

# Building Bridges

## DRIVEN

His past struggles in the rearview mirror, May grad looks ahead to his dreams

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Alumnus starts two scholarships to fund full, in-state tuition for students.

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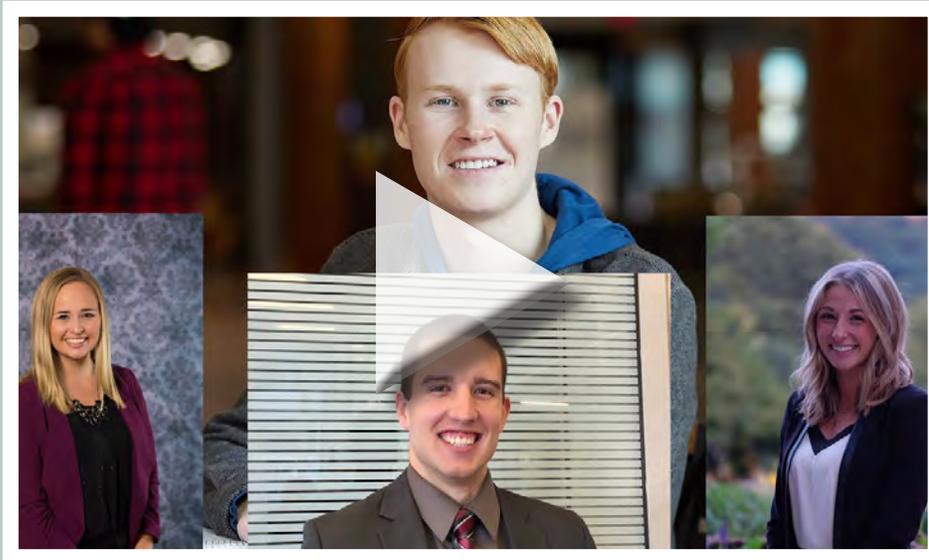
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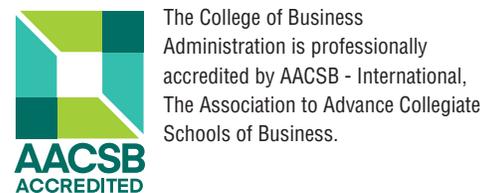
## Message from the Dean

College of Business Administration Dean Laura Milner shares how the college is keeping its focus on student success.



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**COVER IMAGE:**  
Ryan Crain is a UWL business management major who will graduate in May.

# GENEROUS JOE

Marketing alumnus gives back in multiple ways

Joe Laux, CEO at River States Truck & Trailer

Joe Laux knows a thing or two about hard work. Before becoming the CEO of River States Truck & Trailer, he started in the workforce with long hours at a meat-packing plant, entry-level work at Dole Foods Company and odd jobs for the New Orleans Saints. “I had glamorous jobs like taking cut players to the airport and telling overweight players they couldn’t eat,” recalls Laux, ’89.

Now the successful businessman shares his message and experiences with students every chance he gets — especially those at UWL. During fall semester, he spoke at the Silver Eagles Take an Eagle to Dinner event. He shared his journey and passion for business and mentoring the future.

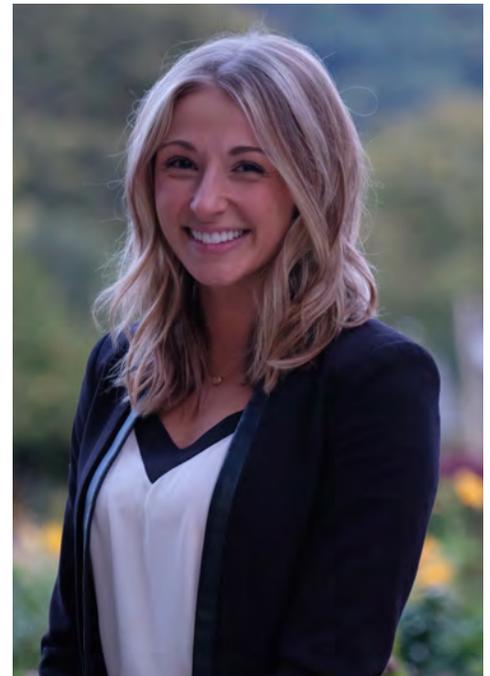
Anna Ostrowski, a senior majoring in marketing, says Laux’s message of ‘I was you’ stuck with her. “He made himself one of the students and put himself in a place to

be very relatable,” she says. “And it was not just his success stories, but also failures and struggles he encountered.”

Along with sharing his time with UWL students, Laux, who majored in marketing and management, is also sharing his wealth. He is providing a pair of scholarships to fund full, in-state tuition for students. One is for a marketing student. The other will support the top-performing junior in the CBA.

The scholarships are the two largest at UWL. Laux is hopeful others will be inspired to follow suit. “UWL gave me a great basis for my future,” he says. “It gave me a great background to understand who I was, and I want to be able to provide opportunities for others to explore and find their path to success.”

That’s a message students like Ostrowski are taking to heart. “He made me believe in myself, my education and my future,” she says.



Anna Ostrowski, a senior marketing major, calls Joe Laux’s message relatable.

