



Wittich Hall renovation plans preserve history, create modern space for CBA

P4



UWL students join top business students worldwide to prepare for their futures

P9



How small classes, college opportunities have helped CBA students succeed

P13



Building Bridges

University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

FORGING A TALENT PIPELINE

New initiative strengthens bonds among students, faculty, community businesses

When companies hire a new employee, they want to know that he or she is the right fit.

When college students accept a new internship, they want to know they'll be doing more than fetching a cup of hot joe.

Companies and students have a mutual interest in finding out more about each other long before the job interview.

A new initiative in the College of Business Administration that started in fall 2016 is helping to make connections between area businesses and students much stronger.

Through the Talent Connection Network, area organizations are given numerous opportunities to meet and connect with CBA students and faculty. Those opportunities include visiting stu-

dent clubs, meeting with faculty, speaking to classes and more. Businesses provide financial support of CBA student and faculty development opportunities, such as study abroad or participation in national conferences.

Dean Laura Milner says the college has an important role in supporting a talent pipeline. By forging closer bonds between the CBA and business partners, both benefit, she says. Students have more exposure to career paths and companies, while those companies gain greater access to meet with faculty and students using a structured approach.

“Everyone wants our students. They are in very high demand, but the fact that these companies support us financially is a deep expression of their devotion to the college or university as a whole,” says Milner. “They are providing much needed resources to support our students and faculty with declining revenues.”





CLICK IMAGE TO WATCH

Message from the Dean

College of Business Administration Dean Laura Milner gives an overview of the stories in this issue.



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Building Bridges

University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

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COVER IMAGE:

UWL Professor Gwen Achenreiner, Marketing, and a UWL student meet with Peter Guidinger, of Fastenal, one of five businesses to join the Talent Connection Network so far. This new network is creating more formal relationships among CBA students, faculty and businesses.

A welcome home

December grad came for
the area's beauty, found
engaging people



Katelin Harned's first impression of UW-La Crosse came on an August day after a high school soccer game in Rochester, Minnesota. She and her mother decided to take a drive about an hour east to check out the campus.

No one was around as they roamed the sidewalk by the empty stadium with a picturesque bluff backdrop. Harned was impressed with the scenic beauty. It is what initially attracted her to UWL.

Having recently graduated in December, Harned says the quality of her UWL experience had little to do with the physical appearance of this place. It had everything to do with what was missing during that August visit — the people.

"I don't think I've ever had someone say no to helping me at UWL," she says.

Harned asked for help when looking to apply for an internship with the Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank the summer after her junior year. Someone in her Delta Sigma Pi fraternity gave her good advice that helped her land the internship, she says. She ended up working two internships and then landed a full-time job with the bank after graduation.

UWL advisors and instructors were also a listening ear for general life advice — and major decision making that led to switching her major to international business and economics.

During her final semester at UWL, Harned paid it back by mentoring other economics students interested in interning with the Federal Reserve Bank via a career-focused student group created by Mary Hamman, assistant professor of economics. Through the group, Harned met with several economics students interested in learning more about what it's like to work for the Fed. Hamman has been able to connect many other students and alumni via the group with the goal of preparing students for career success.

That student-to-student or student-to-alumnus connection is key. "It's so much more valuable than me trying to guess what will happen in the interview or what the first year in one of those jobs would be like ... it is much better to talk to a peer who has gone through that process," says Hamman.

Connecting students to careers on LinkedIn

Mary Hamman, UWL assistant professor of Economics, created a career-focused student group, SEARCH (Source for Economics and Related Careers Help). The informal group of economics majors and minors have been in her classes the past two years. She is able to connect students seeking interviews with alumni who have already landed jobs within those companies.

Katelin Harned, an international business and economics major, started a career in the internal audit department at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis after graduating in December.



BUILDING ON HISTORY

Wittich Hall renovation plans preserve history, create modern space for CBA



The new CBA home will include:

- Five CBA departments: Accountancy, Economics, Finance, Management and Marketing
- CBA dean's office
- Small Business Development Center
- 81 private offices
- 38 work stations
- 1 large meeting room that can be subdivided or seat 90-100 people lecture style
- 3 meeting rooms for 16-24 people
- 5 meeting rooms for 6-8 people
- Informal meeting and study spaces
- Instructional spaces and more
- * Information Systems is the only CBA department not moving into the building. It will remain in Wing Technology Center.

UW-La Crosse is preserving the history of its second oldest building while creating an iconic and modern new home for the College of Business Administration.

Architectural plans have been drawn up for the complete renovation of the interior of Wittich Hall to house the new CBA. The project still requires State Building Commission approval in June. If approved, building construction would start in 2018, with doors expected to open in 2020. The \$25 million project is funded through university program revenue; no state tax money will be used.

Wittich Hall, built in 1916 with an addition in 1931, was originally constructed to house the university's rising physical education program. At the time, it was deemed one of the best facilities in the nation for physical education training.

