. She discovered their ideas could easily relate to the social problems and politics in the contemporary world. Krizan could use their logic to make sense of her own reality. She ended up declaring philosophy as a second major and going on to earn master's and doctoral degrees in the field.

While developing her professional career around philosophy, the study has also helped Krizan in her personal life. She's looked to philosophy's reasoned arguments to work through life's challenges such as the death of her father.

So it makes sense that Krizan

“I think philosophy is something everyone can benefit from. In a way, it's a disservice to students — particularly female students — if they think it's something they can't succeed at.”

MARY KRIZAN

is advocate for getting students interested in the study of philosophy, especially women like herself who aren't equally represented.



Mary Krizan, assistant professor of philosophy, started teaching at UWL in fall 2013.



“ALL HUMAN BEINGS BY NATURE DESIRE TO KNOW.”

NOTE ON THE QUOTE:

An older translation of Aristotle’s quote was “All men by nature desire to know,” but Krizan much prefers the more modern, accepted translation of “all human beings.”

During her undergraduate and graduate career, Krizan was typically one of only two or three women in classes of 20 or more. That lack of female representation in the field continued as she accepted teaching positions at California State University, Fullerton and Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alabama.

Krizan’s experience isn’t extraordinary. Nationally, 21 percent of postsecondary instructors in the field are women, according to the 2009 Digest of Education Statistics. That’s unfortunate, says Krizan, because female students may be reluctant to pursue a field dominated by men.

“I think philosophy is something everyone can benefit from. In a way, it’s a disservice to students — particularly female students — if they think it’s something they can’t succeed at,” she says. “They are missing out on something that could help them not just in their professional, but also in their personal lives.”

At UWL, Krizan is pleased with the equal representation of male and female faculty in the Philosophy Department. But the department struggles to recruit female undergraduates. Krizan, who remembers female role models being important during her college career, reaches out to female

students and others from underrepresented groups to encourage them to continue.

When students do stay in the field, she is amazed at how their thinking improves in ways that will be beneficial in any career. They begin to logically work through problems, write papers that are organized and analyze arguments effectively. They even use texts written thousands of years ago to make sense of their own life — just like she did as a student.

Philosophy is most definitely a topic for all human beings, she says, because “All human beings by nature desire to know.”



STUDYING SAVINGS

UWL research uncovers potential solutions to La Crosse's high property taxes

The city of La Crosse is an economic hub for the region, yet the majority of people who work in the city don't live in it.

Why? The No. 3 reason is La Crosse's high property taxes, according to a 2014 survey of 8,000 people who work in La Crosse.

It's a long-term problem that Mayor Tim Kabat hears

about regularly. To better understand it, Kabat turned to UW-La Crosse experts.

John Kovari, assistant professor of Political Science and Public Administration, was commissioned to investigate one of the reasons the city's property taxes are likely higher than surrounding communities — duplication of services between the city and county.

The research, which began in January 2015 and was presented to the city council in November 2015, found the city could save taxpayers anywhere up to 25 percent on their city property tax bill. Without making any recommendations, the study offered a variety of potential solutions. For example, savings could come from merging certain city and county services, and distribut-



The city commissioned John Kovari, assistant professor of Political Science and Public Administration, to examine potential solutions to the La Crosse's long-term high property tax problem.

ing the costs of some services more equally among all users in the county. It examined areas such as law enforcement, and city libraries and parks.

Kabat has already started using the study's findings to propose changes. He proposed a merger of the city and county library systems in August, which would significantly reduce city property tax bills.

"It's rewarding to see something come out of your

**"This
is the
Wisconsin
Idea
coming
to life."**

NICK BEZIER, '15

research that is actionable and tangible," says Kovari. "If I can help out and promote a dialog about these kinds of innovations, I feel like I've done my job and it's very meaningful to me."

Nick Bezier helped with Kovari's study after his December 2015 graduation from UWL. "This is the Wisconsin Idea coming to life," he says "It was about building a university and community partnership, so that both the university and the community can do better."

While helping the city with a long-term problem, Bezier was learning about public policy research and data collection. He was the legs of the study, ana-

lyzing city and county budgets and interviewing program administrators. He also explored models for funding services in other communities across the nation. These research, communication and analytical skills helped as Bezier as he pursued law school at UW-Madison, he says. It also gave him an opportunity to continue to work closely with Kovari. "He was a great mentor in general and continues to be throughout law school," says Bezier.

Kabat turned to UWL because of the university's strong reputation — particularly the students and faculty in the Political Science and Public Administration Department. Kabat says past UWL interns for the city have been talented and well-rounded, and UWL faculty members in the department like Kovari, Joe Heim and Tim Dale have earned a reputation far beyond the university for their political science and public policy expertise.