Joe Laux was also a student-athlete during his time at UWL. He shares what he learned when he wasn’t the fastest track & field and cross country runner on the team.



# RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Alums, students are thankful for knowledge, support

When UWL alumnus Liam Koons impressed company leadership with a new automated process in his first job out of college, he wrote back to Associate Professor Mary Hamman.

“What I’m getting at is thank you. The R! skills [computer coding language] that you helped me with are helping me make a splash at Allscripts. I wouldn’t be as effective as I have been without your teaching!,” Koons wrote.

When Matt Lorenz, ’16, an accountancy and finance double major, passed all four parts of the Certified Public Accountant exam on his first attempt, he wrote to Julie Ancius, associate lecturer of Accountancy.

“Part of my success has to be a testament to the quality of the education I received in college, so even if I didn’t enjoy all of the studying for my accounting classes back then, I greatly appreciate it now!,” Lorenz said.

When UWL marketing major Courtney Reukauf landed an internship in the Marketing Department at Gundersen Health System, she wrote back to three faculty who teach in the CBA’s Integrated Core Program, Maggie McDermott, Nicole Gullekson and Lise Graham, to share how the program gave her an advantage as an applicant.

“The Integrated Core has provided me with experience and skills that have helped me become a better business professional,” she says. “For that, I am forever grateful for the three

of you and the experience that the Integrated Core provided for me.”

When Collin Pickart, ’17, landed an internship at Kwik Trip Corporate headquarters in La Crosse straight out of an economics class, he wrote back to say, “I cannot say thank you enough times to get across how grateful that I am for your help in getting this job. ... It’s everything I could’ve asked for in an internship. You really go above and beyond for your students ...”

And those thank you notes extend to many other college faculty, and also beyond the walls of UWL — to CBA alums who are also dedicated to seeing students succeed.

## Flexibility for success

Receiving scholarships has lifted a weight off UWL Junior Reed Powell. It has also lessened the load of medical bills.

When most high school graduates were soaking up summer sun before their freshman year of college, Powell was entering the surgery room to remove a portion of his intestine. The procedure would help relieve intense pain he had managed throughout his senior year of high school.

The recovery process the summer before his freshman year took money, time, hard work and endurance, but it was all worth it, says Powell.

He says college requires that same kind of thing — money, time, hard work and endurance, but he also knows it is worth it.

“It doesn’t matter what class it is, I put in 110 percent. I study my butt off. I go to office hours, and I know a lot of my professors on a first-name basis,” he says.

He wants to do well in school because he knows this is his chance to acquire knowledge and skills.

Classes have challenged him to work under pressure, communicate on teams, and carefully consider other’s perspectives. He has stepped out of his comfort zone in “Acting for Non-Majors.” He’s gleaned lessons from other’s business experiences like Joel Chilsen, Onalaska mayor and CBA senior lecturer, who teaches his “Principles of Marketing” class.

Scholarship assistance has given him flexibility to get involved. So, Powell has put his financial knowledge to the test as finance chair for UWL’s chapter of American Marketing Association. He learned to manage junior golf tournaments across the state as a Wisconsin PGA intern. And more recently, he has earned a spot on Beta Gamma Sigma, the highest national recognition for a business student.

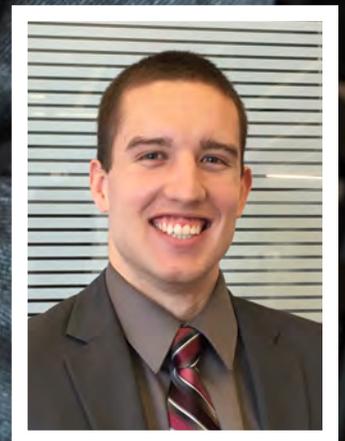
Powell is motivated not only to get as much as he can out of college, but also to show scholarship donors like Joe Laux, ’89, that he is worth the investment. Powell received the \$1,000 Laux Family Scholarship for the 2017-18 school year.

“I hope I can return the favor by helping someone else some day,” says Powell.

*Junior Reed Powell, of Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, is a marketing major with a minor in professional communications. He hopes to land a career in marketing after his May 2019 graduation.*



Courtney Reukauf



Matt Lorenz, '16



# DRIVEN

His past struggles in the rearview mirror,  
May grad looks ahead to his dreams



UWL senior Ryan Crain holds a picture of his mother. He keeps it next to the odometer in his car. She would be proud of how far he has come, he says.



Ryan Crain's mother didn't sugarcoat anything. When she had no food on the table, she told him why. When Ryan's dad went to prison, she shared what he had done.

Sometimes Ryan's mother told him things that were hard to hear. But she also told him that he could do anything.

"She told me that the greatest thing she gave me was her blood — my heritage being Ho Chunk. It is unique," he says. "... she wanted me to live my dreams."

Ryan's mother died when he was 21. Her picture is propped up next to the odometer in his 2007 Dodge Caliber, tracking the miles along with him. Ryan is only 33 years old, but he has a long road behind him.

He grew up living in and out of foster care because of the instability, alcohol abuse and fighting at home. His memories of his father are vague phone calls to prisons in Appleton and Green Bay. Only one foster parent, a Native American named Joe Buck, truly connected with him. He taught Ryan about sweat lodges and his Ho Chunk ancestry.