It is no simple feat to transform a facility built for one particular program into a space that would house an entire college of offices, meeting rooms, instructional spaces and more, said Doug Pahl, of ARO EBERLE Architects during a January presentation on the building's proposed renovations.

"For the first time this will give us something very tangible and apparent to show people who visit how important this college is."

- UWL Chancellor Joe Gow

Above: Architectural plans call for adding a new, third floor level in the building that matches the current elevation of the building's original suspended running track. The floor was already established by staircases built to access it.

But the firm has managed that challenge with careful attention to the building's history, as well as feedback from CBA students, faculty and staff.

"As someone who was not so thrilled about losing the office I have, I think you've done a fantastic job of listening to us and coming back with changes," said TJ Brooks, chair of the Economics Department after Pahl's presentation. "I think it will be a great space for us."

The interior renovation plans call for restoring certain features to preserve its historic character. They aim to memorialize a suspended running track on the third floor, preserve Maple wood floors in the building's two gymnasiums, expose the building's steel trusses, and open up the original 1916 skylights covered in 1970.

Original staircases and lobby spaces at building entrances will also be preserved, and most perimeter walls will be restored to their original appearance. All windows will be replaced with historic replica windows to match the original design.

The building will house five CBA departments, the Small Business Development Center and the CBA dean's office. It will also offer numerous spaces for studying, teaching, collaboration and active learning. "Our goal is to connect departments and make collaboration easier while creating a place where you want to be, and can be more productive," explained Pahl.

While most changes will come to the interior of Wittich, architects have also envisioned new accessibility features to the exterior. Patios on the east and west sides of the building with gradually-rising ramps will increase accessibility in a seamless way.



CBA Dean Laura Milner says the project has evolved over the years from a building that would house only CBA offices to much more.

"This is truly going to be a space where our faculty, staff and students want to come together to collaborate and learn. Having a home of our own will be a transformational experience for the college," she says. "It is a physical space designed to live out the promises of our mission statement, 'Foster Academic Excellence, Career Success and Community Engagement through Enriching, Interactive Experiences.'"

This rendering shows several design features and materials that will honor the suspended running track on the third floor of the original 1916 building. A large opening in the third floor design plans will overlook a public space on the second floor below. The opening will be about half the size of the opening created for the suspended running track. A bridge will accommodate traffic across the opening. Steel rods that suspend the historic track will be repurposed to support the new bridge. Also, dark stripes in the bridge floor beneath a layer of glass are made of tongue and groove decking that supports the historic running track.

Forging a talent pipeline

Partners join the TCN

Five area companies have already joined the Talent Connection Network. The first was Northwestern Mutual.

Shane Stuhr, '07, finance, managing director of Northwestern Mutual, agrees with Milner about the demand for UWL students. Nine out of the 15 financial advisors at the Northwestern Mutual's La Crosse branch are UWL graduates.

"UWL students in general are very hard working and down to earth, which is the type of person we are looking for," he says.

But Stuhr says the TCN has much broader goals from a company perspective than simply recruiting interns or future employees.

Through TCN, Stuhr and other Northwestern Mutual representatives have spoken about finance-related topics in classes and

started developing relationships with business faculty. "I've been able to sit down with business faculty and talk about the different ways their classes could work with us to help the students — whether on educational topics or understanding what it is that we could do better," he explains.

The network creates a more formal relationship between the company and college, Stuhr says. Through those relationships, students are exposed to careers such as the financial advisor position. "This is an incredible career for the right person," he notes. "It is in everyone's best interest that we align the right personalities with the right career."

Professor Gwen Achenreiner, chair of the Marketing Department, says company representatives have presented to several classes in her department on topics from trends and challenges in the sales industry to what to expect on the job.

"I think as educators we do a good job of providing an education and preparing students for the job market, but when you bring in people from industry, they help reinforce what you are teaching students," she says. "And having two people come at a concept from two different perspectives — academics and industry — that is providing a more holistic education, so the student benefits."

In the past, many of the college's relationships with external partners were on a one-on-one basis between a faculty member and business person. If a faculty member retired or an industry professional took a new position, that relationship ended. The TCN allows those relationships to continue independent of any one individual, explains Milner.

Fastenal, a company headquartered in Winona, Minnesota, joined the TCN in December because of the positive relationships it had already developed with CBA faculty and programs through opportunities to engage with the college such as the annual sales competition on campus. The company has been impressed with the quality and dedication of faculty, as well as talent and engagement of students, says Peter Guidinger, director of Employee & Customer Development, Fastenal Company.

Through the network, Fastenal is now beginning to develop new relationships in other parts of the college that it anticipates will also grow organically over time.



Shane Stuhr, '07, finance, managing director of Northwestern Mutual.

Talent Connection Network sponsorship supports:

- Students attending national association meetings
- Students traveling abroad
- Student field trips
- Student competitions
- Short-term pay opportunities for CBA students for CBA projects
- Student development opportunities
- Student club support
- Student Wall Street Journal and Financial Times subscriptions
- Specialized databases and software
- Faculty development opportunities and research
- CBA events and promotions



Danielle Spahn, of Inland Packaging, speaks to a marketing class. Inland is a member of the Talent Connection Network.