UWL's research arm, as well as the university's public lectures, arts, culture and international population — all add to the richness of La Crosse, adds Kabat.

"Having this institution here in our backyard is incredibly beneficial to the city," he says.

LANGUAGE LEAPS

CLS alum in Germany on a Fulbright scholarship



Erik Reitan, '15, far left, during his study abroad experience in Germany. Reitan earned degrees in cultural anthropology and German studies. His experience studying abroad made him interested applying to return to the country on a Fulbright scholarship. Pictured far right is his brother, David Reitan.

Language is the first of many steps in building strong human-to-human connections and breaking down cultural barriers.

That's something Erik Reitan, '15, learned as an undergraduate. It's something he put in practice in August through a Fulbright scholarship to teach English as a second language in Germany.

Reitan is teaching in Mainz, Germany during 2016-17. He also plans to find an immigration-related internship in the country.

The Fulbright Program is the U.S. government's flagship international educational exchange program. Recipients are selected on academic and professional achievement, as well as service and leadership. The program aims to increase mutual understanding between U.S. citizens and others.

Understanding between cultures is something Reitan experienced first-hand while studying abroad. He refers to the experience at Goethe University in Frankfurt, Germany, during his junior year as the "cornerstone of my UWL experience." He saw how language was an important gateway to knowing a country and its people.

“Being able to speak German opened up a lot of doors for me that were not as accessible to other students.”

ERIC REITAN

“Being able to speak German opened up a lot of doors for me that were not as accessible to other students,” he says.

For one, he was able to build meaningful relationships with people from other cultures to understand not only an inside joke, but also challenges they faced. For example, some friends of his from

Turkey and Mexico that he met while studying abroad who were the perfect candidates for positions at U.S. companies or completely qualified to attend U.S. schools were turned away because of passport limitations.

It was frustrating for Reitan to see people working so hard to improve their futures have to return to unproductive or unsafe living conditions in their own countries. That led to Reitan's interest in immigration.

Reitan came to UWL in part because of the strong academic program in international studies. He benefited from not only the classes, but also great mentors like Assistant Professor of Modern Languages Audie Olson, who was an inspiration and resource.

Olson says students like Reitan are the reason he teaches. “Those who study abroad are changed in significant ways for life,” says Olson. “It's gratifying to play a small part in helping them get there.”

Reitan would eventually like to work in administration of international education or in immigration.

PARK FRENZY

Environmental Studies Course Spurs a Visit to all of Wisconsin's State Parks

Alum Jonathan Ringdahl grew a love for nature from a young age, but environmental studies classes during college deepened that love. The appreciation sparked his interest to visit all of Wisconsin's 65 state parks, forests and recreation areas in 2012. That journey was recently featured in a Travel Wisconsin video.

"I wanted to do something memorable that year — to make it stand out," says the

2010 psychology graduate.

Ringdahl says the class "Introduction to Environmental Studies" with Associate Lecturer Scott Lee was life-changing.

"He raised my awareness about environmental issues and how I can impact the environment in a positive way," says Ringdahl. "That was a profound experience and one that I retain."

Environmental awareness led to lifestyle changes for Ringdahl such as reducing waste and energy use. It also led to his desire to help educate others about nature conservation — particularly kids. He does this through his day job working with children with autism and also as a certified Wisconsin Master Naturalist — a title he earned studying environmental curriculum for 12 weeks at the Kickapoo Val-

"I wanted this to be more than a personal goal. That's why I try to weave in understanding for the kids I work with. It's about something bigger than me."

JONATHAN RINGDAHL

ley Reserve near La Farge.

"I wanted this to be more than a personal goal," he says about his state park excursion.



Jonathan Ringdahl, '10, La Crosse, earned a degree in psychology. After visiting the Badger State's 65 state parks, forests and recreation areas, he's become an advocate for the park system and the environment.

sions. "That's why I try to weave in understanding for the kids I work with. It's about something bigger than me."

The ambitious trek through Wisconsin exhausted his vacation time and bank account, but was well worth it, he says.

"To experience the parks and see the diversity across the system is amazing," explains Ringdahl. "I had no clue about the diversity in rock formations, lakes, rivers, plant life and animal life. It is enthralling to be in these places and come

CLICK HERE
to watch Ringdahl's
journey.



face to face with nature."