His teenage years and young adulthood were no easier. He lost his parents to cancer and had facial reconstructive surgery twice after a brutal beating from a stranger.

Despite all of this, Ryan is finishing his bachelor's degree in management from

UWL, with plans to graduate in May. He says his mother would be proud because he is living his dreams.

## Running away from home

Ryan felt anxious living in and out of foster care and never knowing who would take care of him next. At age 11, he decided to run away and live with his older brother, Chris, who was still a teenager.

Ryan was in middle school at the time, and the two would need to live on Chris' minimum wage job. Ryan had been wearing the same faded, black pair of jeans to school every day. Other kids would tease him and they would fight.

At night Ryan woke up from dreams of himself walking the halls of his school. He would see lockers filled with clothing, but the minute he'd try to grab a shirt or pair of pants, the locker door would slam shut. Chris told him the dream meant that he wanted new clothes. So, his older brother took him shopping and bought him his first pair of new jeans.

Ryan says his brother gave him a lot of things. Many have lasted longer than jeans.

On the first day home alone after moving in with his brother, all Chris asked Ryan to do was wash the dishes and sweep the kitchen floor while he was gone. Ryan sped through

the chores the minute his brother left. Then, he sat down and played video games the rest of the day. When his brother got home, he went into the kitchen with broom in hand. Chris moved the oven and the refrigerator, thoroughly sweeping every nook and cranny. He showed the large pile of dirt to Ryan.

Ryan watched Chris succeed in his jobs because of his dedication. Chris instilled in his younger brother that the work someone does is representative of who they are.

"I always wanted him to do things the right way, be responsible and not lazy," says Chris. "It really stuck with the kid."

## Pushing through pain

Ryan says life was relatively good living with his brother. "We were away from every problem we had before," he explains.

That was true — for awhile.

Ryan eventually moved into his own home and he remembers the early morning hours of Feb. 2, 2006. A man arrived at the door of his Wisconsin Dells home and slammed a metal object into his head — possibly a crowbar. It was later revealed the man was from a fight Ryan had broken up in downtown Wisconsin Dells several months earlier.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

## Branding video

Scott Reber, UWL lecturer in management, challenged Ryan Crain and other students in his business communication class to create a personal branding video. The videos feature someone summarizing their own experiences, skills, interests and values that have prepared them for their career. Watch Ryan's video.





Despite the many downs in his life, May graduate Ryan Crain has kept his focus ahead. He paid attention to signs along the way — little things like his brother showing him the right way to sweep a floor and his girlfriend graduating from college. These were the moments that pushed his foot a little harder on the gas.

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

The first note in the surgeon's book was that he could see Ryan's brain through the roof of his mouth, which had completely caved in. Much of his face was broken — his jaw, nasal cavity, eye sockets, and his right cheek bone.

After the first round of surgery, Ryan woke up in intensive care to the sound of a morphine drip and extreme pain all over his face. He asked his brother Chris to grab a mirror.

"I remember looking at my face and crying," he says.

His head had swelled to the size of a pumpkin. His eyes were black and blue, and his nose was attached with stitches.

The doctor walked in, telling Ryan what an amazing job he had done. "I was not having it at the time," recalls Ryan. "I thought I would look like a monster forever."

Ryan says, later, as the healing continued, that same doctor became a hero.

## More on heroes

In his late 20s, Ryan was recovering well and working multiple jobs in Wisconsin Dells to pay his medical bills. He noticed

that he was always asked to take on more responsibilities, yet he was never offered a management position. He dreamed of being a leader, but he knew the only way to do it was to go to college.

About that same time, Ryan met Cassidee Fosterling. They were both servers at a Wisconsin Dells restaurant. Fosterling had known that she wanted to be a teacher since the third grade, and she was finishing her student teaching at UWL.

The two started dating and Ryan watched her graduate from UWL in December 2013. Soon after, she landed a position as a full-time teacher. Ryan had other friends who graduated from UWL and landed great jobs. But seeing Fosterling do it was different.

"I was never inspired enough to go out and capture my dreams until I started dating her," says Ryan. "I knew if I was to marry this great woman, I would need to provide and be an equal."

## Try, try again

In fall 2014, an admissions officer at UWL set Ryan's transcripts out on the table in front of him. His high school record wasn't great, and he had earned an F in a class at

UW-Baraboo about a decade before because he hadn't finished it. His academics were not strong enough to be accepted to UWL.

Ryan left the meeting to drive to work at The Waterfront.

"I was upset with myself. I yelled something in the car. I shed a tear," he says. "I didn't tell anyone that I hadn't gotten accepted."

But Ryan got an email from that same admissions officer not long after.

"I don't reach out to every student we deny admission to," says Scott Johns, UWL assistant director of admissions. While Ryan didn't meet the academic requirements for UWL, in their short meeting, Johns says he developed an instant rapport with him.

Ryan had a certain energizing quality that was impressive and made Johns think he'd be a good fit for UWL. "If you've taken StrengthsFinder, I think he would be described as a 'Woo' [winning others over] ... He has a certain woo about him. He is a really likeable guy. I remember wanting to help," recalls Johns.