Don Weber, of Logistics Health Inc., gives a career-related presentation to CBA students in the Student Union.

“The business world changes and evolves at a rapid pace and it is important for businesses to support universities with current practices and trends so their programs remain strong and relevant,” says Guidinger.

“Of course an outcome of our efforts is also to attract UWL students to careers at Fastenal, but we feel that will occur as a result of being involved with supporting faculty and students.”

Who can participate?

- Partner organizations in the Talent Connection Network could be in the private sector, public sector, for-profit or non-profit. All organizations must have a desire to focus on students and provide the best collegiate professional development experience possible.

- Sponsorship levels per academic year:

- Gray: \$3,000

Gray level benefits:

- Company logo recognition on TCN CBA website
- Recognition as sponsor of student-oriented events
- Invitation to be a client for student consulting projects
- Invitation to be a club speaker
- Invitation to host a field trip to your organization (location or virtual tour)
- Invitation to faculty meet and greet

- Maroon: \$5,000

Maroon level benefits:

- All of the gray level benefits
- Invitation to be a guest speaker for two classes
- Invitation to have a video vignette of you and/or your company representative on UWL’s CBA website
- Invitation to participate in a CBA student club event

Talent Connection Network – partner companies

FASTENAL



Inland
We power great packaging

LHI

Mutual of Omaha

Northwestern Mutual

If your organization is interested in learning more about the Talent Connection Network, contact Dean Milner at lmilner@uwlax.edu or 608.785.8090.

Happiness formula

Economics student researcher compares happiness of UWL and Frankfurt students



UWL student researcher Stephanie Drefahl says the analytical and problem-solving skills she's learned through research will be useful when she begins her career as a Financial Analyst with IBM after graduation in May.

What makes people happy?

If you answered, money, consider this: The U.S. Gross National Product per capita has risen by a factor of three since 1960, yet measures of average happiness have stayed about the same, according to the World Happiness Report, a survey of global happiness.

Happiness is complex. Money often plays a role, particularly for poor people who could move out of difficult situations, past research has shown. But money is one of many factors in the happiness equation, explains UWL student Stephanie Drefahl.

The senior recently surveyed 160 college students from Germany and the U.S. to better understand and compare their financial well-being and happiness. Drefahl will present her research at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research, April 6-8, at the University of Memphis.

Drefahl says a College of Business Administration course initially got her interested in Happiness Economics, a growing field that gets to the root happiness in a data-driven way.

In Donna Anderson's Environmental and Ecological Economics course, Drefahl learned about how mass consumption in affluent countries has environmental consequences. She wondered whether or not people were happier with more stuff — like the latest fashionable clothing or the newest electronic devices. Past studies have asked similar questions, but Drefahl wanted to understand the economics of happiness from college students' perspectives, across two different cultures.



>> Click to review the
World Happiness Report

She received a \$3,500 UWL Undergraduate International Research Grant to conduct research in Germany in summer 2016. She surveyed about 80 students in economics classes at both the Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences and UWL to compare both groups' happiness and overall well-being.

In addition to asking students to rank their overall happiness, Drefahl also asked them about various factors such as their standard of living and access to healthcare. She wanted to see if these and other measures played a role in happiness or if the effect of those variables were significantly different between German and U.S. students. Drefahl was still analyzing her results at the time of publication, but her interviews have so far confirmed the notion that money isn't the only answer to a happy life.

One thing Drefahl is sure of is how undergraduate research has contributed to her own happiness. Her research project has turned "into something more than I had ever imagined," allowing her to work with "amazing faculty" and meet students with similar passions, she says.

Students find strengths

UWL students join top business students worldwide to prepare for their futures

People tend to focus on the negatives — listening to that inner voice that says, “I’m not as strong as her or as successful as him.”

The message of a Global Leadership Summit UWL business students attended in November was — don’t do that. Instead, people will find greater success by focusing on strengths, explains UWL senior Adam Letto.

Letto was one of the seven students from UWL’s Beta Gamma Sigma chapter selected to attend the Beta Gamma Sigma Global Leadership Summit Nov. 3-6, in Dallas. Students learned how to best use their strengths with help from other business students across the globe. Donna Anderson, professor and advisor to BGS, led the group from UWL.

Prior to the conference, students complet-



UWL senior Kayla Peterson, far left, pictured with her group at the summit. They took second overall. UWL senior Hannah Thomsen’s team took first overall. Photo courtesy of Glennon Williams.

ed StrengthsFinder. Once they arrived, they heard from speakers about how to use those strengths for success. On the last days of the conference, all were assigned to diverse groups of business students and given a company marketing challenge or ethical dilemma to solve by combining their strengths. On the final day, each group presented to a panel of judges made up of business executives.