Completing the state park goal has led to some personal benefits. Ringdahl is now on the board of directors for Wisconsin State Parks. He's a kayak instructor and a Wisconsin Master Naturalist — all things that likely wouldn't

have happened if he hadn't embarked on his state park trip goal, he says.

"It's had a positive effect on my life, and what I've been able to share with others," he says.

Now Ringdahl has set a new goal — to visit 30 national parks in 2016 as the National Park Service celebrates its centennial year. He started with Badlands National Park — the first national park that he saw as a child.

UWL communication studies major Devyn Prielipp believes in living life compassionately. She donated a kidney to a stranger.



COMPASSIONATE CONTRIBUTOR

CLS student donates kidney to a stranger

Senior Devyn Prielipp was only 14 when her mother was murdered during a domestic dispute. It changed the way she looked at life. The communication studies major decided to live for today — a direction that led her to give life to someone else.

Only three years after her family tragedy, Prielipp began inquiring about donating a kidney. She'd read a story about kidney donation saving lives of those on waiting lists for years undergoing dialysis.

But as much as Prielipp wanted to donate, getting approval wasn't easy. Doctors urged her to wait and make sure the decision was right.

"A lot of people my age are still maturing and are not sure what they want out of life," she explains. "They didn't want me to regret it."

But Prielipp's past taught her that life isn't guaranteed. She could go down the list of "what if" questions forever.

"I don't want to live by those 'what if' questions. It's exhausting," she says. "I'm a firm believer in fate. Things are laid out for us, and what is going to happen will."

The best way to live is compassionately, she says. After three years of persistence, she was screened, tested and cleared for surgery in August 2015 at age 21.

For Prielipp's non-directed kidney donation, she received the American Hero Award from the National Kidney Registry. Of the 15 non-directed donors invited, Prielipp was the youngest by decades.

Prielipp says the hardest question she gets is why she decided to donate. "I don't have an ulterior motive or specific reason why," she says. "I was born blessed with a healthy lifestyle and I just want to help someone else have the same."

Making History

Community project 'Hear, Here' earns national recognition

A History Department project heard worldwide has received prestigious national recognition for preservation and interpretation of state and local history.

"Hear, Here," organized by the public and policy history major

"I learned what it is like to not only be part of a public history project, but also to be passionate about my work and my place in the world."

JENNIFER DEROCHER

emphasis, received the Leadership in History Award from the American Association for State and Local History. The award recognizes history that changes people's lives by helping them make connections with the past.

Associate Professor of History Ariel Beaujot and her classes launched "Hear, Here" in down-



Jennifer DeRocher, '16, right, was a public and policy history major who helped with the "Hear, Here" project. She stands at one of the downtown sign locations with UWL Alum Shaundel Spivey, whose story is cited that location.

town La Crosse in April 2015. It remains intact until 2020. Orange-colored street signs downtown have toll-free numbers that provide recorded stories from everyday people who worked, lived and shopped the streets. The system is accompanied by a [website](#) with an interactive map featuring the same community voices.

About 2,700 people called into Hear Here during the first year. About 1,000 calls came from area codes other than 608, and 6,600 users came from 108 different countries.

Jennifer DeRocher, '16, worked on the project and says

the experience changed her life. "Both Hear, Here and Dr. Ariel Beaujot taught me countless things," she says. "I learned what it is like to not only be part of a public history project, but also to be passionate about my work and my place in the world."

Hear, Here takes stories from [UWL's Oral History Program](#) and makes them more public, says Beaujot, to increase historical awareness. Many think of history as "great men, great wars," but the project opens up a broader understanding that encompasses the average and everyday. It allows everyone to make history.



ROLLING ART

La Crosse area artists got on a roll creating new pieces, thanks to help from a big piece of construction equipment.

As part of the 2nd annual Mississippi Steamroll, an industrial-scale asphalt roller drove over the prints, transferring the design to fabric.

To create the prints, artists carve their designs into wood or Styrofoam, cover it with ink, and then watch as the asphalt roller pushes the design onto fabric or similar materials.

“A lot of people don’t know a whole lot about printmaking,” says Ben Alberti, an organizer of the event. “This is a great opportunity to show people we can do cool stuff in our town with art.”



UWL alum Ben Alberti, '13, is the Mississippi Steamroll organizer.

The Mississippi Steamroll included local K-12 students from 15 area schools, as well as artists from the community and UWL alums. They created dozens of pieces displayed at La Crosse’s annual summer art festival, Artspire.

The event was dreamed up by two UWL printmaking alums who were working at the Pump House in 2015. They worked with UWL Professor of Art Joe Elgin to organize the events that have printed more than 150 images using a steamroller.