Johns met with Ryan again and helped him lay out a plan to go to Western Technical College and transfer in to UWL. That's exactly what Ryan did — and then some.

*“Before I applied to UWL, I said out loud in the mirror, ‘I am going to graduate from UWL and do so with honors,’” Crain says. “I’m a month away from that coming true.”*

He became captain of Western’s basketball team and joined a volunteer society for student athletes. And he earned three semesters of a 4.0.

“He knocked it out of the park,” says Johns.

### Seeing success in the mirror

When the time came, the transition to UWL was more challenging.

Some of Ryan’s classes, like applied calculus, meant extra studying to learn concepts he had not mastered. That first semester, he spent every day in faculty office hours, and felt overwhelmed. But, as the semesters rolled on, he learned the importance of finding balance. He cut his hours at The Waterfront and prioritized balancing his life, including making time to have regu-

lar dinners with Fosterling. He learned the benefits of meeting with his academic advisor, connecting with professors and working with management tutors.

“Once I realized the professors at UWL — like at Western — were willing to help me, that helped me make the transition,” he says.

At UWL he also became a founding member and president of an honors fraternity, Lambda Chi Alpha, dedicated to community service. He took an internship with the Ho Chunk Nation.

His grades have steadily improved, landing him on the Dean’s List in fall 2017.

“Before I applied to UWL, I said out loud in the mirror, ‘I am going to graduate from

UWL and do so with honors,” he says. “I’m a month away from that coming true.”

Today Ryan, a business management major, looks forward to the next step. He interviewed with companies in management, financial advising and other business positions. He received multiple job offers and accepted a position as a financial advisor with Northwestern Mutual. He is genuinely excited to help others and to lead.

Chris says Ryan no longer needs the extra push he did as a kid.

“When he decided to go back to school, he did it full force,” says Chris. “I tell him I’m so proud of him. Every time I see him, it brings a smile to my face.”

Fosterling thinks about Ryan’s success in relation to the many youngsters she sees in school ever day.

“Thinking about the kind of lives students can have, and watching him overcoming those things — it’s a success story I hope for all of my students who have those rough points,” says Fosterling.

Ryan Crain with his fiancée, Cassidee Fosterling. He says Fosterling, ’13, who earned her degree in education from UWL, was the main reason he decided to go to college. “I’ve never been with someone who challenged me or inspired me like she has,” he says.



# AROUND the world

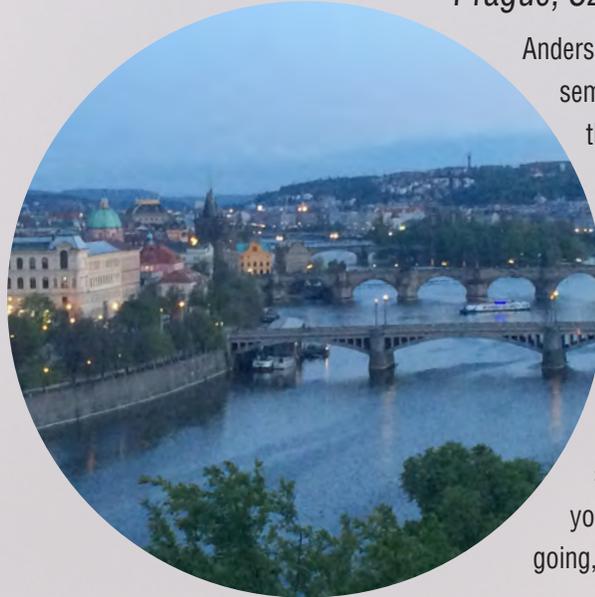
Senior shares journey abroad in photos, moments

In the last five months, UWL senior Quincey Anderson has walked on four continents and flown around the globe once.

The Wisconsin native says what started as a yearning for a change of scenery, ended with spending a quarter of her undergraduate years living in three different countries — plus side trips along the way. She studied abroad in Prague, Czech Republic; Seoul, South Korea; and Accra, Ghana — all the while earning credit toward her major in economics and minors in sociology and international studies.



## DAY ONE ... WITH ONLY HER LUGGAGE. Prague, Czech Republic. Spring 2016.



Anderson's flight arrived early for her semester-long study abroad program at the University of Economics — her first time out of the country. As her taxi sped off, she realized she was alone in an unfamiliar place with 45 minutes to spare. Instead of fretting, Anderson picked up her luggage and took a tour down the street to treat herself to a cup of soup. "Things may get crazy ... but you just have to roll with it and keep going," she says.

## ON MEETING PEOPLE Seoul, South Korea. Summer 2017.

Anderson took Taekwondo lessons while studying Korean politics and culture the summer before senior year at Hansung University. She met many friendly faces, like her Taekwondo instructor — in and outside of class. "It shows you that the world is very small, and people are just people no matter what language they speak."



## ON LEARNING LANGUAGES Accra, Ghana. Fall 2017.

Although Anderson didn't know the languages of the countries where she studied, she made sure to learn the basics to get to know people such as: hello, goodbye, my name is and how are you? Here she meets a chief from a village in the northern region of Ghana. "It's fun to try and speak the languages," she says. "The locals and local students all really appreciate it and encourage you just for trying."