UWL senior Hannah Thomsen, a double major in marketing and Spanish, was part of the team that won the competition. Winning was a “confidence booster” and inspiration to challenge herself to do more competitions going forward, she says.

Learning about strengths was not only useful for winning the event. It will also be important in job interviews and future ca-

reers. The summit helped students learn to look for strengths in others, and find resolution when strengths conflict.

UWL senior Kayla Peterson, a double major in management and marketing, has already used her strengths for insight into her leadership style in a campus organization. In particular, she learned she needs to communicate to understand why people do what they do instead of simply becoming frustrated by not knowing.

UWL Junior Jon Barnes, an accountancy major, says the speakers’ messages about finding passion within careers was energizing.

“It struck me that our business paths as young leaders will shape the future,” says Barnes. “There are ways to combine business with making a difference in society.”



December graduate Emily Sherwin, left, during discussions at the Beta Gamma Sigma Global Leadership Summit. Sherwin says the experience helped prepare her for successful collaborations that she expects in a future career. Photo courtesy of Glennon Williams.



UWL Junior Jon Barnes, left, says the global summit opened his eyes to the life experiences of others. Photo courtesy of Glennon Williams.



The business of social justice

Faculty pursue projects, classes related to economic justice and more

At a time when U.S. income inequality continues to grow, affecting the world's population and global power dynamics, a good university education should not neglect serious discussion on economic justice, says Nabamita Dutta, a UWL associate professor of economics.

Dutta is just one of several faculty in UWL's College of Business Administration doing work related to social justice issues.

Dutta helped make possible a photography exhibition on campus fall semester, "Search for Economic Justice Through Photography," which promoted a new general education course she is teaching for the first time this spring, "Search for Economic Justice." The course critically examines economic justice around the world through a variety of academic disciplines.

Dutta, an economist, and Christine Hipert, a cultural anthropologist, are the first two teachers of the multi-disciplinary course. In future semesters the course will extend to other fields.

"Our team came together because of an awareness of a dearth of information and perspectives for students on questions of economic justice, economic inequality, and economic empowerment in the general education curriculum," says Dutta.

The above photo is from the "Search for Economic Justice" photography exhibition. Many organizations work to help families and children learn marketable skills, illustrated in the photo showing Bolivian children learning higher-yield farming techniques at the Bolivian organization called the Pirwa ("silo" in Quechua). These techniques support and maintain valuable indigenous farming knowledge that has been lost because of increased rural to urban migration to work in the informal economy as day-laborers or for very low-pay work in factories.



Exploring women's and gender issues

Meanwhile, Nicole Gullekson, associate professor of management, is opening students' eyes to the challenges people of various genders face at work. She teaches a course on the role of women, and other genders, in organizations. She also does research examining women in male-dominated industries.

"The work is intriguing because the experiences of women and other genders at work, the challenges they face, and what they have overcome, but also what they have left to

overcome is all too real," she says.

Elizabeth Crosby, assistant professor of marketing, presented collaborative research related to discriminatory and stigmatizing issues that transgender consumers face in the marketplace as part of UWL's first ever Social Justice Week in April 2016. The market has the power to stigmatize or destigmatize traditionally marginalized groups, notes Crosby.

"I would like to see the market take a more proactive approach to social justice issues," she explains. "It could have a huge impact."



Elizabeth Crosby



Nabamita Dutta



Nicole Gullekson

PUMPING UP ECONOMIC EXPOSURE

UWL economist earns \$400,000 grant to hold workshops, public lectures and more

A UWL economist received a \$400,000 grant that aims to increase people's exposure to economics at UW-La Crosse and throughout the La Crosse community.

Adam Hoffer, UWL assistant professor of Economics, created the Wisconsin Initiative for Economic Research grant from a Charles Koch Foundation grant. The award is sponsoring economics events focusing on topics from basic economics and financial literacy to public policy discussion.

Over a two-year period, the grant will fund not only regional economic events, but also a weekly economics discussion group at UWL, a speaker series and the hiring of a resident research economist who will help run and organize programs for the initiative, as well as lead economics research projects.

The grant-funded speaker series began with a public presentation "The Myth of the Rational Voter" from Byran Caplan, a professor of economics at George Mason University, in October. The seminar presentation focused on the November presidential election and the rather surprising and unprecedented voting outcomes observed.

About the grant

The \$400,000 Wisconsin Initiative for Economic Research grant, created from a Charles Koch Foundation grant, promotes academic openness and rigorous economic inquiry. Hoffer hopes to engage the community in exploring economics.