CLICK HERE
to watch Mississippi
Steamroll video.



“La Crosse Greetings”



UWL students Bekah Kienzle, left, and Julie Pleshe stand in front of their mural while they work on it in the UWL Center for the Arts Building. The piece of art was revealed on Monday, Sept. 26, at the southside Oktoberfest grounds.

Sophomore Bekah Kienzle and senior Julie Pleshe had the rare opportunity to leave their mark on La Crosse.

They were approached to create an 8 by 16-foot mural in the city that looked like a greeting postcard. “They wanted it to highlight La Crosse and the iconic places that people love,” says Kienzle, an art major.

The students tracked their progress on a blog and on Instagram. The public will be able to see the full mural at the southside Oktoberfest ground this year, and for years to come.

ARTISTIC PASSION

For Pleshe, this is a totally unexpected opportunity, especially since she is pursuing a communications studies major and Spanish minor. She has worked to maintain art classes in her schedule.

“I’m not an art student, but I still did something like this,” says Pleshe. “I hope it encourages people to follow their passion, even if it’s not something they’re going to school for. It’s

CLICK HERE
to watch Kienzle and
Pleshe paint.

important to seek these opportunities.”

The students received an undergraduate research and creativity grant for the project: “I thought grants were for people doing medical research,” says Kienzle. “I didn’t know we could use it for art, but I’ve learned so much doing this mural.”

Part of the grant sent Pleshe and Kienzle on a trip to see murals in Detroit and Ann Arbor, Michigan. Their travel provided an opportunity to tour the cities’ newest urban murals, learn techniques from professional mural painters and see the iconic imagery.

The project was also funded in part by La Crosse Festivals, Inc., the parent organization of the annual Oktoberfest USA celebration in a Crosse.



Top Bike Advocate

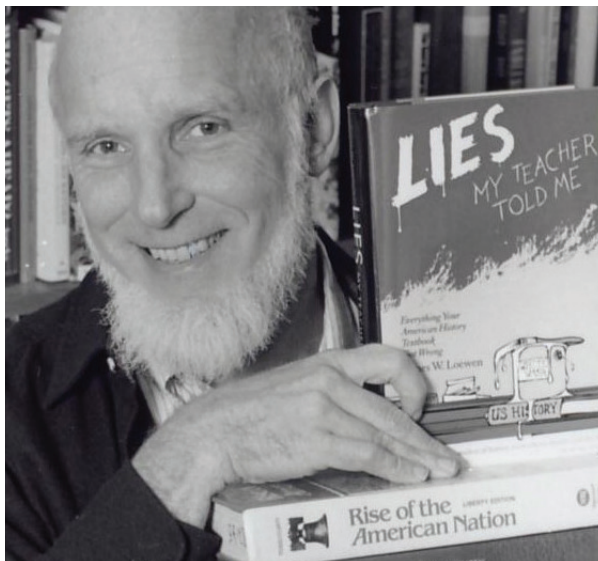
The Wisconsin Bike Federation has named UWL History Professor James Longhurst Advocate of the Year, which honors efforts to make bicycling a more accessible, comfortable and equitable transportation option.

With a steering committee of students, faculty, staff and supporters, Longhurst authored the first-ever application for “Bike Friendly University” recognition from the national League of American Bicyclists (LAB). A year-long project of surveys, traffic counts, stakeholder meetings and interviews resulted in the “UWL ON THE GO” report and a bronze level award in fall 2015.

Longhurst, a bicycle advocate off campus as well, is the author of **“Bike Battles: A History of Sharing the American Road.”**

COMING

NEA BIG READ



Oct 27, 2016

James Loewen, author of “Lies My Teachers Told Me” and “Sundown Towns” speaks at UWL at 11 a.m.

ULTRA-AMERICAN



Nov. 7, 2016

*ULTRA-AMERICAN: A PATRIOT ACT
American Muslim comedian Azhar
Usman performs at UWL.*

[***Details »***](#)

EVENTS

CREATIVE IMPERATIVES



Feb. 27-28, 2017

Speakers and artists exploring definitions and perceptions of identity.

[Details »](#)

CLS EXCELLENCE AWARDS



April 25, 2017

CLS recognizes outstanding faculty, staff and students.

SNAP!

The Seojung Dance Co. from South Korea performed “Korean Wave — Globalization of Korean Traditional Culture 2016” in spring of 2016. The team presented traditional court and folk dance. Along with the CLS, the performance was supported by the UWL Korean Percussion Ensemble, Segregated University Fee Allocation Committee, Office of International Education and Engagement, and the UWL Foundation.



CAPSTONE

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