# MONEY MATTERS

UWL alum, financial guru shares his path



Reynolds shares more. Click to watch video.



James Reynolds, Jr., has a passion for teaching others about the value of understanding finance. He saw that value early in his career working with investments. One day he made a multi-million-dollar investment, and then proceeded to go out for happy hour, dinner and home for a night of sleep. When he came back the next day, it had grown by \$5,000.

“No matter what your career is, you have to know a little about finance,” says Reynolds, ’77. “You have to understand the basics like profit, loss and returns.”

Reynolds shared that message when he returned to campus in October as part of the Russell G. Cleary Distinguished Business Leadership Series. He also shared his path from graduating with a political science degree to becoming

CEO of Loop Capital, an investment bank, brokerage and advisory firm he started in 1997. It is the largest minority-owned financial services firm and one of the largest privately-held investment banks in the U.S.

“When I graduated, I didn’t know I’d be a CEO,” says Reynolds. “But a goal I had was to be successful in whatever I did.”

Along with his business accomplishments, Reynolds makes it a priority to be a role model for youth on the South Side of Chicago where he grew up. “I know how important it is for someone who made it through that and has achieved some level of success to stay involved,” he says. “A major part of everything I do is aimed at giving back and staying attached to those kids.”

James Reynolds, Jr., returned to campus in October as part of the Russell G. Cleary Distinguished Business Leadership Series.

## The Russell G. Cleary Distinguished Business Leader Series

Sponsored by the Cleary Family, the lecture honors Russell Cleary who attended UWL from 1951-54, UW Madison Law School 1954-57 and earned the Graff Distinguished Alumni Award in 1980. Cleary built La Crosse’s Heileman Brewing Co. into one of the largest breweries in the country. In addition to numerous other awards, he was named Executive of the Year by “Corporate Report Magazine” in 1980. Cleary, a strong supporter of UWL, was committed to serving the La Crosse community.

# Celebrating a decade of health, life

*Professor learns his  
organ donor has a  
UWL connection*

Andrew Stapleton is a professor of operation and supply chain management. Spending time with his dog, Xaanten, is just one way he has enjoyed life and health post transplant. Stapleton raises German Shepherds and Huskies at his Onalaska home.

Professor Andrew Stapleton reaches out to two important UW-La Crosse alums every Mother's Day and Father's Day.

The couple are not his parents. But they have an important link to the reason he is alive.

About a decade ago, Stapleton was very ill. A diabetic of 23 years, he was keeping up a regimen of four to five insulin shots a day.

One morning he would get up with healthy blood sugar levels. The next, his count would sky rocket to 600 milligrams per deciliter — a level close to causing life-threatening dehydration and diabetic coma if untreated. Considered a “fragile diabetic,” his levels fluctuated regardless of what he ate or how much he exercised.

Being diabetic caused other complications as well, including the need for 10 eye procedures and the slow deterioration of his kidneys. Entering his 40s, Stapleton was exhausted and constantly felt ill as if he had food poisoning. It affected his ability to concentrate and do high level math as part of his research.

Doctors put Stapleton on the kidney-pancreas organ transplant list. About 18 months later, on Sept. 15, 2008, he received the call from UW Health in Madison. He felt mixed emotions.

“I was elated because I knew I would get better,” says Stapleton. “But I also knew someone had passed away who had provided those organs to me.”

## NEW LIFE

Stapleton didn't realize how unhealthy he was until he woke up in his hospital bed post-transplant feeling 20 years younger.

# *On average, 20 people die each day while waiting for a transplant.*

*Source: Organ Procurement and Transplant Network.*

His head was clear and the food poisoning feeling was gone. He wrote to his organ donor's family, expressing his gratitude for the gift of life.

It wasn't until he was preparing to teach an online course on New Year's Eve of 2009, that a phone call came from his donor's father — who surprisingly had a UWL connection.

Months later he met his donor's parents for dinner, two UW-La Crosse alums, Tom and Pat Lemke who attended UWL in the 1960s.

Stapleton calls it “emotional and cathartic” to learn more about his donor, Chris Lemke, as well as develop a relationship with his donor's parents. He has learned he shares similarities with Chris, including both working in the same supply chain management field and both having a twin brother. He has kept in touch with Pat and Tom, and reaches out every Mother's Day, Father's Day and Christmas.

Pat and Tom have also taken an interest in Stapleton's accomplishments. His ability to do high level math immediately came back post-transplant, and he has returned to being a prolific publisher over the past decade. He's been energized by collaborations with other faculty and staff on projects and com-

mittees. He has loved the connections he has made with thousands of UWL's business management students.

He has also taken greater pleasure in the small things — watching his dogs do tricks in the backyard, or taking a long bike ride on a summer day. He's been able to watch his daughters — Katie and Karen — grow into young women who are now both early in their careers, one in management and one in law.

Two years ago, he joined his daughters on a Kidney Foundation 5K run/walk in Madison. They distributed T-shirts at the start of the race with a blank line on the back for organ recipients to write what the donation meant to them.

Stapleton wrote “2,914” — for every additional bonus day of life since his transplant.