Adam Hoffer, UWL assistant professor of economics

Upcoming Wisconsin Initiative for Economic Research-funded events

All events are free and open to the public

- Four nationally-renowned speakers will present during the event, Economics and Sports: Manging Money to Win from 4-8 p.m. Friday, April 28, in the Brian and Lori Hesprich Auditorium, 260 Graff Main Hall. Advanced online registration is recommended. https://uwlacrosse.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_ahmxO53UVYYWizj
Speakers include: Craig Benzel, '91, vice president of Sales and Business Development for the Green Bay Packers; Russ Sobel, professor of Economics and Entrepreneurship at the Citadel; Adam Carroll, a financial literacy expert whose TED talks have more than one million views; and Billy Corben, an Emmy and Peabody Award-winning filmmaker. The event will be co-sponsored by the La Crosse Money Smart Week and UWL's It Make\$ Cents program.
- Three financial literacy sessions are also planned during Money Smart Week, April 22-29. Sessions will be tailored for specific groups including, student teachers, children and young adults and parents and grandparents who may wish to teach their children and grandchildren about financial education. Dates and times of these events were not set at the time of publication.





The Small Business Development Center was the first resource La Crosse residents Josh and Mary Larson looked to when launching their new business, Full Circle Supply. They returned to share their story during the first Small Business Academy in October 2016.

Sustainable success

La Crosse entrepreneurs share start-up story during first Small Business Academy

La Crosse residents Josh and Mary Larson have long held a personal commitment to environmentally-conscious living. They use reusable bags, compost food and reduce energy use and waste when they can.

The Wisconsin Small Business Development Center at UWL helped the couple transform their sustainable living ideas into a new business. Today their downtown La Crosse shop, Full Circle Supply, is growing while helping La Crosse residents reduce waste. The business — an eco-friendly boutique specializing in refills of natural personal care and cleaning products — has moved to a larger downtown location and launched online sales in Nov. 2016.

The business is one example of many that has succeeded with free assistance from the SBDC. During the 2016 fiscal year, the SBDC helped more than 330 entrepreneurs with tasks ranging from business planning to market research to financial management.

And the SBDC continues to reach out to new people with entrepreneurial ideas. In October 2016, the SBDC, in collaboration with the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, hosted the first ever La Crosse Small Business Academy. The free half-day program aimed to connect regional entrepreneurs and start-up business owners to tools, resources and networks to start and grow their businesses. The goal is to hold the event each year.

The Larson's returned to present at the academy, sharing how their business started with SBDC help. Terri Urbanek, an SBDC consultant, helped with budgeting, forecasting, creating profit-loss statements, establishing contacts throughout the community and even hiring an employee. Mary says that financial assistance has been particularly important.

"I'm not an accountant, but when you own a business, you wear every single hat," she

notes. "Terri has been a great resource to help us make sure the business is going in the right direction."

Since opening, Full Circle Supply has refilled nearly 14,000 plastic bottles — approximately 1.5 tons of plastic waste. Mary feels good about reducing that waste, but, big picture, she hopes the business is able to fulfill a larger goal of changing the way consumers think about everyday products they use and the power they have with each purchase.

"I hope this starts a wave, and we can change the way of consuming in general," she says. "I would love to see every Walmart, Target ... refilling their plastic containers."

For a complete listing of SBDC 2017 training programs or to request consultation services, visit www.uwlax.edu/sbdc.

College — it's not like TV

How small classes, college opportunities have helped CBA students succeed

As a high school student, UWL freshman Alex Jantz wasn't sure what college would be like.

"On TV they give you the perception that it will be these big lecture halls, and you're basically a nobody. But it's not like that here," he says. "You feel welcome — like a member of the class. It's been great so far."

Jantz, who aims to pursue a business management major, was one of many UWL incoming freshmen learning more about programs at the annual CBA Meet & Greet fall semester.

When Jantz toured UWL he liked that it was a medium-size campus where he could get a more personalized education. Those perceptions have matched his experience, he adds. His classes have been small and his professors have been genuinely interested in his success, he says.

"When I talk to professors, I'm not just a number; I'm a student," he says.

CBA senior stresses the value of a well-rounded education

At the event, UWL Senior Marketing Major Greta Stawicki was sharing her experience in the CBA. She was a creative student who had dreams of going into marketing as early as her sophomore year



UWL Senior Marketing Major Greta Stawicki, center, says the CBA's required courses have made her a more well-rounded student who feels ready for her future. She shared her experiences during the CBA Meet & Greet.



UWL freshman Alex Jantz, center, says his college experience so far has included small classes and faculty who want him to succeed. He was learning more about UWL's College of Business Administration during the annual CBA Meet & Greet fall semester.

of high school. But when she started in the CBA, she was not excited to learn that earning a marketing degree would require a wide variety of courses, including plenty of math.

While she struggled in some of the market research and accounting classes, they've paid off in the long run, she says. During her time at UWL, she landed a marketing research specialist internship for a water filtration company in California, which she wouldn't have qualified for without her strong market research background. Approaching graduation in December 2017, those required classes have helped her feel more prepared to enter a career in advertising.

"Going into internships, I've either out-shined the employer's expectations, or I've felt more prepared than other interns there," she says. "A lot of that has to do with the faculty and the courses we are required to take at UWL."

Along the way, she's loved learning alongside professors who "go above and beyond."