## A FAMILY AFFAIR

Diabetes runs in Andrew Stapleton's family. After getting his transplant, he watched two of his older brothers develop similar signs of kidney failure. Stapleton convinced them to get procedures at UW-Health, a global leader in simultaneous kidney-pancreas transplants. They are now the only three siblings in the world to have kidney-pancreas transplants.

# THE CBA BOARD OF ADVISORS

## Area businessmen key to keeping college in business

They speak at classes and advise student organizations. They provide input into the college's strategic plan. They sponsor speakers and mentoring programs.

Those on the College of Business Administration Board of Advisors are key to the college's international accreditation and staying a strategic player in 7 Rivers Region business.

Two of the loyal, local businessmen on the board are Robert "Bob" Allen and Jeff Kessler. "They have been the backbone of the CBA Board of Advisors for a long time," says CBA Dean Laura Milner.

They — and the 13 others on the board — have been helpful to Milner's transition into the CBA's top administrative role. And board members are vital to keeping the college current.

### A charter member

Bob Allen, senior vice president of investments for Stifel in La Crosse, has served on the board since its founding in the late 1980s. At that time, he was chair of the UWL Foundation board and had been a class speaker and advisor to the business fraternity, Delta Sigma Pi.



Bob Allen has served on the board since its founding in the late 1980s.

"I have enjoyed seeing the CBA go from a newer school of business to one of choice," says Allen. "Our students have been cream of the crop for some time now, and have made this a very competitive school to attend."

While Allen says the board has morphed several times over the nearly three decades he has served, it continues to give the college an external voice, as well as being its ears. He envisions the board's role will continue to evolve.

"I, as well as many others, would like to see the board become increasingly helpful in outside programming and contribute in some way financially to the discretionary

needs of the school to allow it to do its best work," he explains.

### Proud to serve when he returned

Jeff Kessler, '81, was excited to re-engage with his alma mater when returning to La Crosse after 22 years in the Twin Cities. He appreciates the board's first-hand view of the challenges and accomplishments of a top-ranked Midwest business school.

"Meeting the faculty and leadership has been a great privilege, and understanding more of what goes into being a professor and running a business school in a competitive and ever changing higher education

institution is interesting to say the least,” says Kessler. “The best part is having opportunities to meet and spend time with students. They are our future business professionals and leaders. Seeing how they are prepared for the challenges of the business world gives me great confidence in the years and decades ahead.”

During his 15 years on the board, Kessler has assisted with reaccreditations, helped identify core learning objectives, and provided input for refining curriculum. “To see the CBA navigate through challenging waters in terms of budgets and faculty retention — among many — and not lose course in terms of delivering a top-rated business education to students is the result in some small way to the contributions of all those on the Board of Advisors providing guidance over the years,” he says.

Kessler, practice executive for Allergy Associates of La Crosse, says helping future generations succeed is rewarding. “Selfishly, I’m counting on it as in my industry, health-care, like many other industries, we have to find the next generation of thinkers and doers,” he says. “I’m lucky to be able to say that I see and hear them through my experience with the board, and they want to hear from us.”



Jeff Kessler, '81, has served on the board for 15 years.

## The current CBA Board of Advisors

Bob Allen  
Steven Christiansen  
Bill Drazkowski  
Todd Fitzgerald  
Ron Gillies  
Eric Guth  
Karla Helke  
Tanner Holst  
Jeff Kessler  
Martin Kolar  
Terry Murphy  
Mark Platt  
Mike Skroch  
Kevin Spellman  
Scott Turnbull



# Making his mark

Professor, Fulbright Scholar explores political, social, economic life abroad

The Slovak Republic is an exciting place for an economist to work following decades of economic, political and social changes, including adoption of the Euro, says TJ Brooks, UWL professor of economics.

Brooks is one of three UWL faculty teaching, conducting research and building relationships across cultures as part of the prestigious Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program this academic year. Eleven faculty and students have earned Fulbrights while teaching or working at UWL since 2009.

Brooks is teaching a graduate course on macroeconomic theory and conducting research at the University of Economics in Bratislava, Slovakia, from January-June 2018.

Like Wisconsin's counties, the Slovak Republic also has sub-national, regional economies that vary greatly in their performance; however, no comprehensive indices exist at these levels, Brooks explains. His research will investigate economic business cycles at the sub-national level and identify metrics that could be used to compare them. This would be beneficial to academics, practitioners and government officials alike, he says.

Once home, Brooks says the Fulbright opportunity will help him be a better teacher with educational experiences learned from students of different cultural and economic backgrounds. Brooks hopes to gain an understanding of the Slovak perspective on economic, political and social changes. Moreover, he hopes to grow interculturally and professionally.

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## Sharing skills

Brooks brings experience that could help the Slovak university in its quest for AACSB accreditation, a prestigious internationally-recognized accreditation for business and accounting programs, which UWL's CBA has maintained for nearly four decades. Brooks served as chair of the Assurance of Learning Task force during the CBA's 2013 re-accreditation process.

UWL Economics Professor TJ Brooks at the Monument to the National Slovak Uprising, in Bratislava, Slovakia. The monument commemorates an attempt to depose of the Nazis government during World War II. Brooks earned a Fulbright Scholarship to teach and conduct research in The Slovak Republic through June 2018.

# From management class to marriage

Alums make new memory where their relationship started eight years ago



CBA alums Alex Gonzalez and Monica Mariño met in 138 Wimberly Hall. Eight years later, Gonzalez proposed outside of the same room.

## WHERE THEY MET:

Management class — room 138 — Wimberly Hall. Alex Gonzalez, '11, was debating his choice of chair when he saw a beautiful woman sit down up front. He quickly switched spots, landing in the chair alongside Monica Mariño.

## HIS FIRST WORDS TO HER:

“Thank you for saving my seat.”

## WHAT THEY HAD IN COMMON:

Type-A personalities, Latin backgrounds and roots in large cities — Gonzalez from Miami and Mariño from Bogota, Colombia. They became fast friends.

## TRY, TRY AGAIN:

Gonzalez tried to become more than friends with Mariño six times in college. Each time she turned him down. She was committed to finishing her degree, which she completed in three years.

## DATING:

After graduation, both eventually ended up in Atlanta and started dating. Fast forward three and a half years and Gonzalez was ready to propose where it all began.

## ONE LITTLE HICCUP:

Room 138 is now the College of Business Administration dean's office. But with help from a former professor and the dean's office, they were still able to have a memorable marriage proposal July 3, 2017. Mariño didn't suspect a thing.

## THE PROPOSAL:

During a return visit to campus, the two were being goofy and reflecting on old times as they walked the halls of Wimberly. But then Mariño noticed a change in Gonzalez' demeanor, "... he got really serious and started talking about how we can do anything together," she says. "Why are you saying this?" she asked. "You are going to make me cry." Then, Gonzalez got down on his knee. Mariño's jaw dropped when he proposed outside room 138.

## ONE MORE UWL MEMORY, MADE:

“After the fact, I don't think he could have proposed in a better, more meaningful place,” says Marino.



CLICK IMAGE TO WATCH

Drew Keeley is making his path in the healthcare analytics field less than a year after graduating. He shares advice at an event launching UWL's new "Healthcare Analytics Management" minor fall semester.

# HEALTHY DATA

New minor, Healthcare Analytics Management, marries student interest and industry need

Growing up, UWL Alum Drew Keeley was diagnosed with juvenile arthritis. Spending time in and out of healthcare facilities, he became interested in a future in healthcare. "I wanted to help people the way they helped me," he explains.

But Keeley, '17, wasn't looking to work in medicine. Instead, he took his data-driven brain and found a place in healthcare analytics. Today he is a rebate analyst with IMS Health, a contract healthcare IT company. "It's working with data, analyzing it and finding ways to improve the process," says Keeley.

That is an emphasis area now more available to UWL students. Associate Professor of Economics Mary Hamman led the development of UWL's new minor in healthcare analytics management, which officially launched fall semester. With guidance from an executive advisory board — including senior leadership from Mayo Clinic Health System – Franciscan Healthcare of La Crosse and

Gundersen Health System — the minor helps meet the need for these skills in industry.

The minor will guide students through classes in business and liberal studies. It will provide them the skills to identify and communicate innovative uses of data to solve healthcare management problems, construct and understand key industry metrics, and guide professional decision-making.

The minor is something students, like Junior Steven Martine, are considering picking up. "It seems like there's a lot of growth that could happen with this whole industry," the economics major says.

Keeley is a little jealous he couldn't declare it during his time at UWL. "It would have been great to have more specified classes to help students get into the workforce and have basic concepts and understanding," he says. "It's a big step, and it will be good for students."

# Marketing ... and much more



American Marketing Association is CBA's largest student organization with nearly 140 members. When they are not baking campus cakes, networking with marketing professionals or participating in marketing competitions, these students are bonding during socials and while volunteering. Here AMA students go trick-or-treating for non-perishable food items in La Crosse to donate to The Salvation Army, WAFER and the UWL Food Pantry.



AMA members, from left, Katie Wawrzaszek, Cassidy Steyer and Anna Ostrowski.

## Remembering emeriti faculty

UWL Professor Emeritus of Economics Barry Clark died in December 2017. He was part of the CBA from 1978-2006, teaching courses in comparative economics systems, history of economic thought, and modern political economy. Colleagues of Clark have established the Barry Clark Fund to support undergraduate research in economics. To contribute visit the UWL Foundation website.

[www.uwlax.edu/foundation/?fund=d-gen-1](http://www.uwlax.edu/foundation/?fund=d-gen-1)

Under "Area of Interest" select College of Business Administration and note "Barry Clark" in the optional note below.

Professor Emeritus of Management John Betton died in October 2017. From 1981-2012, he taught classes in comparative management, business and human rights, and business and the environment.



The Economics/Finance Department was pictured in the 1978 yearbook. Row one, from left: William Wehrs, Richard Snyder, Barry Clark. Row two, from left: Lawrence Daellenbach, Edward Wolfe, Daniel Gerland, George Starner, Michael Schellenger, Richard Schoenberger and Douglas Sweetland. Not pictured: Douglas Matthews. Photo courtesy of UWL Murphy Library.