"I have friends in Madison who have professors who never knew them by name," she says. "In the CBA, all of the professors have known my name, which is really nice."



Harry Blount, '86, finance, formed the DISCERN founding team, building on his more than 20 years of executive and financial experience on Wall Street.



Broadening business networks

Citizens State Bank Executive Lecture Series brings alumni back to talk business, leadership

A college campus is great ground for networking, says Dennis Vogel, '97 & '02. That person sitting next to you in class could become your future business partner, employee or resource down the road.

The Citizens State Bank Executive Lecture Series at UW-La Crosse is broadening that college network. The series that started in fall 2016, features business leaders and UWL alumni who return to campus to share their experiences in business management and leadership. The series is sponsored by Citizens State Bank where Vogel is president and CEO.

Vogel hopes the event opens more doors for UWL students. That's what UWL did for him, he adds.

"We all have a higher duty in terms of giving back in the community," says Vogel. "I do what I can for my university because, without it, I wouldn't be where I am today."

Dennis Vogel, '97 & '02, president and CEO of Citizens State Bank, earned an undergraduate degree in finance and Masters of Business Administration. He says his well-rounded business education created a strong foundation for later success.



"When people think about banking, they think about numbers. A big part of my success has been understanding customer service and sales. It's not just one thing ... a lot of things from a lot of different classes added to who I am today."

— Dennis Vogel, '97 & '02

Three alums have returned for lecture series

So far crowds of College of Business Administration students and faculty have heard from successful UWL alumni including, Harry Blount, '86; Eric Jungbluth, '85; and Angela M. Sikowski, '02.

- Blount, an investment research industry veteran, gave the first lecture in the series in October 2016. He shared his financial insights in “\$150 Trillion Financial Disruption: The End of Index Funds and Spreadsheets?”
- Jungbluth, a manufacturing industry veteran, paid his way through college as a full-time manager at Shopko. He reflected on his career journey that led to becoming a CEO in “Building Your Career from the Ground Up” in November 2016.
- On Feb. 3, Sikowski, an insurance industry financial executive, presented “The Mother of Success: One Woman’s Journey to the C-Suite.”



Eric Jungbluth, '85, far left, finance, had a successful career in the manufacturing industry, leading to his role as chief executive officer of CPG International, from March 2008 until he retired in June 2016.

PERSEVERANCE PAYS

Alumna shares story of successful career journey



Angela M. Sikowski, '02, accountancy, is the chief financial officer of Ansay & Associates LLC., a leading independent insurance agency.

Memories rushed back to Angela Sikowski when she set foot on campus in February. The 2002 alumna hadn't been back in 15 years — since graduating — and found the experience to be very humbling. “There’s been a lot of changes,” she said. “I’m jealous, and I want to come back to college.”

Since graduating in accountancy, Sikowski worked her way up the ladder to become the Chief Financial Officer for Ansay & Associates LLC. The independent insurance agency manages insurance and risk needs of more than 5,000 businesses and more than 20,000 personal insurance clients in Wisconsin and the Midwest.

She credits how far she’s has gone to her perseverance, which was tested when she lived in Coate Hall her freshman year. Sikowski ended up on academic probation by the end of the year and found herself trying to transfer. Instead, thanks in part to a push from her father and an advisor, she found herself graduating with her name on the Dean’s List.

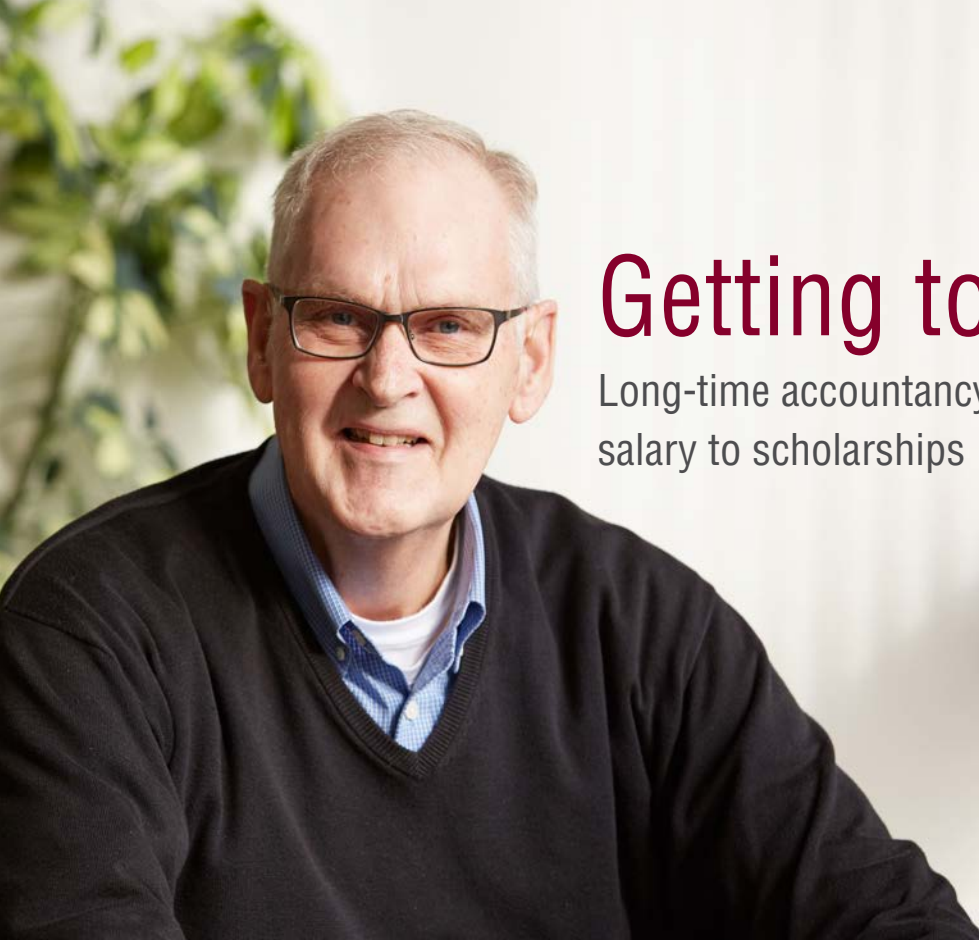
“Everyone has to go through those times and experiences,” she says.