# 6 TIPS TO BE A STRONGER LEADER

Students glean insights from worldwide summit

Six UWL business students attended the Beta Gamma Sigma Global Leadership Summit in Orlando, Florida, last November. They networked with top business students from around the world and listened to insights from thought leaders. They brought back ideas on how to strengthen their leadership skills. Here students share their collective best tips to be a stronger leader.

**1. Listen and accept new ideas.** Leading is all about being willing to actively listen, guide and provide support for others. It is also about being open and willing to accept new ideas that you might not perceive as right.

– Jeremy Miller

**2. Focus on strengths.** Know your strengths and capitalize on them instead of focusing on improving your weaknesses. If every person has a few qualities that they are really good at, we can work as a team and accomplish amazing things.

– Amanda Nelson



During a Global Leadership Summit seminar, UWL student Patrick Dixon creates a picture that aims to capture the story of “all that I am and who/what/where I want to be in the future” using only drawings.

**4. Say ‘yes’ to opportunities.** Take advantage of opportunities in front of you. They build experience, and experience makes you a better leader.

– Patrick Dixon

**5. Use past experience.** To be a great leader, you must first learn to lead yourself. Learn from the past and use it to excel in the future.

– Sydney Schemenauer

**6. Reflect.** Take time to reflect on where you have been, where you are now, and where you want to go in the future. You cannot expect to guide others if you do not have a plan of your own to follow first.

– Reed Powell



UWL Student Sara Vesel, left, during the Global Leadership Summit.

**3. Find mentors.** Have multiple, quality mentors in your life. They will serve as guides and help you grow professionally in your career and in life.

– Sara Vesel

For more about the Global Leadership Summit: [www.betagamma.org/events/gls](http://www.betagamma.org/events/gls)

# INCALCULABLE ECONOMICS EXPERIENCE

Northwestern Mutual Wealth Management Adviser Shane Stuhr, '07, learned more about Americans' financial behaviors and knowledge from UWL students in James Murray's Business and Economics Research and Communication class during the fall semester. Students applied computer programming and data analysis skills to a data set of tens of thousands of Americans. Students shared how perceptions of financial literacy and actual financial literacy are not always in line, as well as factors that influence financial literacy and how it influences individuals' financial behaviors.

Business professionals interested in working with Murray's business research methods students on a similar project should email Murray at [jmurray@uwlax.edu](mailto:jmurray@uwlax.edu).



From left, Shane Stuhr, Northwestern Mutual; UWL student Paige Forde; UWL student Caleb Happel; UWL student Andrew Hilgemann; and James Murray, associate professor of economics.

*"It was invaluable to take the accumulated knowledge learned throughout this class and apply it to a real-life business situation."  
- Paige Forde, UWL junior.*

## New, returning faculty and staff

**NEW** (starting in fall 2017)



**Mehmet Kocakulah**  
Assistant professor  
Accountancy



**Chun-Lung Huang**  
Assistant professor  
Information Systems



**Uzay Damali**  
Assistant professor  
Management



**Scott Peterson**  
Business manager  
Dean's Office



## College will have a new home in 2020

The State Building Commission approved the Wittich Hall renovation project during its December 2017 meeting at the State Capitol in Madison. A complete renovation of the building's interior will create an iconic and modern new home for the CBA. Construction will begin in June 2018, with doors expected to reopen in May 2020. The approximately \$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, is UWL's second oldest building.

**RETURNING** (to teach spring semester)

**Nicholas Breidel**  
Associate lecturer  
Information Systems

**Bradley Dobbs**  
Associate lecturer  
Management

**Gary Massey**  
Associate lecturer  
Management

**Thomas Schlesinger**  
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# KEEPING PACE WITH INDUSTRY

Professor masters hospital analytics tool to recreate for classroom use

Associate Professor Mary Hamman is a popular teacher, but she is also an effective learner. She regularly seeks out industry input to develop her courses.

In summer 2017, Hamman worked with an industry partner — the Wisconsin Hospital Association Information Center (WHAIC) — to learn how to use a tool they created that more than 60 hospitals throughout Wisconsin now use to analyze data. With help from WHAIC, Hamman developed a demo version of the tool for classroom use. Hamman received a \$4,400 faculty development grant to fund her project and allow her to take a course in Tableau Data Visualization that will allow her to teach her students to use this popular software platform.

“My motivation is to make sure my students are ready for the job market,” says Hamman. “To do that, I need to know what tools they need to know, and that requires industry partnership.”

*“My motivation is to make sure my students are ready for the job market,” says Hamman.*

Hamman has shared the tool with other College of Business Administration faculty members. It has been used in three, upper-level UWL courses in economics and management thus far.

The tool gives students access to mock hospital discharge data, so they can analyze issues such as population health and patient access. They can also compare data between hospitals based on size or region.

Practice using tools like this is increasingly important as applicants to healthcare analytics positions are often asked to demonstrate their knowledge of tools as part of the interview process, says Hamman.

Hamman, who led the development of UWL’s minor in healthcare analytics management, got the idea for the tool from the board of advisors for the minor, which includes 18 senior-level executives involved in healthcare throughout the state.



**MARY HAMMAN** joined UWL in fall 2013. She is grateful to have university support to improve her knowledge as industry evolves.

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# Building Bridges



University of Wisconsin-La Crosse