Sikowski brought her story back to campus and shared it with a full auditorium of students as part of the Citizens State Bank Executive Lecture Series. “It was nice to be asked to reflect on what I have done with my career and the steps I’ve taken to get where I am, including my time at UWL,” she said.

By showing students how she’s succeeded, most prominently in her eyes as a “crazy mini-van mom,” she hopes to inspire them to overcome career roadblocks, just as she did.

“Obstacles are illusions — perceived things that you might think will keep you from your path,” she says. “But you have to keep pushing through.”

>> [Click to watch her presentation](#)



Getting to the heart of it

Long-time accountancy professor donates fall semester salary to scholarships

Joe Kastantin retired after a long-term career teaching accountancy at UWL. He also spent 14 years working and teaching in Europe, including a Fulbright grant to research and teach in Slovakia.

A long-time UWL accountancy professor has given students a big boost. Professor Emeritus Joe Kastantin and his wife, Linda Kastantin, chair of the UWL Alumni Association Board of Directors, donated a semester's worth of his teaching salary to support UWL student scholarships.

"In accounting, debits go on the left and credits go on the right. In between the debits and credits one will usually find a human with a heart," explains Kastantin. "Linda and I were very pleased to be in the position to make this final financial contribution at the end of my teaching career to our present and future accountancy majors."

Kastantin retired from the Accountancy Department in June 2016, but came back to work in September 2016 after the department had a last-minute vacancy in a high-demand course. The course, Auditing,

makes up about one fourth of the Certified Public Accountant examination. In the fall, 40 UWL students had signed up — the vast majority seniors who needed it to graduate. "This is a truly unbelievable display of generosity of time, talent and treasure," says CBA Dean Laura Milner.

But the move wasn't out of character for Kastantin. Much of his life has been dedicated to teaching students, serving others and showing compassion. To accomplish his personal objectives, Kastantin often took on work that others showed no interest in doing, thereby creating some remarkable opportunities, he says.

Kastantin spent 10 years in the U.S. Army in Korea and Vietnam before starting his teaching career. He taught accountancy in the CBA, but also lived and taught abroad for 14 years in Europe.

During a semester-long teaching assignment in Dalkeith, Scotland, he took a weekend trip to visit the site of the crash of Pan Am Flight 103, the plane brought down by a 1988 terrorist attack known as the Lockerbie Bombing. At a memorial wall, Kastantin met the father of one of the victims, whose grief struck him so deeply that he wrote a poem about the personal grief he felt from the complete stranger. He wrote about the 17-year-old victim, "Tracey Jane and Lockerbie," in a poem later published in a sociology journal.

Kastantin has published many works throughout his life — particularly for academia. He developed a writing partnership with Barry Minkow, a former businessman, pastor and convicted felon. The two have published several business fraud case studies even while Minkow was still serving sentences.

"Linda and I were very pleased to be in the position to make this final financial contribution at the end of my teaching career to our present and future accountancy majors."

- Joe Kastantin

After his second retirement in January, Kastantin has continued to be interested in working with prison inmates. He volunteered for the first time with Defy Ventures, an entrepreneurship, employment and character development training program for incarcerated people.

Kastantin is still processing the connections he made with inmates at Nebraska State Penitentiary whose life stories touched him deeply — the same way Tracey Jane’s father did.

Helping prison inmates turn their lives around is a different kind of work than helping a UWL student solve an accounting quandary. But it is motivating in the

same way for Kastantin. What the two tasks share in common is the satisfaction that he gets from digging in and helping others — sometimes when no one else will.

It is not a question of debit or credit. It is much more powerful. It is about delivering human heart.

A history of giving

Joe Kastantin and his wife, Linda, are long-time contributors to the UWL Foundation. In 2001 they started their own scholarship that provides about \$1,000 to accountancy student scholarships annually. The recent additional donation will allow them to pay out an additional \$4,000 each of the next five years.

Defy Ventures: <https://defyventures.org>

Welcome, new CBA faculty and staff



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Marketing specialist, SBDC



SHERI KNOPE
Associate lecturer, Accountancy



ANUP MENON NANDIALATH
Assistant professor, Management



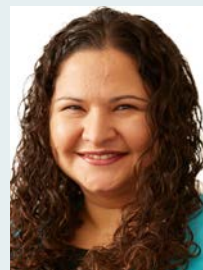
KATIE RICK
Associate lecturer, Accountancy



DANNY FRANKLIN
Lecturer, Management



YUREE LIM
Assistant professor, Finance



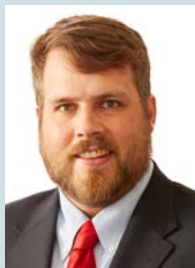
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Assistant professor, Marketing



ADAM STIVERS
Assistant professor, Finance



YEONKA KIM
Assistant professor, Management



JARED LINNA
Lecturer, Finance



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Associate dean, CBA Dean's Office



NICOLE VIDDEN
CBA academic services director, CBA Dean's Office

2016 CBA HONOR ROLL

We are proud for the first time ever as a College of Business to acknowledge those who have supported us fiscally during the prior year using an Honor Roll list in *Building Bridges*. The individual list and the corporate list are for those donations given Jan. 1, 2016–Dec. 31, 2016. The lifetime giving list goes through calendar year 2016 as well. Mere words cannot express profoundly enough our appreciation to those who through their gifts of scholarships and professional development monies support our students and faculty. For the year 2016, cumulatively these gifts total more than \$250,000. Whether you have given before, gave in 2016, or will give in the future, we humbly thank you.

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Take an Eagle to Lunch

Alumnus Mike Ancius, '87, accountancy, shared advice for success during the 17th Annual Take an Eagle to Lunch event October 28, at the UWL Cleary Alumni & Friends Center. The CBA Silver Eagles Organization and the CBA Board of Advisors hold the event annually, along with the UWL Alumni Association.

[WATCH THE VIDEO.](#)



Thank you, Silver Eagles

With a scholarship from the Silver Eagles Alumni Association, UWL Senior Hannah Thomsen is able to focus on the most important part of college: learning.

[Watch the video.](#)

COMING NEXT YEAR!

Estate Gifts and CBA Alumni Giving Elsewhere in the University



NATIONALLY RANKED

UW MBA Consortium program again ranked among top five percent in the nation

The University of Wisconsin MBA Consortium, a partnership that includes UW-La Crosse, was again ranked among the top five percent of online MBA programs in the nation by *U.S. News & World Report*.

The UW MBA Consortium tied for the No. 12 spot in the 2017 list of the Best Online MBA Programs. Additionally, the UW program tied for seventh in the *U.S. News & World Report* ranking for Best Online MBA Programs for Veterans, moving up three spots from last year.

This is the third year the UW program has earned a spot in the top five percent. The program tied for 12th in 2016, was 10th in 2015 and was recognized in *U.S. News & World Report's* Best Online Graduate Business Programs rankings in 2014 and 2013.

Rankings are determined by factors such as admission selectivity, student retention and engagement, faculty credentials and training, peer reputation, and student services and technology.

The UW MBA Consortium allows students to complete an MBA completely online through the partnership of four UW System business schools that are all accredited by AACSB International. In addition to UWL, the consortium includes UW-Eau Claire, UW-Oshkosh and UW-Parkside.

Learn more about the UW MBA Consortium at www.wisconsinonlinemba.org



Sales success

UW-La Crosse was the only school with two students to finish in the top 10 at the 10th annual Great Northwoods Sales Warm-Up Oct. 20-22 at UW-Eau Claire. Out of 63 competitors from across the country, UWL senior marketing majors Ben Stauss and Adam Letto placed fourth and 10th, respectively. The event is a national collegiate sales competition that showcases the talents of sales and marketing students. Students participating were, from left, front, Letto and Stauss. From left, back, Kayla Peterson, Alicia Roberts and Mikayla Williams.



Russell G. Cleary Distinguished Business Lecture Series

The man who helped Cisco Systems become a world leader for internet networking spoke on campus as part of the Russell G. Cleary Distinguished Business Leadership Series October 20. John P. Morgridge, chair emeritus at Cisco, discussed the significant roles of education, infrastructure and research in advancing economic and social development.



Prestigious production

Jeremy Richter, '94, marketing, and his creative team at Richter Studios accepted a prestigious award for film excellence at the black tie Cannes Corporate Media and TV Festival in October 2016.

Building Bridges



University of Wisconsin-La Crosse